

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



Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
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Tel: 01296 744441

Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Louise Harrison

To: The Members of the Executive Committee

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC**

Please note the content of
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1 July 2024

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in **MEETING ROOM 1, BLUE LIGHT HUB, 3 THORNBURY, WEST ASHLAND, MILTON KEYNES, MK6 4BB** on **WEDNESDAY 10 JULY 2024 at 10.00 AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Health and Safety:

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting, at the web address provided overleaf.

Councillors: Bailey, Banks, Hall, Lambert, McLean, O'Neill, Rouse and Walsh



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Recording of the meeting

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

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

The Authority also allows the use of social networking websites and blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens.

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

The Authority may adjourn a Meeting to hear a member of the public on a particular agenda item. The proposal to adjourn must be moved by a Member, seconded and agreed by a majority of the Members present and voting.

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

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

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) should only speak once unless the Chairman agrees otherwise.

The Chairman should resume the Meeting as soon as possible, with the agreement of the other Members present. Adjournments do not form part of the Meeting.

Rights to Speak - Members

A Member of the constituent Councils who is not a Member of the Authority may attend Meetings of the Authority or its Committees to make a statement on behalf of the Member's constituents in the case of any item under discussion which directly affects the Member's division, with the prior consent of the Chairman of the Meeting which will not be unreasonably withheld. The Member's statement will not last longer than four minutes. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk at least two clear working days before the meeting.

Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

Where the Chairman of a Committee has agreed to extend an invitation to all Members of the Authority to attend when major matters of policy are being considered, a Member who is not a member of the Committee may attend and speak at such Meetings at the invitation of the Chairman of that Committee.

Questions

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To make all decisions on behalf of the Authority, except in so far as reserved to the full Authority by law or by these Terms of Reference.
2. To assess performance of the Authority against agreed organisational targets.
3. To determine matters relating to pay and remuneration where required by collective agreements or legislation.
4. To select on behalf of the Authority-the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent, taking advice from suitable advisers and to make recommendations to the Authority as to the terms of appointment or dismissal.
5. To consider and make decisions on behalf of the Authority in respect of the appointment of a statutory finance officer; a statutory monitoring officer; and any post to be contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part taking advice from the Chief Fire Officer and suitable advisers.
6. To act as the Employers’ Side of a negotiating and consultation forum for all matters relating to the employment contracts of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent; and where relevant, employees contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part.
7. To hear appeals if required to do so in accordance with the Authority’s Policies.
8. To determine any human resources issues arising from the Authority’s budget process and improvement programme.
9. To determine policies, codes or guidance:
 - (a) after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee in respect of:
 - (i) regulating working relationships between members and co-opted members of the Authority and the employees of the Authority; and
 - (ii) governing the conduct of employees of the Authority
 - (b) relating to grievance, disciplinary, conduct, capability, dismissals and appeals relating to employees contracted to “Gold Book” terms and conditions in whole or in part.
10. To form a Human Resources Sub-Committee as it deems appropriate.

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Election of Chairman

To elect a Chairman for 2024/25

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for 2024/25

3. Apologies

4. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 20 March 2024 (Item 4) **(Pages 7 - 14)**

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

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

6. Disclosure of Interests

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

7. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

8. Budget Monitoring Report April 2023 - March 2024 (Provisional Outturn)

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 15 - 28)**

9. Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Contract - Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT)

To consider Item 9 **(Pages 29 - 32)**

10. Exclusion of Public and Press

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes and report contain information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes and report contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11. Exempt Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 20 March 2024 (Item 11)

12. Succession Planning Update

To consider Item 12

13. Date of next meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 10 am.

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

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Minutes of the Meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024 at 10.00 AM.

Present: Councillors Christensen, Hall, McLean (Vice-Chairman) and Walsh

Officers: L Harrison (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Hussain (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), P Scanes (Head of Prevention and CRMP), S Tuffley (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), D Buchanan (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager), F Mansfield (HR Advisory and Development Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Adoh, Darlington, Lambert and Rouse (Chairman)
(Councillor McLean in the chair)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q>

EX55 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on Thursday 8 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX56 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Vice-Chairman advised on the following matters arising:

EX44 THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) CONTRACTS

A Member asked about the retrospective approval, and if this was the accepted process. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that usually contracts were authorised in advance, but with this agreement, the timings did not line up, but it was something to be looked at in the future. The Vice-Chairman advised that this had been on the agenda for the TVFCS Joint Committee meeting on

Monday and would feature in a future TVFCS Joint Committee workshop.

EX57 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX58 GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the Authority had a duty to carry out gender pay gap reporting, and to publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female employees on an annual basis by 30 March. The snapshot date for public sector employers was 31 March each year, and the data presented within the report as detailed in appendix one, was based on data as of 31 March 2023.

The Gender Pay Gap report showed the difference between the average earnings of males, compared to females, irrespective of role or seniority. It examined the difference in the average pay gap, expressed as a percentage of male earnings. It was important to note that a gender pay gap was not unlawful and the presence of a gender pay gap does not mean the Authority was discriminating against groups of individuals. A gender pay gap was a reflection of a workforce profile at a specific time, i.e. the snapshot date.

In comparison, equal pay was a legal obligation and about unequal rewards for male and females carrying out the same job, similar job or work of equal value, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Organisations could have a gender pay gap without breaching equal pay provisions. The Authority's gender pay gap was not because of any equal pay issues.

The Gender Pay Gap report detailed the Authority's gender pay gap as of 31 March 2023. The mean gender pay gap had decreased again in 2023 and was the lowest pay gap since first reporting in 2017, which was positive. For 2023, the mean gender pay gap had decreased from 13.4 per cent in 2022 to 11.8 per cent. The median gender pay gap had also decreased, from 11.7 per cent in 2022 to 8.46 per cent.

From 2023 the ethnicity pay gap data had also been reported. Interestingly, the ethnicity pay gap was similar to the gender pay gap. For 2023 the mean ethnicity pay gap was 11.9 per cent and the median ethnicity pay gap was 7.59 per cent.

With regard to the ethnicity pay gap, due to the requirement to protect confidentiality, different ethnic groups had been combined and for 2023, the categories included white British, other ethnic backgrounds and not known. Whilst it was acknowledged having

fewer categories masked the variations between ethnic groups and provided pay gap data comparing the earnings of ethnic minority employees as a percentage of all white British employees, using the five-category breakdown, as defined in the 2021 Census of England and Wales, would result in many of the categories with insufficient numbers to be able to report the data.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to compare the ethnicity pay gap data to other fire services, unless the categories used were the same. However, the Authority would be able to compare its data year on year as it continued reporting. Through positive action and community engagement it would engage, encourage, and support those from under-represented groups in seeing the Service as an employer of choice in the hope of lowering the pay gap.

Benchmark data, as published on the Government's website, provided additional comparison data across fire and rescue services. The benchmark data demonstrated widely different mean and median gender pay gaps within the same sector for the 2023 reporting period. It was very difficult to understand how other fire and rescue services arrived at their gender pay gap without all the background data, and many services do not publish a report alongside their data.

For this year, officers thought it would be interesting to look at the gender pay gap between operational and support service employees, to see what data this produced. The assumption had been that the gender pay gap was largely driven by the under-representation of females in operational roles, given that only 6% of the operational workforce was female. However, despite a larger representation of females in support service roles, at 56%, gender disparity was greater within this group.

A Member asked that given what we know, what would be done to address both the gender pay gap and the ethnicity pay gap, what was the action plan as a result of this data.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that there was a lot being done in terms of positive engagement. With current recruitment, a lot of positive engagement had taken place. 71 people had been invited to role related testing. Over the last eight weeks, a programme had been put together for 13 females who had been coming into practice, to help with the role related testing. In terms of the recent role related testing, around 49 people had passed. When the whole-time advert was published, the focus was on females and encouraging them to apply.

Officers were looking at all the recruitment processes, the reason that people drop out, what could be put in place to support them,

including exercises and interview techniques. This was not just for females, but all underrepresented groups. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group were also going out to events and trying to engage.

A Member asked about the other authorities issuing data, around their statements, how much does that effect the benchmarking as this Service was 30 out of 34 in the benchmarking. What was the opinion in terms of where the Authority might be after that ranking if other authorities reported the same standards as us.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members it was hard to say what other fire and rescue services do, as the Authority used ordinary pay expressed as hourly pay to calculate the mean and median gender pay gap. The Authority uses the ACAS government equalities options prescribed way of reporting pay. This was calculated over up to 12 weeks per guidance which was considered best practice. It was not known what other services did.

A Member asked if 6% of the operational staff were woman, which was low, but at least on the operational side the gender pay gap was reducing significantly, which was good to see, albeit based on a small number. Support services were still going the wrong way, clearly work was going on, but what was being done to address those pay gaps.

The Head of Human Resources advised there were ED&I objectives and the HMICFRS Action Plan, there was a pay and allowances review and the support services pay scales were being reviewed. These would all be reported back on when they were complete. There was also a new role Members had approved, a People and Culture Officer, which was imminently about to be advertised and would be put out to lots of different organisations, including the Asian Fire Services Association, the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, South East Employees, and Women in the Fire Service.

RESOLVED –

1. That the content of the Gender Pay Gap report 2023 be noted and approved for submission to the Government website (gov.uk) as per reporting requirements.
2. That the ethnicity pay gap 2023, as detailed in Appendix four, be noted.

EX59 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Q3 2023/24

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that the highlighted measures in the quarter three report gave more of a

positive story. GP.1.01 Actual versus Establishment – Wholetime, was blue and above where it should be. The numbers were reviewed regularly at the Workforce Planning meeting and they were currently predicting one leaver per month, which would bring the establishment figures down. 15 operational employees were eligible for retirement this year, which would also reduce the figures. GP1.08 Appraisal and Objectives Completion - this was at 93% which was the highest on record for the Service.

A Member asked about wholetime availability, obviously the headcount had risen significantly and officers were forecasting an improvement in this number in the next quarter. With the investment that had been made, had officers had a chance to look at January and February figures? Were the numbers looking like they would be going in the right direction.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that the availability of wholetime appliances was now in the blue above 99% for both January and February, which was very positive. The other measure was how many pumps were available and that was a solid 12, which was again very positive.

A Member asked about GP1.05 Absence rate for wholetime in December, which was not good, was there a particular reason for the spike.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised, that while it looked bad, it was the way it was calculated. It took the average amount of sickness across the sector, but it was taken pre-Covid to try to be fairer in December and January. In the winter seasons there tends to be more absence, but it could be more about the target than the actual, so while it goes up, it was in line with what normally happens. The target was spread evenly across the Service. As it stands, this Service was one of the best in terms of absence. Officers receive a report that benchmarks this Service across all other services.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing meeting last week, there was a much greater breakdown of the attendance figures, and the days lost in total was the lowest it had been for a long time and that was with more people. The figures were regularly scrutinised, and all the trends were going in the right direction.

A Member asked about GP1.09 Mandatory E-Learning Completed – it had been in the red for three periods now for both wholetime and support, what measures were being taken to improve this.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised it was helpful that the report raised flags like this and already there were plans in place to improve it, especially for next year going forward. At present, it was down to every manager to manage their own departments and ensure that eLearning was undertaken. Now there would be a monthly report, sent to each manager, showing where each of their staff were and it would break down which subjects had been completed and when needed to be done. There was a very good plan being put in place and like with appraisals which saw them go up, the same route was being taking with eLearning.

A Member asked about PI.2.07 – Non-domestic Property False Alarms – which were up 17% in the last six months, was there any change in the number for the first three months of this year.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that both were amber in January and February, and this would be discussed further. The Service was currently developing a plan to mitigate the impact of automatic fire alarms on its resources and plans to implement this during the summer of 2024.

A Member asked above PI.2.08 – Fire Safety Audits, the target was significantly increased in October, effectively doubling the number of audits that would be undertaken. This was good, but the Service was still quite a way behind the new target. How was it looking for the first few months of this year?

The Head of Protection, Assurance and Development advised Members that there was a significant shift around the expectations of the audit numbers, which came off the back of the HMICFRS Action Plan. It was a stretched target, but one that was achievable. Currently it was at 145 and would be an improvement on quarter three. Positive progress was being made but it was noted there was still work to be done to meet the Risk Based Inspection Programme.

A Member asked about PV.1.02 – Bank Shift Costs, it was encouraging to see those costs coming down month on month, but on the downside of that, firefighters' wages were not going to be as good in some cases when they were used to having bank shifts to supplement their wages, would this cause a knock-on effect with retention.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer agreed there were less bank shifts available for firefighters, but the Service had been struggling to fill them which was why the number of pumps were sometimes down.

The bank shift was still being used, but not to the degree it was previously.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised there had been a significant reduction, this year costs were around £10k in January, and to put it in perspective, January last year bank costs were £85k.

A Member asked how the Service was getting on with attracting more drivers.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that officers were working through where specific skills need to be and would be able to forecast where training courses needed to be allocated, particularly for driving. As mentioned before, it was quite a long pipeline to get people from application stage all the way through to being an emergency response driver. The training programme had been rearranged to front load as many people as possible into the pipeline. It was probably a 12-to-18-month plan to get those numbers up, but it was reassuring to know there was a good pipeline.

A Member asked about R.1.03 – Effecting Entry Incidents, the numbers had increased significantly, what was the cause of South Central Ambulance Service needing to get access?

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that the medical reasons for being there were not recorded. The firefighter's job was to help them gain entry and sometimes firefighters would assist while they were in there, if required, but the main effort was to enable paramedics to get to the casualty. The Home Office were currently looking at how this was recorded, to capture more data to understand it better, but that was the way it was captured at the present.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer also advised that officers were carrying out a review within the Thames Valley as part of a collaboration piece, because the Service effects entry on behalf of Thames Valley Police, who get called by South Central Ambulance Service, and this was currently being reviewed.

A Member asked about R.3.02 – Hydrant Availability, it doesn't look as if there had been any notes taken of any of the hydrants being checked, does this have any impact on crews if they go out and find a hydrant was not working.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager reassured Members that the hydrants were available. It was a very specialised area with one person in charge of the team, and that one person had been on long term sick. They had recently returned to work which was

positive news. Also, the software was being replaced that keeps the information and it was currently being implemented. There should be something in the next reporting period.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance Management – Q3 2023/24 be noted.

EX60 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED –

It was moved and resolved that the public and press representatives be removed from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(With the exception of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Director of Finance and Assets, Director of Legal and Governance and the Democratic Services Officer, all officers left the meeting.)

EX61 INTERIM SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT) ARRANGEMENTS

The Authority considered the report, details of which are noted in the exempt minutes.

RESOLVED -

1. That the transfer of £382k from the projected year-end underspend to the workforce planning reserve be approved in order to fund:
 - a. the recruitment and appointment of a Director of People and Organisational Development on a two-year fixed term contract; and
 - b. incremental six-month cost of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer post.
2. That it be noted that, after the conclusion of the recruitment and selection process, the appointment to the Director of People and Organisational Development role will be subject to ratification by a future meeting of the Authority.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.08 AM



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 10 July 2024

Report title: Budget Monitoring Report April 2023 - March 2024 (Provisional Outturn)

Lead Member: Councillor Matthew Walsh

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets

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

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That the provisional outturn forecast for the Authority as at 31 March 2024 be noted.
2. That the slippage of £1.300m on the capital programme is approved to be carried forward into 2024/25.
3. That the underspend of £0.189m is transferred into Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve (RCCO).
4. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer to authorise any late changes to the movements in reserves and capital slippage amounts resulting from accounting adjustments needing to be made during the year-end closedown process.
5. That should any changes to the amounts referred to above be required, then the Chief Finance Officer will report these to Members at the next available meeting.

Executive summary:

The report in Appendix A sets out the Authority's revenue and capital spending position as at 31 March 2024, together with the projected outturn position for the financial year.

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

The provisional outturn figure for the year is a net underspend of £0.189m. The underspend is predominantly due to a favourable variance being reported under employee costs (within Support and On-Call) and a reduction in bank costs in recent months due to the Operational establishment surpassing 300. Furthermore, due to the significant increase in the Bank of England base rate since the budget was approved, the investment returns were significantly higher than budgeted. The

outturn reflects over £0.600m additional interest in investment returns than originally budgeted.

It is recommended that £0.189m be transferred to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Reserve in line with the approved Medium Term Financial Plan.

The capital programme for 2023/24 is £3.634m, including £1.100m from 2022/23 carry forward capital projects and approval of £0.297m in-year funding for capital projects. The provisional outturn shows an underspend of £0.027m with a slippage of £1.300m on the capital programme. Appendix B contains details of all property works carried out across the estate during 2023-24.

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

Risk management: Management of our financial resources is a key risk to the Authority and the performance reports to Committee inform Members of the main financial risks facing the Authority in year.

Legal implications: None.

Privacy and security implications: None.

Duty to collaborate: None.

Health and safety implications: None.

Environmental implications: None.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: None.

Consultation and communication: None.

Background papers: Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28, Fire Authority Meeting 14 February 2023. [Bucks Fire & Rescue](#), [Bucks Fire & Rescue](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
A	Appendix A – Budget Monitoring Report April 2023 – March 2024 Provisional Outturn	None
B	Appendix B – Property Works 2023-24	None

1. Revenue Forecasts by Service Area

Table 1 shows the budget and provisional outturn for each Directorate as at the end of 2023/24 financial year. The budget of £36.450m compared to the forecast outturn of £36.346m gives a forecast yearend underspend of £0.104m. Furthermore, the level of funding is showing a favourable variance of £0.086m which has resulted in an overall net underspend of £0.189m against our expenditure budget.

Table 1

Directorate	Total Budget £	Actual Year to Date £	Provisional Year End Variance £
Corporate Core	1,105,890	686,745	-419,145
Finance & Assets	6,878,050	7,017,913	139,863
Human Resources	551,150	566,670	15,520
Delivery, Corp. Dev. Planning	25,768,410	25,627,484	-140,926
Statutory Acc. & Contingency	2,146,500	2,447,517	301,017
Total Expenditure	36,450,000	36,346,329	-103,671
Total Funding	-36,450,000	-36,535,562	-85,562
Net Position	0	-189,233	-189,233

Protection Grant - Table 2

Table 2 shows the ringfenced grants received by the Service. In previous years these funds had been included within Table 1, but for 2023-24 onwards are being shown in a separate table to provide additional clarity in reporting.

Protection Grant	Funding £	Actual Year to Date £	Residual Grant Remaining £
Protection Uplift	-327,784	104,147	-223,637
Grenfell Uplift	-23,023	23,023	0
Total	-350,807	127,170	-223,637

Variance by Directorate

Corporate Core £0.419m under – The underspend mainly relates to higher-than-expected investment income as a direct result of the Bank of England base rate increasing significantly over the past year. The service overachieved by £0.637m in investment returns which is significantly higher than budgeted (£0.350m). It is expected that the base rate has now peaked and with a significant drop in consumer price index in recent months which may result in a reduction in the interest base rate in the coming months.

Finance & Assets £0.140m over – The overspend relates to provision being held to mitigate any additional costs that may arise from the exit of unit 7.

Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning £0.141m under – The directorates underspend is primarily due to operational establishment being less than budgeted for the first two quarters, and on-call activity being lower than forecast. In September, the service surpassed its operational establishment of 300 and has remained over 300 since then. This has had a positive impact on availability of appliances and use of bank. In recent months we have seen a reduction in bank activity and increase in appliance availability. This is a direct result of the service surpassing the 300 budgeted operational establishment.

As the service had identified underspends in-year, it took a proactive approach in re-aligning some of the underspend by giving budget holders the opportunity to submit in-year one-off growth bids (table 4) to utilise the underspend. Included within this forecast is the expenditure relating to the one-off bids (although in practice some of the bids relate to other directorates) which were approved in May and August.

Statutory Accounting £0.301m over – The directorate is overspending due to an approval of in-year growth bids (table 4) which relate to the purchase of vehicles, generic equipment and operational equipment. The proper accounting treatment for this is to capitalise these items due to their cost and expected useful life. Therefore, the service has increased capital contributions and recognised these purchases in the asset register as capital assets.

Funding – The level of funding exceeded the budget by £0.086m. The service is seeing additional funding of £0.009m relating to services grant and £0.115m relating to precept and NNDR as these figures were revised and increased by Buckinghamshire Council after the Fire Authority had set the annual budget. This will be offset by a reduction in S31 grants which have been reconciled as part of their latest National Non-Domestic Rates collections (in August) and has resulted in a net deficit of £0.100m. In addition to this, we also received additional one-off grants totalling £0.062m relating to end of year reconciliations carried out by central government and allocation of residual funds.

Protection Grant - This grant is being reported separately as this is ring-fenced grant for specific purposes which is only approved and allocated in-year. Therefore, it makes it difficult to include in the base budget as the grant information is not available until closer to when the funding allocations will be distributed. The grant is predominantly for the Fire Service to increase their protection capability and delivery, aligning with locally agreed integrated risk management plans and risk-based inspection programmes. As at the end of March 2024, there was a residual balance of £0.224m which will be carried forward to 2024/25

2. Direct Employee Variances

Table 3 shows the breakdown of all the favourable (-) and adverse (+) variances for each sub-heading within the direct employees subjective as at the 31 March 2024:

Subjective	Salary (Including Training costs)	Allowances	NI	Pension	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Wholetime	-333,779	180,916	8,483	-177,658	-322,038
On-Call	163,205	-305,454	31,444	-86,386	-197,191
Support	-265,592	-1	-33,834	-247,134	-546,560
Technicians	11,589	0	2,006	2,307	15,902
Sessional	-6,754	2,512	2,079	-274	-2,438
Agency	40,068	0	0	0	40,068
Grand Total	-391,262	-122,027	10,178	-509,144	-1,012,255

Wholetime – The operational establishment was below budgeted levels until September and as a result has led to a favourable variance. Furthermore due to operational numbers exceeding 300, this has had a positive impact on bank with the costs of bank reducing significantly in the last quarter compared to previous years.

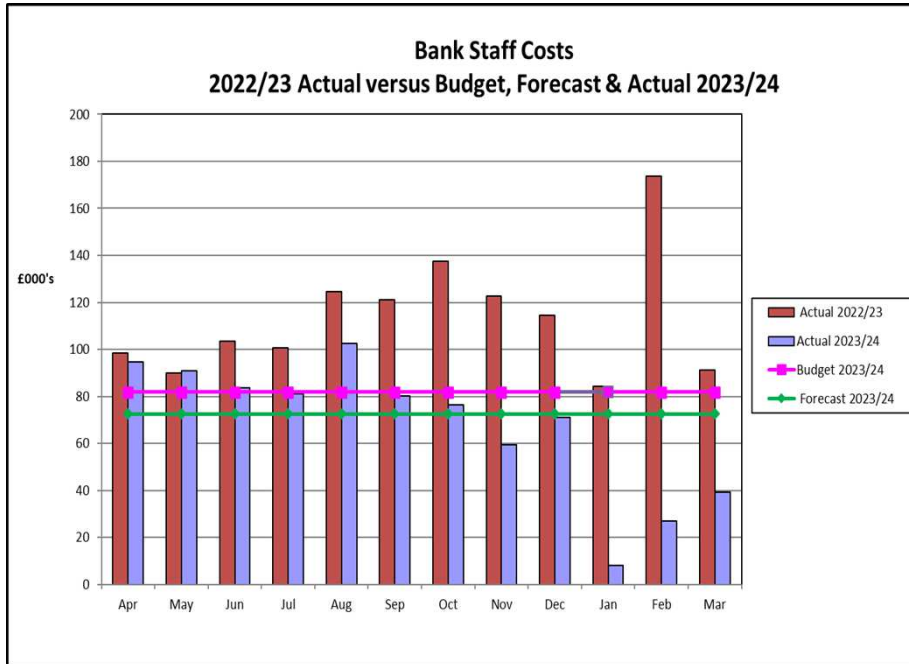
On Call – Underspends predominantly seen within allowances which is based on activity/training in-year.

Support Staff – This relates to vacant in-year support roles which will be recruited to throughout the year.

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

3. Bank Costs

The following table/graph provides a breakdown and comparison of bank costs in 2022/23 and 2023/24. As you will see in the table, bank costs have reduced significantly compared to 2022/23. In particular, the costs have shown a substantial drop in the last quarter when we had surpassed our operational budgeted establishment of 300. Please note these figures do not include NI contributions.



Bank	Actual 2022/23 £	Actual 2023/24 £
Apr	98,597	94,769
May	90,105	90,856
Jun	103,433	83,662
Jul	100,631	81,139
Aug	124,662	102,597
Sep	121,236	80,305
Oct	137,385	76,430
Nov	122,582	59,552
Dec	114,487	71,171
Jan	84,346	8,253
Feb	173,545	26,849
Mar	91,224	39,323
Grand Total	1,362,232	814,906

4. In Year Growth Bids

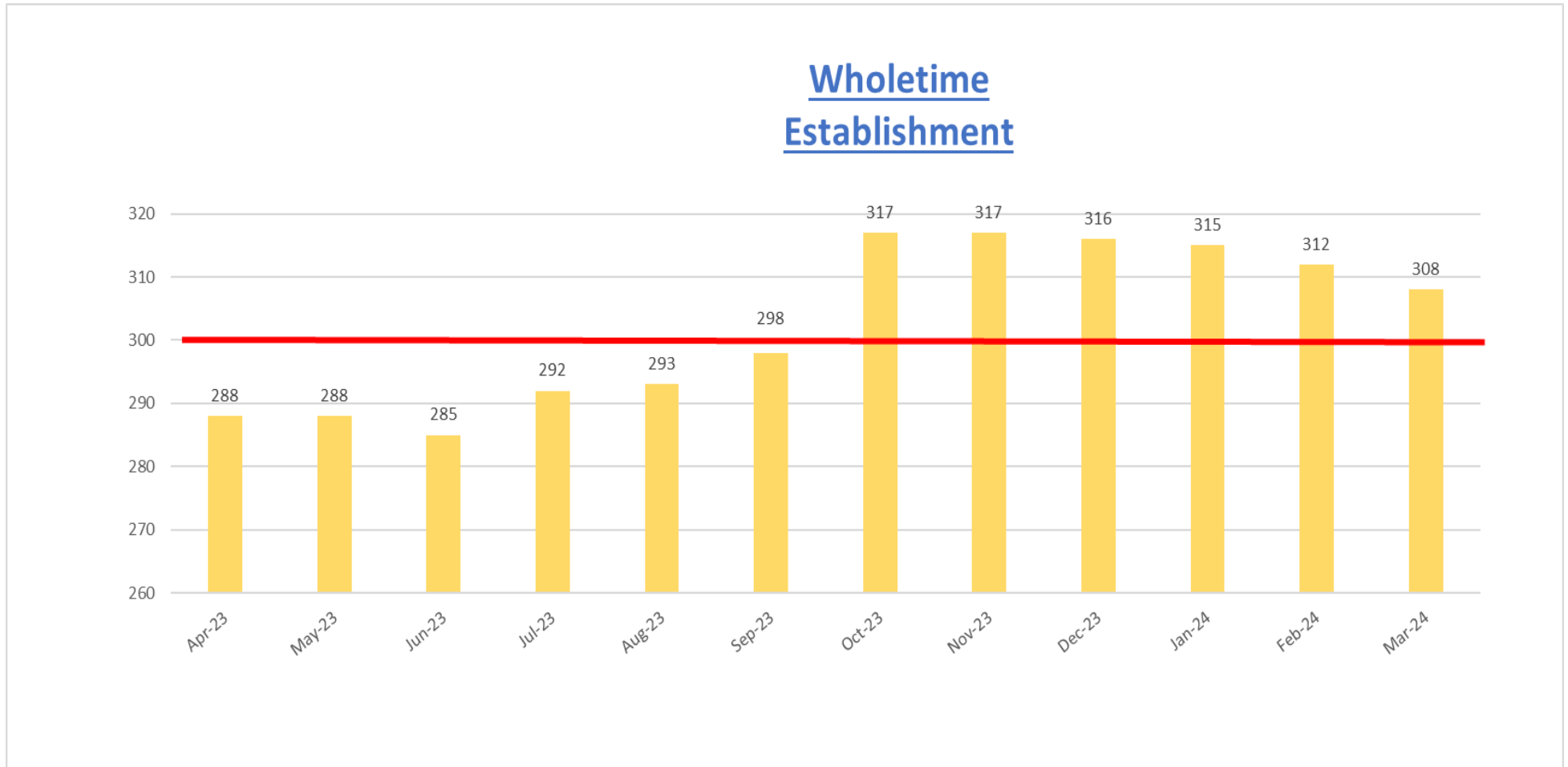
Table 4 shows the total bids approved in May and August 2023 which total £0.225m and £0.298m and are for one-off projects only. The actual expenditure for both sets of bids approved was £0.514m against a budget of £0.523m. As noted earlier in the report these are included within the forecast expenditure in Table 1 under Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning and Statutory Accounting.

Bids Approved in May	Total spend & Commitment	Variance
Installation of a brake roll tester	36,565	65
Airwave Device Refresh	11,969	-131
Airwave Contract	69,000	-1,000
Resource to support the delivery of BFRS' Staff Development Pathway project	45,665	-7,835
White Ribbon Accreditation	1,868	-132
Marketing and Communications equipment	4,524	-576
Prevention Events equipment	5,407	-343
NILO Ballistic PPE	8,000	0
Operational Support Unit Refresh	32,000	0
Total	214,998	-9,952

Bids Approved in August	Total spend & Commitment	Variance
Purchase of two white fleet vehicles	55,200	0
Purchase protective base layers PPE.	7,240	40
Purchase multi-purpose PPE, RPE and personal hygiene bags for all operational members of staff	16,258	58
Installation of flagpoles at Wholetime Stations.	10,000	0
Cleaning provision for BA sets.	74,994	2,994
Finance System upgrade	48,631	31
Speak-up campaign marketing material.	3,493	-7
Purchase of welfare packs.	4,000	0
Email Management Software	4,950	-4,550
Purchase of 13 tablets to support Prevention home fire safety visits.	2,625	-1,575
To purchase 9 stations end to replace windows 7 devices.	71,612	4,212
Total	299,002	1,202

5. Wholetime Establishment Roadmap

The following graph illustrates the actual Wholetime operational establishment from April 2023 through to March 2024. The central red line is our budgeted establishment which was 300 for Wholetime operational staff in 2023/24.



5. Funding

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

Funding	Total Budget £	Actual Year to Date £	Projected Year End Variance £
Government Funding	-3,861,790	-3,921,502	-59,712
Specific Grants	-1,188,000	-1,198,383	-10,383
NNDR	-7,174,055	-7,110,865	63,190
Top-up Grant	-1,510,155	-1,510,150	5
Precept	-25,194,000	-25,272,662	-78,662
Transfer to Reserves	2,478,000	2,478,000	0
Grand Total	-36,450,000	-36,535,562	-85,562

The level of funding forecast is exceeding the budget by £0.086m. The additional funding of £0.009m relates to services grant. The service is also forecasting an additional £0.115m relating to precept and business rates as these figures were revised and increased by Buckinghamshire Council after the Fire Authority had set the annual budget. Furthermore, following reconciliations of business rates grants by central government in August, they have revised the funding allocation and identified a deficit of £0.100m which was deducted from the NNDR funding. In addition to this, we also received additional one-off grants totalling £0.062m relating to end of year reconciliations carried out by central government and allocation of residual funds.

5. Capital Monitoring

Capital Forecast

The capital programme for 2023/24 is £3.634m, including £1.100m from 2022/23 carry forward capital projects and approval of £0.297m in-year funding for capital projects.

Project Name	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Carry Forwards 2022/23 £	In Year Funding £	Revised Budget 2023/24 £	Provisional Outturn £	Slippage £	Projected Year End Variance £
Property	1,139,000	249,000	0	1,388,000	427,274	957,623	-3,103
Total Property Portfolio	1,139,000	249,000	0	1,388,000	427,274	957,623	-3,103
Hydraulic Equipment	65,000	18,915	0	83,915	24,841	19,000	-40,074
Operational Equipment	90,000	0	62,724	152,724	126,465	26,259	0
Operational Red Fleet Vehicles	750,000	560,148	0	1,310,148	1,355,104	0	44,956
Operational White Fleet Vehicles	37,000	0	87,190	124,190	32,160	92,030	0
BA and Associated Equipment	0	65,460	74,994	140,454	86,955	59,817	6,318
Fireground Radios	0	115,000	0	115,000	0	115,000	0
Total Fire Appliances & Equipment	942,000	759,523	224,908	1,926,431	1,625,525	312,106	11,200
ICT	156,000	91,656	71,612	319,268	253,852	30,300	-35,116
Total Support	156,000	91,656	71,612	319,268	253,852	30,300	-35,116
Grand Total	2,237,000	1,100,179	296,520	3,633,699	2,306,651	#####	-27,019

Capital Funding

The capital programme will be funded as follows:

Capital Funding	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000	Estimated Transfers (in) £000	Estimates Transfers Out £000	Estimate Balance at 31 March 2024 £000
Revenue Contribution to Capital	-3,359	-2,356	0	-5,715
Other Capital Contributions	0	-3,342	2,307	-1,035
Total Capital Funding	-3,359	-5,698	2,307	-6,750

Property Portfolio

For 2023/24, Property has an allocated capital budget of £1.388m, which includes carried forward budget from 2022/23 of £0.249m. The capital budget has been utilised to carry out planned capital projects, as agreed at Business Transformation Board. This includes capital works across several sites following a condition survey carried out during 2022/23. Furthermore, a business case was presented to the Executive Committee in September 2023 setting out the plan to exit Unit 7 and relocation of the services provided from this site. This resulted in the approval of vacating this site and relocating services by September 2024. The works relating to the exit of Unit 7 are well underway with works completed at HQ to relocate personnel and services.

During 2023/24 capital projects have been completed at Amersham, Aylesbury, Beaconsfield, Broughton, Buckingham, Gerrards Cross, High Wycombe, Marlow, and West Ashland. In addition, drill towers upgrades at Broughton, Buckingham and Newport Pagnell have been completed, with the remaining sites due to be completed in 2024/25.

Due to the focus for 2023/24 into 2024/25 being the departure and relocation of services out of the Unit 7 site, several capital projects have been delayed and are now set to be completed in 2024/25, this has resulted in a slippage of £0.958m. A further breakdown of property works has been provided in Appendix B.

Fire Appliances & Equipment

Fire Appliances & Equipment has a capital budget of £1.926m for 2023/24, which includes carried forward budget from 2022/23 of £0.760m and in-year funding of £0.225m. The capital funds have been utilised to purchase five red fleet appliances and operational equipment for these appliances in line with the fleet strategy. Furthermore, capital purchases have been made for a white fleet vehicle and installation of breathing apparatus (BA) washer sets on three fire stations. During 2023/24 a price increase on the build costs for fire appliances was applied by the manufacturer, and an increase in costs of some equipment resulted in an overspend of £0.051m. This overspend has mostly been offset by identified savings of £0.040m on hydraulic equipment, resulting in an overall overspend of £0.011m for Fire Appliances & Equipment.

A slippage of £0.312m has been recognised in Fire Appliances & Equipment following the delays in the delivery of three white fleet vehicles, operational equipment, additional BA washer sets and purchase of fireground radios.

Support

ICT has a capital budget of £0.319m for 2023/24, which includes carry forward budget from 2022/23 of £0.092m and in-year funding of £0.072m. This budget has been utilised for the purchase of ICT hardware equipment (surfaces / laptops), as per the ICT replacement strategy along with replacement of On-Call MDTs, purchase of servers and replacement of station end turnout system. The carry forward budget of £0.092m relates to an agreed change to the ICT capital spend plan, which includes the carried forward capital works of station end turnout system upgrade from 2022/23 into 2023/24. A slippage of £0.030m has been identified for the delay in delivery of ICT hardware equipment and purchase of further On-Call MDTs.

Slippage into 2024/25

The provisional outturn figure is showing a slippage of £1.300m (subject to any late accounting changes) which predominantly relates to property capital works and the delays in the delivery of white fleet vehicles and operational and ICT equipment, which will be purchased / completed during 2024/25.

6. Reserves

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

Reserves	Balance at Start of year £000	Projected Movement £000	Balance at End of Year £000
General Fund	-1,625	0	-1,625
Earmarked Reserves (Revenue)*	-1,937	-2,828	-4,765
Earmarked Reserves (Capital)	-3,359	-3,391	-6,750
Total Reserves	-6,921	-6,219	-13,140

* This figure includes £0.585m, which represents this Authority's share of the joint control room renewals fund (which is held by Oxfordshire).

Appendix B

Progress:

- Completed
- On track
- Delayed
- Not started / on hold

Property Capital Progress Report 2023/24																			
Ref	Station / Department	Capital works to be completed	Complete	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	Update
P.0.1 Carried forward Capital works from 2022/23																			
0.1.6	Aylesbury	Refurb old drill tower, with option to be installed at another station		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				Exploring installation options with Supplier, works will be completed in 2024/25
1.2.2a	High Wycombe	Various works including: Redecoration, fitting and replacement of flooring in multiple areas, blinds and furniture	Yes	●	●	●	●												Complete
E1.10	Aylesbury	Installation of motorised front door at Brigade HQ	Yes	●	●	●	●												Complete
E1.16	West Ashland	Installation of external stair case (from first to second floor)	Yes	●	●	●	●												Complete
PF.03	Broughton	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including: Install new road surface adequate for HGVs in car park, repair brick boundary wall, replace dehumidifier/heater in line with replacement schedule.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				On Hold - To be completed in 2024/25
PF.05	Gerrards Cross	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including: Road resurfacing, replace flat roofing in line with life cycle and upgrade rainwater pipes	Yes	●	●	●	●												Complete
PF.08	Olney	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including refurbishment to First Floor Mess / Kitchen Area and ceiling		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				On Hold - To be completed in 2024/25
P 1.1 Implement Priority Capital Repair- Works Drill Towers																			
1.1.1	High Wycombe	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				- 2022/23 - Went out for tender for all drill towers but received zero responses. - 2022/23 - Agreed with operational managers to repair prioritised drill towers based on operational need. - 2023/24 - Remainder of drill towers on hold pending further work linked to relocation of Aylesbury's old drill tower - 2023/24 - all remaining drill tower works have been put on hold until 2024/25
1.1.2	Gerrards Cross	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.3	Beaconsfield	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.4	Broughton	Drill tower works	Yes	●	●														
1.1.5	Buckingham	Drill tower works	Yes	●	●														
1.1.6	Newport Pagnell	Drill tower works	Yes	●	●														
1.1.7	Princess Risborough	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.8	Haddenham	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.10	Stokenchurch	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.14a	Brill	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.14b	Great Missenden	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.14c	Amersham	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.14d	Olney	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
1.1.14e	Winslow	Drill tower works		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
U7 Unit 7 Departure (Dilapidations) and Facilities Relocation																			
U7.1.01	Unit 7	Unit 7 Departure Costs (Dilapidations)		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Work in progress - Approval from Executive Committee to vacate Unit 7 by September 2024
U7.2.01	Unit 7	Unit 7 Facilities Relocation Costs		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				Work in progress - Approval from Executive Committee to vacate Unit 7 by September 2024
W Implementation of MTFP capital works																			
W.1.0	Aylesbury	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including: Internal upgrades to flooring, ceiling, walls and windows								●	●	●	●	●	●				On Hold - To be completed in 2024/25
W.2.0	Beaconsfield	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including: resurfacing of drill yard and car park, and internal ground works								●	●	●	●	●	●				On Hold - To be completed in 2024/25
W.3.0	Buckingham	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Replace Ideal concord gas fired boiler in line with replacement schedule. Along with resurfacing of front yard and internal ground works & door replacements		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				All yard work completed, other works still in progress (Going out to market for quotations looking at various options (Ground source, Air source heating etc) which will provide value for money with a view to award a contract in Q3.) Works for remaining works at Buckingham put 'On Hold' until 2024/25.
W.4.0	Marlow	Various works from 2022-23 Condition Survey. Including: Roof upgrades and internal flooring replacement							●	●	●	●	●	●	●				On Hold - To be completed in 2024/25
OW Other Workstreams																			
OW.1.0	Winslow	Window replacement	Yes	●	●	●													Completed
OW.2.0	Gerrards Cross	Kitchen replacement	Yes	●	●	●													Completed
OW.3.0	Workshops	Replacement of Bay Lighting	Yes	●	●	●													Completed
OW.4.0	Aylesbury	Fuel Tank repairs and upgrades	Yes	●	●	●													Completed
OW.5.0	Amersham	Kitchen replacement	Yes										●	●	●				Completed
OW.6.0	Marlow	Solar Panel Installation	Yes								●	●	●	●	●				Completed
EW Emergency Unplanned Capital Works																			
Complete																			
EW.01	Marlow	Replacement of Extraction System	Yes					●											Completed
EW.02	Amersham	Repair and replace ACO drain	Yes						●										Completed
EW.03	AYL / WAS / MAR	Upgraded building management control panel for all mechanical services	Yes												●				Completed
EW.04	BHQ / Workshops	Replacement of Motorised Gate													●	●	●		On track - to be completed in 2024-25
EW.05	High Wycombe	Subsidence repairs	Yes											●					Completed
EW.06	Amersham	Supply and install a new Vaillant Ecotec Plus 624 System boiler and horizontal flue Works	Yes												●				Completed
EW.07	BRO / Workshops	Upgrade to SolarEdge at Broughton and Workshops	Yes												●				Completed
EDI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Capital Works																			
Complete																			
EDI.01	Blue Light Hub	Installation of motorised front door at Blue Light Hub	Yes						●	●	●	●	●						Completed
EDI.02	Newport Pagnell	Installation of motorised fire door at Newport Pagnell Fire Station													●	●			On track - to be completed in 2024-25

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 10 July 2024

Report title: Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Contract – Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT)

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse (Chairman)

Report sponsor: Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Simon Tuffley

Author and contact: Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Simon Tuffley,
stuffley@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) be authorised to enter into a contract between RBFA and AVR Group Ltd for the supply and support of MAIT ‘hub’ services in TVFCS, to commence in 24/25 at a cost of no more than £25,000 for years 3 and 4 of the contract.

Executive summary:

Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) is an interface that provides emergency services with a robust, fast and secure messaging solution to allow information sharing between emergency services and other agencies.

It was highlighted in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report that communication between emergency services could have been improved during this event, with each service declaring a Major Incident at different times, without that information being shared across blue light services. The report recommended several changes to ensure better communication in the future.

An NFCC procurement process for MAIT resulted in a contract being awarded to the AVR Group in the summer of 2023, creating a framework for FRS to utilise in adopting MAIT.

Home Office funding is available for the first 2 years running costs, with FRS bearing the cost of delivering the service into control rooms.

Subject to approval, implementation costs will be recovered through TVFCS revenue recharges aligned to the Inter-Authority Agreement.

Financial implications:

The cost of bringing the MAIT hub service into the control environment is borne by each FRS. In terms of TVFCS, the RBFRS ICT team would provide this service at an expected cost of circa £2-3k, which would be reflected in a minimal increase in the recharges for the 25/26 TVFCS revenue budget.

TVFCS would be able to draw down £23,580 of the Home Office funding to cover the first two years of the contract. This would create a revenue pressure in years 3 and 4 of the contract of circa £10.4k p.a. (noting the likely CPI related increases up to 3%), currently less than 0.5% of the 24/25 revenue budget [p.a.] Per partner, using the current Cost Apportionment Model, this would approximately add an additional cost of - BMKFRA £3.6k, OCC £3k and RBFA £3.8k - each year.

Risk management:

The risk of not adopting MAIT is that TVFCS, and subsequently Thames Valley Fire & Rescue Services, would not be able to meet the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations. In practice this means that during any significant event the flow of information may be compromised by operator capacity and issues with voice transfer that could impede the swift and effective resolution of emergencies, impacting on community and firefighter safety.

Legal implications:

TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement (IAA), states “Clause 17.3. [...] A Fire Authority, on its own account or jointly with another, shall not enter into a new TVFCS Contract without the agreement of the Fire Authorities (not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed) [...].”

This decision is in support of the approval given by the TVFCS Joint Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2024.

Privacy and security implications:

None arising directly from this report. The report is not protectively marked.

Duty to collaborate:

The Fire Authorities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire County Council and Royal Berkshire have collaborated to deliver the TVFCS as a single joint emergency call handling, mobilising, and resource management function for all the Thames Valley.

Health and safety implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Environmental implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Consultation and communication:

Principal consultation was between the TVFCS Joint Coordination Group members and the TVFCS Joint Committee.

Background papers:

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	https://bucksfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/tvfcs-joint-committee-agenda-and-reports-18-march-2024.pdf	Not protectively marked
2	https://bucksfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/legal-agreement-relating-to-the-steady-state-operation-of-the-thames-valley-fire-control-service.pdf	Not protectively marked

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