

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
Louise Harrison

To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

2 February 2026

Dear Councillor

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC

Please note the content of Page 2
of this Agenda Pack

To contact our Communication
Team, please email
cteam@bucksfire.gov.uk

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in the **PARALYMPIC ROOM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, THE GATEWAY OFFICES, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY, BUCKS, HP19 8FF** on **11 FEBRUARY 2026** at **11AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Health and Safety:

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

Chairman: Councillor Monger
Councillors: Adoh, Bailey, Banks, Carroll, Exon, Gomm, Hall, Hussain M OBE, Hussain N, Lancaster, McLean, Priestley, Rouse, Sherwell, Stuchbury and Wilson



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www.bucksfire.gov.uk

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

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

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

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

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

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

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

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

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

Rights to Speak - Members

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

Petitions

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

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

Questions

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



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COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

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

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 10 December 2025. **(Pages 7 - 26)**

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Meetings

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

4. 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.

5. Chairman's Announcements

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

6. Petitions

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

7. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

8. Recommendations from Committees

Executive Committee – 4 February 2026

The Recommendations below are recommendations from officers to the Executive Committee. Revisions by the Executive Committee, if any, will follow.

(a) The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2030/31

"It is recommended that:

(a) the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see Section 7 of Annex A) be noted.

(b) a Council Tax precept of £89.46 for a band D equivalent property (equal to an increase of approximately 10p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

(c) the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 be approved."

(Pages 27 - 40)

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

“That the Authority be recommended to approve:

1. The Prudential Indicators for 2026/27
2. The Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement.”

(Pages 41 - 52)

(c) Members' Scheme of Allowances 2026/27

“That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members’ Allowances for 2026/27 (as shown in draft as Appendix 1).”

(Pages 53 - 70)

(d) Performance Management Q3 2025/26

“That the Performance Management – Q3 2025/26 be noted.”

(Pages 71 - 122)

9. Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

To consider item 9. **(Pages 123 - 142)**

10. Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2026/27

To consider item 10. **(Pages 143 - 168)**

11. Safety Centre Funding Agreement 2026/27-2029/30

To consider item 11. **(Pages 169 - 182)**

12. 2026-27 Annual Delivery Plan

To consider item 12. **(Pages 183 - 210)**

13. Member Update on the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Improvement Agenda 2025

To consider item 13. **(Pages 211 - 228)**

14. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 10 June 2026 at 11 am in the Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council Offices, The Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks.

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



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

ROLE DESCRIPTION

LEAD MEMBERS

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

(Approved 8 June 2007)



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2025 AT 2 PM.

Present: Councillors Bailey (Vice Chairman), Banks, Exon, Gomm, M Hussain (OBE), N Hussain, Lancaster, McLean, Monger (Chairman), Rouse (part), Stuchbury and Wilson

Officers: L Harrison (Chief Fire Officer), S Tuffley (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), D Buchanan (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets) A Hussain (Head of Finance and Assets), R Davidson (Director of People), A Collett (Head of People), A Carter (Head of Service Improvement), P Scanes (Head of Response and Resilience), A Burch (Head of Prevention and Protection), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Adoh, Carroll, Hall, Priestley and Sherwell

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

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

FA40 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 8 October 2025, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Extraordinary Fire Authority held on 8 October 2025, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Extraordinary Fire Authority held on 16 October 2025, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING – 8 OCTOBER 2025

FA27 - ON-CALL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE (OCTOBER 2025)

A Member asked if more work could be undertaken on trained wholetime firefighters that live in Buckinghamshire and what was needed to be done to attract them to retain for the Service in the communities and those Stations that needed extra staff. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that he did not have the up-to-date numbers to hand, but would provide them to Members, as he was sure it had increased since last year – the Deputy Chief Fire Officer had updated the Member with the following information: The On-Call workforce comprises of 55.5 Full Time Equivalents (FTE), represented by a total of 121 individual employees. Of these, 52 employees are dual contract, serving as both Wholetime and On-Call in BFRS. This accounts for 43% of the total On-Call workforce. In addition, we have 8 employees who are Wholetime with us and doing On-Call in another Service. These Services are Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire.

FA42 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

None.

FA43 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that:

Celebrating Success at the NFCC Prevention Awards 2025

I am pleased to announce that Firefighters Robbie Jackson and Jack Edwards have been formally recognised at the NFCC Prevention Awards for Volunteer Recognition 2025. Their nomination reflects their exceptional work as Armed Forces Champions, bringing together more than 25 agencies, charities and local businesses to support veterans. Their efforts have transformed our fire stations into trusted hubs where veterans can access the help they need. We are very proud to see their impact recognised nationally.

We are also delighted that our partnership with The Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) was also recognised, with more than 40 of the Centre's volunteers formally acknowledged for their vital contribution. Their dedication in helping deliver immersive safety education to thousands of young people

each year is central to the partnership's success, and this national recognition reflects the scale and impact of their commitment.

These nominations shine a light on the dedication, compassion and community focus shown by our staff, volunteers and partners across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Apprenticeship Levy Transfer

I wanted to share the good news that we have had approved a transfer of levy funds from Milton Keynes City Council of £84k. This is to fund our 6 cohort 14 Firefighter Apprentices due to start in 2026. This gives us direct savings and tops up our levy account, meaning we will be able to fully fund more apprenticeships directly, without the need to pay any additional "top up".

This is the same arrangement we have had in place with Milton Keynes City Council for cohorts 12 and 13 meaning that our total levy transfer from Milton Keynes City Council will be £336k. We continue to be extremely grateful to Milton Keynes City Council for their partnership in delivering our firefighter apprenticeship programme.

Launch of our Thrive Leadership Programme

I am pleased to confirm that our new Thrive Leadership Programme has launched. This programme equips our leaders with the confidence to get the best from their teams and themselves, focusing on early intervention conversations, performance management, self-awareness, emotional intelligence and strategies to manage effectively off the Fire Ground.

Feedback from attendees so far has been very positive with high levels of engagement. The pilot programme will be reviewed in the New Year, and any further changes made before it rolls out to the remaining line managers in the Service in 2026.

(Councillor Rouse joined the meeting)

White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Action

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service actively supported the White Ribbon campaign during White Ribbon Day on 25 November, and the following 16 Days of Action. The Service raised awareness through a series of social media posts created by BFRS staff, and by publishing

internal articles focusing on key issues such as honour-based violence, safe travel on public transport, and online safety.

On 3 December staff were invited to the Houses of Parliament to engage with cross-party supporters of the campaign, and to hear updates from the CEO of White Ribbon UK and many MPs on progress and future initiatives.

On 5 December, officers also hosted a discreet event at High Wycombe fire station for women and children who are currently being supported within Wycombe Women's Aid refuge and outreach services. The event offered a secure and welcoming environment, creating a positive experience that reinforces our commitment to helping women and children who have been subjected to abuse and violence by men.

These activities reflect the Service's ongoing support to the vision of ending men's violence against women and girls and demonstrates a strong commitment to the advocacy of this important accreditation, which is now entering its third year.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Marie Crothers, who has recently retired from the service after a long career. Marie was an influential driver in bringing White Ribbon accreditation to this service, and I know we all recognise this work as a powerful driver for change. Thank you, Marie.

Proposed Training Centre at Westcott Venture Park

The planning application for the proposed training venue was validated on 3 November 2025. The internal target date is 29 December 2025 with a determination deadline of 2 February 2026. As of 7 December, the planning application had received two public comments (Objections: 1, Supporting: 0). There were ten comments from other consultees, and the Service is currently working through the points raised.

A presentation was made by the Chief Fire Officer to Councillor Simon Rouse to mark his service as Chairman of the Authority from 2022 to 2025.

FA44 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2025

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Q2 2025/26

The Data Intelligence Team Manager presented the Service's 2025-2026 Quarter two performance pack. The pack was broken down into six areas. These six areas were the Service's objectives, as set out in the Community Risk Management Plan. The cover report also detailed four highlighted measures from the report and provided more detail on those measures.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that it was also worth noting that, as per the governance process, this report was first presented to the Executive Committee. There were a couple of requests made at this meeting, the first being that more insight into some of the longer response times was provided. Officers scrutinize these incidents monthly, with the plan of providing more detail in future reports.

The second was in relation to the Service providing a workshop to help Members understand how officers manage and measure performance. This was something that would be arranged early next year. However, officers were mindful that the Service would be receiving its HMICFRS Inspection in February.

With this in mind, the Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that should anyone need support in relation to performance prior to the workshop to contact him, or the Democratic Services Officer.

A Member asked about Fire Safety Audits, the commentary talked about consistent progress being made in narrowing the gap and that several staff members were expected to become fully qualified shortly. It looked like the Service needed to be achieving about 80 safety audits per month between now and the end of the period to get back on track. How close was the Service to achieving this.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised this was looked at monthly and in October 71 audits were completed and in November 83. Year to date the target was 528 and the Service was currently on 468. There was a gap, but the gap was narrowing, and the Service was on a

positive direction in terms of seeing an increase improvement in fire safety audits.

A Member asked what co-operation was taking place regarding deliberate primary fires, as a large number were car fires, what collaboration was taking place with the police to see whether these were stolen vehicles. Also, deliberate secondary fires on property, what education were the councils providing so that householders were aware of what they could and could not do.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised that regarding deliberate primary fires, a report was being drafted from the lead Fire Investigator to try and understand the level of impact post fires, and understanding deliberate causes, i.e. arson. It was interesting to see the impact the Service was having and some of the success stories, especially with Thames Valley Police. In terms of deliberate secondary fires, community education was very important and how both actively and reactively respond to understanding the types of incidents, trends and the risks associated with them.

A Member asked about bank shifts and the narrative in the cover report.

The Head of Response and Resilience advised Members that during Q2 there was an increase in bank shifts, primarily driven by a combination of reasons, around long-term and short-term absences, seasonal relief pressures, secondments and continuation of training courses throughout that period. The training courses covered a wide range of areas including breathing apparatus, driving refreshers, emergency response driving, water rescue, incident command and urban search and rescue. To assist in the requirement to reduce bank shifts down to its lowest levels, a review of operational leave guidance had taken place. Another review would be undertaken based on feedback received. There was a reduction of 29% in October and it was being monitored very closely.

A Member asked about social media engagement and the impact of Facebook. Was it 24,500 hits in a month and had it brought the engagement required in recruiting for example.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that it was the number of hits in a month. Engagement came from a lot of different areas. One of the biggest hits was anything

to do with the USAR dog. The number of hits this year had already beaten last year and officers do look at who they engaged with, but it was not yet used as a driven technology.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance Management – Q2 2025/26 be noted.

FA45 STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO CONTRACTS

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that these proposed amendments reflected a significant update in line with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, which came into force this year, incorporating detailed procedural guidance, enhanced compliance and transparency measures. These would continue to deliver efficiency, accountability and effectiveness in the Authority's procurement activities. The changes mostly impact above threshold or covered procurement. This was procurement for goods and services with a total value of over £214,000, or works with a value above £4.3 million, both including VAT.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised most expenditure falls below that threshold. Whilst this area of spend was not subject to the same rules as the above threshold procurement, transparency still applied. However, in these instances the Authority had increased flexibility to set the rules for below threshold spend.

As part of this review, officers were proposing to change the below threshold values and revised procedures aligned to different categories of expenditure. This was to provide more proportionate values and processes for certain categories such as small works, ICT goods and services, licences and consultancy services. There were two main reasons for adopting the category approach rather than the blanket approach adopted before. The first one was to provide most efficient procurement process, for example, having high limits on IT or works allowed officers to use suppliers that were known to be performing well and it avoided having to do a one off cost of change or having to change IT systems for example.

The second reason was to try and encourage more competition and participation from local suppliers and small and medium enterprises. The cost to small businesses

of having to complete a significant tender exercise was high or they do not have the expertise in house to do those lengthy or significant processes. By changing the thresholds, the Service could open up to more small businesses, especially around the capital works and some stations which were not of significant value to the Authority but were very significant contracts to those businesses. This opens up a lot more competition and would make the Service more efficient and provide a better service.

A Member asked about the section on waivers and exemptions and was there a process for the annual reporting on waivers and if not, was it something that the Overview and Audit Committee should look at. Also, point 6.1.3 was missing a zero, and 6.1.4 and 6.5.4 talked about being approved by a committee of the Authority, does that cover any committee, or does it need to be specific?

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that in terms of waivers, there was not an annual report, but one could be provided. Any waivers signed needed to be signed by the Director of Finance and Assets or the Head of Finance and Assets. 6.1.3 was missing a zero and would be corrected. 6.1.4 and 6.5.4 would be the Executive Committee or Fire Authority for approval and this could be made more specific for those procedures.

Director of Finance
and Assets

RESOLVED –

That the Authority approve the updated Standing Orders Relating to Contracts – Contract Procedure Rules (Appendix 1) subject to the corrections mentioned above.

FA46 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Health and Safety Manager advised Members that this report covered the performance overview, risk management, working with others, Health and Safety training, a look forward and performance Indicators. In previous reports, it would normally include an appendix that compared health and safety performance against 11 other family group fire and rescue services. However, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) did not release the data until last Thursday, therefore officers were not able to analyse the information and include the comparator data in this report in time for this meeting. Once the data had been analysed,

Health
and Safety
Manager

comparator performance tables would be produced, and it would be shared with Members.

In addition to not being able to include that data this year, another consequence to the time lag in reporting was that some of the Authority's own data was almost 21 months old and the achievements delivered in the previous eight months would not be covered in this report. Examples of this were three more senior members of staff had received specialist training on Health and Safety roles and responsibilities and improvements had been made to station audit processes. These were captured in the quarterly Health & Safety Committee meetings, of which the minutes were published internally and externally.

The Health and Safety Manager advised Members that the safety event statistics for the year 2024/25 identified there had been an increase in the number of personal injury safety events by almost 22%. This was still trending in a positive direction over the last five years. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) had also increased by 2 from 10–12 which was still lower than the 2022/23 performance.

The Health and Safety team no longer report on equipment damage unless the incident caused or had the potential to cause injury, ill-health or harm. This was being managed by the Equipment Department. If a member of staff breaks an item of equipment and in doing so there was no risk, potential or otherwise for harm, injury or loss to individuals then it does not constitute a safety event. However, if an item of equipment was damaged, and does present a risk of harm, injury or loss, it would be reported and managed as a safety event or hazard report.

Whilst there had been a decrease in the number of vehicle damage safety events, down by more than 25%, this was an area that officers recognised still needed work and further improvement. Officers meet with the insurers, Fire Risk Indemnity Company (FRIC), and were working with them, to see how to further improve this.

The Health and Safety Manager advised that acts of violence had been separated out in the KPIs for 2025/26 and the one event in the reporting period was a member of the public shoulder barging a firefighter at an incident when the Service was called to extinguish a bonfire in a garden. The police were involved in this incident.

The performance target for near misses had been reviewed and reset, hence no directional arrow. Officers were continuing to monitor this metric and would review the inclusion of an indicator for next year's report.

The Health and Safety Manager focussed on contaminants and advised that of the eight air quality monitoring devices the Service had invested in and placed in different locations across four sites, volatile organic compounds vary the most. However, almost 88% of the time the levels would indicate the air quality was excellent, less than 12 % of the time it was assessed as moderate and less than 1% of all readings it momentarily dipped into inadequate which was primarily at two of the four sites. One being near a busy main road and the other coincided with cleaning activities.

Based on the readings of 15 different air quality parameters, overall, the evidence indicated that the air quality at the Service's sites was very good. There was more work to be done to continue the improvement and protection journey, and there may be benefit from testing the air quality inside the crew cabs of operational appliances and on the work surfaces of high use areas.

As mentioned in last year's report, following the introduction of line manager notifications within the Visor system to highlight overdue investigations, in 2022/23 around 65% were being completed on time, in 2023/24 it improved to 79%. In this reporting period, there was further improvement.

A Member asked if the contamination reports for each station could be shared with Members, in particular high risk areas of contamination. If the FBU were here, what would they say the key things that the Service needed to do more of to get to the levels that they would want to see from their decom campaign. If officers were setting themselves an ambition to be the leading service in the UK protecting firefighters against contaminants by the end of next year, what would you need to do and what would be the investment.

The Health and Safety Manager advised that the devices do give reports, and it could be shared through the appropriate channels. He could not speak on behalf of the FBU and did not know what would be their top priority but they were actively involved in the contaminants working group.

The Health and Safety Manager advised that from January the HSE lead for fire, along with her team would be auditing the majority of fire and rescue services. The Service had good representation locally and within the Thames Valley, and at a national level.

A Member observed out of 39 personal injury safety events recorded, 22 occurred during training activities, with 15 being from operational training activities based on station. The highest causation was inattention and not following procedure. What confidence could Members draw as to how that was being addressed. The second question was regarding personal injuries related to handling, lifting and carrying, was there work needed in this area. The third question was as a result of third parties causing damage to Service vehicles, does the Authority get money back from insurance claims when people damage Service vehicles.

The Health and Safety Manager advised that regarding training, it was an area they were looking at to analyse the root cause. Each event was investigated, and the recommendations were fed out to individuals and the VISOR system. Looking at manual handling, this was carefully monitored to see what more could be done to reduce occurrences.

The Director of Finance and Assets confirmed money would be recovered from them or their insurers if a third party was at fault.

A Member asked about the causation and not following procedure, the extent to which that was the responsibility of the individual who was harmed versus the person who was leading the training.

The Director of People advised that from a human resources, people perspective, procedures had been reviewed and reinforced, and officers were working on operational training procedures to ensure they remained fit for purpose and current. Area trainers emphasised the correct procedures during all training sessions, through health and safety briefs and observation activities. Officers had reviewed operational training risk assessments to ensure scoring was amended where necessary to reflect this data, any additional control measures required, including any recommended through safety event investigation outcomes. Officers were reviewing all training

equipment for defects and suitability to ensure the testing regime was up to date.

In terms of monitoring and assurance, visits to be conducted for training validation days by the Training Assurance Manager and assisted by Area Trainers. Review of the personal injury trends to identify high risk activities and identify control measures such as task specific training or adjusting the training delivery. Finally, a review of the manual handling package and introduction of more training specific examples. There was a lot of work going on in terms of assurance and it was something that Human Resources and Health and Safety would work more closely together on.

A Member asked what role does Occupational Health play for the firefighters in terms of contamination. Do they have annual checks for respiratory functions, to ensure their health was maintained.

The Health and Safety Manager advised that they do, and those that were in what was perceived as higher risk activities, potentially being exposed to more contaminants more often, were subject to more routine, more frequent medicals.

A Member asked about the 'FBU 2023 Manifesto' and were officers working with the FBU to compare what the Service was doing to meet their objectives.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Director of People meet with the FBU on a quarterly basis to go through their improvement agenda. One of their areas of focus was contaminants management. The areas of improvement the FBU would like to see, were the same the Service would like to see. There had been some really good Improvement on welfare provision at incident grounds. There had been some challenges around PPE, as when the initial contract was signed, there was less information and data around contaminants, the replacement schedule and good practice, but officers had been working with the provider around that, and when the Service moved to the next PPE contract, there would be quite a substantial increase in the cost of that contract in relation to the turnover of PPE required to keep staff safe.

From an estates perspective, there had been a lot of dialogue with the FBU and good progress had been made

in terms of station zoning and mitigating some of the risk around tracking of contaminants around the stations. Some of the stations were difficult to manage in terms of contaminants in terms of size and layout. There was also something around the behaviours of staff, showering within an hour and making sure people were doing that.

There were still challenges around health screening, and as the Health and Safety Manager had said, some things were done through Occupational Health, but the FBU would like to see it go further in terms of cancer screening, a difficult area as there were hundreds of different cancers that could be screened for. The FBU representative had been asked to bring forward a proposition of what they think it would look like.

A Member would like to see a report showing what progress the Service had made in relation to the FBU improvement agenda.

Deputy Chief
Fire Officer

RESOLVED –

That the health and safety performance as detailed in the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2024-25 be noted

FA47 PROTECTION ASSURANCE REPORT

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised that the purpose of this report was to provide Members with assurance on how the Service was delivering its statutory protection responsibilities, how it responded to national expectations, and how it continued to strengthen its performance following the previous HMICFRS inspection.

Since the 2023 inspection, officers had made substantial progress across all areas of Protection. The HMICFRS Cause of Concern had been fully addressed and formally closed, and the Service now had strong governance, a fully embedded risk-based inspection programme, and a clear quality assurance framework.

The 2025–2026 Delivery Plan was on track. Of the 42 agreed actions, 30 were completed and the remaining 12 were progressing as planned with completion expected by the end of Quarter 4 in March 2026. Alongside this, a regional peer review was commissioned and delivered in the first quarter of the year. Of the eleven actions identified, six had been completed and five remained in progress.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised Members that the biggest ongoing risk remained the same as the national picture, attracting, recruiting, and retaining qualified Fire Safety Officers. There was a recognised national shortage of competent inspectors, and the pathway to full competency took time. This was being mitigated through planned succession, improving career pathways and improving professional development and accredited training.

At present, the Protection capability was funded through a mix of core budget and temporary external grant funding under the Protection Uplift programme. Next year, officers would continue to review the capacity within the Protection team and explore further opportunities to strengthen resilience.

The Business Engagement Framework was now firmly embedded and proving effective. There was improved compliance, stronger relationships with responsible persons, and a more consistent approach to advice and enforcement. The Primary Authority Scheme was fully embedded and had grown year on year, with over 400 hours annually dedicated to supporting national and regional partners.

There was now a clearly defined methodology that prioritised inspections based on genuine risk. This approach was supported by data that was refreshed quarterly and by stronger collaboration between the Protection team and Data Intelligence team. Together, these changes had significantly improved the ability to target high risk premises and ensure that resources were deployed effectively.

Audit activity was now more consistent, underpinned by enhanced quality assurance processes, improved recording standards, and a stronger focus on high-risk settings including care homes, sleeping accommodation, and complex buildings. As of 30 November, 646 audits had been completed this calendar year. Of these, 69% were categorised as high or very high risk and 70% resulted in non-satisfactory outcomes. This provided good assurance that the targeted approach was having the intended impact.

Premises identified as very high risk were now scheduled for annual audits. By the end of November, 89% had been

completed within the required timeframe. Of the remaining 11%, only 5%, representing 21 audits, were still to be scheduled.

This report also reflected the strength of partnership arrangements, particularly with local authorities, housing providers, and the Building Safety Regulator. Officers were working with colleagues across the Southeast region, feeding in nationally to jointly influence and respond to the consultation on the revised Fire Standard for Protection.

A Member felt it would be helpful to get officers perspective if they were confident the gap had closed from where the Service was before. Was the Service now confident it would consistently, on a sustainable basis, be able to meet the audit targets. The other area was the pressure of the competing demands on the protection team. How well was the team protected from those competing demands. Was there a better way to be thinking about funding the protection team.

The Head of Protection and Prevention started with the competing demands, and the breadth of work the protection team undertake which was vast and complex. Officers look very closely and monitor monthly the number of consultations, the number of licencing consultations, the number of building regulation consultations, the volume of complaint management that comes in, the level of training, and the number of post incidents that need to be serviced. This does have an impact on the number of audits, and it was important to monitor it on a regular basis as there were trends and peaks. Consultations could almost double month on month depending on what was going on across Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised that the Service was in a good position regarding funding and the benefits of investment in staff could be seen in how they had grown and developed. Work had to be done to retain those individuals and to continue to develop those people in the same way.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that when HMI revisit, the Service was in a much better place, the quality of audits would show in terms of consistency of approach, and the outcomes were quite positive in terms of hitting high and very high risk and the number of non-satisfactory outcomes achieved. There was still a vulnerability to know

whether the Service would be able to recruit and retain the right skill set, but also to address the spikes in activity. Hitting the audit target was achievable when staff were not training or when there was not a particularly complex building going on.

In terms of next year's progression, the budget could be used more effectively, and some layer of resilience could be built into the protection function. The use of external associates when they were needed for particular tasks, but this could be expensive. Also, an internal associate model could be used potentially using station end staff, qualified and on dual contracts for when there were high numbers of consultations. There was work to do to improve resilience so that challenges could be met. From an HMI perspective, the Service was in a significantly different place to where it was two and a half years ago.

A Member advised the final paragraph which read 'the biggest risk to delivering an outstanding protection function is the vulnerability of maintaining the right number of qualified staff', was there merit in talking to Thames Valley or the south east to say how do we organise ourselves to grow our own. The provision of an Academy to do our own thing may provide a degree of resilience. It may be worth considering pooling with others to provide some resilience.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer said officers would go away and look at that and it would be interesting to see what the College of Fire brings in terms of supporting the Service. A regional approach in terms of exploring how the Service could be more resilient as part of the Thames Valley was something worth considering.

A Member asked how new premises were identified and what categorises high risk or very high risk. How does the Service pick up on change of use of premises. Regarding key partners, John Lewis was on the list but not Marks and Spencer, how do organisations become key partners. Had the Service closed any premises for fire reasons under the competent use of enforcement powers. There was no mention of prisons, were they not high risk.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that with regard to new premises, officers look at lots of different correlation data points, whether it be based on height of building, size, what it was used for, and correlate that with

the incident data that affects Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised that prisons did not sit under the Service as the regulator and that was why they were not included. There were very good response plans in place, and in Milton Keynes the prison governor attended the local resilience forum.

In terms of change of use, that was down to good partnerships and relationships. Both the teams across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes meet regularly with partners and the local authority so the Service was sited early. Even where the Service was not statutory consultees, where there were changes of use, they were looking at fire risks and concerns.

The Primary Authority scheme was national, and this Service was identified to work with John Lewis a nationwide organisation. The Service does not just have an impact on a single premises; but it can impact on changes that happen to multiple premises.

Enforcements and prosecutions were tracked to ensure the actions were carried out and the right education took place with the responsible person.

(Councillor Rouse left the meeting)

A Member asked about the fact that the Service was not consultees on change of use or planning permission, does it have any input into it.

The Head of Prevention and Protection advised that the Service had very good partnership working relationships with both local authorities. The partnership working agreement covered HMO's and looked at its responsibilities and when the lead regulator would step in and take responsibility. The Service had recently secured £116.5k to further invest in staff to ensure the Service could strengthen capacity and capability of the team.

RESOLVED –

That the Protection Assurance Report be noted.

**FA48 HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) –**

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (BFRS) 2023-2025 UPDATE

The Head of Service Improvement advised Members this report provided an update on the Service's HMICFRS journey including the latest 'Areas for Improvement' update, the recent State of Fire report and the next inspection.

Following the HMICFRS inspection in 2023, the Service was identified with three causes of concern in the areas of Prevention, Protection, and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), alongside a wide range of Areas for Improvement. Earlier this year HMICFRS confirmed that all causes of concern were resolved, and the HMICFRS had removed the Service from enhanced monitoring.

Focusing on the Areas for Improvement, the Service had two that remained open. Both had been worked on by the relevant teams and were on track to be completed before the next inspection. Officers continued to track progress on a monthly basis via the HMICFRS Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.

The Head of Service Improvement advised that on 5 November 2025 the HMI released their latest State of Fire report. This report was based on the inspection reports published between February 2023 and August 2025 and the themes found in the inspections. On page 37 of the State of Fire report, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was highlighted for having successfully resolved all previous causes of concern and re-entered standard monitoring, reflecting significant cultural progress through visible values-based leadership, strategic focus and well-executed cultural change action plans.

The next round of inspections would look at the progress the Service had made since the previous inspection. As in previous years, the performance would be measured against HMICFRS's 'characteristics of good performance'.

The 2025-27 inspection programme would involve a number of changes from the previous round. Whilst the inspection would focus on effectiveness, efficiency and people, the overall number of diagnostic questions had reduced to ten. HMICFRS had enhanced the leadership questions, in their assessment of how each Service looked after its people and would focus on leadership at all levels of the organisation. For the first time, HMICFRS would look

more closely at the governance arrangements and would assess how each fire and rescue service was affected by its Fire Authority's governance, oversight and scrutiny arrangements.

The next inspection commences on 5 January 2026 with a document request and staff survey. HMICFRS would be on site for two weeks between 23 February and 9 March, completing interviews, desktop reviews and focus groups.

A Member asked about the two outstanding items, demountable mobile data terminals (MDTs) and media communication.

The Head of Service Improvement advised that regarding communications, there was a paper going to the Programme Board next week which would close that one.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that in terms of the MDT's, there was the business-as-usual part to ensure any day-to-day errors were picked up and prioritised. The demountable bit was maintaining the connection when taking it off the appliance. Officers were confident the latest configuration change had fixed the issue. It was just waiting approval and then it would be tested at the end of the month to ensure it worked.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised in the last two inspections there were challenges from the inspectorate as to how the Service matched its resources to the risk, how there was a common thread from the Community Risk Management Plan, right down to what was done day-to-day at station end, and that was the reason the CRMP was reviewed early. The Authority had a really strong relationship with the Inspectorate, officers were in regular dialogue with them, and as part of the full inspection they would look at everything that was being done as part of the CRMP.

RESOLVED –

That the HMICFRS update be noted.

FA49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 11 am

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 3.36PM

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 4 February 2026

Report title: Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2030/31

Lead Member: Councillor Niknam Hussain

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming

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

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

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

1. It is recommended that:
 - (a) the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 7 of Annex A) be noted.
 - (b) a Council Tax precept of £89.46 for a band D equivalent property (equal to an increase of approximately 10p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
 - (c) the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

Executive summary:

The main report (Annex A) presents the proposed revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the financial years 2026/27 to 2030/31. The MTFP is closely linked to the Service's new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030, which went live on 1 April 2025.

On 17 December 2025, the Government announced the Provisional Local Government Settlement in a Written Ministerial Statement, alongside the publication of the provisional local government finance report for 2026-27 and supporting settlement documents. The settlement is a multi-year settlement, covering the next three financial years. Final confirmation of the settlement is expected in February 2026 and any changes in the provisional to final settlement will be presented in a revised Appendix 1 at the meeting.

For 2026-27, the referendum principles allow Fire and Rescue Authorities to increase council tax by £5. The core spending power (CSP) figures published assume all authorities raise council tax by the maximum amount permitted.

The Settlement Funding Assessment has been rebranded as the Fair Funding Assessment (FFA) and now consolidates most grants, including the Revenue Support Grant and business rates income. The only grants excluded from this settlement are the fire specific Pension Grant and the New Dimensions Grant. All other grants, such as the National Insurance Grant received last year, have been incorporated into the FFA. The consolidation of these grants into a reduced FFA has a significant impact on overall funding levels.

As part of the Fair Funding Review, a resources adjustment is deducted from the needs assessment based on a notional level of council tax. The fact that the Authority's actual precept is significantly below this notional level is the primary reason for **non-council tax funding (excl. fire specific grants) decreasing from £12m in 2025/26 to just £9.7m in 2028/29**. According to analysis by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) this is the third highest percentage loss of any standalone fire authority (and one of the two higher authorities is a mayoral authority with unlimited precept flexibility). Updates to data used within the fire funding formula have had a negligible impact on the level of non-council tax funding receivable.

Key assumptions are detailed in Section 4 of Annex A and are based on information received to date.

For 2026/27, the council tax base increase is 1.28%, which is lower than previous years but still represents a positive and stable growth, albeit slightly below our medium-term assumption of 1.6%.

The revenue budget for 2026/27 and indicative figures for future years are shown in Appendix 1.

It should also be noted that the figures for council tax and business rates are provisional. The statutory deadline for the billing authorities to provide this information to the Authority is 31 January 2026. Any changes to the figures will be presented in a revised Appendix 1 at the meeting.

Appendix 2 shows the latest summary of the capital programme for 2026/27 to 2030/31.

Appendix 3 provides further detail on the level of council tax chargeable for each band if the Authority accepts the recommendation to increase the band D by £5.

Financial implications: All financial implications are shown in the main body of the report.

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

Legal implications: The Local Government Act 2003 gives the responsible finance officer, namely the Chief Finance Officer of the Combined Fire Authority under s112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the responsibility to report to Members of the Authority on their assessment of the robustness of the estimates used within the budget and on the adequacy of reserves.

Members must have regard to the report of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of the above and the highlighted associated risks before considering the recommendations as set out in the report.

Privacy and security implications: No direct impact.

Duty to collaborate: No direct impact.

Health and safety implications: No direct impact.

Environmental implications: No direct impact.

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

Consultation and communication: None.

Background papers:

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26 to 2029/30 and Revised Appendices, Fire Authority, 12 February 2025: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/FIRE-AUTHORITY-AGENDA-AND-REPORTS-12-FEBRUARY-2025-INCLUDING-LATE-URGENT-ITEMS-1-2-AND-3.pdf>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
Annex A	Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31	None
Appendix 1-4	Appendix 1 – MTFP Budget Model and Reserves Position Appendix 2 – Capital Programme Summary Appendix 3 – Council Tax Rates Appendix 4 – Risk Assessment of the Adequacy of General Reserves	

Annex A – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2030/31

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the proposed revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27 to 2030/31.
- 1.2. The MTFP is closely linked to the Service's new Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-2030, which went live on 1 April 2025. The MTFP details the resources available to facilitate this Plan.
- 1.3. As part of the Fire Authority's Terms of Reference and MTFP, the Authority reviews and sets a balanced budget each year in line with corporate priorities. The MTFP is expressed as a detailed annual budget for the first year, with outline indicative budgets for the following four years.
- 1.4. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer (as S.112 Chief Finance Officer of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) is required to report to Members on:
 - The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget
 - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves
- 1.5. The Local Government Act 2003 requires that Members have regard to the report in making their decisions (see section 8).
- 1.6. Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires the Authority to have regard to the level of reserves for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the net budget requirement.

2. Local Government Finance Settlement 2026 to 2026

- 2.1. The Settlement Funding Assessment has been renamed the Fair Funding Assessment (FFA) and now consolidates most grants, including the Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates funding. The only grants excluded are the Pension Grant and the New Dimensions Grant. All other grants, including the National Insurance Grant received last year, have been incorporated into the FFA. The consolidation into a reduced FFA has a significant impact on overall funding levels.
- 2.2. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has confirmed a multi-year settlement covering 2026/27 to 2028/29. This includes real-terms protection for standalone Fire and Rescue Authorities, assuming a £5 council tax precept and taxbase growth. The funding floor is indexed to GDP deflator forecasts: 2.2% for 2026/27, 2.1% for 2027/28, and 2.0% for 2028/29. This Service will not receive any funding floor payments under this scheme.
- 2.3. The Council tax referendum principles for 2026/27 allow Fire and Rescue Authorities to increase Band D council tax by £5.
- 2.4. For the Fire sector, Core Spending Power (CSP) is forecast to increase by 4.5% in 2026/27, followed by 4.5% and 3.8% in subsequent years. However, government funding will reduce by 1% in cash terms across the three-year period, meaning all CSP growth is driven by the assumed £5 council tax increase and taxbase growth.

Government funding is expected to decline further in 2027/28 and 2028/29, increasing reliance on council tax.

- 2.5. The published headline changes in core spending power between 2025/26 and 2026/27 for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is 3.91% as per the analysis carried out by National Fire Chiefs Council.
- 2.6. This is based on the assumption that the Authority will increase its Band D council tax in 2026/27 by £5.

3. Council Tax and Business Rates

- 3.1. In publishing core spending power figures for the multi-year settlement, the Government has reinforced its expectation that local authorities will apply the maximum permissible council tax increase each year.
- 3.2. The Authority currently sets a band D equivalent precept of £84.46 per annum (approx. £1.62 per week). This is significantly below the national average and one of the lowest precepts of any combined fire authority.
- 3.3. Council tax chargeable for each band should the Authority resolve to increase the band D by £5 is shown in Appendix 3.

4. Risk Factors in Budget Assumptions

- 4.1. The budget proposed for 2026/27 at Appendix 1 has been compiled by looking in detail at current spending and future plans and applying the zero-based budgeting methodology.
- 4.2. The service adopted a zero-based budget approach whereby every line of budget was reviewed and challenged by the appropriate officers. This resulted in savings and reallocation of budgets to minimise the impact on inflation.
- 4.3. Included within the budget is the increase in revenue contribution to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) which is a joint control room operated by the three Thames Valley FRS. Buckinghamshire FRS contribution towards the revenue expenditure for the TVFCS has increased by £38k per annum (£1.052m for 2026/27) which has been included in the MTFP. Furthermore, the annual contribution towards the renewals fund has increased from £0.050m to £0.090m to help fund the replacement of the command and control system.
- 4.4. The Service have assumed the continuation of funding for the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capability and the pension grant on a flat cash basis.
- 4.5. Uncertainty continues to persist regarding the level of inflation that the Service will be subject to over the coming years. Given that almost three-quarters of the budget relates to direct employee costs, pay inflation has a hugely significant impact on the Services budget.

- 4.6. The detailed costs and funding are based on the updated budget requirement including the annual uplift assumptions below:

Annual Uplift Assumption	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
Council tax precept (£)	£5	£5	£5	£5	£5
Council tax base (%)	1.28%	1.60%	1.60%	1.60%	1.60%
Fair Funding Assessment (GDP Deflator- %)	2.20%	2.10%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Pay Award (%)	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%

5. Capital

- 5.1. The revenue impact of the capital programme has been factored into the base revenue budget requirement. This includes an annual revenue contribution to capital (RCCO), details of which are shown in Appendix 1.
- 5.2. The table at Appendix 2 details the approved capital programme for 2025/26, the estimated provisional outturn position and any proposed slippage to the programme. Any slippage is then added to the new budget requests for 2026/27 to give a total capital budget requirement of £8.4m for 2026/27. This figure includes indicative funding relating to points raised in 5.3.
- 5.3. The capital programme includes funding relating to a proposed local training facility and an indicative allocation of up to £8m for the redevelopment High Wycombe Fire Station. The local training facility has had a business case approved and is awaiting planning permission to proceed. The options appraisal for High Wycombe Fire Station is subject to Member approval at the meeting of the Executive Committee in March 2026.
- 5.4. The capital programme also includes indicative funding relating to the replacement of specialist appliances in 2029/30 and 2030/31.
- 5.5. The Authority should also take cognisance of the prudential indicators when approving the capital programme (submitted as a separate paper at this meeting).

6. Adequacy of Reserves

- 6.1. Given the significant uncertainty that persists around inflation and other subsequent events that have occurred, the level of the General Fund has been reviewed. The current calculation of the risk assessed amount can be seen in Appendix 4.
- 6.2. The latest forecast balances and reserves at year-end 2025/26 are:
- General Fund Balance - £2.0m
 - Earmarked Reserves - £0.2m*
 - Capital Reserves - £11.8m
- * The earmarked reserves balance excludes the amount held by Oxfordshire County Council relating to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

7. Statement of the Chief Finance Officer

- 7.1. The purpose of this statement is to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 whereby the Chief Finance Officer, in the Fire Authority's case the Director of Finance and Assets and Chief Finance Officer, must report on:
- The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and;
 - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves;
 - In recommending the budget to the Authority, Members must have regard to this report when making decisions in connection with which it is made.
- 7.2. 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 controls for budget management, it is my conclusion as Chief Finance Officer for the Authority that, subject to approval of recommendation 1(b), there is sufficient capacity in the reserves to cope with the financial risks the Authority faces for 2026/27 and future years and that the methodology applied provides the necessary assurance to the Authority about the robustness of the estimates used in constructing the budget.

Appendix 1 – MTFP Model

The model below is based on the assumptions detailed in Sections 3 and 4 and all significant budget movements have been subjected to Officer and Member scrutiny as noted in Section 6.1. The statutory deadline for the billing authorities to provide Council Tax and business rates information to the Authority is 31 January 2026. Any changes to these figures will be presented in a revised Appendix 1 at the meeting.

Directorate	2025/26 Approved Budget £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
Base Budget	0	42,989	43,880	44,878	46,337	48,735
Inflation Adjustment	0	949	999	1,029	1,060	1,090
Corporate Core	1,354	-293	-5	200	0	0
Statutory Accounting	1,321	-922	0	0	0	0
Delivery, Corporate Development & Planning	27,266	805	450	823	447	451
Peoples Directorate	3,020	716	0	0	0	0
Finance & Assets	7,367	368	592	300	-53	0
RCCO	2,661	-732	-1,037	-893	944	1,024
Net Budget Requirement	42,989	43,880	44,878	46,337	48,735	51,300
Fair Funding Assessment (FFA)	-11,722	-11,400	-10,600	-9,700	-9,875	-10,052
Council Tax Receipts Surplus/Deficit	-413	-307	-150	-150	-150	-150
Fire Specific Grants	-877	-802	-802	-802	-802	-802
Council Tax Receipts	-28,116	-30,164	-32,359	-34,618	-36,941	-39,329
Fire Pensions Grant	-1,107	-967	-967	-967	-967	-967
National Insurance Grant	-253	0	0	0	0	0
Transfers to/(from) Reserves	-501	-240	0	-100	0	0
Total Funding Available	-42,989	-43,880	-44,878	-46,337	-48,735	-51,300

Appendix 1a – Reserves Position

Reserves Position	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
General Fund Balance	-2,040	-2,040	-2,040	-1,940	-2,040	-2,040
Other Earmarked Reserves (excluding Control Room Res.)	-241	0	0	0	0	0
Capital and Transformation Reserves	-11,840	-5,283	-2,907	-1,687	-617	-270
Total	-14,121	-7,323	-4,947	-3,627	-2,657	-2,310

Appendix 2 – Capital Programme

The table below summarises the capital programme from 2025/26 through to 2030/31 and is based on the revenue contribution to capital levels shown in Appendix 1:

Capital Programme	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	2028/29 £000	2029/30 £000	2030/31 £000
Property	6,516	2,360	6,219	250	250	250
Total Property Portfolio	6,516	2,360	6,219	250	250	250
Operational Red Fleet Vehicles	0	0	326	680	356	740
Operational Red Fleet Vehicles (Specials)	350	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Operational White Fleet Vehicles	78	0	0	0	0	0
Total Fleet Vehicles	428	0	326	680	1,356	1,740
Hydraulic Equipment	54	59	64	69	74	79
ICT Equipment	105	92	99	106	113	120
Operational Equipment	100	105	110	115	120	125
Total Equipment	259	256	273	290	307	324
Slippage (Approved July 2025 Executive Committee)	1,597	0	0	0	0	0
Current Year Slippage Forecast	-5,870	5,870	0	0	0	0
Total Other Movements	-4,273	5,870	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Expenditure	2,930	8,486	6,818	1,220	1,913	2,314
Funding B/Fwd	-6,894	-11,840	-5,283	-2,907	-1,687	-617
In-year Funding	-7,876	-1,929	-4,442	0	-843	-1,967
Total Funding (Available) / Deficit	-11,840	-5,283	-2,907	-1,687	-617	-270

Appendix 3 – Council Tax Rates

If the band D equivalent council tax were increased by £5.00 for 2026/27, the following rates would apply to properties in each band:

Bands	Per Week (£)	Per Month (£)	Per Year (£)
A	1.14	4.97	59.64
B	1.33	5.80	69.58
C	1.53	6.63	79.52
D	1.72	7.46	89.46
E	2.10	9.11	109.34
F	2.48	10.77	129.22
G	2.86	12.43	149.10
H	3.43	14.91	178.92

This would represent an annual increase of £3.33 per annum on a band A, £5.00 per annum on a band D and £10.00 per annum on a band H property.

The following table shows the increase in each band (rounded to the nearest pence).

Bands	Per Week (£)	Per Month (£)	Per Year (£)
A	0.06	0.28	3.33
B	0.07	0.33	3.89
C	0.09	0.37	4.44
D	0.10	0.42	5.00
E	0.12	0.51	6.11
F	0.14	0.60	7.22
G	0.16	0.70	8.33
H	0.19	0.83	10.00

Appendix 4 – Risk Assessment of the Adequacy of General Reserves

The table below shows the calculation of the amount required to be held in the General Fund:

Budget Assumptions	Financial standing and management assessment/impact	Comments	Amount Required £000
The treatment of inflation and interest rates	The overall financial standing of the authority (level of borrowing, debt outstanding, council tax collection rates etc.). Rises in the prices of some commodities, e.g. fuel, highlight the relevance of using a number of inflation rates in the budget and financial strategy, and considering whether general reserves are adequate to deal with unexpected increases. Volatility in the financial markets also points to the need to consider investment and borrowing risks and their impact on income.	Significant uncertainty persists regarding the level of inflation (both pay and non-pay). Amount required to be held in general reserve estimated as circa 2% of net budget requirement.	850
The treatment of demand led pressures and resilience in spare conditions.	The authority's capacity to manage in-year budget pressures, and its strategy for managing both demand and service delivery in the longer term.	An amount has been set aside to help fund any recommendations that may come from the Grenfell Tower inquiry or the McCloud/Sargeant judgement. This also includes an amount associated with providing resilience in spare conditions.	100
The treatment of planned efficiency savings/productivity gains	The strength of the financial information and reporting arrangements. The authority should also be in a position to activate contingency plans should the reporting arrangements identify that planned savings or gains will either not be achieved or be delayed.	A key future efficiency within the Medium-Term Financial Plan is the efficiency saving relating to bank costs and over the border costs. However, these amounts can be potentially volatile so an amount should be held in the General Fund to mitigate the associated risk.	200

Budget Assumptions	Financial standing and management assessment/impact	Comments	Amount Required £000
The financial risks inherent in any significant new funding partnerships, major outsourcing arrangements or major capital developments	The authority's virement and end of year procedures in relation to budget under/overspends at authority and department/directorate level. Risk management measures in relation to partnerships, including consideration of risk allocation. Contract provisions designed to safeguard the authority's position in the event of problems arising from outsourcing arrangements.	This amount is based on circa 13% of the total estimated expenditure on the capital programme for 2026/27. This figure has increased compared to previous years due to the indicative funding allocated for the local training facility and High Wycombe Fire Station.	840
The availability of reserves, government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions	The adequacy of the authority's insurance arrangements to cover major unforeseen risks. When considering insurance cover, the structure of the cover as well as the overall level of risk should be taken into account. Risk assessments should be used when balancing the levels of insurance premiums and reserves.	The insurance excess is set at £5,000 for the majority of claims. There is a risk that there may be a large number of high value claims. This value assumes ten claims over £5,000 in any one year.	50
Total Required			2,040

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 4 February 2026

Report title: The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Lead Member: Councillor Niknam Hussain

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance & Assets

Author and contact: Marcus Hussey mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision.

Recommendations: That the Executive Committee approve the recommendations below for submission to the Fire Authority.

That the Authority be recommended to approve:

1. the Prudential Indicators for 2026/27
2. the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement

Executive summary:

This report is being presented as the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement are required to be approved by the Fire Authority and to support the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The Authority has already made sufficient revenue provision to cover the repayment of its gross borrowing. The Authority has no plans for additional external borrowing in the foreseeable future, according to the current MTFP.

It is recommended that the Authorised Limit for 2026/27 is set at £2.5m higher than the Operational Boundary Limit to allow for the effective management of cashflow and the implementation of IFRS 16 Leasing from 1 April 2024.

Financial implications:

The decision on the prudential indicators sets out the financial limits within which the Authority will operate in future years.

The minimum revenue provision is a statutory charge against the General Fund, estimated at £47k for 2025/26 (no change from 2025/26).

The impact of the Prudential Code will allow the Authority to make informed choices between revenue and capital financing of procured services, to encourage invest to

save schemes and will only allow capital investment to proceed where the Authority can fund projects within prudential limits.

Making sufficient minimum revenue provision ensures that when borrowing matures, cash is available to make the repayment. This ensures that the Authority does not need to borrow additional money to repay existing loans.

Risk management:

The Prudential Code was established to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. The indicators presented here demonstrate that the current plans for capital investment meet these criteria and present an acceptable level of risk to the Authority.

Minimum revenue provision is a statutory charge to the General Fund, which ensures that an Authority has sufficient cash balances to repay borrowing upon maturity, reducing the refinancing risk.

There are no direct staffing implications.

Legal implications:

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/3146 make provision for capital finance and accounts under the Local Government Act 2003 requiring the authority to have regard to the 'Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' when determining, under the Local Government 2003 Act, how much money it can afford to borrow; and require the Authority to determine for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent.

Privacy and security implications:

No direct impact.

Duty to collaborate:

No direct impact.

Health and safety implications:

No direct impact.

Environmental implications:

No direct impact.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

No direct impact.

Consultation and communication:

No direct impact.

Background papers:

Realignment of Reserve Balances to Facilitate the Medium Term Financial Plan,
Executive Committee, 18 November 2015, agenda item 6:

https://bucksfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/181115_exec_committee_papers.pdf (from p.23)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and MRP	

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The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision

2026/27

Contents

Prudential Indicators	Page 2
Summary Table of Prudential Indicators	Page 6
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement	Page 7

Prudential Indicators

1.0 Indicators for Affordability

1.1 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This indicator measures the percentage of the net revenue funding used to finance external debt. As no future external borrowing is planned and a decision was made to reallocate reserves to reduce the capital financing requirement in 2015/16, the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream will remain consistently low. However, as per the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31, during 2027/28 the voluntary revenue provision of £3.55m is forecast to be reversed.

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	-2.47%	-2.18%	-1.23%	-0.79%	0.34%

2.0 Indicators for Prudence

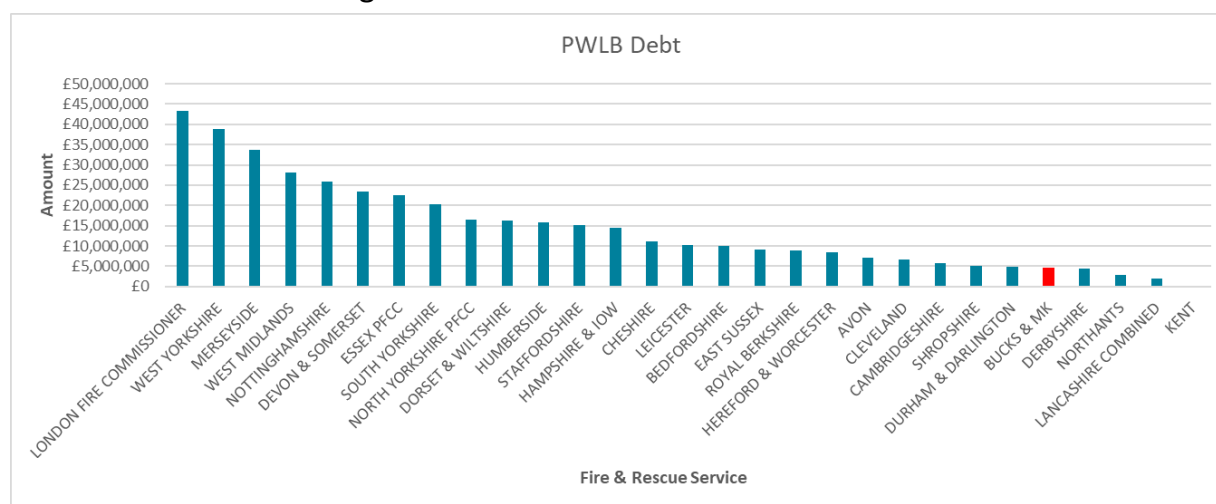
2.1 Gross borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

The table below shows gross borrowing and the capital financing requirement (CFR). The Authority should ensure that gross borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the CFR. However, due to the reallocation of reserves to reduce the CFR (excluding finance lease) to zero (see Provenance Section & Background Papers) gross borrowing will exceed the CFR until £3.55m of the voluntary revenue provision previously made is reversed.

Gross borrowing at the start of 2024/25 financial year was £4.550m. The figures shown below indicate the maximum level of borrowing during the year (i.e. repayments will reduce the limit for the following year):

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Gross borrowing (£000)	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550	3,550
Capital financing requirement (£000)	1,402	1,355	1,308	4,811	4,414

The graph below provides an overview of gross borrowing from Public Works Loan Board across Fire Services in England as of 31st March 2025.



3.0 Indicators for Capital Expenditure

3.1 Capital Expenditure and Financing

This indicator shows the expected level of capital expenditure for future years:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Capital expenditure (£000)	2,012	2,930	8,486	6,818	1,220

The table below summarises the above capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital resources and reversal of voluntary revenue provision.

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Reversal of Voluntary Revenue Provision (£000)	0	0	0	-3,550	0
Revenue contribution to capital (£000)	-2,012	-2,930	-8,486	-3,268	-1,220
Total	-2,012	-2,930	-8,486	-6,818	-1,220

The CFR reflects the Authority's underlying need to borrow. This figure was reduced down to the level of the finance lease by the reallocation of reserves (see Background Papers). No additional external borrowing is planned in the medium term. As noted earlier, the figure for 2027/28 includes the forecast reversal of the remaining voluntary revenue provision as per the latest MTFP. The CFR should be looked at in relation to gross borrowing, as detailed in Section 2.1:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Capital financing requirement (underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose) (£000)	1,402	1,355	1,308	4,811	4,414

4.0 Indicators for External Debt

4.1 Authorised Limit

This is the maximum limit on borrowing and other long-term liabilities. From 2024/25, the authorised limit for other long-term liabilities factors in an estimated additional amount of £500k to account for the lease liabilities following the implementation of IFRS 16 Leasing. This amount cannot be exceeded without approval from the Fire Authority:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Authorised limit for borrowing (£000)	6,550	6,550	6,550	6,550	5,550
Authorised limit for other long-term liabilities (£000)	2,253	2,206	2,159	2,112	2,065
Authorised limit for external debt (£000)	8,803	8,756	8,709	8,662	7,615

4.2 Operational Boundary

This indicator shows the most likely estimate of debt for future years:

The actual external debt for the year ending 31 March 2025 was **£6.303m**.

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Operational boundary for borrowing (£000)	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550	3,550
Operational boundary for other long-term liabilities (£000)	1,753	1,706	1,659	1,612	1,565
Operational boundary for external debt (£000)	6,303	6,256	6,209	6,162	5,115

5.0 Indicators for Treasury Management

5.1 Adoption of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectorial Guidance Notes

The aim is to ensure that treasury management is led by a clear and integrated forward treasury management strategy, and a recognition of the pre-existing structure of the Authority's borrowing and investment portfolios.

5.2 Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures

This indicator shows the Authority's upper limit of the net exposure to fixed interest rates. Currently all borrowing is at a fixed rate of interest:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5.3 Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures

This indicator shows the Authority's upper limit of net exposure to variable interest rates:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%

5.4 Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing

This indicator shows the repayment profile of fixed rate borrowing. All loans are repayable on maturity:

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25		Estimate 2025/26		Estimate 2026/27		Estimate 2027/28		Estimate 2028/29	
	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowings										
Under 12 months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	0%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	22%	0%	0%	0%	0%
24 months and within five years	0%	22%	0%	22%	0%	14%	0%	14%	0%	39%
five years and within 10 years	0%	30%	0%	30%	0%	16%	0%	16%	0%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
20 years and within 30 years	0%	48%	0%	48%	0%	48%	0%	48%	0%	61%
30 years and within 40 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
40 years and above	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

5.5 Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 365 days

The purpose of this indicator is for the Authority to contain its exposure to the possibility of loss that might arise as a result of it having to seek early repayment or redemption of principal sums invested. The Authority currently has no investments over a period longer than 365 days.

Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days (£000)	0	0	0	0	0

5.6 Credit Risk

The duration of any investment with a counterparty will be restricted as advised by the Authority's treasury management advisors, Link Asset Services. The advisors will base their assessment of credit risk based on credit ratings provided by the major agencies, as well as reviewing credit default swaps (a proxy measure for the markets perceived risk of default).

Summary Table of Prudential Indicators

For reference, the following table summarises the key indicators detailed in Appendix 1 in a single table:

	Indicator	Actuals 2024/25	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28	Estimate 2028/29
Indicators for Affordability						
1.1	Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	-2.47%	-2.18%	-1.23%	-0.79%	0.34%
1.2	The incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the council tax	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Indicators for Prudence						
2.1	Gross borrowing (£000)	4,550	4,550	4,550	4,550	3,550
Indicators for Capital Expenditure						
3.1	Capital expenditure (£000)	2,012	2,930	8,486	6,818	1,220
3.2	Capital financing requirement (underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose) (£000)	1,402	1,355	1,308	4,811	4,414
Indicators for External Debt						
4.1	Authorised limit for external debt (£000)	8,803	8,756	8,709	8,662	7,615
4.2	Operational boundary for external debt (£000)	6,303	6,256	6,209	6,162	5,115
Indicators for Treasury Management						
5.2	Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
5.3	Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
5.5	Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 365 days (£000)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

The actual external debt for the year ending 31 March 2025 was £6.303m. The projected external debt for the year ending 31 March 2026 is £6,256m (both figures include the lease liabilities).

The following indicators are not shown above:

- 5.1 – the Authority has adopted CIPFA’s Treasury Management Code
- 5.4 – details of the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing
- 5.6 – narrative regarding credit risk

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement

The two methods for calculating prudent provision are set out below and were approved by members in 2008/09. Regulation 28 of the 2003 Regulations (as amended by regulation 4 of the 2008 Regulations) requires a local authority to calculate for the current financial year an amount of MRP which it considers to be prudent. The Secretary of State recommends that, for the purposes of regulation 4 the prudent amount of provision should be determined in accordance with one of four options, two of which were agreed by members in 2008/09 and are outlined below.

The broad aim of prudent provision is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits (asset life).

(a) CFR Method

MRP is equal to 4% of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at the end of the preceding financial years. Since the CFR (excluding finance lease) is now at zero, this method is no longer applicable (for finance leases, the MRP requirement is regarded as met by a charge equal to the element of the rent that goes to write down the Balance Sheet liability).

(b) Asset Life Method

Since 1 April 2008, where capital expenditure on an asset is financed wholly or partly by borrowing or credit arrangements, MRP is to be determined by reference to the life of the asset, based on an equal instalment method. This amount is projected to be nil for 2026/27.

Where assets have been purchased utilising Capital grants or Revenue Contributions no MRP calculation is required. Only assets purchased utilising borrowing require an MRP charge.

The asset life method calculation requires estimated useful lives of assets to be input into the calculations. These life periods will be determined by the Director of Finance and Assets & Treasurer, regarding the statutory guidance and advice from professional valuers.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 4 February 2026

Report title: Members' Scheme of Allowances 2026/27

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger, Chairman

Report sponsor: Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance

Author and contact: Katie Nellist knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2026/27 (as shown in draft as Appendix 1).

Executive summary:

The proposed Scheme of Allowances 2026/27 is based on the principle agreed by the Authority in February 2023 that indexation with the preceding year's Grey Book pay award be maintained. **Appendix 1** includes additional information showing the effect of the indexation for illustrative purposes.

The Authority agreed at its meeting on 14 December 2011 that the index linking for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 – for basic and special responsibility (and co-optee) allowances – be the pay award for the Authority's staff on National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book) for the preceding year. The application of this index linking had been endorsed annually by the Authority since 2014/15 until 2021/22.

Although there had been a Grey Book 2% pay award effective from 1 July 2020, the Authority agreed in February 2021 to suspend the indexation for the year 2021/22, resulting in a 0% increase in Members' allowances. The indexation with the preceding year's Grey Book pay award, was re-established for 2022/23 by a decision of the Authority; and by a decision of the Authority at its meeting on 15 February 2023 when it resolved 'That a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2023/24 be adopted, index linked to the 2022/23 'Grey Book' pay award.'

The 2025/26 Grey Book pay award (3.2%) was published on 21 May 2025 (Circular NJC 3/25). The draft Scheme of Allowances for 2026/27 is attached at **Appendix 1** with the 2025/26 figures included for illustration of the 3.2% increase in line with the NJC employers' Grey Book pay award.

Paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Scheme of Allowances provide that:

“20. The scales for all allowances are maxima and there is no obligation on any Member to claim any or all of the allowances.

21. A Member shall give notice in writing to the Chief Finance Officer that he/she elects to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under the scheme.”

Financial implications: The current budget for Members’ Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is £77,770. With Members’ allowance assumptions index linked to Grey book pay award, the proposed budget provides for a 3.2% increase in April 2026, which would increase the budget for Members’ Allowances to £80,259.

Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members’ Allowances in a newspaper circulating in its area. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £800.

Risk management: The recommendation will have no adverse effect on the Authority’s business.

Legal implications:

The Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members’ Allowances before 1 April each year and, in so doing, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels (IRP) of the constituent authorities [links are included the background papers section below^{1 2}] when considering its own Scheme of Members’ Allowances and confirm that it has done so when it gives public notice of the Scheme of Allowances.

The making or amendment of the Members’ Scheme of Allowances is a function reserved to a meeting of the Authority. An amendment may be made by the Authority in year. Regulation 10(4) of Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provides that “A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended.”

¹ The Buckinghamshire Council IRP January 2025 report recommended that no indexation be automatically applied to the scheme going forward and the Panel be reconvened in January 2026 to review how the scheme has worked in practice and whether it best reflects the needs and requirements of members in the new structure. The recommendation was not accepted by Buckinghamshire Council.

² The MKCC IRP November 2025 report recommended annual increases in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries from 2026 (with the officers’ recommendations being to re-adopt the existing scheme without indexation from 1 April 2026, and then to amend the scheme, to reflect the recommendations of the IRP with effect 11 May 2026 (when newly elected Councillors take office).

Privacy and security implications: No issues arising from the recommendations.

Duty to collaborate: The making of a scheme of allowances is the responsibility of each individual authority defined in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The methodology for doing so is prescribed exclusively by those regulations.

Health and safety implications: No issues arising from the recommendations.

Environmental implications: No issues arising from the recommendations.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: The Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances does not include any element for meeting costs incurred by a Member who has to arrange care in order to carry out their function as a Member of the Fire Authority.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 exclude the Authority from including such a provision in its Scheme. However, with the exception of co-opted members, all Members are appointed by either Buckinghamshire Council or Milton Keynes City Council and are entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority. There are currently no co-opted members on the Authority.

Consultation and communication: A notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members Allowances will be published in a local newspaper and the updated Scheme of Members' Allowances can also be inspected at Headquarters, during standard office hours. Copies of the Scheme may be purchased at a cost of £2.50 or downloaded for free at www.bucksfire.gov.uk

Background papers:

[NJC 3/25 – Pay Award 2025](#)

[NJC 3/24 – Pay Award 2024](#)

[NJC 3/23 - Pay award 2023](#)

[Minutes](#) of the meeting of the Fire Authority (Wednesday 14 February 2024)

[Minutes](#) of the meeting of the Executive Committee (Wednesday 8 February 2023)

[Minutes](#) of the meeting of the Authority (Wednesday 15 February 2023)

[Buckinghamshire Council Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 30 January 2025](#)

[Buckinghamshire Council Report to full Council 12 March 2025](#)

[MKCC Report to full Council 24 January 2024](#)

[MKCC Report to full Council 22 January 2025](#)

[MKCC Report to full Council 21 January 2026](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Draft Scheme for Members' Allowances 2026/27 (showing the 2025/26 figures and increases for illustrative purposes).	None



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON
KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

DRAFT

***MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES
2026/27***

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. This Scheme is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – “the regulations.”
2. Elected Members of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Combined Fire Authority may claim basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties in accordance with the provisions of this scheme.
3. Appointed (non elected) members may claim co-optees allowance, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties specified in this scheme.
4. "Year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.
5. The Scheme has four Schedules attached which are:
 - (a) Schedule 1 - Special Responsibility Allowances
 - (b) Schedule 2 - Payment of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances
 - (c) Schedule 3 - Duties Excluded from the Allowances Scheme
 - (d) Schedule 4 - Rates of Allowances

Creation and Amendment of the Scheme

6. This scheme comes into effect on 1 April 2026.
7. For subsequent changes in basic allowances, special responsibility allowances and co-optees allowances, new rates will be payable from the date the amendment takes effect as set out either in this scheme or the Regulations.

8. The Fire Authority will be responsible for amending the scheme and in doing so will have regard to any recommendations to its constituent councils of the independent remuneration panels set up by them.

Basic Allowances

9. The Fire Authority will pay equally to each Member of the Authority a basic allowance of an amount specified in Schedule 4.
10. Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends in the course of a financial year entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
11. Basic Allowances are payable monthly and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Special Responsibility Allowances

12. The Fire Authority will pay each year to the Members of the Fire Authority who have special responsibilities by reason of the office(s) they hold the special responsibility allowances set out in Schedule 1.
13. Where a Member takes up or relinquishes any post that carries a special responsibility allowance in the course of a financial year the entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
14. Special responsibility allowances are payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions. Where a Member is eligible for more than one special responsibility allowance (whether payable by the Fire Authority or another authority for Fire Authority duties) only the highest one will be payable, with the exception that a Lead Member may claim one Lead Member's Allowance in addition to one other Special Responsibility Allowance payable.

Approved Duties

15. Travelling and Subsistence Allowances are payable monthly and are only payable to Elected Members of the Fire Authority for the approved duties set out in Schedule 2.

Co-optees Allowance

16. A Co-optees Allowance may be paid to appointed members (i.e. non-Elected Members whether voting or not) for the performance of any approved duty as defined by this document.
17. The allowance will be payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

18. The term "Member" for the purpose of travelling and subsistence allowances applies to any person who is a Member of the Fire Authority, or who is a member of any committee, sub-committee or panel of the Fire Authority, and so includes appointed non-elected members of those bodies. The payment of these allowances is dependent upon the performance of an "approved duty" which is an attendance as a member at a meeting, or the carrying on of a duty, set out in Schedule 2.
19. The rates for travel and subsistence allowances are specified in Schedule 4.

Allowances are Maxima

20. The scales for all allowances are maxima and there is no obligation on any Member to claim any or all of the allowances.
21. A Member shall give notice in writing to the Chief Finance Officer that he/she elects to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under the scheme.

Social Functions and Occasions

22. Elected Members on occasions are invited, or feel it necessary to attend functions, or occasions which have a social element. No allowances are paid to Members of the Fire Authority on these occasions unless the Member is undertaking the performance of a positive duty and one of significant size, e.g. making a speech or distributing prizes when travel and subsistence allowances may be paid. Merely to attend because the member is interested or represents people in the district is insufficient to justify payment of any allowances.

Conference Expenses

23. If attendance at a conference has been approved by the Authority, conference expenses which are obligatory and outside the control of the Member, will be paid in advance on request or will be reimbursed. These expenses will include the conference fee. The actual cost of accommodation, meals and the like, will only be met or reimbursed if it is part of the inclusive charge for the conference or it is a requirement of the conference or its organisers that the Member should stay at a particular hotel.
24. Travel and subsistence allowances are payable where appropriate.

Telephones

25. A mobile phone will be provided to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, with the cost of supply, rental and business calls being met by the Fire Authority.

Avoidance of Duplication

26. A claim for an allowance under this scheme must include, or be accompanied by, a statement signed by the claimant that no other claim has been or will be made for the matter to which the claim relates.

Records of Payments

27. Records of payments made to Members are available for inspection free of charge by any local government elector of the Fire Authority.
28. A person entitled to inspect a record may make a copy of any part of it.
29. Details of total payments made to each Member for allowances under this scheme will be published as soon as practicable after the end of the year to which they relate.

Expense Claims

30. All information requested for the expense claim must be provided, including the number of miles, the locations travelled from and to and the reason for travel. (It is always advisable for Members to make

contemporaneous notes in their diary to assist in the completion of claims).

31. Claims for expenses should only be made when actually incurred, i.e. rail/bus, taxis, hotel accommodation. Receipts must be provided.
32. Claims for the same expenses (mileage, travel and subsistence etc) must not be made from more than one body.
33. Payments for basic and special responsibility allowances will be paid monthly in arrears and travel and subsistence payments will be paid monthly in arrears on the submission of a claim through the HR and Payroll Portal.
34. No claim from a Member for traveling or subsistence allowances which is submitted more than three months after the costs were incurred and no later than the end of April for the preceding financial year will be entertained, except in exceptional circumstances and approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer.

SCHEDULE 1

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES FROM APRIL 2025

Special Responsibility Allowance per annum

Position	April 2025 £	April 2026* £
Chairman	15,072	15,554
Vice-Chairman	5,052	5,214
Chairman - Executive Committee	6,220	6,419
Chairman - Overview and Audit Committee	4,074	4,204
Chairman - Human Resources Sub Committee**	2,039	2,104
Group Leaders	4,522	4,667
Lead Members	3,931	4,057

***3.2% increase**

****If constituted by the Executive Committee**

SCHEDULE 2

PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

The duties in this Section have been approved for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances:

- (a) Attendance at a meeting of the Fire Authority;
- (b) Attendance at a meeting of any committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority;
- (c) Attendance at a meeting of any section, panel, working party or other meeting authorised by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority or a joint committee of the Fire Authority and one or more other authorities to which the member has been specifically appointed provided that it is a meeting to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- (d) Attendance at a meeting of an association of authorities of which the Fire Authority is a member and to which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority to represent it.
- (e) Attendance at ad hoc meetings with other authorities, organisations or bodies authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (f) Attendance at briefing meetings to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (g) Attendance at seminars and conferences arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions.
- (h) Attendance at specific visits arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions and where Members of at least two political groups have been invited.

- (i) Attendance at a meeting of any body or authority upon which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority to represent it.
- (j) Attendance in connection with the discharge of any function of the Fire Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Fire Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- (k) Attendance at meetings of bodies where the Fire Authority makes appointments, where the Fire Authority has a major influence at national, regional, county or district level. These bodies are listed below:
- (i) Local Government Association
 - (ii) Fire Commission
- (l) Attendance at any disciplinary, grievance, dismissal or appeals sub-committee or panel.
- (m) The following duties if approved by the Fire Authority or a Committee:
- Attendance at briefing meetings held for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Fire Authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.
 - Attendance at the official opening of new Fire Authority establishments or projects.
 - Attendance by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority and of committees at official functions in a representative capacity.
 - Duties undertaken by Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Fire Authority, committees or subcommittees acting in an official capacity.
 - Members' delegations to Government Departments.
 - Town Centre Management Meetings and Parishes.
- (n) Meetings organised by the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer or Director of Legal and Governance or their nominated representatives with external bodies or persons to further the business and aims of the Fire Authority which the relevant officer certifies requires the attendance of members on the grounds of urgency which prevents approval being obtained from the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee.

Note: In authorising attendances in accordance with the above, no member, official or officer of the Fire Authority shall act in a discriminatory manner reflecting party political preference. Members, officials and officers should take care to ensure that their actions can not be construed as having been discriminatory.

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SCHEDULE 3

DUTIES EXCLUDED FROM THE ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The duties in this Section are those for which the Fire Authority has decided that no allowances will be paid.

- Members' surgeries
- Political activities

DRAFT

SCHEDULE 4

RATES OF ALLOWANCES

From April 2026 the following rates of allowances will apply

Basic Allowance per annum:

April 2025	April 2026*
£	£
1,508	1,556

***3.2% increase**

Special Responsibility Allowances:

See Schedule 1

Co-optees Allowance per annum:

April 2025	April 2026*
£	£
378	389

***3.2% increase**

Travel Allowances (in line with HMRC Mileage Allowance Payments)

(a) Car

The rate for travel by a Member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family or otherwise provided for his/her use, other than a solo motor cycle, shall be 45 pence for the first 10,000 miles and 25 pence for each mile after that.

(b) Motorcycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own motorcycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall be 24 pence per mile.

(c) Bicycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own bicycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall not exceed 20p a mile.

(d) *Public Transport*

Members can claim the full cost of travelling on public transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt, bus ticket etc is produced to substantiate the claim.

Subsistence

The rate of subsistence allowance shall not exceed the amounts which can be claimed under the Buckinghamshire Council Members' Allowances Scheme applicable at the time when the cost is incurred.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 4 February 2026

Report title: Performance Management – Q3 2025/26

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger, FA Chair

Report sponsor: Simon Tuffley, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Chief Operating Officer

Author and contact: Craig Newman, Data Intelligence Team Manager,
cnewman@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting and Decision

Recommendation:

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

1. It is recommended that the Performance Management – Q3 2025/26 be noted.
-

Executive summary:

The Service monitors its performance on a monthly basis across three delivery boards. These then feed the Performance Board and the Strategic Leadership Board. One of the tools used to monitor performance is a Key Performance Measures pack. This is scrutinised, with any actions arising being captured and monitored.

The attached report now details 56 specific performance measures selected from the above-mentioned key performance measure pack. These are split across the Service's six objectives, as defined in the 2025-2030 community risk management plan (CRMP):

- 1) Reducing risk and keeping our community safe
- 2) Protecting people from the risk in the built environment
- 3) Responding quickly and effectively to emergencies
- 4) An Inclusive, healthy and engaged workforce
- 5) Making the most of our finances and assets
- 6) Optimising our technology and data

This report comprises of the Service performance against these measures for Q3 2025/26. This includes detail that shows performance alongside relevant trend information and where needed commentary.

At the end of Q3, 56 measures reported with a Blue, Green, Amber or Red status, one is awaiting information and one is currently for monitoring purposes only.

BRAG	Total	%
B	15	27%
G	24	43%
A	9	16%
R	7	12%
-	1	2%

Highlighted measures:

PRV 1.03 Home Fire Safety Visits Completed

The performance across quarter 3 for home fire safety visit continues to follow the positive trend of the first half of the year. Whilst December saw a slight underperformance of 374 completed against a target of 400 (which is to be expected due to limited interest from people to have visits over festive period), the strong numbers in October and November more than offset this, with an overall completion of 1389 against a target of 1200. Arguably more important than the number of visits is our confidence in the quality and the assurance that we are reaching the most vulnerable to dying in a fire. Therefore, it is excellent to note that across the quarter we have significantly exceeded target on vulnerability. One key contributing factor to this is the consistently high proportion of visits that are now generated by partner agency referrals, broadly recognised in the sector to be best practice in relation to HFSV generation.

PRT 1.01 Fire Safety Audits

It is acknowledged that achieving the audit target of 66 per month can be challenging for our protection teams, when balanced against other demand and planned work. It is therefore really promising to see that quarter 3 performance continues to build on that of the previous quarter, achieving an overall audit completion of 210 against a target of 198. As with HFSV's, internal governance monitors fire safety audit performance against quality and impact measures. It is positive to be able to report that across the quarter these audits exceeded our targets relating to high risk and also our targets relating to non-satisfactory outcomes, which gives assurance that we are a) going to the right places to audit and b) finding and acting upon non-compliance.

RSP 7.02 Over The Border Mobilisations into BFRS Grounds

During quarter 3 there were a total of 1535 incidents in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Within that response, 245 utilised some level of support from neighbouring services, resulting in 440 appliance mobilisations into BFRS. Of these, 286 were mobilised from Berkshire and Oxfordshire on the basis of being assigned by Thames Valley Fire Control as being the quickest (or one of the quickest) assets identified for the incident pre-determined attendance. This remains a key benefit to the public in respect of the borderless mobilising agreement across the three services. A significant proportion of those sent from Berkshire relate to the geography of the south of Buckinghamshire, where Slough fire station is quickest to reach certain communities.

Service	Time unavailable	Appliances Requested	Appliances Mobilised	% Mobilised	Appliances On-Scene	% On-Scene
Berkshire	201:48:27	210	203	97%	150	71%
Oxfordshire	60:09:04	76	74	97%	51	67%
Bedfordshire	28:49:32	53	36	68%	25	47%
London	46:58:48	48	33	69%	23	48%
Hertfordshire	11:41:02	34	14	41%	9	26%
Northamptonshire	4:16:23	17	9	53%	4	24%
Surrey	0:01:38	2	0	0%	0	0%
Total	353:44:54	440	369	84%	262	60%

Of the 245 incidents in which BFRS requested appliances from other Services, 111 resulted in an over the border appliances being first on-scene (45%). A breakdown of this can be found below; With the exception of Berkshire into the South accounting for 73, only 38 of the 1535 were attended first by another Service.

Service	First in attendance	%
BFRS	134	55%
Roayl Berkshire FRS	73	30%
Oxfordshire FRS	28	11%
Bedfordshire FRS	6	2%
Hertfordshire FRS	2	1%
London FRS	1	0%
Northants FRS	1	0%
Total	245	

In many cases, the full pre-determined attendance mobilised by Thames Valley Fire Control will not be required on scene, once an assessment is made by the first arriving incident commander. During quarter 3, of the 440 over the border mobilisations 262 did arrive at the incident, 178 did not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: There are no specific Equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this paper.

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

Strategic Leadership Board	12 January 2026	Approved
Executive Committee	4 February 2026	
Fire Authority	11 February 2026	

Next steps -

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

Background papers:

Fire Authority, 08 October 2025: Performance Management – Q1 2025/25
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 08/10/2025 14:00](#)

Fire Authority, 01 December 2025: Performance Management – Q2 2025/25
[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 10/12/2025 14:00](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	BFRS Key Performance Measures – Q3 – 25-26	N/A

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KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES - 2025-2026

QUARTER THREE - OCT to DEC

Introduction

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

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

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

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

REDUCING RISK AND KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE



PRV.1.03 - Home Fire Safety Visits Completed

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Target	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	B > 10%
	2025/2026	368	469	430	464	468	432	551	464	374				G Within 10%
	Status	G	B	G	B	B	G	B	B	G				A < 10%
Cumulative		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Target	400	800	1200	1600	2000	2400	2800	3200	3600	4000	4400	4800	What is good
	2025/2026	368	837	1267	1731	2199	2631	3182	3646	4020				More is better
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	B	B	B				

Ref	PRV.1.03
Owner	Prevention
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group

The total number of HFSV completed from all sources. This includes referrals, hot strikes and targeted locations. This does not include any advice given online.

Quarter three maintained a positive trajectory in the number of Home Fire Safety Visits completed by our crews and Prevention team. For context, BFRS completed 303 visits in December 2024, matching the 303 visits achieved in December 2023.

PRV.1.04 - Home Fire Safety Visits - % Vulnerable

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	B => 80%
	2025/2026	83%	78%	75%	81%	80%	82%	77%	82%	78%				G => 70%
	Status	B	G	G	B	B	B	G	B	G				A => 60%
Cumulative		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	What is good
	2025/2026	83%	80%	78%	79%	79%	80%	79%	80%	79%				Higher is better
	Status	B	G	G	G	G	B	G	B	G				

Ref	PRV.1.04
Owner	Prevention
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group

The percentage of HFSV that were deemed to be supporting a dwelling that contained a vulnerable person. This definition is taken from the Home Office guidance note.
The target is based on the national average across the sector.

One of the key challenges in increasing the number of completed visits lies in the complexity of the cases we handle. Individuals who are more vulnerable often require additional time and support. With this in mind, we are pleased that the performance figures demonstrate our continued commitment to assisting those who need it most.

A significant contributor to this success has been the enhanced online referral system, coupled with the Prevention team's proactive engagement with partner agencies to ensure they utilise this function effectively when required.

PRV.2.01 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	<div> <div>B</div> <div>< 20%</div> </div> <div> <div>G</div> <div>Within 20%</div> </div> <div> <div>A</div> <div>> 20%</div> </div> <div> <div>R</div> <div>> 30%</div> </div>
	Prev 5 year	22.2	23.2	24.2	16.8	17	21.8	22	24	24.8	24	24.2	21.2	
	2025/2026	27	20	20	30	22	22	25	22	21				
	Status	A	G	G	R	A	G	G	G	G				
Cumulative														<div>What is good</div> <div>Less is better</div>
	Prev 5 year	22.2	45.4	69.6	86.4	103.4	125.2	147.2	171.2	196.0	220.0	244.2	265.4	
	2025/2026	27	47	67	97	119	141	166	188	209				
	Status	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				

Ref	PRV.2.01	Number of dwelling fires where the cause of the fire was recorded as accidental. Dwelling fires are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/ hostels and residential institutions.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

While the number of accidental dwelling fires remained within seasonal trends, it was pleasing to see the outcomes of these incidents were limited, with zero fatalities or zero injuries being recorded, as well as the majority of incidents being smoke and heat damage only (no flame damage), or the fire was contained to the item that first ignited.

Accidental dwelling fires data feeds into our domestic dwelling fire methodology, which helps ensure that our prevention activity and HFSV delivery remain focused across our nine Service Delivery Areas on those at greatest risk of death or serious injury from fire.

PRV.2.03 - ADF Fire-Related Fatalities

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	<div> <div>B</div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>G</div> <div>0</div> </div> <div> <div>A</div> <div>> 0 a year</div> </div> <div> <div>R</div> <div>> 3 a year</div> </div>
	Prev 5 year	0	0	0.4	0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0	0	0	0.2	0.6	
	2025/2026	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
	Status	A	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				
Cumulative														<div>What is good</div> <div>Less is better</div>
	Prev 5 year	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	2.0	
	2025/2026	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3				
	Status	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				

Ref	PRV.2.03	Number of fire related fatalities recorded at accidental dwelling fires. In general, 'fire-related deaths' are those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

There were no fire-related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires recorded between October and December 2025.

PRV.2.04 - ADF Fire Related Serious Injuries

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	Prev 5 year	0.4	0	0.2	0.2	0.6	0	0	0	0.8	0.4	0	0.4	G	< 3 a year
	2025/2026	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0				A	> 2 a year
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G				R	> 4 a year
Cumulative															
	Prev 5 year	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.2	2.6	2.6	3.0	What is good	
	2025/2026	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1				Less is better	
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PRV.2.04	Number of fire related serious injuries recorded at accidental dwelling fires. In general, 'serious injury' can be defined as: at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

There were no fire-related serious Injuries in accidental dwelling fires recorded between October and December 2025.

PRV.2.05 - Deliberate Dwelling Fires

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	Prev 5 year	1.4	2.4	1.8	1.8	3	0.6	2.8	1.4	0.6	0.8	1.6	1.2	G	< 2 per month
	2025/2026	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	0				A	> 2 per month
	Status	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B				R	> 4 per month
Cumulative															
	Prev 5 year	1.4	3.8	5.6	7.4	10.4	11.0	13.8	15.2	15.8	16.6	18.2	19.4	What is good	
	2025/2026	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	10	10				Less is better	
	Status	A	G	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	PRV.2.05	Number of dwelling fires where the fire was started deliberately by someone other than the owner/occupant. This includes derelict properties - derelict are buildings which are unfit for further use.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

Despite three deliberate dwelling fires being recorded in November, the positive trend for the year has continued with numbers of incidents recorded being lower than the previous five year average.

In relation to the three recorded incidents, all post incident activity was carried out as expected, and no link was found between the incidents.

Since these incidents, a change was made to Thames Valley Fire Control Service's radio procedure to ensure stop messages include specifics around post incident prevention activity being formally noted on messages.

PRV.3.01 - Deliberate Primary Fires (to other's property)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 10%
	Prev 5 year	13	15	15.2	20.6	19.8	12.8	11.2	8.8	7.6	9	8.4	11.4	G	Within 10%
	2025/2026	16	17	22	14	21	7	12	9	5				A	> 10%
	Status	R	A	R	B	G	B	G	G	B				R	> 20%
Cumulative		13	28	43	64	84	96	108	116	124	133	141	153	What is good	
	Prev 5 year	13	28	43	64	84	96	108	116	124	133	141	153	Less is better	
	2025/2026	16	33	55	69	90	97	109	118	123					
	Status	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PRV.3.01	Number of Primary fires that were deliberately started by somebody that wasn't the owner. Primary fires are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to non-derelict property such as buildings, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures. Prison Fires have been excluded from these numbers.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

Unlike deliberate secondary fires (see PRV.3.02), we tend to be called to deliberate primary fires more on weekends and during more unsociable hours (not the usual late afternoon/evening peak). Deliberate primary fires also don't necessarily follow the usual correlation between deprivation and fire - most notable by the location of the incident.

Quarter three saw these trends continue. We also saw a slight decrease when compared with the previous five year average.

we continue to work proactively with partners to share insights, monitor activity and take action against offenders where possible.

Property lvl 1	Property lvl 2	Total
Building	Dwelling	3
	Non Residential	1
	Other Residential	2
Outdoor	Grassland, woodland and crops	3
	Outdoor structures	1
Road Vehicle	Car	8
	Minibus	2
	Motorcycle	1
	Multiple Vehicles	1
	Other	1
	Van	3
Total		26

Station Ground	Total
Newport Pagnell	5
West Ashland	5
Gerrards Cross	4
Amersham	3
Aylesbury	3
Beaconsfield	2
Broughton	2
Chesham	1
High Wycombe	1
Total	26

Day	Total
Monday	3
Tuesday	3
Wednesday	1
Thursday	1
Friday	4
Saturday	8
Sunday	6
Total	26

Hour	Total
0	3
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	2
5	1
6	1
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	1
11	0
12	1
13	1
14	1
15	2
16	3
17	0
18	1
19	0
20	1
21	0
22	3
23	1

PRV.3.02 - Deliberate Secondary Fires (to other's property)

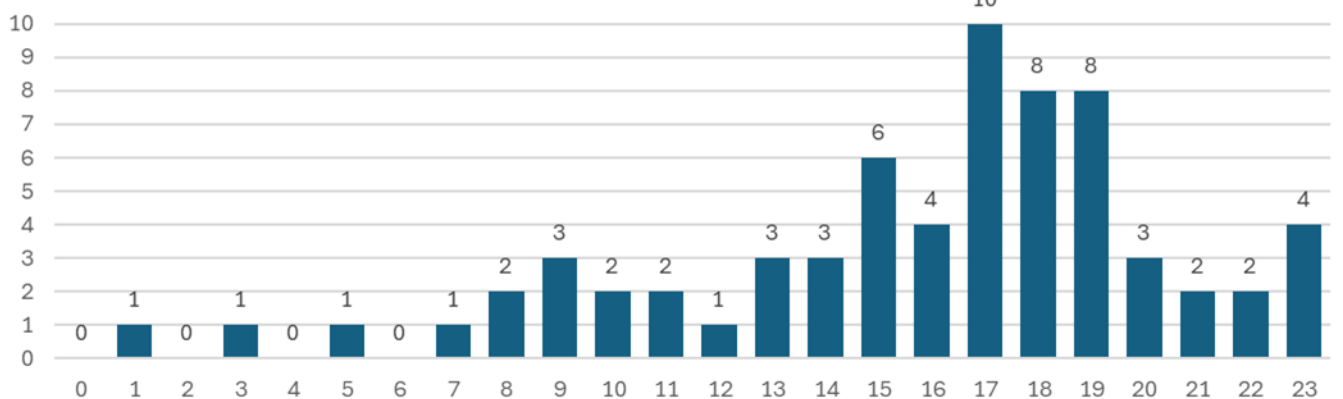
Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 10%
	Prev 5 year	34	32	40.6	40	45.8	25.2	19.2	18.8	11.8	10.4	15	21.8	G	Within 10%
	2025/2026	55	48	28	33	44	21	30	25	12				A	> 10%
	Status	R	R	B	B	G	B	R	R	G				R	> 20%
Cumulative														What is good	
	Prev 5 year	34	66	107	147	192	218	237	256	267	278	293	315	Less is better	
	2025/2026	55	103	131	164	208	229	259	284	296					
	Status	R	R	R	A	G	G	G	A	A					

Ref	PRV.3.02	Number of secondary fires that were deliberately started by somebody that wasn't the owner. Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended.
Owner	Prevention	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

Deliberate secondary fires involving other people's property during quarter three were higher than the previous five-year average. While there were a number of different property types involved at these incidents, loose refuse continues to be most common. These insights are shared with Thames Valley Police and local authority community risk teams to ensure that deliberate fire-setting and anti-social behaviour risks are considered within wider community risk management activity.

Property Type Lvl 1	Property Type Lvl 2		Station Ground	Total	Day	Total
Car		1	West Ashland	19	Monday	8
Grassland, woodland and crops	Canal/riverbank vegetation	1	Broughton	11	Tuesday	8
	Grassland, pasture, grazing etc	3	Aylesbury	8	Wednesday	11
	Heathland or moorland	1	High Wycombe	6	Thursday	9
	Hedge	1	Gerrards Cross	5	Friday	15
	Roadside vegetation	4	Buckingham	3	Saturday	7
	Scrub land	1	Olney	3	Sunday	9
	Tree scrub (includes single trees not in garden)	6	Amersham	2	Total	67
Minibus		1	Marlow	2		
Other outdoors (including land)	Cycle path/public footpath/bridleway	3	Newport Pagnell	2		
	Highway/road surface/pavement	1	Beaconsfield	1		
	Lake/pond/reservoir	1	Brill	1		
	Loose refuse (incl in garden)	19	Great Missenden	1		
	Other outdoor location	3	Princes Risborough	1		
	Park	3	Waddesdon	1		
	Playground (not equipment) or Recreational area	1	Winslow	1		
Outdoor structures	Wasteland	4	Total	67		
	Common external bin storage area	1				
	Refuse/rubbish tip	3				
	Small refuse/rubbish/recycle container (excluding wheelie bin)	7				
	Wheelie Bin	2				
Total		67				

Q3 2025-2026 Deliberate Secondary Fires by hour



PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM RISK IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



PRT.1.01 - Fire Safety Audits

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 70 Per month
	Target	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	G	> 59 Per month
	2025/2026	37	54	43	60	68	53	83	83	44				A	> 49 Per month
	Status	R	A	R	G	G	A	B	B	R				R	< 50 Per month
Cumulative															
	Target	66	132	198	264	330	396	462	528	594	660	726	792	What is good	
	2025/2026	37	91	134	194	262	315	398	481	525				More is better	
	Status	R	R	R	R	A	A	A	A	A					

Ref	PRT.1.01	<div>Number of Fire Safety Audits Completed. A fire safety audit is an examination of the premises and relevant documents to ascertain how the premises are being managed with regards to fire safety. Occupants will need to demonstrate to our officers that they have met the duties required by the Fire Safety Order.</div>
Owner	Protection	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

Fire safety audit activity improved during Quarter 3 compared with earlier in the year.

Audit numbers were particularly strong in October and November, with 83 audits completed in each month, well above the monthly target of 66. Audit activity reduced in December, largely due to seasonal factors, increased annual leave over the Christmas period, and the temporary absence of three of nine inspecting officers attending external training related to fire safety qualifications.

Across the whole of Quarter 3, the Service completed 210 audits against a target of 198, exceeding the quarterly requirement.

By the end of December, 525 audits had been completed against a cumulative target of 594. While performance remains below the cumulative target, the gap reduced during Quarter 3, reversing the decline seen earlier in the year.

Overall, Quarter 3 demonstrates that when staffing levels allow, the Service can deliver audit activity at or above expected levels, providing confidence that recent workforce improvements are having a positive effect.

PRT.3.01 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Accidental

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 5 per month
	Prev 5 year	9.8	11	9.2	10.8	11.4	7.4	11.8	10.6	9.4	9.6	9.2	12.0	G	< 11 per month
	2025/2026	12	12	12	15	12	10	5	7	14				A	< 16 per month
	Status	A	A	A	A	A	G	G	G	A				R	=> 16 per month
Cumulative															
	Prev 5 year	9.8	20.8	30.0	40.8	52.2	59.6	71.4	82.0	91.4	101	110	122	What is good	
	2025/2026	12	24	36	51	63	73	78	85	99				Less is better	
	Status	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	G	A					

Ref	PRT.3.01	Number of primary fires in non-domestic properties where the cause was recorded as accidental. This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons.
Owner	Protection	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

During Quarter 3, accidental fires in non-domestic premises remained broadly in line with the previous five-year average, with some month-to-month variation.

Incident numbers were lower than average in October and November, indicating a period of reduced accidental fire activity in workplace and commercial settings. December recorded a higher number of incidents, which is consistent with seasonal variation rather than a sustained increase in risk.

Detailed analysis of Q3 incidents shows that, while fires occurred across a range of premises types including retail, education, residential care homes, food and drink premises, healthcare buildings, and public administration sites, most incidents were associated with garden sheds and garages. This indicates that the overall profile is being driven more by fires in small, lightly constructed outbuildings than by incidents within workplace or public-facing premises.

In terms of fire spread, most incidents were limited in impact, typically resulting in smoke or heat damage only or being contained to the item first ignited or the room of origin. Whole-building involvement was comparatively rare and generally occurred in small ancillary structures constructed from lightweight or combustible materials. In these types of buildings, rapid fire development and total loss are expected outcomes, as their construction offers limited resistance to fire spread and is not comparable to the resilience of larger workplaces or public buildings.

By the end of December, the cumulative number of accidental non-domestic fires was slightly above the five-year average, reflecting December's higher total offsetting strong performance earlier in the quarter. There is no evidence of clustering by premises type, cause, or severity, and the overall profile indicates routine accidental causes rather than systemic failure or deterioration in fire safety standards.

Overall, Quarter 3 performance suggests normal fluctuation rather than an emerging trend. The data supports confidence that accidental workplace fires can be reduced to below historic levels for sustained periods, with continued monitoring and business engagement activity remaining appropriate to manage variability going forward.

PRT.3.02 - Non-domestic Property Fires - Deliberate

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Prev 5 year	2.4	1.6	2.2	2.6	1.8	1.6	1	0.4	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	B < 1 per month
	2025/2026	0	2	1	4	1	0	0	1	2				G < 3 per month
	Status	B	G	G	A	B	B	B	G	G				A > 2 per month
Cumulative														
	Prev 5 year	2.4	4.0	6.2	8.8	10.6	12.2	13.2	13.6	15.2	16.8	18.4	20.2	What is good
	2025/2026	0	2	3	7	8	8	8	9	11				Less is better
	Status	B	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				

Ref	PRT.3.02	Number of fires in non-domestic properties where the cause was recorded as deliberate (where the fire was started deliberately by someone other than the owner/occupant). This excludes derelict properties (unless four or more pumps were needed) and Prisons.
Owner	Protection	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

Deliberate fires in non-domestic premises remained low throughout Quarter 3.

No deliberate fires were recorded in October, followed by one in November and two in December. All three months remained within expected levels and below historical averages.

By the end of December, the year-to-date total was well below the five-year average, indicating continued low levels of deliberate fire-setting in workplace and commercial settings.

There is no evidence of any emerging trend or escalation during the quarter.

PRT.3.07 - Non-domestic Property False Alarms

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	Prev 5 year	114	115	117	121	122	140	147	139	131	120	100	109	B < 10%
	2025/2026	62	62	46	65	66	66	71	78	56				G Within 10%
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				A > 10%
Cumulative														
	Prev 5 year	114	229	346	467	589	729	877	1016	1147	1267	1366	1476	What is good
	2025/2026	62	124	170	235	301	367	438	516	572				Less is better
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				

Ref	PRT.3.07	Number of incidents attended in non-domestic properties that were recorded as a False Alarm. These could have been fire related or a special service i.e. flooding. However, this does not include where we attended as a co-responder.
Owner	Protection	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery Group	

False alarm attendances in non-domestic premises remained consistently and significantly lower than historic levels throughout Quarter 3.

The Service attended 71 incidents in October, 78 in November, and 56 in December, all substantially below the typical figures seen over the past five years.

By the end of December, the cumulative total was around half of the five-year average, demonstrating a sustained and meaningful reduction rather than a short-term improvement.

Overall, Quarter 3 confirms that changes to response arrangements have been effective in reducing unnecessary attendances, supporting better use of operational resources while maintaining public safety.

RESPONDING QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO EMERGENCIES

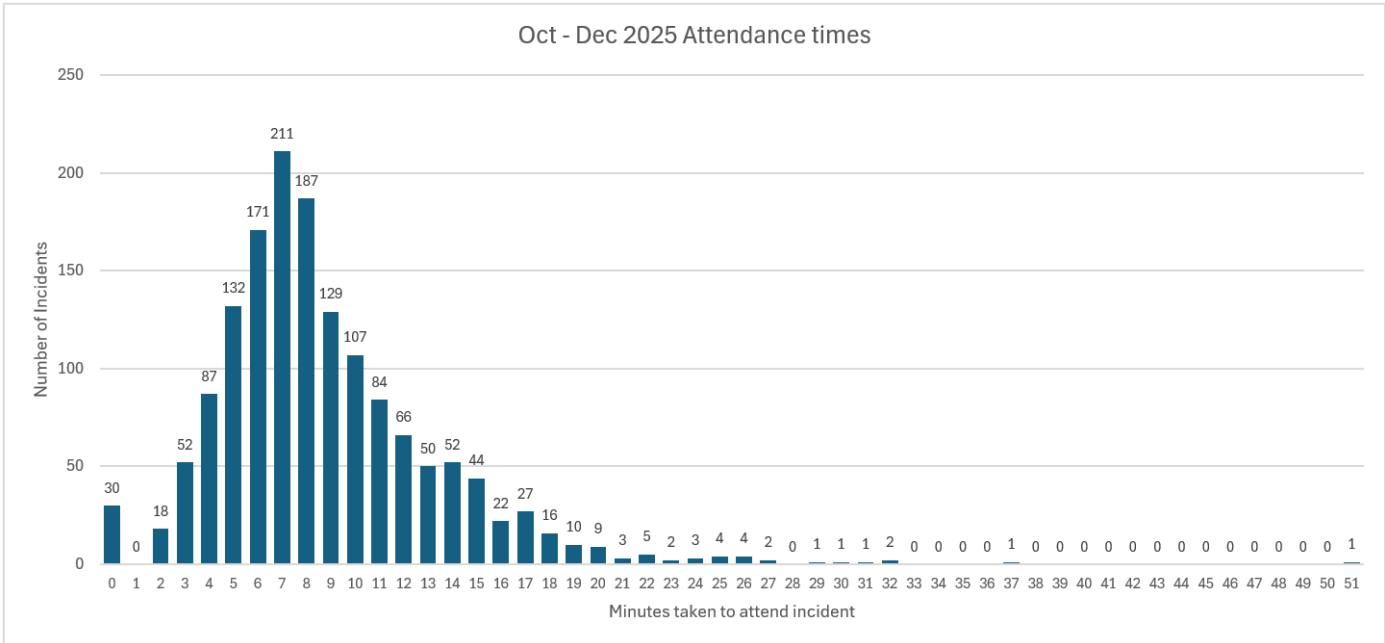


RSP.2.01 - Average Attendance Time to all Incidents (exc Co-Res)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 08:30
	Prev 5 years	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	G	=< 09:30
	2025/2026	08:54	08:43	08:49	08:52	09:03	08:54	09:13	09:26	09:07				A	> 09:30
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				R	> 10:00
YTD														What is good	
	Prev 5 years	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	Less is better	
	2025/2026	08:54	08:49	08:49	08:50	08:52	08:53	08:55	08:59	09:00					
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	RSP.2.01	The average attendance time to all incidents (excluding co-responding incidents). The average time is the minutes and seconds elapsed from the time the first appliance was assigned to the incident, to the arrival of the first appliance at the incident.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Prev 5 year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Below is a graph, showing a breakdown of the attendance times to incidents between 1 October and 31 December 2025.



Of the 1534 incidents attended, 39 took longer than 20 minutes to attend, and 118 took between 15 and 20 minutes.

A couple of examples of the slow responses can be found below:

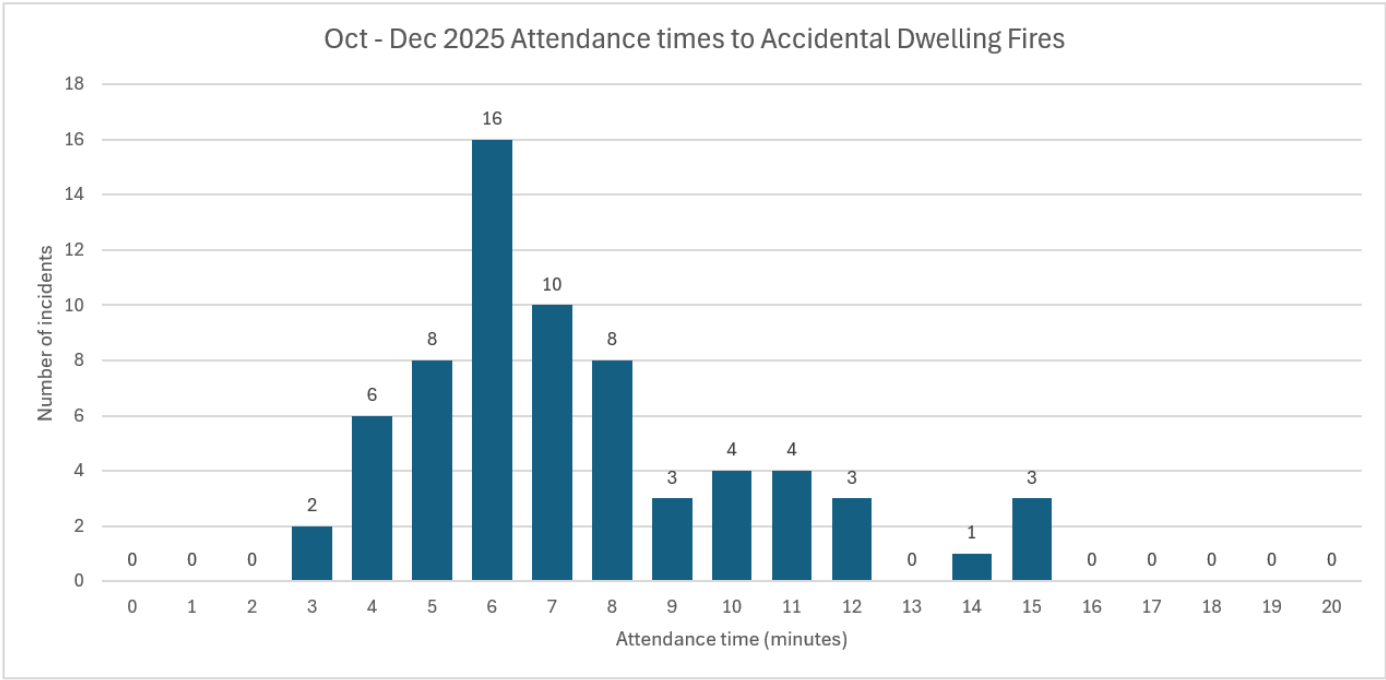
- The one incident that took 37 minutes to attend was in relation to a call from somebody driving on a motorway. They advised that they had seen some smoke in the woods, but were unsure whereabouts. The delay was all due to the crews trying to identify the location.
- The first incident that took 32 minutes to attend was in relation to an incident in which our control were provided with incorrect information in relation to the incident type and location. This incident was on a motorway.
- The second incident that took 32 minutes to attend also involved the wrong location being provided to our control room.
- The single incident that took 31 minutes to attend and also involved the wrong location being provided to our control room. This incident was on a motorway.

RSP.2.02 - Average Attendance Time to ADFs

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 08:30
	Prev 5 year	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	G	=< 09:30
	2025/2026	07:33	07:41	07:42	08:14	08:18	08:50	08:12	08:12	07:26				A	> 09:30
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	G	B	B	B				R	> 10:00
Cumulative														What is good	
	Prev 5 year	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	10:00	Less is better	
	2025/2026	07:33	07:37	07:38	07:49	07:54	08:03	08:04	08:05	08:01					
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	RSP.2.02	The average attendance time to Accidental Dwelling Fires. The average time is the minutes and seconds elapsed from the time the first appliance was assigned to the incident, to the arrival of the first appliance at the incident.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Below is a graph, showing a breakdown of the attendance times to accidental dwelling fires between 1 October and 31 December 2025.



The slowest response (15:13) was to a smell of burning coming from a washing machine. This incident was located in Cheddington. The three quickest/nearest appliances were available and mobilised.

The three appliances (in order of predicted arrival time) were;

- Leighton Buzzard
- Aylesbury 1
- Aylesbury 2

The length of time taken to attend was due to the location of the incident and it's distance from the nearest station.

Attendance times to dwellings tend to be quicker than other incidents due to the stations being located nearer denser populated areas, as well as callers being able provide more accurate information during the initial call.

RSP.3.01 - Response Model - All

Day		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	2024/2025	12.9	12.9	12.4	12.8	12.3	12.3	12.3	13.4	13.0	14.9	14.1	14.2	B > 12
Night	2025/2026	14.2	13.5	13.2	13.3	12.8	13.5	13.5	13.2	12.4				G > 10
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				A => 9
Night	2024/2025	13.1	13.2	12.7	13.5	13.6	13.2	13.1	14.5	14.0	16.3	15.5	15.6	What is good
	2025/2026	15.8	15.3	14.9	14.5	13.7	14.8	15.1	14.9	13.0				Higher is better
Night	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				

Ref	RSP.3.01	The average number of pumps available at the beginning of each shift, broken down by day shift and night shift.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous year	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

The territorial Group Commanders work closely with the Resource Management Team and People services to greater understand how absences affect appliance availability.

Equally work is taking place to reduce the reliance on bank shifts and reduce the number of standbys between stations.

Improvements have been made to the operational leave guidance and a review of operational establishments to ensure we have the right people in the right place.

RSP.3.02 - Availability - Wholetime

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	2024/2025	97.9%	99.1%	96.7%	97.0%	96.5%	96.2%	96.8%	98.0%	97.5%	99.2%	99.3%	98.5%	B 99% - 99.9%
Cumulative	2025/2026	98.9%	97.5%	98.4%	97.0%	96.8%	97.3%	97.5%	97.5%	95.9%				G 98% - 98.9%
	Status	G	A	G	A	A	A	A	A	A				A 96% - 97.9%
Cumulative	2024/2025	97.9%	98.5%	97.9%	97.7%	97.4%	97.2%	97.2%	97.3%	97.3%	97.5%	97.6%	97.7%	What is good
	2025/2026	98.9%	98.2%	98.3%	97.9%	97.7%	97.7%	97.6%	97.6%	97.4				Higher is better
Cumulative	Status	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A				

Ref	RSP.3.02	The availability of BFRS pumps to respond to incidents. This measure reflects when pumps are "on the run". With this in mind, should an appliance be at an incident, it would still be recorded as being available. Reasons for an appliance being "off the run" include, crew/skill deficient, vehicle defects and decontamination.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Our resourcing model details that West Ashland and High Wycombe's second pumps will generally be the first pumps to be resource managed if we are short on staff. This is reflected in the data when we have had to drop below 12 appliances.

Callsign	Description	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
JC13P1	Broughton	99.1%	98.5%	100.0%
JC14P1	Newport Pagnell	98.6%	98.3%	98.6%
JC16P1	West Ashland 1	99.3%	98.9%	99.4%
JC16P2	West Ashland 2	89.0%	92.7%	75.7%
JC21P1	Aylesbury 1	99.2%	99.0%	96.6%
JC21P2	Aylesbury 2	99.5%	99.3%	98.3%
JC22P1	Buckingham	99.7%	99.9%	99.2%
JC31P1	Amersham	98.8%	99.4%	99.3%
JC41P1	High Wycombe 1	91.7%	89.0%	91.7%
JC41P2	High Wycombe 2	98.0%	98.2%	95.2%
JC51P1	Beaconsfield	99.1%	97.6%	98.1%
JC52P1	Gerrards Cross	98.6%	99.0%	98.9%
Total		97.5%	97.5%	97.9%

RSP.3.04 - Bank Shifts

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 10%
	2024/2025	197	137	260	202	311	270	224	176	209	40	63	104	G	=< 0%
	2025/2026	163	252	199	293	385	304	212	213	224				A	> 0%
	Status	B	R	B	R	R	R	G	R	A				R	> 10%
Cumulative															
	2024/2025	197	334	594	796	1107	1377	1601	1777	1986	2026	2089	2193	What is good	
	2025/2026	163	415	614	907	1292	1596	1808	2021	2245				Less is better	
	Status	B	R	A	R	R	R	R	R	R					

Ref	RSP.3.04	The number of banks shift utilised per month.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous Year	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

The bank shift numbers remain higher this quarter, with the exception of October.

Impacts on these numbers include continued high level of absence, this was alongside supporting training courses and secondments.

To assist in the requirement to reduce the number of bank shifts, a review has been carried out of the operational leave guidance and adjustments made to change the bank exchange process. While we would expect to see an improvement off the back of these changes during the next few months, we expect to see greater improvements into 2026/2027.

RSP.4.01 - Availability - On-Call

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	=> 25%
	2024/2025	10.6%	9.6%	7.3%	11.2%	10.8%	11.6%	10.8%	13.5%	11.1%	20.9%	18.8%	17.5%	G	=> 15%
	2025/2026	18.5%	17.7%	16.1%	15.5%	11.3%	15.9%	16.4%	15.4%	10.0%				A	=> 10%
	Status	G	G	G	G	A	G	G	G	A				R	< 10%
YTD Avg	2024/2025	10.6%	10.8%	9.15%	9.7%	9.9%	10.2%	10.3%	10.7%	10.7%	11.8%	12.3%	12.8%	What is good	
	2025/2026	18.5%	18.1%	17.4%	16.9%	15.8%	15.8%	15.9%	15.8%	15.2%				Higher is better	
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	RSP.4.01	The availability of BFRS pumps to respond to incidents. This measure reflects when pumps are "on the run". With this in mind, should an appliance be at an incident, it would still be recorded as being available. Reasons for an appliance being "off the run" include, crew/skill deficient, vehicle defects and decontamination.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Whilst we continue to see an improving trend when compared with 2024/2025, we did see a considerable decline in availability during December.

There are fundamental challenges within the On-Call which are contributing to this very low availability, some of this can be attributed to wholtime staff who are dual contracted with On-Call roles, who were involved with multiple training activities across Q3.

Other impacts include: a drive to ensure On-Call staff use their annual leave entitlement, which reset in January and sickness.

The On-Call working group will continue to monitor the existing and emerging fundamental challenges through line management and discussion, with the aim of increasing On-Call availability, whilst the On-Call Improvement Programme takes a longer-term view of potential issues.

We have recently completed a recruitment drive for more On-Call staff, which are due to start their training in March.

RSP.4.02 - Availability - On-Call - Immediately Available

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B => 20%
	2024/2025	5.9%	5.6%	3.5%	6.3%	5.5%	5.2%	6.3%	9.0%	7.0%	14.3%	11.7%	9.7%	G => 10%
	2025/2026	11.6%	10.9%	9.9%	8.7%	6.9%	8.9%	9.1%	8.4%	5.9%				A => 5%
	Status	G	G	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				R < 5%
Cumulative	2024/2025	5.9%	5.7%	5.0%	5.3%	5.4%	5.3%	5.5%	5.9%	6.0%	6.9%	7.3%	7.5%	What is good Higher is better
	2025/2026	11.6%	11.2%	10.8%	10.3%	9.6%	9.5%	9.4%	9.3%	8.9%				
	Status	G	G	G	G	A	A	A	A	A				

Ref	RSP.4.02	The availability of BFRS On-Call pumps to respond to incidents. This measure reflects when pumps are "on the run", but does not include when the pump is available with a slower response time (i.e. excludes 2nd, 3rd and 4th line). Reasons for an appliance being "off the run" include, crew/skill deficient, vehicle defects and decontamination.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Whilst we continue to see an improving trend when compared with 2024/2025, On-Call's immediate availability continues to follow a negative trend across the year.

As highlighted in RSP 4.01, there are fundamental challenges within the On-Call which are contributing to this very low availability, some of this can be attributed to wholtime staff who are dual contracted with On-Call roles, who were involved with multiple training activities across Q3.

Other impacts include: a drive to ensure On-Call staff use their annual leave entitlement, which reset in January and sickness.

The On-Call working group and the On-Call Improvement Programme aims to improve availability, but this is very much a long-term plan.

We have recently completed a recruitment drive for more On-Call staff, which are due to start their training in March.

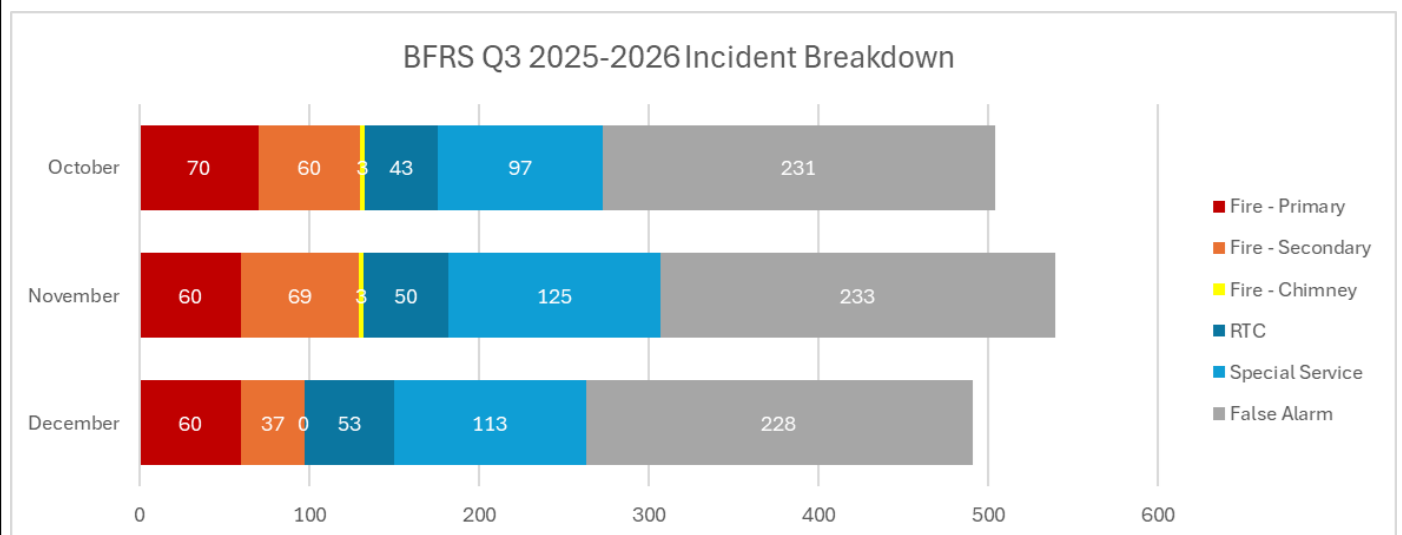
RSP.7.01 - Total Incidents (exc co-responders)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 2.51%
	Prev 5 year	562	575	604	652	652	619	607	573	551	555	480	502	G	Within 2.5%
	2025/2026	566	534	560	676	655	542	504	540	491				A	> 2.51%
	Status	G	B	B	A	G	B	B	B	B				R	> 10%
Cumulative														What is good	
	Prev 5 year	562	1137	1741	2393	3045	3664	4272	4844	5395	5951	6431	6933	Monitor	
	2025/2026	566	1100	1660	2336	2991	3533	4037	4577	5068					
	Status	G	B	B	G	G	B	B	B	B					

Ref	RSP.7.01	Total number of incidents attended within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (excluding co-responder incidents).
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Incidents during Q3 remained on season trend across most types of incident. However, we a slight increase in deliberate secondary fires (see PRV 3.02) during this period.

A breakdown of the broader incident types and time of incident can be seen below.



Below is a breakdown of the false alarms attended by BFRS between October 2025 and December 2025.

False Alarm - Property Type	Incidents	False Alarm Reason (high level)	Incidents
Dwelling	370	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - Animal	1
Non Residential	118	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - Contaminants	35
Other Residential	87	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - External factors	5
Car	31	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - Human	173
Grassland, woodland and crops	23	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - System: flame	1
False Alarm - Property not found	16	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - System: heat	4
Other outdoors (including land)	15	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - System: other	37
Outdoor structures	10	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - System: smoke alarm	73
Outdoor equipment and machinery	8	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - System: sprinkler	1
Van	4	Fire alarm due to Apparatus - Unknown	88
Bus/coach	3	Good Intent false alarm - Fire	207
Multiple Vehicles	3	Good Intent false alarm - Special Service	38
Lorry/HGV	2	Malicious False Alarm - Activation of fire call point	7
Other	1	Malicious False Alarm - By phone	15
Towing caravan elsewhere (not on tow)	1	Malicious False Alarm - By phone, Call NOT challenged	2
Total	692	Malicious False Alarm - Other	4
		Malicious False Alarm - Special Service - Not Required	1
		Total	692

Monthly

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Prev 5 year	129	131	151	201	195	150	149	132	138	117	114	117
2025/2026	126	133	153	242	201	146	111	179	150			
Status	G	G	G	R	G	G	B	R	G			

Cumulative

Prev 5 year	129	260	410	611	807	957	1106	1238	1376	1493	1606	1723
2025/2026	126	259	412	654	855	1001	1112	1291	1441			
Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G			

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

What is good
Less is better

Ref	RSP.7.02	Number of mobilisations of appliance from Over The Border (OTB) into BFRS grounds.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Below is breakdown of Q3 2025-2026 Mobilisations into Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes from other Fire and Rescue Services.

Service	Time unavailable	Appliances Requested	Appliances Mobilised	% Mobilised	Appliances On-Scene	% On-Scene
Berkshire	201:48:27	210	203	97%	150	71%
Oxfordshire	60:09:04	76	74	97%	51	67%
Bedfordshire	28:49:32	53	36	68%	25	47%
London	46:58:48	48	33	69%	23	48%
Hertfordshire	11:41:02	34	14	41%	9	26%
Northamptonshire	4:16:23	17	9	53%	4	24%
Surrey	0:01:38	2	0	0%	0	0%
Total	353:44:54	440	369	84%	262	60%

Station Ground	Appliances Assigned	Time Unavailable
Beaconsfield	91	143:01:19
Gerrards Cross	153	116:39:53
Aylesbury	34	20:50:21
Haddenham	14	11:55:06
High Wycombe	26	11:01:25
Stokenchurch	19	9:33:13
West Ashland	18	7:56:28
Brill	13	7:24:44
Buckingham	13	6:16:28
Chesham	20	4:09:23
Princes Risborough	5	3:24:11
Waddesdon	5	3:03:41
Broughton	14	2:26:50
Olney	3	2:25:29
Marlow	3	2:25:19
Newport Pagnell	7	1:09:38
Amersham	2	0:01:26
Total	440	353:44:54

Incident type - at time of call	Appliances Assigned	Time Unavailable
FIRE - DOMESTIC	68	113:28:04
TRANSPORT - RTC PERSONS TRAPPED SMALL VE	44	29:54:42
TRANSPORT - SMALL VEHICLE ON FIRE	36	16:58:49
FIRE - FIRE IN THE OPEN	34	31:02:53
TRANSPORT - LARGE VEHICLE ON FIRE	30	46:38:59
ALARM - RESIDENTIAL	21	6:12:59
MOBILISING - STANDBY	19	14:57:52
TRANSPORT - RTC PERSONS TRAPPED LARGE VE	12	4:24:56
TRANSPORT - RTC SCENE SAFETY	12	8:18:04
RESCUE - RESCUE OF LARGE ANIMALS	10	7:26:03
FIRE - ROOF RESIDENTIAL	8	10:03:58
FIRE - PERSONS REPORTED DOMESTIC	8	1:21:18
HAZMAT - SMALL	8	2:47:03
Other	130	60:09:14
Total	440	353:44:54

Of the 245 incidents in which BFRS requested appliances from other Services, 111 resulted in an over the border appliances being first on-scene (45%) A breakdown of this can be found below;

Service	First in attendance	%
BFRS	134	55%
Roayl Berkshire FRS	73	30%
Oxfordshire FRS	28	11%
Bedfordshire FRS	6	2%
Hertfordshire FRS	2	1%
London FRS	1	0%
Northants FRS	1	0%
Total	245	

RSP.7.03 - OTB Mobilisations out of BFRS Grounds

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 10%
	Prev 5 year	36	50	41	54	53	40	49	39	45	39	32	36	G	Within 10%
	2025/2026	58	84	88	69	70	67	40	42	44				A	> 10%
	Status	R	R	R	R	R	R	B	G	G				R	> 20%
Cumulative														What is good	
	Prev 5 year	36	86	127	181	234	274	323	362	407	445	478	514	Within range is better	
	2025/2026	58	142	230	299	369	436	476	518	562					
	Status	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R					

Ref	RSP.7.03	Number of mobilisations of appliance from BFRS into Over The Border (OTB) grounds.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Previous five year average	
Delivery Group	Service Delivery	

Below is breakdown of where BFRS supported other Fire and Rescue Services with incidents outside of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, during Q3 2025-2026.

Station	Wholetime/ On-Call	Appliance Type	Appliances Assigned	Time Unavailable
Broughton	WT	Pump	13	8:46:15
Newport Pagnell	WT	Pump	4	3:20:52
Newport Pagnell	WT	Boat	1	1:11:16
Olney	OC	Pump	1	0:37:51
West Ashland	WT	Pump	10	6:48:39
West Ashland	WT	Pump	3	0:44:09
Aylesbury	WT	Pump	4	3:07:18
Buckingham	WT	Pump	12	10:32:07
Buckingham	OC	Pump	1	0:30:56
Aylesbury (USAR)	WT	USAR	1	0:23:33
Aylesbury (USAR)	WT	USAR	1	0:13:32
Aylesbury (USAR)	WT	USAR	1	0:24:36
Amersham	WT	Pump	2	2:15:40
High Wycombe	WT	Aerial	8	2:10:36
High Wycombe	WT	Pump	14	9:09:53
High Wycombe	WT	Pump	9	8:52:59
Beaconsfield	WT	Pump	17	14:23:35
Beaconsfield	WT	Boat	1	0:37:24
Gerrards Cross	WT	Pump	23	14:41:11
Total			126	88:52:22

Service	Appliances Assigned	Time Unavailable
Berkshire	53	41:32:45
Bedfordshire	27	18:15:32
Oxfordshire	27	16:59:17
Northamptonshire	10	8:04:47
London	5	2:29:33
Hertfordshire	4	1:30:28
Total	126	88:52:22

AN INCLUSIVE, HEALTHY AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE



PPL.1.01 - Actual vs Establishment - Wholetime

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	>100%
	Target	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	G	> 94.9%
	2025/2026	314	312	310	310	307	310	309	309	307				A	< 95%
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				R	< 90%
Average														What is good	
	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Closer to Target	
	2025/2026	104%	104%	104%	103%	103%	103%	103%	103%	103%					
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	PPL.1.01	Total number of people in Wholetime roles v's budgeted establishment as at the last day of the month.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Role	Head Count
Senior Management	3 (1 Temp)
Area Commander	2
Group Commander	7 (1 Temp)
Station Commander	21 (1 SC on secondment)
Watch Commander	44
Crew Commander	53
Firefighter	177 (inc 2 FF on secondment & 1 FF on sabbatical)
Total establishment	307

Throughout quarter three, Cohort 13 of our Wholetime Firefighters have continued their training programme, delivered both in-house and at the Fire Service College. In line with our strategic workforce planning and projected operational requirements, the Service also authorised a further intake of six Wholetime Firefighter (Apprentice) positions. These individuals were selected from the existing recruitment pool established during the Cohort 13 campaign, in which fifteen applicants successfully passed all assessment stages but did not rank among the highest-scoring candidates.

All shortlisted candidates have now completed an RRT assessment and interview, and six have been offered roles, subject to the successful completion of pre-employment checks.

This approach reflects the efficient utilisation of an established talent pool, enabling the Service to reduce recruitment lead times, maintain momentum in workforce supply, and ensure continuity in operational capability.

As of December, the projected monthly wholetime leaver rate has increased marginally from 1.1 to 1.3, remaining within a range consistent with normal workforce variation. While this represents a slight rise, the broader trend continues to indicate a stable and resilient workforce profile. Between October and December, three Wholetime employees left the Service, all from Firefighter roles, with one Firefighter later transferring into a Support role. Despite these movements, current staffing levels allow us to maintain a minimum of 301 operational personnel, a threshold essential for sustaining operational resilience and effective service delivery.

Looking ahead, any further operational recruitment will be progressed through a measured, evidence-based approach, ensuring alignment with organisational need and long-term workforce sustainability. This strategic stance positions the Service to remain agile, responsive, and well-prepared to meet future operational demands.

PPL.1.02 - Actual vs Establishment - On-Call

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 95%
	Target	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	G	> 89.9%
	2025/2026	60.0	59.8	60.8	59.7	59.5	55.7	56.3	56.8	57.3				A	< 90%
	Status	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R				R	< 85%
Average YTD														What is good	
	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Closer to Target	
	2025/2026	62.0%	62.0%	63.0%	63.0%	62.0%	62.0%	61.0%	61.0%	61.0%					
	Status	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R					

Ref	PPL.1.02	Total number of people in On-Call roles v's budgeted establishment (FTE) as at the last day of the month.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Since the last quarter, we have been progressing through the different stages of the On-Call Firefighter recruitment campaign which went live on 1 September 2025. On-Call Managers, HR, and the Communications team have been focused on the six priority stations identified for this campaign: Princes Risborough, Winslow, Waddesdon, Brill, Olney, and Chesham. However, due to the low number of applications received, SHL links were sent to all candidates that were shortlisted. Interviews have now taken place, and we currently have 6 candidates that are going through the pre-employment check stage.

While the budgeted Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for On-Call stations is 96, it is important to note that this figure does not directly equate to headcount. As highlighted by HR and Finance, a single FTE may be fulfilled by multiple individuals, reflecting the flexible nature of On-Call contracts.

The December FTE figures were shaped by several key changes including current employees increasing or decreasing their hours of availability and current Wholetime employees taking on new On Call contracts, alongside their Wholetime roles.

To ensure our systems accuracy and consistency, a thorough validation of all On Call contracted hours in iTrent will be carried out alongside ongoing work to review and refine On-Call contracts, with a focus on aligning contractual arrangements with station-specific needs.

This campaign represents a key step in strengthening our On-Call workforce model and ensuring long-term operational resilience across our communities.

The table below shows the progress of our current recruitment campaign for On-Call firefighters;

	Applications	SHL Testing	Treadmill Test	Role Related Test	Interview & Presentation	Medical	DBS
Start of Process	47	44	13	10	9	6	6
Passed	44	13	10	9	6		
Failed	2	25	2	1	2		
Did not complete/withdrew	1	6	1				
Put on Hold					1		
Moved to next stage	44	13	10	9	6		

PPL.1.03 - Actual vs Establishment - Support

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	>100%
	Target	133.1	135.1	135.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1				G	> 94.9%
	2025/2026	128.3	128.3	130.3	131.3	130.9	128.1	130.1	128.7	126.6				A	< 95%
	Status	G	A	G	G	G	A	A	A	A				R	< 90%
%														What is good	
	Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Closer to Target	
	2025/2026	96.4%	95.7%	95.9%	95.9%	95.8%	95.4%	95.3%	95.2%	94.8%					
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A					

Ref	PPL.1.03	Total number of people in Support roles v's budgeted establishment as at the last day of the month.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

The table below presents the current status of our support establishment over the last quarter, comparing targeted versus actual Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) figures.

Month	Target	FTE
October	137.11 No change	130.14
November	137.11 No change	128.74
December	137.11 No change	126.56

- Target FTE: 137.11
- Actual FTE: 126.56
- Variance: No change in target for the month of December

Key Movements:

Support FTE levels continue to experience month on month variation, driven by staffing changes and evolving workforce dynamics. The targeted FTE figure for 2025/26 encompasses both budgeted and temporary positions, with the latter playing a critical role in enabling departments to manage increased workloads and deliver priority projects within required timeframes. Where possible, we aim to recruit into roles ahead of planned leavers, allowing for a comprehensive and effective handover process. Recent months have seen a high volume of recruitment activity, with the majority of vacancies successfully filled, contributing to a more resilient workforce. FTE levels also fluctuate due to existing employees adjusting their contracted hours, either increasing or decreasing their FTE hours.

These movements reflect ongoing efforts to align resources with service demands. While overall FTE remains below the target, staffing levels are closely monitored to ensure continuity and quality of service delivery.

The HR Operations team continues to collaborate closely with managers, providing support throughout recruitment campaigns to ensure we attract and appoint the most suitable candidates for each role.

PPL.1.04 - Staff Turnover

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	Target	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%	G	<= 1% per month
	2025/2026	1.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.4%				A	> 1% per month
	Status	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				R	> 1.9% per month
YTD															
	Target	< 1%	< 2%	< 3%	< 4%	< 5%	< 6%	< 7%	< 8%	< 9%	<10%	<11%	<12%	What is good	
	2025/2026	1.4%	2%	2.6%	3.2%	3.8%	4.6%	5.4%	6.2%	6.6%				Less is better	
	Status	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PPL.1.04	Percentage of employees who leave the Service, expressed as a percentage of the total workforce.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

During the third quarter of the financial year (October to December), the organisation recorded a total of nine employee leavers. This comprised of one operational and four support employees who resigned, one operational and two support employees who retired and one operational dismissal. These movements reflect the natural ebb and flow of workforce dynamics and are consistent with anticipated patterns for this period.

While we continue to monitor our monthly leaver rate as part of broader workforce planning efforts, overall turnover remains within acceptable and manageable thresholds. The organisation remains committed to maintaining service continuity and operational resilience through proactive planning and strategic resourcing. To support this, we are working closely with managers across departments to identify potential risks and recruitment strategies. These include succession/workforce planning, with early recruitment to enable effective handovers, and ongoing engagement initiatives to support employee satisfaction and career development.

Our approach ensures that staffing levels are aligned with service needs, and that we remain agile in responding to changes within our workforce. By maintaining a focus on retention and forward planning, we aim to safeguard organisational stability and deliver consistent, high-quality service outcomes.

PPL.2.05 - Maintenance of Operational Skills - WT

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 10% per month
	Target	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	G	> 7.99% per month
	2025/2026	4.2%	10.7%	11.9%	11.4%	4.3%	7.3%	10.8%	6.7%	8.4				A	< 8% per month
	Status	R	B	B	B	R	A	B	A	G				R	< 6% per month
Cumulative														What is good	
	Target	8%	16%	24%	32%	40%	48%	56%	64%	72%	80%	88%	96%	Higher is better	
	2025/2026	4.2%	14.9%	26.8%	38.2%	42.5%	49.8%	60.6%	67.3%	75.7%					
	Status	R	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	R3.01	Progress against maintenance of operational skills by wholetime firefighters and supervisory managers.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

During Quarter 3 of 2025/26, progress in the maintenance of operational skills (MOS) among wholetime firefighters remained positive overall, with cumulative performance continuing to track in line with expectations despite some monthly variation.

October delivered a strong start to the quarter, with a completion rate of 10.8%, exceeding the monthly target of 8%. This performance contributed positively to cumulative progress and reflected increased training activity following the summer period.

Performance dipped in November, with a completion rate of 6.7%, falling below the target and placing the month in the amber category. This reduction is likely attributable to a combination of operational demands and reduced training availability during the late autumn period. Despite this, cumulative performance remained on track, supported by the strong results achieved in October.

December saw a recovery in performance, with a completion rate of 8.4%, marginally exceeding the target. This improvement helped stabilise quarterly results and ensured cumulative progress continued to align with planned delivery.

Overall, Q3 performance reflects a resilient position, with strong performance in October and December offsetting the outcome in November. While monthly fluctuations were evident, cumulative MOS completion remained steady and in line with expectations achieving 75.7%, which is above the 72% target. Ongoing monitoring and scheduled training activity will continue into Q4 to maintain momentum and address any emerging gaps.

PPL.2.07 - Mandatory E-Learning

Wholetime		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> Target
	Target	11%	22%	33%	44%	55%	66%	77%	88%	95%	95%	95%	95%	G	< 0 - 9.9 %
	2025/2026	43%	46%	48%	65%	68%	69%	73%	74%	87%				A	< 10 - 19.9 %
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	G	A	G				R	< 20%
Support														What is good	
	Target	8%	16%	24%	40%	56%	72%	80%	88%	95%	95%	95%	95%	Higher is better	
	2025/2026	33%	34%	41%	56%	61%	62%	69%	72%	88%					
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	G					

Ref	PPL.2.07	All BFRS staff are required to complete a number of mandatory e-learning packages every year. These packages cover three main subjects across Health & Safety, Equality Diversity & Inclusion and Data Protection. Within the subjects, there are packages such as Safety Event Reporting, ED&I in the Workplace and Responsible for Information.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

The eLearning programme for 2025/2026 adopted a modular structure.

Q1 - EDI

Q2 - Health & Safety

Q3 - Data Protection

Q4 - Mop up

As at the end of Q3, the Service did not achieve the KPIs of 95% for Wholetime and 95% for Support. Completion rates were as follows: 87% for Wholetime, 88% for Support.

Detailed reports are generated at the end of each quarter, broken down by team and module. These are distributed to Managers to highlight outstanding completions and to support staff in fulfilling mandatory training requirements. Monthly KPI tracking then reinforces accountability. Throughout November and December, further interim reports were generated to try and mitigate the risk of the KPIs not being met resulting in an increase in completion rates.

Detailed reporting to Managers continues to be generated on a regular basis to highlight where modules are incomplete and as we move into Q4, the focus shifts to those who have not completed their modules with a view to obtain 95% before the year end.

PPL.3.01 - Appraisal Completion

Appraisals

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	30%	60%	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
2024/2025	71%	79%	87%	90%	92%	95%	96%	96%	97%			
Status	B	B	A	A	A	B	B	B	B			

B	>10% of target or 95%
G	=> 0% of Target
A	< 0% of target
R	< 10% of target

Ref	PPL.3.01
Owner	People Services
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group

The percentage of all staff that have received their 2024/2025 end of year review.

What is good
Higher is better

As of the end of Q3, the Service exceeded its KPI target of 95% for End of Year appraisal returns achieving a return rate of 97%. Monthly reporting throughout the year so far has provided Managers with detailed, staff-level data, clearly identifying incomplete appraisals. This enables targeted follow-up to ensure all employees engage in meaningful career development discussions. Reports also include return rates against KPI benchmarks, offering Managers clear visibility into their contribution toward overall Service performance.

Appraisal training remains ongoing and is strategically aligned with the end of year, objective setting and half-year review periods. This ensures Managers can participate at appropriate intervals, with a focus on fostering open dialogue and addressing any barriers to completion. Additionally, all newly appointed Supervisory Managers receive appraisal training as part of the Supervisory Managers Acquisition Programme following each Assessment and Development Centre.

Throughout Q3, focus has shifted towards half-year appraisal discussions with a push to submit these in time for the end of year appraisal meetings due by the end of Q4. Completion rates of all appraisals will continue to be monitored and reported on monthly to Managers and through the People Delivery Group.

PPL.3.02 - Objectives & Half Year Review

Objectives

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	30%	60%	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
2025/2026	32%	47%	82%	89%	93%	96%	98%	99%	99%			
Status	G	R	A	A	A	B	B	B	B			

B	>10% of target or 95%
G	=> 0% of Target
A	< 0% of target
R	< 10% of target

Review

Target	-	-	-	-	-	25%	50%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
2025/2026	-	-	-	-	-	35%	65%	81%	85%			
Status	-	-	-	-	-	G	B	B	B			

What is good
Higher is better

Ref	PPL.3.02
Owner	People Services
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group

The percentage of all staff that have received their 2025/2026 Objectives, and have then had their half year review.

As of the end of Q3, the Service exceeded its KPI targets of 95% for Objective Setting appraisals and 75% half year reviews, achieving return rates of 99% and 85% respectively.

Monthly reporting throughout the year so far has provided Managers with detailed, staff-level data, clearly identifying incomplete appraisals. This enables targeted follow-up to ensure all employees engage in meaningful career development discussions. Reports also include return rates against KPI benchmarks, offering Managers clear visibility into their contribution toward overall Service performance.

Appraisal training remains ongoing and is strategically aligned with the end of year, objective setting and half-year review periods. This ensures Managers can participate at appropriate intervals, with a focus on fostering open dialogue and addressing any barriers to completion. Additionally, all newly appointed Supervisory Managers receive appraisal training as part of the Supervisory Managers Acquisition Programme following each Assessment and Development Centre.

Throughout Q3, focus has shifted towards half-year appraisal discussions with a push to submit these in time for the end of year appraisal meetings due by the end of Q4. Completion rates of all appraisals will continue to be monitored and reported on monthly to Managers and through the People Delivery Group.

PPL.4.01 - Absence - Wholetime Staff

Count		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 20%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	G	=< 0%
	2025/2026	40	60	29	39	36	33	56	44	53				A	> 0%
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R	> 10%
Shifts														What is good	
	Target	297	295	293	293	291	293	293	293	291				Less is better	
	2025/2026	283	360	210	269	266	265	419	373	385					
	Status	G	R	B	G	G	G	R	R	R					

Ref	PPL.4.01	The number of occasions wholetime employees are absent due to sickness and number of working days lost per month due to sickness. This covers short and long-term sickness. The target is based on the national average of days/shifts recorded per WT FF across 2024-25. This does not account for seasonal trends.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Primary Causes of Absence

- Musculo Skeletal – Lower body / limb.
- Musculo Skeletal – Back.
- Respiratory Illnesses: Cold, cough, and influenza were the most frequently reported reasons for absence.
- Gastrointestinal Illnesses: Sickness, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, and gastroenteritis also contributed notably to the overall absence figures.

During October 2025, the service experienced a significant spike in absence, totalling 419 days lost. This increase aligns with broader public health trends observed across Buckinghamshire and the UK.

Public Health Context

- The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) reported that influenza activity exceeded seasonal baseline levels by late October, with: Positivity rates rising to 8.2% and Hospital admissions reaching 2.19 per 100,000 population.
- NHS England issued a "flu jab SOS", warning of an early wave of flu cases and urging vaccination uptake.
- Norovirus outbreaks were also reported, particularly in schools, care homes, and hospitals, contributing to increased community transmission.

Long-Term Absence Trends

Musculoskeletal conditions remain the leading cause of long-term absence among whole-time employees.

Local Impact

Given the national trends and early onset of seasonal illnesses, it is likely that Buckinghamshire was significantly affected, contributing to the elevated absence levels within the service.

BFRS Measures

To support in the prevention of instances of cold and flu, Flu Vaccination Clinics were held throughout October and November for all staffing groups.

Current Position

Monthly Attendance Review Meetings are held with Station Commanders to monitor and manage absence cases.

Proposed Improvement

- Introduce a Structured Review Process for Support Services teams by implementing Monthly Attendance Review Meetings with Support Services Managers in areas where Short Term Sickness and long term sickness is high.
- Align this process with the operational model to ensure consistency across the Service and improve early intervention for absence management.
- Provide more training from managers – SLED and Thrive Programme
- Work closely with Occupational Health to commence early intervention especially relating to Musculo skeletal cases

Expected Benefits

- Improved visibility of absence trends across all departments.
- Earlier identification of support needs and potential adjustments.
- Consistent application of Attendance Management Policy across the Service.

Work closer with the Health and Safety Team

Focus on musculoskeletal injury prevention awareness

Count		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 20%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	G	=< 0%
	2025/2026	10	13	8	11	11	12	18	10	10				A	> 0%
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R	> 10%
Days														What is good	
	Target	169	167	169	169	169	170	170	170	172				Less is better	
	2025/2026	112	183	136	209	252	224	284	170	153					
	Status	B	A	G	R	R	R	R	G	G					

Ref	PPL.4.03	The number of occasions OC employees are absent due to sickness and calendar days (not shifts) lost per month due to sickness. This covers short and long-term sickness. The target is based on the national average of days/shifts recorded per OC FF across 2024-25. This does not account for seasonal trends.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Primary Causes of Absence

- Back and spinal disorders.
- Musculo Skeletal – Shoulder.
- Musculo Skeletal – Upper body / limb.
- Post Operative Recovery / Hospital.

Key Insights

- Significant increase in overall absence: Both the number of absentees and total days lost rose sharply in 2025.
- Long-Term Sickness is the main driver: Accounts for 60% of all lost days in 2025, compared to 41% in 2024.
- Short-Term Sickness also grew: Average duration per absentee more than doubled.

The most common reason for on-call Long Term absences is because of spinal disorders and muscular-skeletal.

Recommendation

Integration of HR, Health & Safety, and Occupational Health Data.

Current Gap: There is a lack of integration between HR absence data, Health & Safety incident reports, and Occupational Health cases. This limits visibility of trends and risks across the organisation.

Recommendation:

Share and align data on incidents and health cases.

Identified Trend: A notable pattern of musculoskeletal injuries among on-call employees has emerged. This requires:

- Targeted review of working practices for on-call roles.
- Preventative measures, such as ergonomic assessments, training, and health monitoring.

BFRS Measures

To support in the prevention of instances of cold and flu, Flu Vaccination Clinics were held throughout October and November for all staffing groups.

Current Position

Monthly Attendance Review Meetings are held with Station Commanders to monitor and manage absence cases.

Proposed Improvement

- Introduce a Structured Review Process for Support Services teams by implementing Monthly Attendance Review Meetings with Support Services Managers in areas where Short Term Sickness and long-term sickness is high.
- Align this process with the operational model to ensure consistency across the Service and improve early intervention for absence management.
- Provide more training from managers – SLED and Thrive Programme.
- Work closely with Occupational Health to commence early intervention especially relating to Musculo skeletal cases.

Expected Benefits

- Improved visibility of absence trends across all departments.
- Earlier identification of support needs and potential adjustments.
- Consistent application of Attendance Management Policy across the Service.

Work closer with the Health and Safety Team

Focus on musculoskeletal injury prevention awareness.

PPL.4.05 - Absence - Support Staff

Count		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 20%
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	G	=< 0%
	2025/2026	14	19	14	17	22	17	19	17	25				A	> 0%
Shifts	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R	> 10%
	Target	103	103	105	105	105	103	105	105	102				What is good	
	2025/2026	122	117	58	44	88	77	90	108	175				Less is better	
	Status	R	R	B	B	G	B	G	A	R					

Ref	PPL.4.05	The number of occasions SS employees are absent due to sickness and working days (shifts) lost per month due to sickness. This covers short and long-term sickness. The target is based on the national average of days/shifts recorded per FTE across 2024-25. This does not account for seasonal trends.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Primary Causes of Absence

- Musculo Skeletal – Lower body / limb.
- Musculo Skeletal – Back.
- Respiratory – Cold / Cough / Influenza.
- Sickness/ Diarrhoea/ Abdominal pain/ Gastroenteritis.
- Post operative Recovery/ Hospital.

BFRS Measures

To support in the prevention of instances of cold and flu, Flu Vaccination Clinics were held throughout October and November for all staffing groups.

Current Position

No structured approach currently exists; attendance reviews are not held on a regular basis.

Proposed Improvement

- Introduce a Structured Review Process for Support Services teams by implementing Monthly Attendance Review Meetings with Support Services Managers in areas where Short Term Sickness and long-term sickness is high.
- Align this process with the operational model to ensure consistency across the Service and improve early intervention for absence management.
- Provide more training from managers – SLED and Thrive Programme.
- Work closely with Occupational Health to commence early intervention especially relating to Musculo skeletal cases.

Expected Benefits

- Improved visibility of absence trends across all departments.
- Earlier identification of support needs and potential adjustments.
- Consistent application of Attendance Management Policy across the Service.

Work more closer with the Health and Safety Team

Focus on musculoskeletal injury prevention awareness.

PPL.5.02 - Grievances

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	2024/2025	1	1	4	2	1	4	4	2	1	1	4	3	G	< 2 per month
	2025/2026	3	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	0				A	2 per month
	Status	R	A	G	A	G	G	G	G	G				R	> 2 per month
YTD														What is good	
	2024/2025	1	2	6	8	9	13	17	19	20	21	25	28		
	2025/2026	3	5	5	7	8	9	10	10	10				Less is better	
	Status	R	A	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PPL.5.02	The number of new grievances recorded each month. Figures include both informal and formal grievances. Where an informal grievance is escalated to being a formal grievance, this will be counted twice.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Previous Year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Monthly and year-to-date grievance levels for the first three quarters of 2025/26 remained within acceptable limits.

During Q3, one grievance was submitted, compared to the five submitted in Q2. This results in a year-to-date total of ten.

The one grievance raised within Q3 was from a Support Services employee.

As of the end of December, there was two active cases being managed formally.

The average time for grievance closure from April to December was 68 days.

No specific trends can be established.

We are committed to addressing concerns promptly and at the most appropriate level. All grievances are handled with transparency, fairness, and respect. The number of grievances raised reflects employees’ confidence in the process. When a concern involves an employee, it is managed with fairness and proportionality. We ensure that each issue is addressed using the correct procedures, with suitable resources allocated for investigation and appropriate support provided to all parties involved. Our goal is to resolve matters efficiently and within a reasonable timeframe.

PPL.5.04 - Disciplinary

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	2024/2025	1	1	0	2	0	2	1	3	0	2	5	6	G	< 2 per month
	2025/2026	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0				A	2 per month
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A	G				R	> 2 per month
YTD															
	2024/2025	1	2	2	4	4	6	7	10	10	12	17	23	What is good	
	2025/2026	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	4	4				Less is better	
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PPL.5.04	The number of new disciplinarys recorded each month.
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	Previous Year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Monthly and year-to-date disciplinary cases for the first three quarters of 2025/26 remained within acceptable limits.

No cases raised between April and July, one case was raised in August, one in September and two in November.

The two cases raised in November/Q3 were addressed promptly and concluded through the Service’s Discipline Procedure.

No specific trends can be established and learns from cases continue to be had through case reviews and evaluations.

We are committed to addressing concerns promptly and at the most appropriate level. All discipline cases are handled with transparency, fairness, and respect. When a concern involves an employee, it is managed with fairness and proportionality. We ensure that each issue is addressed using the correct procedures, with suitable resources allocated for investigation and appropriate support provided to all parties involved. Our goal is to resolve matters efficiently and within a reasonable timeframe.

PPL.5.06 - Independent Reporting Line Calls

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	G	
	2025/2026	2	3	1	0	5	0	0	0	0				A	
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	R	
YTD														What is good	
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Monitor	
	2025/2026	2	5	6	6	11	11	11	11	11					
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		

Ref	PPL.5.06	The number of independent reporting line calls received each month
Owner	People Services	
Comparison	-	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

No concerns were raised during quarter three.

This results in a year-to-date total of eleven.

Our Safecall numbers show that employees have the confidence to raise issues, and when a concern or complaint is raised about an employee they are treated fairly and proportionately.

All concerns that are raised, are triaged through the assessment panel and investigated accordingly.

PPL.5.09 - Complaints

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	0
	Target	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	G	=< 1 per month
	2025/2026	0	2	2	2	3	5	0	0	3				A	> 1 per month
	Status	B	A	A	A	A	R	B	B	R				R	> 2 per month
YTD															
	Target	<2	<3	<4	<5	<6	<7	<8	<9	<10	<11	<12	<13	What is good	
	2025/2026	0	2	4	6	9	14	14	14	17				Less is better	
	Status	B	G	A	A	A	R	R	A	A					

Ref	PPL.5.09	Number of complaints received each month. This does not identify if the complaints were upheld.
Owner	Information Governance	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Of the three complaints received, one was in relation to how we handled an incident. The other two were classed as miscellaneous.

The two miscellaneous were not upheld. The incident related complaint is still under investigation.

PPL.5.10 - Compliments

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	>5 per month
	2024/2025	1	3	7	4	6	4	3	8	6	5	11	4	G	>0 per month
	2025/2026	0	2	7	5	16	6	7	11	10				A	
	Status	G	G	B	G	B	B	B	B	B				R	
YTD															
	2024/2025	1	4	11	15	21	25	28	36	42	47	58	62	What is good	
	2025/2026	0	2	9	14	30	36	43	54	64				More is better	
	Status	G	G	G	G	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	PPL.5.10	Number of compliments received each month.
Owner	Information Governance	
Comparison	Prev Year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

A breakdown of the types of compliments received in quarter three can be found below;

Type	Compliments
incidents	11
miscellaneous	6
HFSV	5
community engagement	3
educational	3
Total	28

PPL.6.03 - Injury Rate

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	2024/2025	5.99	7.95	6.00	4.02	1.97	7.72	5.80	9.70	9.65	5.83	7.78	3.83	B < 5 per month
	2025/2026	1.91	7.68	1.90	5.74	7.66	1.92	1.93	3.88	3.88				G < 8 per month
	Status	B	G	B	G	G	B	B	B	B				A < 10 per month
YTD Avg														
	2024/2025	5.99	6.97	6.65	6.00	5.18	5.62	5.64	6.16	6.55	6.48	6.60	6.36	What is good
	2025/2026	1.91	4.79	3.82	4.30	4.97	4.47	4.11	4.08	4.06				Less is better
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				

Ref	PPL.6.03	The injury rate give the number of people injured over a month, based on a group of 1,000 employees or workers.
Owner	Health & Safety	
Comparison	Previous year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

We are pleased to see that the Service's injury rate continues to follow a positive trend.

All injuries are investigated at the appropriate levels. Incidents and trends are then managed and discussed on a monthly basis at the People Delivery Group, with more in-depth analysis taking place at the quarterly Health and Safety Committee.

Detail of injuries can be found under measures such as PPL.6.04 - Workplace Injuries.

PPL.6.04 - Workplace injuries

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	2024/2025	3	4	3	2	1	4	3	5	5	3	4	2	B 0 per month
	2025/2026	1	4	1	3	4	1	1	2	2				G =< 3 per month
	Status	G	A	G	G	A	G	G	G	G				A < 6 per month
YTD														
	2024/2025	3	7	10	12	13	17	20	25	30	33	37	39	What is good
	2025/2026	1	5	6	9	13	14	15	17	19				Less is better
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				

Ref	PPL.6.04	The number of workplace injuries reported across the Service. This includes operational staff, support staff, agency and visitors.
Owner	Health & Safety	
Comparison	Previous year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Of the five recorded workplace injuries, two were deemed moderate, the remaining three were minor.

Details of the moderate Injuries can be found below:

- A firefighter sustained a graze on their neck, from glass while cutting through an air cylinder during an incident. Although superficial, it was recorded as moderate. As a result of the investigation into this injury, firefighter training packages have been updated. A communication was also made to all operational staff, reminding them of the risks associated with certain cutting scenarios "peel and reveal".
- A firefighter experienced a back strain while emptying a dishwasher. This was classified as a moderate due to being an over-seven-day injury. No actions were identified following the investigation into this incident.

PPL.6.05 - RIDDOR reportable Injuries

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	
	2024/2025	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	0	G	< 1 per month
	2025/2026	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	0				A	=> 1 per month
	Status	G	R	A	A	A	G	G	R	G				R	=> 2 per month
YTD	2024/2025	1	1	2	3	3	5	6	7	8	10	12	12	What is good	
	2025/2026	0	2	3	4	5	5	5	7	7				Less is better	
	Status	G	R	A	A	A	G	G	G	G					

Ref	PPL.6.05	Number of injuries that required reporting to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013.
Owner	Health & Safety	
Comparison	Previous year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

The only RIDDOR incident related to an injury involving a firefighter who strained their back while emptying a dishwasher. This resulted in the employee being off work for more than seven calendar days. This in itself triggers the RIDDOR process.

As mentioned in the previous measure, no actions were identified following the investigation into this injury.

PPL.6.07 - Near Miss Events Recorded

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	<div><div>B</div>< 2 per month</div>	
Monthly	2024/2025	2	1	3	2	3	5	2	1	1	1	2	3	<div><div>G</div>< 4 per month</div>	
	2025/2026	1	1	3	0	4	2	1	3	2				<div><div>A</div>< 5 per month</div>	
	Status	B	B	G	B	A	G	B	G	G				<div><div>R</div>=> 5 per month</div>	
YTD	2024/2025	2	3	6	8	11	16	18	19	20	21	23	26	What is good	
	2025/2026	1	2	5	5	9	11	12	15	17				Monitor	
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	PPL.6.07	Number of near miss events recorded across the Service. A near miss is where a safety event (an accident or incident) occurs, but no personal injury, damage or financial loss results.
Owner	Health & Safety	
Comparison	Previous year	
Delivery Group	People Delivery Group	

Of the six near miss events recorded, five were deemed to be moderate and one minor. Examples of the moderate can be found below;

- Breathing apparatus (BA) set went into free flow while entering a property; glass fragments later found inside the facemask. Incident remains under investigation.
- Main pump malfunction at an incident: loss of pressure when switching to low pressure during use. Equipment was defected. This pump was one of many at the incident.
- Staff member became ill but managed to seek help from colleagues who called an ambulance. Raised as a near miss due to potential risk had other colleagues not been present.
- Appliance turning into a side road caused an e-bike on a pedestrian pathway to swerve and hit a curb.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR FINANCES AND ASSETS



FIN.1.01 - Forecast - Outturn (£000's)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Target			42,989	42,989	42,989	42,989	42,989	42,989	42,989				B	Within 0.5%
Forecast	-	-	42,832	42,960	42,997	42,850	42,796	42,796	42,824				G	Within 1.0%
% Difference	-	-	-0.00%	-0.07%	0.02%	-0.32%	-0.45%	-0.45%	-0.38%				A	Within 2.0%
Status	-	-	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				R	> 2% difference

What is good

Closer to Target

Ref	FIN.1.01
Owner	Finance
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets

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

The total approved expenditure budget is £42.989m, with a forecast outturn of £42.122m, resulting in a projected underspend of £0.867m.

The funding budget is £42.989m, while the forecast stands at £42.287m, resulting in a projected shortfall of £0.702m. This variance is primarily attributable to reduced grant allocations (£0.201m), although additional investment income has eliminated the need to draw £0.501m from reserves

Taking both expenditure and funding into account, the net position is a forecast underspend of £0.165m

FIN.3.01 - Wholetime Cost (£000's)

Monthly

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	-	-	22,126	22,126	22,269	22,669	22,758	22,758	22,758			
Forecast	-	-	22,541	22,483	23,044	22,914	23,037	23,001	23,019			
% Difference	-	-	1.9%	1.6%	1.7%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%			
Status	-	-	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			

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

What is good
Closer to Target

Ref	FIN.3.01	The financial measure compares the approved revenue for our wholetime operations budget (target) against the forecast revenue outturn position (forecast). Negative % difference indicates an underspend whereas positive % difference indicating an overspend.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

For more detail in relation to our financial position, please refer to the most recent Budget Monitoring Report (see link in Background Papers).

FIN.3.03 - On-Call Cost (£000's)

Monthly

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Target	-	-	1,456	1,456	1,498	1,498	1,505	1,505	1,505			
Forecast	-	-	1,235	1,244	1,314	1,324	1,287	1,352	1,343			
% Difference	-	-	-15.2%	-14.6%	-12.3%	-11.6%	-14.4%	-10.1%	-10.7%			
Status	-	-	R	R	R	R	R	R	R			

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

What is good
Closer to Target

Ref	FIN.3.03	The financial measure compares the approved revenue for our On-Call operations budget (target) against the forecast revenue outturn position (forecast). Negative % difference indicates an underspend whereas positive % difference indicating an overspend.
Owner	Response	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

For more detail in relation to our financial position, please refer to the most recent Budget Monitoring Report (see link in Background Papers).

FIN.2.01 - Capital Spend (£000's)

	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Target			£8,801	£8,801	£8,801	£5,800	£5,800	£4,930	£4,931				B	Within 0.5%
Forecast	-	-	£8,801	£8,801	£8,801	£5,825	£5,800	£4,930	£4,931				G	Within 1.0%
% Difference	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0.4%	0%	0%	0%				A	Within 2.0%
Status	-	-	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				R	> 2% difference

What is good

Closer to Target

Ref	FIN.2.01
Owner	Property
Comparison	Target
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets

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

Projected capital outturn is now £4.931m. very slight increase of £1k compared to previous month. This is for drill tower inspection at Broughton Fire Station, which was not initially in the plan.

FIN.2.03 - Energy Usage - Electricity (000's - Kilowatts per hour)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 96,000 per month
	Target	-	-	-	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	G	< 144,000 per month
	2025/2026	-	-	-	117	109	101	110	114	129				A	=> 144,000 per month
	Status	-	-	-	G	G	G	G	G	G				R	=> 180,000 per month
Cumulative														What is good	
	Target	-	-	-	120	240	360	480	600	720	840	960	1080	Less is better	
	2025/2026	-	-	-	117	226	328	438	553	682					
	Status	-	-	-	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	FIN.2.02	Monthly usage (kWh) of Electricity across the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Estate
Owner	Property	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

Usage since July has been monitored using smart meters to establish a baseline target. Usage will continue to be monitored closely during the remainder of 2026-27.

FIN.2.04 - Energy Usage - Gas (000's kilowatts per hour)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	< 5% of target
	Target	160	120	100	100	100	110	150	220	240	260	220	210	G	Within 5% of target
	2025/2026	-	-	-	88	83	101	156	220	293				A	> 5% of target
	Status	-	-	-	B	B	B	G	G	R				R	=> 10% of target
Cumulative														What is good	
	Target	-	-	-	100	200	310	460	680	920	1180	1400	1610	Less is better	
	2025/2026	-	-	-	88	171	272	428	648	941					
	Status	-	-	-	B	B	B	B	G	G					

Ref	FIN.2.02	Monthly usage of Gas (kWh) for all relevant stations across the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Estate
Owner	Property	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

Usage since July has been monitored using smart meters to establish a baseline target, which has been seasonally adjusted using monthly national demand statistics. Usage will continue to be monitored closely during the remainder of 2026-27.

FIN.5.01 - Overdue Internal Audits

High		Mar-25	Jul-25	Oct-25										<div><div>B</div><div>0</div></div>	
	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<div><div>G</div><div>1</div></div>	
	2025/2026	0	0	0										<div><div>A</div><div>2</div></div>	
	Status	B	B	B										<div><div>R</div><div>>2</div></div>	
Medium	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	What is good	
	2025/2026	2	0	0										Less is better	
	Status	A	B	B											

Ref	FIN.5.01	Each year an Internal Audit plan is agreed based on the risks and needs of the service. The progress and findings are reported to the Overview and Audit committee. This measure shows how many actions are overdue broken down by medium/high rating.
Owner	PMO	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

The most recent progress on Internal Audit actions was taken to the Overview and Audit committee on the 5th November 2025 and can be found here : [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for BMKFA Overview & Audit Committee, 05/11/2025 14:00](#)

The next update is due March 2026

FIN.5.02 - Projects

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	B	0 off track
On Track	-	-	-	-	G	< 3 off track
	2025/2026	28	29	28	A	< 5 off track
	-	-	-	-	R	> 4 off track
Risk to Progress	Target	<3	<3	<3	<3	What is good Less is better
	2025/2026	4	6	3		
	Status	A	R	A		

Ref	FIN.5.02	The service sets out its Annual plan each year to support the delivery of the Community Risk management plan. Annual plan progress is reviewed monthly at the internal Programme Board. This measure shows how many projects the service has on track and the number of project that are Risk to Progress.
Owner	PMO	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

There are 42 items on the 2025/26 Annual plan including 5 carried over from last year.

At the end of Q3, there are 10 projects that are now complete, 28 are currently on track. Project completed this quarter include:

- Cyber awareness training programme
- Operational station-based staff resolving fire safety complaints
- Develop our youth inclusion capability

There has been a reduction in the number of Risk to Progress projects to 3 due to one off investments to support delivery. Risk to Progress projects are scrutinised more closely to understand what work/resource is needed to get them back on track.

A photograph of two firefighters in tan uniforms with reflective yellow and silver stripes. They are holding a black handheld device together. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

OPTIMISING OUR TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

DDT.1.01 - Website - Active Users (000's)

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 15,000 Per Month
	Prev 2 years	14.2	14.9	15.9	15.1	18.1	15.3	16.5	15.3	11.7	17.8	13.7	12.0	G	> 10,000 Per Month
	2025/2026	11.0	11.9	12.5	13.0	13.9	10.7	12.4	11.0	9.5				A	=> 8,000 Per Month
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	A				R	< 8,000 Per Month
Cumulative	Prev 2 years	14.2	29.1	45.0	60.1	78.3	93.5	110	125	137	155	169	181	What is good	
	2025/2026	11.0	22.9	35.4	48.4	62.2	72.9	85.3	96.3	105.8				Higher is better	
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	DDT.1.01	Our website is our biggest public communication and engagement channel. Website traffic is monitored for user analysis. Currently, we monitor this superficially due to capacity and conflicting priorities. However it enables us to react, when required, yielding valuable insights to help identify audience, improve the customer experience and website performance.
Owner	MarComms	
Comparison	Previous 2 years	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

DDT.1.02 - Social Media - Engagement (000's)

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	> 15,000
Monthly	Prev 3 year	14.6	11.5	10.8	21.9	17.1	13.3	11.5	11.4	13.5	14.8	18.2	19.7	G	> 10,000
	2025/2026	32.4	24.1	21.3	15.5	24.3	26.8	37.0	35.4	39.0				A	=> 8,000
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				R	< 8,000
Cumulative	Prev 3 year	14.6	26.2	36.9	58.8	75.9	89.2	100.7	112.1	125.6	140.4	158.6	178.3	What is good	
	2025/2026	32.4	56.5	77.8	93.2	117	144	181	217	256				Higher is better	
	Status	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B					

Ref	DDT.1.02	Total number of unique engagements with our social media content across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
Owner	MarComms	
Comparison	Previous 3 years	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

DDT.1.03 - Intranet Active Users

Monthly		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	B	=> 98%
	2024/2025	94.2%	93.6%	92.6%	94.6%	91.9%	93.8%	94.4%	94.8%	91.9%	96.1%	95.9%	95.8%	G	=> 90%
	2025/2026	95.2%	95.4%	95.2%	97.9%	94.2%	95.6%	94.6%	94.0%	94.2%				A	=> 80%
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G				R	< 80%
YTD Avg														What is good	
	2024/2025	94.2%	93.9%	93.5%	93.8%	93.4%	93.5%	93.6%	93.8%	93.8%	93.8%	94.0%	94.2%	Higher is better	
	2025/2026	95.2%	95.3%	95.3%	95.9%	95.6%	95.6%	95.4%	95.3%	95.2%					
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G					

Ref	DDT.1.03	The percentage of staff that access BFRS' intranet each month. Higher numbers of staff accessing the intranet leads to improved communication, enhanced collaboration, streamlined information access, and increased employee engagement.
Owner	MarComms	
Comparison	Monitor	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

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FINANCE & ASSETS - INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

DDT.3.01 - Reportable Data Breaches

Annual		20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	B	
	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	G	0
	Actual	0	0	0	0	0	0	A	
	Status	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	> 0
What is good									
Less is better									

Ref	DDT.3.01	A data breach means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. A reportable data breach is one that triggers a requirement for notification to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) where a breach is likely to result in a significant risk to an individual to whom the data relates.
Owner	Legal & Governance	
Comparison	Target	
Delivery Group	Finance & Assets	

There have been no reportable data breaches.



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 February 2026

Report title: Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27

Lead Member: Councillor Niknam Hussain

Report sponsor: Mark Hemming, Director of Finance & Assets

Author and contact: Marcus Hussey mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision.

Recommendations: That the Authority approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2026/27

Executive summary:

This report is being presented as the Fire Authority is required to approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy. This document also supports the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The current Treasury Management Strategy has been operating effectively and outperforming the benchmark targets. The Authority expects this to continue for 2026/27.

Since August 2024, The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has cut the interest base rate six times from 5.25% to 3.75% (the last cut was in December 2025). This has resulted in a reduction in the rates and levels of returns the Authority is able to receive from investments. Despite the recent reduction in interest rates, the Authority has continued to deliver strong investment performance, exceeding the investment income budget for 2026/27. This outperformance is largely driven by delayed expenditure within the capital programme and the receipt of upfront pension grant funding. As a result, the Authority has been able to maintain higher levels of short-term investable balances, enabling it to generate enhanced returns during the year.

This performance has been reflected in the proposed budget for 2026/27 within the MTFP.

There is no significant change from the previous strategy. The Authority will continue to invest surplus funds in short-term deposits, maturing on a frequent basis, while

ensuring the Authority is able to maintain adequate liquidity and meet short-term expenditure requirements.

Financial implications:

The proposed budget for 2026/27 is £0.800m, an increase of £0.200m from 2025/26. It is anticipated that the budget will be met. Detailed information is shown within Appendix 1.

Risk management:

Making investments in the Authority's own name means that the Authority bears the risk of any counterparty failure. This risk will be managed in accordance with the strategy and with advice from external treasury management advisors.

The Director of Finance and Assets will act in accordance with the Authority's policy statement; treasury management practices and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

The risk of counterparty failure is monitored on the directorate level risk register within Finance and Assets.

There are no direct staffing implications.

Legal implications:

The Authority is required by section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Guidance on Local Government Investments; and by regulation 24 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 [SI 3146] to have regard to any prevailing CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Authority has the power to invest for "any purpose relevant to its functions" and "for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs".

However, it must exercise its investment power in accordance with its fiduciary duty, analogous to that of a trustee, owed to those who contribute to the funds of the Authority.

Privacy and security implications:

No direct impact.

Duty to collaborate:

No direct impact.

Health and safety implications:

No direct impact.

Environmental implications:

As at 31 December 2025, the Authority has £4m invested in sustainable investments. Officers will continue to explore sustainable investments, which are sustainable deposits that allow customers to have their capital referenced against sustainable assets, whether existing now or in the future, as verified through the green and sustainable product framework on a net positive basis.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

No direct impact.

Consultation and communication:

No direct impact.

Background papers:

CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (CIPFA Code)

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Guidance on Local Government Investments (DLUHC Guidance)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27	

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Treasury Management Strategy

2026/27

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Contents

Treasury Management Policy Statement	Page 2
Treasury Management Strategy Statement	Page 3-4
Annual Investment Strategy	Page 5-9
Counterparty List	Page 9-11
Prospects for Interest Rates	Page 12-13
Credit Rating Definitions	Page 14

Treasury Management Policy Statement

This Authority defines its treasury management activities as:

The management of the Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

This Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

This Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

The investment policy objective for this Authority is the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The Authority's investment priorities are the security of capital and liquidity of its investments so that funds are available for expenditure when needed. Both the CIPFA Code and MHCLG guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The generation of investment income to support the provision of local authority services is an important, but secondary, objective.

The Authority's borrowing objectives are to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio. The Authority will set an affordable borrowing limit each year in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 and will have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when setting that limit.

The Authority will continue with Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Corporate Markets (MUFG), previously known as Link Asset Services, as its external treasury management advisor.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

Current Portfolio Position

The Authority's overall treasury portfolio position as at 31 December 2025 are shown below for both borrowing and investments:

Borrowing Portfolio:

Counterparty	Total Borrowing (£m)	Average rate of interest (%)	Annual Interest Payable (£m)
Public Works Loans Board	4.550	4.86	0.214
Other Borrowing	0	0	0
Total Borrowing	4.550	4.86	0.214

At the start of 2026/27 the overall borrowing position will be **£4.550m** with maturity between 1 – 28 years. The next loan maturity is December 2027, for a value of £1m.

The repayments do not directly affect the revenue budget, as they simply reflect the use of cash accumulated by setting aside the appropriate minimum revenue provision (MRP) to settle the outstanding liability.

Investment Portfolio:

Counterparty	Total Investment (£m)
Banks*	12.000
Money Market Funds	6.370
Local Authorities*	5.000
Building Societies*	4.000
Current Account	0.143
Total Investment	27.513

**Average Rate of interest received during period 01 April 2025 and 31 December 2025 was 4.51%.*

The investments have various terms and mature on a frequent basis to ensure the Authority can maintain sufficient liquidity and meet short term expenditure requirements. By 31 March 2026, the investment portfolio will be circa £23m, including investments in Money Market Funds and current account balances.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority has sufficient reserves set aside to repay the PWLB borrowing when due. This was done as part of the realignment of reserves balances to facilitate the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) in November 2015. However, within the MTFP 2026/27 to 2030/31, there is a proposal to reverse the voluntary revenue provision of £3.550m to cover capital expenditure. Following years will look to build the provision to be able to pay borrowing on maturity.

The Authority's borrowing objectives are:

- To minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio
- To manage the Authority's debt maturity profile, leaving no one future year with a disproportionate level of repayments

No additional borrowing is forecast to take place during the duration of the medium-term financial plan.

Investment Strategy

The Authority's investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e., rates for investments up to 12 months). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. The current shape of the yield curve suggests that rates can be expected to fall throughout 2026, but only if the CPI measure of inflation maintains a downwards trend towards the Bank of England's 2% target. Rates may be cut quicker than expected if the economy stagnates.

Accordingly, while most cash balances are required to manage day to day ups and downs of cash flow, where surplus cash can be identified that could be invested for longer periods closer to 12 months, investments will be carefully assessed.

The Authority will continue to use Money Market Fund and call accounts to gain instant access to funds and also benefit from the compounding of interest.

Investment of the Authority's funds is in accordance with the Annual Investment Strategy.

Debt Rescheduling

The potential for debt rescheduling is monitored in light of interest rate movements.

Any rescheduling will be in accordance with the borrowing strategy. The reasons for rescheduling include:

- The generation of cash savings at minimum risk
- Fulfilment of the borrowing strategy
- Enhancement of the maturity profile of the borrowing portfolio

It is recommended that Officers continue to review the Authority's debt structure with MUFG in 2026/27 and if the opportunity arises, further work be undertaken to investigate debt restructuring.

Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

Investment Policy

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)) and CIPFA have extended the meaning of 'investments' to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with treasury (financial) investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets and service investments, are covered in the Financial Strategy, (a separate report).

The Authority's investment policy has regard to the following: -

- MHCLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance")
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2021 ("the Code")
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2021

The Authority's investment priorities will be:

- achieving security first (protecting the capital sum from loss);
- and then liquidity (keeping the money readily available for expenditure when needed);
- only once proper levels of security and liquidity are determined, the Authority will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investment based on what yield can be obtained consistent with those priorities.

In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to maintain a degree of liquidity to cover cash flow needs but to also consider "laddering" investments for periods up to 12 months.

In accordance with guidance from the MHCLG and CIPFA, and to minimise the risk to investments, the Authority has clearly stipulated below the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of what these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using the MUFG ratings service potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.

Continuing regulatory changes in the banking sector are designed to see greater stability, lower risk and the removal of expectations of Government financial support should an institution fail. This withdrawal of implied sovereign support has had an effect on ratings applied to institutions. This will result in the key ratings used to monitor counterparties being the Short Term and Long Term ratings only. Viability, Financial Strength and Support Ratings previously applied have effectively become redundant. This change does not reflect deterioration in the credit environment but rather a change of method in response to regulatory changes.

As with previous practice, ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of

information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the Authority will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as credit default swaps (CDS) and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings. This is fully integrated into the credit methodology provided by the advisors, MUFG in producing its colour coding show the varying degrees of suggested creditworthiness.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.

The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimise risk.

Creditworthiness Policy

This Authority applies the creditworthiness service provided by MUFG. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- Credit 'watches' and credit 'outlooks' from credit rating agencies;
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit 'watches' and credit 'outlooks' in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads. The end-product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes have been used by the Authority to determine the suggested duration for investments.

It is recommended that the Authority continues to use MUFG's colour codes plus an additional six months for UK counterparties only. It would be beneficial if the Authority could lend to existing counterparties for a longer duration. This will increase the risk slightly but will potentially offer increased returns.

The Authority will therefore use counterparties within the following durational bands:

Colour Rating (UK Counterparties)	Colour Rating (Non-UK Counterparties)
Yellow - 5 Years and 6 Months	Yellow - 5 Years
Purple - 2 Years and 6 Months	Purple - 2 Years
Blue - 1 Year and 6 Months (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)	Blue - 1 Year
Orange - 1 Year and 6 Months	Orange - 1 Year
Red - 1 Year	Red - 6 Months
Green - 9 Months (<i>except for building societies on the counterparty list which the Authority can invest with for a maximum duration of 365 days limited to a maximum investment of £5 million per counterparty</i>)	Green - 3 Months
No colour not to be used (<i>except for building societies on the counterparty list which the Authority can invest with for a maximum duration of 365 days limited to a maximum investment of £2 million per counterparty</i>)	No colour not to be used

The MUFG creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information other than just primary ratings. Furthermore, by using a risk weighted scoring system, it does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

Typically, the minimum credit ratings criteria the Authority use will be a short-term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of short-term rating F1, long term rating A-, viability rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are lower than these ratings but may still be used. In these instances, consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use. Credit rating definitions can be seen on page 14.

All credit ratings will be monitored on a regular basis. The Authority is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the MUFG creditworthiness service.

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment may be withdrawn.
- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Authority will be advised of information in movements in Credit Default Swap spreads against the iTraxx European Senior Financials benchmark and other market data on a daily basis via its Passport website, provided exclusively to it by MUFG. Extreme market movements may result in the downgrade of an institution or removal from the Authority's lending list.

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition, this Authority will also use market data and market information, information on any external support for banks and the credit ratings of that bank to help its decision making-process.

Significant levels of downgrades to Short and Long-Term credit ratings have not materialised since the crisis in March 2020. In the main, where they did change, any alterations were limited to Outlooks. Nonetheless, when setting minimum sovereign debt ratings, this Authority will not set a minimum rating for the UK.

Although bank CDS prices, (these are market indicators of credit risk), spiked upwards during the days of the Truss/Kwarteng government in the autumn of 2022, they have returned to more average levels since then. However, sentiment can easily shift, so it will remain important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances. MUFG monitor CDS prices as part of their creditworthiness service to local authorities and the Authority has access to this information via its MUFG provided Passport portal.

Country Limits

The Authority determined that it would not only use approved counterparties based within the United Kingdom but allowed any counterparty (UK or non-UK based) rated at least 'Green' by MUFG. Although no counterparty outside UK was used during 2025/26, these will remain on the lending list for 2026/27. The primary purpose of this is not to increase yield, but to provide additional diversity to the portfolio to effectively manage risk. Several non-UK banks are ranked higher than some of the UK banks on the Authority's current counterparty list. Therefore, the Authority proposes

to limit the duration of all non-UK investment in line with MUFG's recommended limits. A list of the proposed non-UK based Counterparties is shown in on page 11.

Counterparty Limits

As per the AIS, the Authority has determined that the maximum balance that can be invested with a single counterparty at any point in time will be no more than 30% of the portfolio, up to a limit of £5 million.

The two exceptions to this limit in the AIS will continue to be Lloyds, where the maximum balance that can be invested will be a limit of £7.5 million. Of this £7.5 million, no more than £5 million will be invested in non-instant access (call) accounts.

The rationale for this is that Lloyds are the Authority's main banking provider. This means that:

- The officer time taken to move money between the Authority's main bank account and other instant access account is reduced
- The banking charges associated with the movement of the money between accounts is reduced
- The additional risk exposure to the Authority is minimal as all amounts over the current £5 million limit would be available for withdrawal immediately should circumstances require

The other exception relates to building societies rated as 'no colour' or 'green' on the counterparty listing whereby the maximum balance that can be invested will be limited to £2 million and £5m respectively for a maximum duration of 365 days.

Investment Security

Due care will be taken to consider the exposure of the Authority's total investment portfolio. Investments are defined as being in one of two categories:

- Specified investments – these are investments with high security and high liquidity. All specified investments are in sterling and have a maturity of no more than one year. They will be with the UK government, a local authority, a parish council or with an investment scheme or body of "high credit quality" (as judged against the Creditworthiness Policy detailed earlier in this paper)
- Non-specified investments – any type of investment that does not meet the specified investment criteria. A maximum of £5 million will be held in aggregate in non-specified investments for longer than 365 days – up to a maximum of five years and 6 months as denoted by the yellow banding on the MUFG creditworthiness policy detailed earlier in this paper. In addition, property funds are also classified as non-specified investments and a maximum of £3 million will be held in aggregate.

Investment Training

Relevant training and updates will be provided to relevant officers by the external treasury management advisors. This will be supplemented by additional training from CIPFA where necessary.

Investment of Money Borrowed in Advance of Need

The Authority does not currently have any money that has been borrowed in advance of need. No further borrowing is planned over the MTFP.

Investment Liquidity

In consultation with MUFG, the Authority will review its balance sheet position, level of reserves and cash requirements to determine the length of time for which investments can be prudently committed. Investments will be placed at a range of maturities, including having money on-call to maintain adequate liquidity.

Treasury Management Monitoring

The Authority will also pursue value for money in treasury management and will monitor the yield from investment income against appropriate benchmarks for investment performance. Monitoring of investment performance will be carried out throughout the year and reported to the Authority's Overview and Audit Committee on a regular basis.

Counterparty List

This list is based on information provided by MUFG as at 09 January 2026. Please note that all colours indicated refer to MUFG's creditworthiness policy:

UK Based Counterparties

UK Based Counterparties	Counterparty	Suggested Duration (as rated by MUFG)
UK	Al Rayan Bank Plc	Red - 6 mths
UK	Bank of Scotland PLC (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Barclays Bank PLC (NRFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Barclays Bank UK PLC (RFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Clydesdale Bank PLC	Red - 6 mths
UK	Collateralised LA Deposit	Yellow - 60 mths
UK	Co-operative Bank PLC (The)	Green - 100 days
UK	Debt Management Office	Yellow - 60 mths
UK	Goldman Sachs International Bank	Red - 6 mths
UK	Handelsbanken Plc	Orange - 12 mths
UK	HSBC Bank PLC (NRFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	HSBC UK Bank Plc (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Investec Bank Plc	Red - 6 mths
UK	Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets Plc (NRFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Lloyds Bank Plc (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Multilateral Development Banks	Yellow - 60 mths
UK	National Bank Of Kuwait (International) PLC	Red - 6 mths
UK	National Westminster Bank PLC (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	NatWest Markets Plc (NRFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Santander Financial Services plc (NRFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Santander UK PLC	Red - 6 mths
UK	SMBC Bank International Plc	Red - 6 mths
UK	Standard Chartered Bank	Red - 6 mths

UK Based Counterparties	Counterparty	Suggested Duration (as rated by MUFG)
UK	The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	UK Gilts	Yellow - 60 mths

** This is the duration suggested by MUFG. As per the Creditworthiness Policy (see page 6) these will all be extended by six months.*

The Authority will also have the ability to invest in money market funds (MMFs) and enhanced money market funds.

Non-UK Based Counterparties

The duration of all non-UK investments will be in line with MUFG duration limits.

Non-UK Based Counterparties	Country Counterparty	Suggested Duration (as rated by MUFG)
Australia	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Macquarie Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	National Australia Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Westpac Banking Corp.	Orange - 12 mths
Belgium	BNP Paribas Fortis	Red - 6 mths
Belgium	KBC Bank N.V.	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Bank of Montreal	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Bank of Nova Scotia	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	National Bank of Canada	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Royal Bank of Canada	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Toronto-Dominion Bank	Orange - 12 mths
Denmark	Danske A/S	Red - 6 mths
Finland	Nordea Bank Abp	Orange - 12 mths
Finland	OP Corporate Bank plc	Orange - 12 mths
France	BNP Paribas	Red - 6 mths
France	Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank	Red - 6 mths
France	Credit Agricole S.A.	Red - 6 mths
France	Credit Industriel et Commercial	Red - 6 mths
France	Societe Generale	Red - 6 mths
Germany	Bayerische Landesbank	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Commerzbank AG	Red - 6 mths
Germany	Deutsche Bank AG	Red - 6 mths
Germany	DZ BANK AG Deutsche Zentral-Genossenschaftsbank	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landesbank Hessen-Thueringen Girozentrale	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank	Purple - 24 mths
Germany	Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	NRW.BANK	Purple - 24 mths

Non-UK Based Counterparties	Country Counterparty	Suggested Duration (as rated by MUFG)
Netherlands	ABN AMRO Bank N.V.	Red - 6 mths
Netherlands	BNG Bank N.V.	Purple - 24 mths
Netherlands	Cooperatieve Rabobank U.A.	Orange - 12 mths
Netherlands	ING Bank N.V.	Orange - 12 mths
Netherlands	Nederlandse Waterschapsbank N.V.	Purple - 24 mths
Norway	DNB Bank ASA	Orange - 12 mths
Qatar	Qatar National Bank	Orange - 12 mths
Singapore	DBS Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Singapore	Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Singapore	United Overseas Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Svenska Handelsbanken AB	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Swedbank AB	Orange - 12 mths
Switzerland	UBS AG	Orange - 12 mths
United Arab Emirates	First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	Orange - 12 mths
United States	Bank of America N.A.	Orange - 12 mths
United States	Bank of New York Mellon, The	Purple - 24 mths
United States	Citibank N.A.	Orange - 12 mths
United States	JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.	Purple - 24 mths
United States	Wells Fargo Bank, NA	Orange - 12 mths

UK Building Societies

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of MUFG ratings. The Authority will also use market data and market information, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that supporting government. The Authority has ten building societies on the counterparty list using the top-ten building societies (by net assets). Building societies rated as 'no colour' or 'green' on the counterparty listing whereby the maximum balance that can be invested will be limited to £2 million and £5m respectively for a maximum duration of 365 days.

UK Based Counterparties	Country Counterparty	Suggested Duration (as rated by MUFG)
UK	Coventry Building Society	Green - 100 days
UK	Cumberland Building Society	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Leeds Building Society	Green - 100 days
UK	Nationwide Building Society	Red - 6 mths
UK	Newcastle Building Society	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Nottingham Building Society	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Principality Building Society	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Skipton Building Society	Red - 6 mths
UK	West Bromwich Building Society	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Yorkshire Building Society	Red - 6 mths

Prospects for Interest Rates

Part of MUFG's service is to assist the Authority to formulate a view on interest rates. MUFG provided the following forecasts on 22 December 2025. These are forecasts for Bank Rate, average earnings and PWLB certainty rates, gilt yields plus 80 bps.

MUFG Corporate Markets Interest Rate View 22.12.25													
	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27	Mar-28	Jun-28	Sep-28	Dec-28	Mar-29
BANK RATE	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25
3 month ave earnings	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30
6 month ave earnings	3.80	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40
12 month ave earnings	3.90	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.40	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.60	3.60	3.60
5 yr PWLB	4.60	4.50	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
10 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.70	4.60	4.60	4.60	4.70
25 yr PWLB	5.80	5.70	5.60	5.50	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.20	5.20	5.20
50 yr PWLB	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.30	5.30	5.20	5.10	5.10	5.10	5.00	5.10	5.00	5.00

Despite six reductions in the Bank of England base rate since August 2024, and forecasts indicating further decreases (as per the prospect for interest rates table), the Authority, as part of the MTFP will be increasing in investment income for 2026/27. The Authority has set a benchmark interest rate of 3.5%, which would achieve a return on investment of £0.800m against an average portfolio of £23m in 2026/27, an increase of £0.200m compared to the 2025/26 budget of £0.600m.

This improvement is primarily driven by delays in capital programme expenditure and the upfront receipt of additional pension grant funding. As a result, the Authority will hold higher short-term cash balances, enabling the Authority to generate increased investment returns despite the lower interest rate environment.

As at 31 December 2025, the total projected investment return for 2025/26 is in the region of £1.205m, overachievement of £0.605m. The Authority has been able to benefit from the interest rates by achieving investment interest returns of over £3.429m in the last three years.

Since the treasury management function has been managed in-house from 1 April 2013, the Authority have overachieved regularly against the investment returns budget. 2020/21 was the only year the Authority did not achieve its annual investment target, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic outbreak and the impact it had on the interest rates.

For any type of investment there is a downside risk to the level of return the Authority would obtain due to the uncertainty in the markets and the negative impact they have on the interest rates and therefore historical rates of return may not always provide a realistic indication of returns for the future. This will be closely monitored and reported to Members if the position changes from what Officers are currently projecting.

Additional notes by MUFG on this forecast table:

- Our last interest rate forecast update was undertaken on 11 August. Since then, a combination of tepid growth (0.2% q/q GDP for Q2 and 0.1% q/q GDP for Q3), falling inflation (currently CPI is 3.2%), and a November Budget that will place more pressure on the majority of households' income, has provided an opportunity for the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee to further reduce Bank Rate from 4% to 3.75% on 18 December.
- Surprisingly, to most market commentators, the recent steep fall in CPI inflation in one month from 3.6% to 3.2% did not persuade most "dissenters"

from the November vote (Lombardelli, Greene, Mann and Pill) to switch to the rate-cutting side of the Committee. Instead, it was left to Bank Governor, Andrew Bailey, to use his deciding vote to force a rate cut through by the slimmest of margins, 5-4.

- Given the wafer-thin majority for a rate cut it was not unexpected to hear that although rates would continue on a “gradual downward path”, suggesting a further rate cut or cuts in the offing, MPC members want to assess incoming evidence on labour market activity and wage growth. Indeed, with annual wage growth still over 4.5%, the MPC reiterated that the case for further rate cuts would be “a closer call”, and Governor Bailey observed there is “limited space as Bank Rate approaches a neutral level”.
- Accordingly, the MUFG Corporate Markets forecast has been revised to price in a rate cut in Q2 2026 to 3.5%, likely to take place in the wake of a significant fall in the CPI inflation reading from 3% in March to 2% in April (as forecast by Capital Economics), followed by a short lull through the summer whilst more data is garnered, and then a further rate cut to 3.25% in Q4.
- Accordingly, our updated central forecast is made with several hefty caveats. We are confident, as we have been for some time, that our forecast for Bank Rate and the 5-year PWLB Certainty Rate is robust, and we have marginally brought forward the timing of the next rate cut(s). But for the 10-, 25- and 50-years part of the curve, the level of gilt issuance, and the timing of its placement, will be integral to achieving a benign trading environment. That is not a “given”, and additionally, the inflation outlook and political factors domestically and, crucially, in the US, are also likely to hold sway. Matters should be clearer by June in the UK, but the US mid-term elections are scheduled for November.
- Our revised PWLB rate forecasts are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012. Please note, the lower Housing Revenue Account (HRA) PWLB rate started on 15 June 2023 for those authorities with an HRA (standard rate minus 60 bps) and is set to prevail until at least the end of March 2026. Hopefully, there will be a further extension to this discounted rate announced in January.
- Money market yield forecasts are based on expected average earnings by local authorities for 3 to 12 months.

Credit Rating Definitions

Below are the rating definitions for each rating agency:

Fitch:

Short Term	Long Term	Rating Definition
F1	AAA, AA, A	Highest Credit Quality
F2	A, BBB	Good Credit Quality
F3	BBB	Fair Credit Quality
B	BB, B	Speculative Credit Quality
C	CCC, CC, C	High Default Risk
RD	RD	Restricted Default
D	D	Default

Moody's:

Short Term	Long Term	Rating Definition
P-1	Aaa, Aa, A	Superior ability to repay debt obligation
P-2	A, Baa	Strong ability to repay debt obligation
P-3	Baa	Acceptable ability to repay debt obligation
NP	Ba, B, Caa, Ca, C	do not fall within any prime rating

Standard & Poor's:

Short Term	Long Term	Rating Definition
A1	AAA, AA, A	Extremely Strong
A2	A, BBB	Satisfactory
A3	BBB	Adequate
B	BB, B	Vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics.
C	CCC, CC, C	Vulnerable to non-payment
D	RD	Restricted Default
D	D	Default

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 February 2026

Report title: Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2026/27

Lead Member: Councillor Moriah Priestley, Lead Member - People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

Report sponsor: Ronnie Davidson, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Author and contact: Zak Ahmed; People Business Partner zahmed@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

That the Pay Policy Principles and Statement as set out in Appendix one, as the statutory Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27, is approved for publication.

Executive summary:

The Authority is required to approve the Pay Policy Principles and Statement before the end of March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates.

It is proposed the attached draft (Appendix one) be the Authority's revised Pay Policy Principles and Statement for 2026/27. It is based on the Authority's current approved Pay Policy Principles and Statement for 2025/26, with amendments made to the annually updated data.

Due to ongoing work on Pay Scales and Allowances, it is likely that an in-year update to the Pay Policy Principles and Statement will be required during 2026/27. This update would ensure alignment with any changes arising from that work and maintain compliance with the Authority's approach to fair and transparent pay practices.

The Pay Policy Principles and Statement will continue to support and enhance a range of employment opportunities. This will continue to be utilised on a voluntary basis across some roles and functions to offer a more resilient, enhanced and flexible resource, focused on meeting demand and offering the very best service to the public.

This Pay Policy Statement includes two minor updates. Firstly, it reflects the 3.2% pay award implemented in July 2025. Secondly, the pension section has been updated to provide clearer wording on how annual pension increases are applied.

Within the last seven Pay Policy Principles and Statement cover reports, a note was made to the introduction of a public sector exit payment cap termination payment for 'high earners'.

Since the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payment (Revocation) Regulations 2021(the Revocation Regulations), the Government has continued to review exit payment practices to ensure value for the taxpayer. The Public Sector Exit Payment (Limitation) Bill did not progress following the dissolution of Parliament on 30 May 2024, and no further legislative changes have been introduced since the change in government in July 2024. Officers will continue to monitor developments.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the Pay Policy Principles and Statement. Any financial impact of subsequent decisions will be factored into the Medium-Term Financial Planning process and scrutinised and challenged by Members. Any in-year impacts will be considered and reported through the budget monitoring process and any resource re-allocation will be subject to the usual virement approvals and limits as set out in the Financial Regulations.

Risk management:

The Fire Authority is required to adopt and publish an annual Pay Policy Principles and Statement.

Developing and maintaining good employee morale is key to instilling loyalty and maintaining a productive workplace. By being fair, transparent and accountable in what employees are paid for and why, and being consistent, systematic and clear in applying reward practices for all employees, the Authority is living its values and showing best practices with its reward and recognition needs.

Legal implications:

Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on the Authority to prepare annually, a Statement setting out the Authority's policies on the remuneration of its Chief Officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and the remuneration of its employees who are not Chief Officers. Chief Officers are the most senior Officers of the Authority. Authorities are required to state the definition of lowest paid employees they have adopted in the Statement and explain the reasons for adopting that particular definition. The Statement may also set out the Authority's policies relating to other terms and conditions applying to its Senior Officers. In preparing this Statement, the Authority must have regard to any guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State.

The 2026/27 Pay Policy Principles and Statement must be approved by the full Fire Authority before 31 March 2025. Approval cannot be delegated to any committee, sub-committee, or officers.

The Pay Policy Principles and Statement may be amended by the full Fire Authority during the financial year to which it applies.

Section 41 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to comply with its Pay Policy Principles and Statement for the relevant financial year when making a determination that relates to the remuneration, or other terms and conditions of a senior officer of the Authority.

The Pay Policy Principles and Statement must include the Authority's policies in relation to senior pay on:

- a) the level and elements of remuneration
- b) remuneration on recruitment
- c) increases and additions to remuneration
- d) the use of performance related pay
- e) the use of bonuses
- f) the approach to payment on their ceasing to be employed by the Authority, and
- g) the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration

The statutory guidance gives discretion as to whether the Authority wishes to mirror these headings in its Pay Policy Principles and Statement in respect of its other employees.

Privacy and security implications:

The purpose of the Pay Policy Principles and Statement is to provide transparency with regards to the Authority's approach to setting the pay of its employees.

Duty to collaborate:

The Fire and Rescue Authorities are required to have a Pay Policy Principles and Statement. At this time our Thames Valley partners have separate Statements, however an aligned approach may be appropriate in the future, particularly to support collaborative working, sharing of resources and working across boundaries.

Health and safety implications:

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

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the update. There are no identified adverse impacts on any protected characteristics.

Any pay decisions will be subject to the demands of equal pay processes.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 and approved by Parliament in 2016 and came into force in 2017. The obligation under the Regulations requires prescribed gender pay gap information to be published

within ‘the period of 12 months beginning with the data snapshot date’ (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot data for public sector employers is 31 March each year.

The intention of the Regulation is to highlight differences in pay between male and female employees, therefore showing greater transparency within the workplace, and encourage employers to consider what more can be done to close any pay gaps. The Authority will continue to work on closing the Gender Pay Gap and a separate report will be presented to the Executive Committee in February 2026.

Consultation and communication

Adoption of the annual Pay Policy Principles and Statement ensures statutory compliance. However, as the legislation permits in-year changes there is scope for the Authority to revisit certain elements to reflect the needs of the Service and any relevant reform outcomes from a national perspective.

Adherence to the Pay Policy Principles and Statement is controlled via strict establishment and pay change approval process controls and annual reporting. In addition, reports are submitted on key reward areas as appropriate.

Following approval of the Pay Policy Principles and Statement, communication will be via the normal policy publication and amendment process. This will include engagement with members of the Joint Consultation Forum.

Background papers:

BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2025/26:

<http://bucksfire.gov.uk/authority/pay-policy-statement/>

The Localism Act 2011:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

Openness and accountability in local pay: guidance. Published 2012:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-guidance>

Openness and accountability in local pay: supplementary guidance. Published 2013:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-supplementary-guidance>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2026/27	



BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2026/27

1.0 Introduction

The Pay Policy Statement (the 'Statement') sets out Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority's (the Authority) approach to pay in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. The purpose of the Statement is to provide transparency with regards to the Authority's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:

- the method by which salaries of all employees are determined
- the details and level of remuneration of its most senior employees, i.e. Chief Officers, as defined by the relevant legislation

Following approval of the Authority, the Statement will be effective from 01 April 2026. It will be subject to an annual approval and in accordance with any new or proposed legislation to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

As detailed within the Authority's Reward and Recognition policy, and the Statement of Principles, the Authority aims to:

- Be fair, transparent and accountable in what employees are paid for and why, and to be consistent, systematic and clear in applying reward practices for all employees
- Adhere to affordability; ensuring all decisions on pay represents value for money for the taxpayer
- Reward and recognise employees for their knowledge, skills and contribution in the roles they are performing
- Adopt practices which will focus on enabling the recruitment, engagement and retention of the right calibre of people at all levels to deliver its corporate priorities
- Provide effective financial management of the total pay bill in order to inform all of its reward practices and approaches in making the most effective use of resources
- Have appropriate mechanisms in place to review terms and conditions of service
- Meet legislative requirements; ensuring remuneration practices comply with all legal obligations

2.0 Accountability and decision making

Decisions on pay policies will be taken by elected members - those who are directly accountable to local communities. All democratically accountable



members will have input into how decisions on pay are made and there will be openness about the policies that determine those decisions.

The annual Statements and any amendments will be considered by a meeting of the Authority and will not be delegated to any sub-committee. All decisions on pay and reward for Chief Officers must comply with the current Statement.

3.0 Transparency

On an annual basis, the approved Statement will be published on the external website.

Although there is no requirement to use the Statement to publish specific numerical data on pay and reward, consideration will be given to how the information within the Statement fits with data on pay and reward published separately.

This includes data required to be published under the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 and Annual Statement of Accounts.

4.0 Legislation

In applying the Statement, the Authority will work to eliminate any elements which may, directly or indirectly, discriminate unfairly on the grounds of sex, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, having dependents, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, trade union activity, disability or any other factors.

Part-time employees will receive the same pay and remuneration as full-time employees undertaking the same role on a pro-rata basis.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are in the same employment and are doing the same or similar work, work rated as equivalent, or work of equal value. Undertaking an equal pay audit demonstrates the Authority's commitment as an employer to remove unfair pay practices. The last equal pay audit was undertaken in 2020, and no areas of concern were identified as a result of this audit.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 that came into effect in 2017 requires public sector organisations with 250 or more employees to carry out gender pay gap reporting. In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority is required to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female workers



within the Authority. On an annual basis the Authority publishes a Gender Pay Gap report, containing information relating to pay inequalities in line with gender pay gap reporting requirements. While there is currently no legislative requirement to report on ethnicity pay gaps, the Authority has chosen to voluntarily publish this data as part of its commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in line with the principles of the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Responsibility and scale

The Authority is directly responsible for an establishment budget of £31,917,335, and for a budgeted establishment of 137.11 full-time equivalent (FTEs) for Support Services employees, 301 FTE Wholetime employees and 96 FTE On-Call employees (details as at November 2025).

6.0 Determining levels of pay

The Authority recognises its employees are a vital factor in the efficient and effective operation of the Service. In this respect the Authority is committed to ensuring employees are valued and rewarded for their contribution to the Authority.

The Authority is committed to establishing the right working arrangements and conditions of employment for all its employees and understands the benefits of the employment package in promoting and encouraging employee engagement, which in turn improves organisational performance.

The Authority is committed to effectively supporting day to day service delivery, transforming the Authority into a value for money, outcome driven and high performing organisation through, amongst other interventions, appropriate reward and recognition mechanisms.

The Authority is committed to ensuring its reward and recognition practices are conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner that is effective, efficient and responsive, promoting good practice with all its reward and recognition needs.

7.0 Pay structure

The pay structure reflects the different roles, duties and responsibilities undertaken by employees within the Authority. This is reflected in pay differentials between different employee groups and between employees within the same employee group. The pay bands established are based on



nationally applied role maps (Operational employees) or graded bands established through role profiles (Support Services employees).

Operational roles

For the majority of Operational roles, appointments are offered under the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service (known as the Grey Book) and any other local terms and conditions, which the Authority may, from time to time, adopt in relation to the appointment, save where such provisions are amended by a contract of employment.

Any National pay award is as agreed through the National Joint Council (NJC) and notified to Fire Authorities. The last pay award was agreed as 3.2 per cent, effective 01 July 2025.

The pay framework was reviewed in 2003 following a rank-to-role exercise in line with National Guidance, with the grades for each role determined by a consistent job evaluation process. Where appropriate, National role maps are used to determine responsibilities and accountabilities within roles.

For Grey Book employees, rates of pay are set out in circulars issued by the NJC and entitlements are governed by Part B of the Grey Book. However, the Authority recognises new employees may be employed on terms and conditions outside of the Grey Book. This includes the operation of the 'Bank System'.

The Authority also recognises employees in existing Firefighter roles may want to agree rates of pay outside of the Grey Book for the protection of services and provision of enhanced resilience.

In addition, and in line with retention and succession planning, the Authority does agree enhanced remuneration outside of the Grey Book for specific roles, such as Area Commanders, Group Commanders and Station Commanders.

Support Services roles

Appointments for Support Services roles are determined in accordance with local terms and conditions of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Scheme of Conditions of Service for Support Services employees and any other local terms and conditions, which the Authority may, from time to time, adopt in relation to appointments, save where such provisions are amended by a contract of employment.

Any pay award is locally agreed by the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). The last pay award was agreed as 3.2 per cent, effective 01 July 2025.



For Support Services employees, the pay structure takes the form of pay scales, which was reviewed in 2014 to two pay points; development and competent. This is with the exception of employees in post prior to September 2014, who retain three-point scales (until they move posts or are subject to regrading) and those employed within Fleet Management and Driving Training Centre.

The grades for Support Services roles are determined using an analytical job evaluation process, that systematically ranks each role objectively and fairly. This job evaluation system (Korn Ferry (Hay) Methodology) is a recognised best practice non-discriminatory method of ranking roles against a pre-determined scale.

Senior Leader roles

Appointments for a limited number of Senior Leaders are offered under the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (known as the Gold Book) as adopted locally and as amended or supplemented by agreement between the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the employee, or in the case of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, or equivalent, between the Authority and the employee. Employment is also subject to other terms and conditions of service as determined by the Authority from time to time.

This group of Senior Leaders consists of:

- Chief Fire Officer/CE
- Deputy Chief Fire Officer/COO
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
- Director of Finance and Assets
- Director of Legal and Governance
- Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Head of Prevention and Protection
- Head of Response and Resilience

There is a twin-track approach for determining levels of pay for Gold Book roles. At National level, the NJC annually reviews the level of pay increase applicable to these roles covered by the National Agreement. Any increases agreed by the NJC are communicated to Fire Authorities via circulars. Decisions about pay and remuneration are taken by the Authority, who will review salary levels on an annual basis.

National pay awards are agreed through the NJC and notified to Fire Authorities. The last pay award was agreed as 3.2 per cent, effective 01 July 2025 and a £1500 consolidated uplift on all salaries effective from 1 January 2025.



For Gold Book roles, pay arrangements are locally determined and the level of pay fixed and designed to cover the full range and scope of the role.

8.0 Remuneration on Appointment

Remuneration will be based on the evaluated rate for the role, either nationally or locally set.

Base salary is one of a number of components of the employment package and by no means the only factor that influences the Authority's ability to recruit and retain employees.

New employees will usually be appointed to the minimum pay level for the relevant grade (trainee or development rate), unless relevant supporting experience can be identified and appropriately evidenced.

All new Gold Book appointments are subject to Authority approval. The Authority will be offered the opportunity to vote before salary packages (£100,000 plus) are offered in respect of a new appointment. For this purpose, salary packages should include salary, fees or allowances routinely payable to the appointee and any benefits in kind to which the Officer is entitled as a result of their employment.

9.0 Pay Progression

For Operational roles, rates of pay are determined by the role the employee is undertaking, and whether the employee is in the 'Trainee', 'Development' or 'Competent' stage of that role. The time it will take an employee to demonstrate competence will depend on the specific requirements of the employee, accessibility to assessments and the opportunities available. Employees can move between roles through successfully completing a promotion assessment process.

For Support Services roles, progression through the pay grade will be based on evidenced performance, and at least six months in post, attaining training and qualifications associated with the role, and the maximum grade for the post not being exceeded. Progression may be withheld if performance is not to the required standard. Employees can move between roles through completing a promotion assessment process.

For SLB members, progression through the pay grade will be based on evidenced performance, and at least six months in post. Any increase or



additions to remuneration will require approval of the appropriate committee of the Authority.

10. Other allowances and payments

Allowances: There are a number of allowances paid to employees, where specific circumstances require this and where it can be justified. These allowances are in accordance with National agreement or have been locally set in order to meet the demands of service delivery.

Market rate supplement: The Authority recognises the pay structure and job evaluation process does not normally consider factors such as market pay rates relating to specific roles or fluctuating demand for skills in the market place. Whilst the use of market rate supplements will not be the norm, there may be occasions where the Authority is unable to attract candidates to specific roles due to the fluctuations in the local labour market. In addition, existing employees may leave, citing the reason of being offered the 'market rate' for the role. When this occurs consideration may be given to awarding a market rate supplement in addition to the approved job evaluated grade for the role. Any payment will be time limited and reviewed annually.

Expenses: The Authority recognises employees may incur reasonable expenses whilst undertaking their role and will ensure employees are not financially disadvantaged or advantaged because of genuine business expenses. Unless a prior arrangement is in place, employees will be responsible for the payment of expenses incurred and will be reimbursed in accordance with the Authority's procedures relating to expenses.

Car lease schemes: Some employees participate in lease car arrangements, either as an essential car user, lease car user, or via a provided car scheme. The criteria are dependent on the requirements of the role or in accordance with terms and conditions of employment.

Relocation expenses: Upon appointment, where relocation expenses are incurred, the Authority may reimburse the individual in accordance with the Authority's Relocation Expenses Scheme. Members of the Authority will determine the specific application in respect of a SLB appointment and SLB will determine the application of the scheme to all other appointments. The scheme is applied at the discretion of the Authority and normally only applies to external appointees.

Additional Responsibility Allowance (ARA): These payments are used to reward increased responsibilities and duties beyond the normal remit of the role for specific periods, for example to cover managed vacancies for short to medium term periods, enabling successful change management with minimal risk. These payments apply to employees on Grey Book terms and conditions.



Honorarium payments: These can be given to Support Services employees when they are asked to undertake part of the duties at a higher graded post or duties outside the scope of their post, which is particularly onerous. Where the payment relates to an employee undertaking a proportion of the duties of a higher graded post, the calculation of the payment will normally link to the pay scale of the duties of the higher graded post being undertaken. For duties outside the scope of the employee's role, the amount of the payment will be determined by estimating the relative worth of the task in comparison to the employee's substantive grade. These payments are for Support Services employees.

An ARA or Honorarium payment requires approval via a business case.

For SLB members, any increase or additions to remuneration will require approval of the appropriate committee of the Authority.

Performance payment/merit award: One-off performance payments/merit awards may be considered linked to evidenced and scrutinised delivery of performance management objectives.

Pension Schemes: The Authority operates two pension schemes:

- 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme
- 2014 Local Government Pension Scheme

Subject to meeting the qualifying conditions, employees have a right to belong to a pension scheme. All new employees will be automatically entered into the relevant occupational pension scheme as defined by their terms and conditions of employment. Qualifying employees will be automatically re-enrolled every three years during their employment if they have opted out of the scheme.

The Authority makes an employer contribution to the Firefighters Pension Scheme of 37.6 per cent of pensionable pay (2015 Scheme), and 17.4 per cent of pensionable pay (LGPS Scheme).

The employee contributes of between 11 per cent and 14.5 per cent of pensionable pay (2015 Scheme) and 5.5 per cent and 12.5 per cent of pensionable pay (LGPS Scheme).

The Authority is obliged to publish its adopted pension discretions for the Firefighters' Pension Schemes and Local Government Pension Scheme, and the Authority's current policies in respect of discretionary payments are detailed on the external [website](#).



11. Pay Multiple

The pay multiple is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median (average) salary of the Authority's workforce. The average salary level is defined as the total of all regular payments made to an individual.

The definition of lowest paid employees are those who are paid at rates maintained in line with the National Living Wage.

As at 01 December 2025:

- The lowest paid salary is £23,557 (FTE)
- The highest paid salary is £176,988 (FTE)
- The median salary is £38,881 (FTE)

The Authority's pay multiple: the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median average salary figure for all employees in the Authority.

Pay multiple between the highest salary and lowest salary is 7.52:1 (this essentially means the lowest salary goes into the highest salary 7.52 times).

Pay multiple between the highest salary and median salary is 4.55:1 (this essentially means the median salary goes into the highest salary 4.55 times).

Year	Highest pay: Lowest pay	Highest pay : Median pay
2026/27	7.52:1	4.55:1
2025/26	7.70:1	4.51:1
2024/25	8.59:1	4.77:1
2023/24	8.39:1	4.77:1
2022/23	8.94:1	4.77:1
2021/22	9:1	4.77:1
2020/21	9.37:1	4.77:1
2019/20	9.64:1	4.77:1
2018/19	9.86:1	4.77:1
2017/18	10.17:1	4.77:1
2016/17	10.71:1	4.72:1
2015/16	11.04:1	4.77:1
2014/15	11.5:1	4.87:1
2013/14	11.72:1	4.9:1
2012/13	12.7:1	5.0:1

It is the intention that salary multiples do not reach the 1:20 ratio referred to in the Hutton Report.



12. Payment on termination of employment

There may be a number of circumstances where early retirement or voluntary redundancy payments may be paid to employees on ceasing to hold office. This can relate to individual circumstances, for example ill health, or can be the result of organisational change or in the interests of the efficiency of the Authority.

In the event of any redundancies, redundancy payments will be calculated in accordance with statutory requirements as modified by the Authority's agreed policies and in accordance with any extant statutory guidance.

The Authority does not make payments to senior staff members in addition to entitlements under its redundancy procedure who leave, other than to those who are leaving for the purposes of improved efficiency.

Where other severance payments are appropriate, such payments will be approved by the Director of Legal and Governance and the Director of Finance and Assets and will be subject to a settlement agreement and in accordance with any extant statutory guidance.

13. Re-employment and Pension Abatement

Re-employment: This applies where an individual retires from the Authority, draws their pension benefits and is subsequently re-employed into the same or other role within the Authority.

The Authority will consider re-employment of retired employees in accordance with the relevant pension scheme regulations and governance arrangements. There is no automatic right to be re-employed. The decision will be strictly based on organisational need and will follow the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published in May 2018, stated that Fire Authorities must not re-appoint principal fire officers (at Brigade Manager or Area Manager level or those with comparable responsibilities to those roles) after their retirement to their previous or similar role, save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interest of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited, with the reason for the decision published and the pension abated until the contract ends. Such a decision will be subject to prior approval at a meeting of the Authority in open session.

Pension Abatement:

Abatement means that when a retiree returns to work after retiring from any fire and rescue service, their combined annual salary and pension cannot exceed their pre-retirement salary. If the total salary and pension upon re-employment



surpasses this pre-retirement remuneration, the pension must be reduced or abated accordingly. This could result in the retiree receiving a reduced pension allowance or only their pension lump sum, effectively 'freezing' their pension allowance until they stop working. Pensions and pre-retirement salaries are uplifted and calculated annually in line with The Pensions Increase (Review) Order.

The default position of the Authority will be to abate individuals, and if a decision to not abate was taken, this would need to be approved by the Authority via a business case highlighting the full cost that will need to be paid to the pension account. There is no age limit on abatement, and this continues for the full period of re-employment. When the re-employment ends, the pension will be reinstated to the full amount.

There are strict rules around abatement that need to be considered and therefore it is important for the individual to discuss this in advanced with the Pensions team and/or the Pension provider. Furthermore, it is the individual's responsibility to inform the pension administrator of any changes in their employment which may impact their pension due to abatement.

It is important to note that abatement rules do not apply to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, but only to the 1992 and 2006 Schemes.

The Authority operates a flexible retirement process for employees in the Local Government Pension Scheme. This allows an employee to take their pension benefits and remain employed on reduced hours or at a lower grade without abatement of pension. This complies with the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

14. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment should be included to identify any issues which may result in a group being disadvantaged by the process.

To complete the table, tick ✓ the likely impact. If an EIA action plan is necessary, this can be downloaded from the intranet.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.



What impact will the implementation of this proposal have on people who share characteristics protected by <i>The Equality Act 2010</i> ? <input type="checkbox"/> (See Completion notes)				
Protected Characteristic:	Neutral Impact:	Positive Impact:	Negative Impact:	Evidence of impact and if applicable, justification if determining proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims exists
Sex (Men and Women)		X		The Service has an annual Gender Pay Gap Report which sets out the Services aims and objectives in reduce any pay disparity.
Race (All Racial Groups)		X		The Service has an annual Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which sets out the Services aims and objectives in reduce any pay disparity.
Disability (Mental, Physical, and Carers of Disabled people)	X			We are aware of the current consultation that ended on the 10 th of June 2025 relating to making Disability Pay Gap Reporting Mandatory. As a Service we would welcome such national guidance from Government. If there is no Government recommendation for the 2026/2027 published, we will do an internal review and confirm if one is required in advance.



Religion or Belief	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Sexual Orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Straight)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Pregnancy and Maternity	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Marital Status (Married and Civil Partnerships)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Gender Reassignment (Includes non-binary)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Age (People of all ages)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) screening questions

If the document includes any personally identifiable information (PII) a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be required. This should be discussed with the Data Protection Officer and the DPIA file location referenced at this point in your document.

Where no PII is involved it should be stated at this point in your document.

The Data Protection Officer holds the master copies of all completed DPIA in N:Common/Information Assets/DPIAs.

The DPIA needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure that any PII is adequately considered.

The DPIA template and guidance can be found [here](#).

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Bucks Fire & Rescue Service

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (Also known as Equality Impact Assessment, People)

Policy /Project/ Function	Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2026/27	Date of Assessment	04/12/25
Assessment Rating: please tick 1 box <input type="checkbox"/> (The assessment rating is identified after the analysis has been completed - See Completion Notes).	<div>RED</div>	<div>AMBER</div>	<div>GREEN</div> <div>X</div> <div>Proportionate means achieving a legitimate aim/can be objectively justified.</div>
Please list methods used to analyse impact on people (e.g. consultations forums, meetings, data collection)			
Please list any other policies that are related to or referred to as part of this analysis			
Please list the groups of people potentially affected by this proposal. (e.g. applicants, employees, customers, service users, members of the public)	All current and future employees.		
What are the aims and intended effects of this proposal (project, policy, function, service)?			
<p>The Pay Policy Statement sets out Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority's approach to employee pay in line with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. Its purpose is to ensure transparency in how salaries are determined and to disclose remuneration details for senior roles, such as Chief Officers. Once approved by the Fire Authority, the Statement will take effect from 1 April 2026 and will be reviewed annually to remain compliant with legislation and relevant practices.</p> <p>The Authority aims to apply pay and reward practices that are fair, transparent, and consistent for all employees. It seeks to ensure affordability and value for money for taxpayers while recognising employees' skills, knowledge, and contributions. The approach also supports recruitment, engagement, and retention of high-calibre staff to deliver corporate priorities. Effective financial management of the total pay bill underpins these practices, alongside mechanisms to review terms and conditions and ensure compliance with all legal obligations.</p> <p>Accountability for pay decisions rests with elected members, who are directly answerable to local communities. All decisions on pay policies will be made openly by the Fire Authority and will not be delegated to sub-committees. Annual Statements and any amendments will be considered at full Authority meetings, and all decisions regarding Chief Officer pay must comply with the current Statement.</p>			
Is any Equality Data available relating to the use or implementation of this proposal (policy, project, or function, service)? Please Tick			
<input type="checkbox"/> (See Completion notes)			
YES:		NO:	



Bucks Fire & Rescue Service

List any Consultations e.g. with employees, service users, Unions or members of the public that has taken place in the development or implementation of this proposal (project, policy, function)?

Financial Analysis If applicable, state any relevant cost implications (e.g. expenses, returns or savings) as a direct result of the implementation of this policy, project, or function.

Costs (£) N/A

Projected Returns £

Implementation £

Projected Savings £

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Also known as Equality Impact Assessment, People Impact Assessment, Equality Risk Assessment)

What impact will the implementation of this proposal have on people who share characteristics protected by <i>The Equality Act 2010</i> ? <input type="checkbox"/> (See Completion notes)				
Protected Characteristic :	Neutral Impact:	Positive Impact:	Negative Impact:	Evidence of impact and if applicable, justification if determining proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims exists
Sex (Men and Women)		X		The Service has an annual Gender Pay Gap Report which sets out the Services aims and objectives in reduce any pay disparity.
Race (All Racial Groups)		X		The Service has an annual Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which sets out the Services aims and objectives in reduce any pay disparity.
Disability (Mental, Physical, and Carers of Disabled people)	X			We are aware of the current consultation that ended on the 10 th of June 2025 relating to making Disability Pay Gap Reporting Mandatory. As a Service we would welcome such national guidance from Government. If there is no Government recommendation for the 2026/2027 published, we will do an internal review and confirm if one is required in advance.
Religion or Belief	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Sexual Orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Straight)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Pregnancy and Maternity	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Marital Status (Married and Civil Partnerships)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Gender Reassignment (Includes non-binary)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.
Age (People of all ages)	X			There is no identified positive or negative outcome from this statement.

What impact will the implementation of this proposal have on people who are impacted by and / or local factors that sit outside the Equality Act 2010 (non-legislative). Examples include social economic factors (i.e. poverty and or isolation), caring responsibility, unemployment, homelessness, urbanisation, rurality, health inequalities any other disadvantage. ☐ (See Completion notes)

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Also known as Equality Impact Assessment, People Impact Assessment, Equality Risk Assessment)

Identified impact non-legislative factor.	Neutral Impact:	Positive Impact:	Negative Impact:	Evidence of impact and if applicable, justification if determining proportionate means of achieving legitimate aims exists
All Other				

Name of department head / project lead	
Date of EIA sign off:	
Date(s) of review of assessment:	

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Also known as Equality Impact Assessment, People Impact Assessment, Equality Risk Assessment)

Action Plan Owner:		Commencement date:		Sign off date:	
As a result of performing this analysis, what actions are proposed to remove or reduce any negative impact of adverse outcomes identified on people (employees, applicants customers, members of the public etc) who share characteristics protected by <i>The Equality Act 2010</i> or are non-legislative characteristics ?					
Action Planning					
Identified Impact Protected Characteristic or local non-legislative factor	Recommended Actions	Responsible Lead	Completion Date	Review Date	

Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA)

(Also known as Equality Impact Assessment, People Impact Assessment, Equality Risk Assessment)

Completion Notes:	
Analysis Ratings:	<p>The assessment rating is located at the top of the document so that if you have several impact assessments you will be able to determine priority impact status. To assure the assessment determines the rating, the rating should not be determined before the assessment has been completed.</p> <p>Red: As a result of performing this assessment, it is evident a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional, or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics (and / or local non-legislative factors)</i>. In this instance, it is recommended that the use of the activity or policy be suspended until further work or analysis is performed.</p> <p>If it is considered this risk of discrimination (is <i>objectively justified</i>, and/or the use of this proposal (policy, activity, function) is a <i>proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim</i>; this should be indicated and further professional advice taken.</p> <p>Amber: As a result of performing this assessment, it is evident a risk of discrimination (as described above) exists and this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Action Planning</i> section of this document.</p> <p>Green: As a result of performing this assessment, no adverse effects on people who share Protected Characteristics <i>and / or local non-legislative factors</i> are identified - no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p>
Equality Data:	<p>Equality data is internal or external information that may indicate how the activity or policy being analysed can affect different groups of people who share the nine Protected Characteristics <i>and / or local non-legislative factors</i>. Examples of <i>Equality Data</i> include: (this list is not definitive)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Application success rates by <i>Equality Groups</i> 2: Complaints by <i>Equality Groups</i> 3: Service usage and withdrawal of services by <i>Equality Groups</i> 4: Grievances or decisions upheld and dismissed by <i>Equality Groups</i>
Legal Status:	<p>This document is designed to assist organisations in "<i>Identifying and eliminating unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation</i>" as required by <i>The Equality Act Public Sector Duty 2011</i>.</p> <p>The FRSs may be keen to extend "due regard" to local/non-legislative factors such as social economic factors (i.e. poverty and or isolation), caring responsibility, unemployment, homelessness, urbanisation, rurality, health inequalities any other disadvantage. <input type="checkbox"/> (See Completion notes). What impact will the implementation of this proposal have on people for which there is no legal requirement? (consider each local non-legislative factor separately).</p> <p>Doing this assessment may also identify opportunities to <i>foster good relations</i> and <i>advance opportunity</i> between those who share Protected Characteristics <i>and / or local non-legislative factors</i> and those that do not.</p> <p><i>An EIA is not legally binding and should not be used as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.</i></p>

<p>Objective And/or Proportionate</p>	<p>Certain discrimination may be capable of being defensible if the determining reason is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) <i>objectively justified</i> (ii) <i>a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim</i> of the organisation <p>For <i>objective justification</i>, the determining reason must be a real, objective consideration, and not in itself discriminatory. To be '<i>proportionate</i>' there must be no alternative measures available that would meet the aim without too much difficulty that would avoid such a discriminatory effect. Where (i) and/or (ii) is identified it is recommended that professional (legal) advice is sought prior to completing an Equality Impact Assessment.</p>
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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 February 2026

Report title: Safety Centre Funding Agreement 2026/27 - 2029/30

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger (Fire Authority Chairman)

Report sponsor: Area Commander Adam Burch, Head of Prevention and Protection

Author and contact: Group Commander Jack Mills JMills@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That a four-year partnership and funding agreement with the Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2030, funded at £50,000 per annum (total £200,000 over the lifetime of this agreement) be approved.
 2. That the Heads of Terms (Appendix 1) be approved.
-

Executive summary:

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) played a foundational role in establishing The Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) in the early 1990s and has remained a committed partner ever since with a senior BFRS officer serving as a trustee/director since its incorporation.

The Centre is widely recognised both locally and nationally for its contribution to early-intervention safety education, providing immersive learning on fire, road, water, rail and personal safety, as well as broader community risks for children and young people.

The Authority and the Milton Keynes Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Limited have had successive funding agreements in place since 2011 predicated on £25,000 per annum (and which between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2022 included an additional contribution to staff travel costs for outreach work capped at £2,000 per annum).

This was reviewed and renewed for a further three years in 2022 and extended again in October 2025 (see background papers) until 31 March 2026, when it will currently end.

A recent review conducted by officers in partnership with the Safety Centre has concluded with making this recommendation to increase the funding from £25,000 to £50,000 per annum, and is driven by three interlinked factors:

1. Inflationary Pressure

Since 2019, national inflation has risen significantly. Over this period, the real-terms value of the Authority's contribution (which has remained at £25,000 per annum) has

eroded year-on-year, and using CPI inflation as a benchmark, the £25,000 contribution agreed in 2019 would need to rise to approximately £33,000 by 2026 to retain its original purchasing power.

The increase above the £33,000 figure to £50,000 is designed to also anticipate a similar projected inflationary rise between the start of this funding agreement until its conclusion in 2030.

The proposed four-year uplifted agreement would maintain and strengthen BFRS's role as a strategic partner, committing to reinforced investment to help ensure the future sustainability of the centre. It also ensures BFRS remains one of the Safety Centre's largest and most consistent financial supporters, contributing significantly to the Charity's ability to subsidise access for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Schools.

2. Expanded Scope of Delivery

The Centre now delivers a wider range of scenarios, including serious violence, exploitation, and online safety at a time when early-intervention and Serious Violence Duty responsibilities are receiving increasing national and local focus.

The proposed uplift recognises the expanded scope of work delivered through the partnership, including scenario redevelopment, and thematic sessions aligned to the Serious Violence Duty as well as improving delivery of core statutory prevention duties for fire and rescue services.

The recommended approach also strengthens and supports the Safety Centre's outreach model, enabling more flexible delivery for schools unable to travel to the centre, and reflects the Charity's focus on maximising reach and educational impact across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, particularly where transport barriers or socioeconomic factors limit attendance.

3. Strategic Alignment

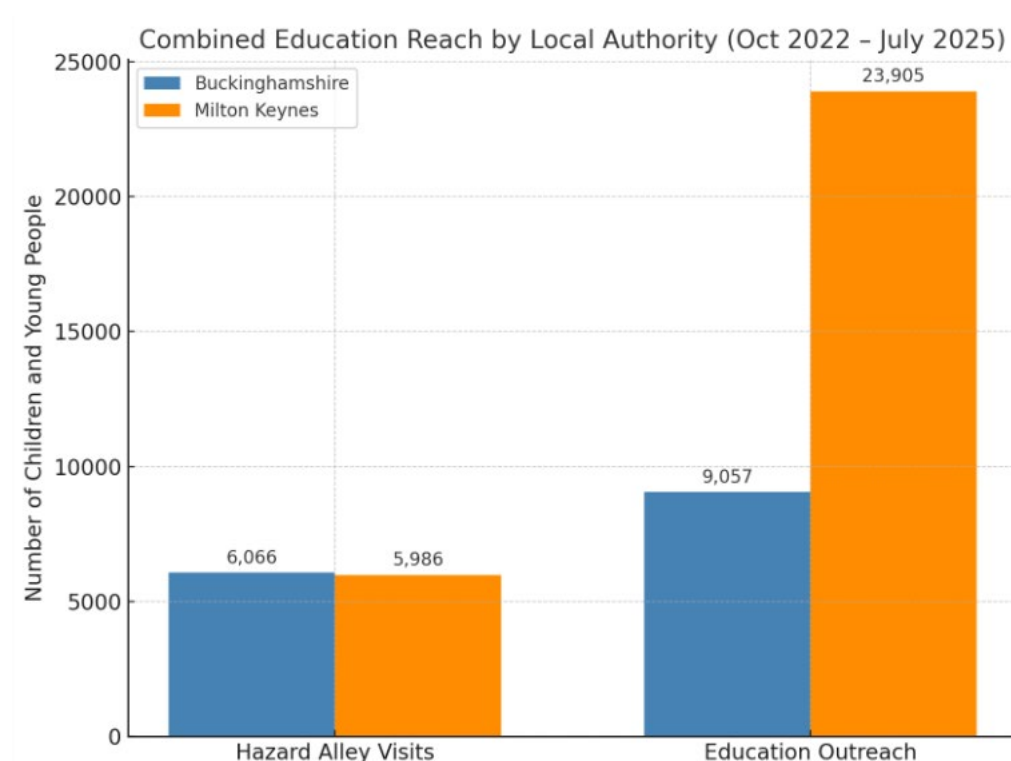
The partnership held with the Safety Centre is embedded as a key delivery mechanism for BFRS's Prevention Framework and Serious Violence Duty commitments across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The proposed funding model strengthens BFRS's strategic role by combining scenario sponsorship, subsidised attendance, and direct investment in thematic sessions that support the Authority's Prevention activities and the priorities of the Serious Violence Duty. It also presents a blueprint for how agencies from neighbouring counties should also be working with Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) to meet common societal impact goals.

In conclusion, an uplifted funding agreement aligned to the timescales of the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030, provides a proportionate and strategically aligned investment that strengthens delivery of the Authority's Prevention Framework and Serious Violence Duty commitments.

Alternatives were examined and their analysis is included within the risk management section of this report. Approval of the preferred option secures a more sustainable partnership model and preserves a key prevention pathway for children and young people across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The impact of the Safety Centre:



The Safety Centre’s delivery aligns directly with the Fire Authority’s prevention priorities, reaching priority groups including SEND pupils, refugee families, and young people at risk of harm.

This includes the delivery of:

- Knife crime prevention workshops
- violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) workshops
- Carbon monoxide and electrical safety workshops
- Anti-social behaviour workshops
- Road safety workshops in partnership with the Motor Insurance Bureau
- Online safety sessions

Financial implications:

It is proposed that Authority funding to the Safety Centre is uplifted to £50,000 per annum for the next four years, covering the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2030, resulting in a total financial commitment of £200,000 which will be factored into the Authority’s Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Safety Centre’s most recent financial data (2025/26 baseline) indicates anticipated total operational costs of £584,262, with an expected 20,000 young people engaged annually at an anticipated average cost of £29.20* per

child. Of these, an estimated 12,000 young people from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes will benefit from Hazard Alley visits or in-school workshops, equating to an annual delivery value of £350,400.

School-generated income (ranging from £50,000–£65,000) covers only a portion of these costs due to the Charity’s choice to maintain affordable and competitive (with other popular school excursion options) visit prices of £12.50 for a half-day and £19.50 for a full-day, including a themed workshop. This creates a significant annual funding deficit, which BFRS has historically helped to offset.

*Variable depending on group sizes, legislation changes, unexpected building or scenario works and utility charge increases.

Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) LTD, income from donations and legacies:

	Unrestricted funds General 2024 £	Unrestricted funds Designated 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds General 2023 £	Unrestricted funds Designated 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and gifts	19,069	4,164	161,284	184,517	11,819	25,687	40,724	78,230
Donations and gifts								
Beds Luton Community Foundation	-	-	2,000	2,000	-	-	-	-
Bucks & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	-	-	25,000	25,000	-	-	25,000	25,000
Harpur Trust	-	-	5,000	5,000	-	-	-	-
Knife Crime Appeal	-	4,164	-	4,164	-	25,687	-	25,687
MK Community Foundation	-	-	36,259	36,259	-	-	-	-
MIB	2,000	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	-
Milton Keynes Council	-	-	24,542	24,542	-	-	-	-
Milton Keynes Health and Safety Group	-	-	-	-	1,800	-	-	1,800
MK Schools Advance Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,000	6,000
National Grid	6,000	-	-	6,000	-	-	-	-
National Lottery	-	-	44,571	44,571	-	-	-	-
Parks Trust	-	-	-	-	8,000	-	-	8,000
Rectory Foundation	-	-	4,978	4,978	-	-	-	-
Ringways	-	-	2,000	2,000	-	-	-	-
Rotary Club of Milton Keynes	7,100	-	-	7,100	-	-	6,700	6,700
West Northants Council	-	-	7,034	7,034	-	-	-	-
Wixamtree Trust	-	-	9,900	9,900	-	-	-	-
Other	3,969	-	-	3,969	2,019	-	3,024	5,043
	19,069	4,164	161,284	184,517	11,819	25,687	40,724	78,230

Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) LTD, annual report and unaudited financial statements, for the year ended 30 September 2024.

Risk management:

There is an inherent risk that grant funding allocated by the Authority to a third-sector organisation may not be utilised for its intended purposes without appropriate oversight. The Safety Centre demonstrate a long history of formal contracts with measurable deliverables, and the proposed partnership mitigates risk through strengthened governance, clearer performance expectations and enhanced monitoring arrangements.

If approved, the officers will undertake formal annual reviews against the revised Funding Agreement, which sets out the required outputs, educational reach, thematic delivery and performance indicators. Should the Safety Centre fail to make satisfactory progress, the Authority retains the right to withhold, suspend or amend payments, in line with the Funding Agreement.

The updated Agreement will continue to include termination provisions that allow the Authority to end the partnership on an anniversary date with appropriate notice, thereby maintaining financial and operational flexibility should priorities or performance materially change.

The Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Limited is a registered charity (1019093) and is legally required to submit annual returns and independently audited accounts to the Charity Commission for England and Wales. As part of the annual review process, officers will examine the Safety Centre's published accounts, the independent auditor's opinion, and the Trustees' Annual Report to ensure the Authority's contribution has been appropriately applied to core educational delivery and outreach activity and will attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to engage with the board of trustees and charity Chief Executive, and other stakeholders.

The strengthened partnership governance arrangement, which include bi-monthly performance meetings, data-sharing, and oversight by a multi-agency Steering Group, provide additional assurance and transparency around delivery, financial stewardship, and alignment to the Authority's prevention and Serious Violence Duty priorities.

Risk of Maintaining Funding at £25,000

Retaining the contribution at £25,000 per annum presents several risks:

- Real-terms decline in support: The value of the Authority's contribution would continue to fall due to inflation, further widening the gap between delivery cost and income.
- Reduced access for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes schools: The Safety Centre may be forced to increase school prices or reduce subsidised places, disproportionately affecting schools with transport or socioeconomic barriers.
- Diminished influence over safety messaging: Lower funding reduces BFRS's strategic leverage to shape the core safety scenarios and ensure alignment with Prevention, CRMP and Serious Violence Duty objectives.
- Potential scaling back of outreach: Without adequate financial support, the charity may have to limit its ability to deliver outreach workshops, reducing reach in more rural or deprived communities.
- Reputational and partnership impact: In the context of rising costs and expanding duties, maintaining the 2019 level of funding may signal reduced commitment to early intervention and community safety.

Risk of Withdrawing Funding

Withdrawal of funding would create a more significant series of risks:

- Immediate reduction in educational access: Without BFRS subsidy, thousands of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes children would face increased costs or lost opportunities to attend Hazard Alley or receive outreach sessions.
- Weakening of statutory duty delivery: The partnership directly supports fire prevention, Serious Violence Duty responsibilities, and wider early-intervention requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act.
- Loss of strategic presence: BFRS would no longer hold scenario sponsorship or direct influence over safety content delivered annually to more young people.
- Potential closure or downsizing risk for the charity: As one of the Safety Centre's largest and most stable funders, the loss of BFRS support may impact the charity's financial resilience, long-term planning and its ability to offer subsidised places.
- Fragmentation of multi-agency collaboration: The Steering Group, shared data, joint sessions and collaborative outreach would be significantly disrupted.
- Negative community and stakeholder perception: Withdrawal may be interpreted as reduced commitment to prevention and early intervention work, particularly during a period where public bodies are expected to strengthen, not reduce, collaborative safeguarding activity.
- £50,000 back into BFRS: Withdrawing support from the Safety Centre and reinvesting £50,000 within BFRS would deliver limited improvement against the priority areas expected on BFRS. For example, a comparable investment would fund approximately one Youth Inclusion Officer post (previously benchmarked at Grade H, £47,303 p.a.), however this would not replicate the wider benefits, capacity and outcomes currently provided through the Safety Centre partnership.

Legal implications:

The previous funding agreement, extended to 31 March 2026, set out the Authority's financial contribution and the associated performance requirements, including provisions enabling the Authority to withhold or suspend payments where agreed outputs were not achieved. Those provisions ensured continued compliance with the Authority's statutory duties and will be retained into the proposed 2026–2030 agreement.

The proposed 2026–2030 partnership constitutes a four-year commitment, funded at £50,000 per annum, with clear requirements set out in Heads of Terms for scenario sponsorship, subsidised attendance, thematic workshops, and outreach delivery. As with previous agreements, the Authority will retain the right to withhold, suspend, delay or terminate payments should the Safety Centre fail to meet its obligations or if performance concerns arise.

The Safety Centre remains responsible for applying all funds in accordance with the purposes defined in the Agreement. Where any portion of the Authority's contribution remains unspent beyond the grant period, the charity will remain bound by the relevant requirements until such time as those funds are expended or returned, consistent with standard public-sector grant management practice.

The partnership continues to support the Authority's statutory responsibilities to promote fire safety and prevent harm. The agreement is legally supported by Section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Authority to provide financial support to organisations delivering fire prevention, community safety, and early-intervention activities aligned to its core functions.

The partnership also contributes to wider statutory responsibilities, including duties under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 (collaboration), the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (early intervention), and the Serious Violence Duty, strengthening the legal basis and strategic alignment of the proposed arrangement.

Privacy and security implications:

The Safety Centre is the Data Controller for all personal data collected in connection with visits, outreach sessions, and educational activities.

Any data shared between the parties will be managed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Authority's own Information Governance Framework. Personal data will only be shared where lawful, proportionate and necessary for the delivery, evaluation, or monitoring of the partnership. Both organisations will maintain appropriate safeguards, privacy notices, and security measures to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Duty to collaborate:

Delivery of safety education by the Safety Centre aligns with the Authority's responsibilities under the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which requires fire and rescue services to actively consider and pursue opportunities for collaboration with police, ambulance, and wider public-sector partners. The partnership also supports multi-agency priorities under the Serious Violence Duty, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and local community safety strategies.

Through joint development of safety scenarios, co-delivery of themed workshops, shared data insights, and participation in a multi-agency Steering Group, the Safety Centre provides a structured platform for collaboration between BFRS, Thames Valley Police, Local Authorities, health partners and other emergency services. This ensures a consistent approach to prevention, early intervention, and public protection across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Health and safety implications:

There are no significant health and safety implications arising directly from the approval of this report. However, the delivery of the partnership will continue to

require both organisations to comply with their respective statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Where BFRS staff undertake duties or work remotely within the Safety Centre, whether for joint delivery, outreach coordination, scenario review, or partnership meetings, they will do so in accordance with BFRS lone working, site-visit and risk assessment procedures.

The Safety Centre will continue to provide a safe working environment for all visitors, volunteers and partner staff, including:

- Maintaining appropriate building safety and risk assessments
- Providing relevant inductions for BFRS personnel working on-site
- Ensuring shared workspaces meet agreed safety and access standards
- Complying with safeguarding, emergency evacuation and incident reporting requirements

Both organisations will maintain clear communication and shared arrangements to ensure that staff operating within the Centre, including those working remotely or using shared facilities, do so safely and in compliance with organisational policies and statutory obligations.

Environmental implications:

There are no significant environmental implications arising directly from the approval of this report. However, both BFRS and the Safety Centre recognise their shared responsibilities to minimise environmental impact in the delivery of educational and community safety activities.

The partnership supports environmentally responsible practice through:

- Reduction of travel emissions by incorporating outreach delivery, reducing the need for schools to make long-distance trips to the Centre.
- Encouraging shared use of facilities and workspaces, reducing duplication of estate usage.
- Utilisation of energy-efficient infrastructure at the Centre following recent building improvements and maintenance undertaken by the landlord.
- Continued review of digital delivery, online resources and paper-free teaching materials where appropriate.
- Alignment with BFRS environmental commitments and the Authority's wider sustainability objectives.

No adverse environmental impacts have been identified as part of the proposed partnership.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The Safety Centre continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, building on the requirements set out in previous funding agreements. Improvements completed during the last agreement period, including enhanced internal lighting for visitors with visual impairment and full compliance with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG 2.1\)](#), remain in place and form part of the Centre's ongoing accessibility standards.

The Centre has also installed a fixed induction loop system to support visitors who are deaf or have hearing loss and has trained staff in adapting scenarios for individuals with neurodiversity, including autistic spectrum conditions, ADHD and sensory processing needs. Scenario content is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains inclusive, appropriate and accessible.

Under the proposed 2026–2030 agreement, EDI considerations will be strengthened further through:

- In-school outreach delivery, which increases access for schools facing transport, cost or inclusion barriers.
- Adaptable educational materials that can be tailored to different learning needs, backgrounds and levels of prior understanding.
- Alignment to BFRS safeguarding and inclusion standards, ensuring consistent practice across both organisations. Note: all safeguarding concerns to be raised when working within the Safety Centre will be via their policy.
- Continued staff training to support inclusive teaching practices, trauma-informed approaches, and safe engagement with vulnerable children and young people.
- Targeted engagement with underserved communities, supporting the Authority's commitment to reaching those at greatest risk of harm.
- Targeted volunteer recruitment campaigns to expand the diversity of volunteer guides to better represent the diversity of the visiting students

No negative EDI impacts have been identified. The partnership is expected to have a positive impact on accessibility, inclusion, and equitable access to early-intervention safety education across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The Safety Centre Theory of Change outlines the concept of how interactions with the Safety Centre has a positive behavioural impact on those children will have who interact with the program.

Consultation and communication:

These proposals have been discussed with the CEO and the Chair of Trustees of the Safety Centre. The impact report and its recommendations were presented to the BFRS Service Delivery Group in December 2025, where feedback and endorsement were received prior to submission to the Fire Authority for final approval.

Background papers:

Safety Centre Funding Agreement - ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/10/2022 11:00](#) (bucksfire.gov.uk) —Item 13, page 129

Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Impact Report April 2025 - ([Public Pack](#)) [Agenda Document for BMKFA Executive Committee, 09/07/2025 10:00](#) – Item 9, page 33

Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Impact Report April 2024 - ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, 12/06/2024 11:00](#) Item 21, page 379

[Serious Violence Duty - Statutory Guidance](#)

[Buckinghamshire Serious Violence Response Strategy 2024/27](#)

[MK Together Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy 2025 - 2029](#)

Proposal for Extension of Safety Centre Funding Agreement - ([Public Pack](#)) [Agenda Document for BMKFA Meeting 08/10/2025 - Item 9, Page 67](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Appendix 1: Safety Centre Heads of Terms	Secure

Parties

- 1) **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE & MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** of Brigade Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1BD ('the Authority').
- 2) **SAFETY CENTRE (HAZARD ALLEY) LIMITED** (Company Register number 0270981) whose registered office is at 18 Carters Lane, Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes, MK11 3ES ('the Safety Centre').

Grant: the sum of £200,000 (TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS)

Commencement Date: 1 April 2026

Grant Period: the period ending on 31 March 2030.

Purpose:

The Safety Centre will:

- Deliver all educational activities, including centre-based sessions, subsidised visits, and outreach workshops
- Ensure that all content, scenarios and materials reflect agreed fire safety, community safety and Serious Violence Duty messages
- Road safety
- Water, rail and electrical safety
- Fire prevention and appropriate response (including calling 999)
- Basic first aid/recovery position
- Education tailored to deliver BFRSs commitments under the Serious Violence Duty
- Develop an evaluation system to provide evidence of behavioural change and report those findings within their impact reports.
- Maintain high-quality safeguarding, inclusion and accessibility standards across all delivery
- Provide timely performance data, pre/post evaluation results and qualitative feedback
- Participate in bi-monthly operational meetings and the multi-agency Steering Group, organised and administered by the Safety Centre
- Maintain compliance with all relevant legislation, including health and safety, safeguarding and data protection
- Notify BFRS of any significant operational, financial or organisational risks that may affect delivery
- Ensure appropriate induction, support and safe working conditions for BFRS staff operating on-site
- Report quarterly as to the Safety Centre's performance

BFRS will:

- Provide direction on fire safety messaging, risk themes and priority areas aligned to BFRS and CRMP objectives
- Contribute to annual content reviews of scenarios, particularly the House Fire scenario

- Support joint delivery where appropriate, including themed workshops and outreach sessions delivered by the community safety advisors in liaison with Safety Centre volunteers and/or staff
- Share relevant data, insights or operational intelligence to support targeted engagement
- Attend all scheduled governance meetings, including Steering Group sessions and partnership reviews
- Ensure BFRS staff working within the Centre follow organisational health and safety, lone working and safeguarding procedures
- Promote Hazard Alley sessions through KS2 visits, school networks and joint communication channels

Monitoring and reporting: The Safety Centre shall provide the Authority with a financial report and an operational report on its use of the Grant and delivery of the Project annually and in such formats as the Authority may reasonably require. The Safety Centre shall, in addition, provide the Authority with a report within three months of the last day of the quarter to which it relates which shall include the following information as a minimum:

- a) number of children from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes schools broken down by school and school year of children attending
- b) details of all follow up visits, dates attended and numbers attending.
- c) details of all non-school visits and outreach sessions delivered by the centre of children and/or residents of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- d) delivery against key performance measures jointly developed and agreed within Year 1 of this Agreement.
- e) outcomes and feedback of evaluation results, teacher/group leader satisfaction scores and any themes arising.
- f) equality of access including attendance breakdown by Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and reach into priority areas/schools as agreed by the Authority.
- g) incidents and complaints including details of any accidents, near-misses, safeguarding concerns and complaints, and actions taken.

Along with its annual financial report, the Safety Centre shall provide the Authority with a risk register and insurance review in the format provided by the Authority. The Safety Centre shall address the health and safety of its staff in its risk register.

Should any part of the Grant remain unspent at the end of the Grant Period, the Safety Centre shall ensure that any unspent monies are returned to the Authority or, if agreed in writing by the Chief Finance Officer of the Authority, shall be entitled to retain the unspent monies to use for purposes as agreed between the parties.

Accounts and records: The Grant shall be shown in the Safety Centre's accounts as a restricted fund and shall not be included under unrestricted funds unless agreed in writing by the Chief Finance Officer of the Authority.

The Safety Centre shall keep separate, accurate and up to date accounts and records of the receipt and expenditure of the Grant monies received by it.

Withholding, suspending and repayment of the Grant: The Authority's intention is that the Grant will be paid to the Safety Centre in full. However, without prejudice

to the Authority's other rights and remedies, the Authority may at its discretion withhold or suspend payment of the Grant if:

- a) The Safety Centre uses the Grant for purposes other than those for which they have been awarded;
- b) The Authority considers that the Safety Centre has not made satisfactory progress with the delivery of the Project;
- c) The Safety Centre is, in the reasonable opinion of the Authority, delivering the Project in a negligent manner;
- d) The Safety Centre obtains duplicate funding from a third party for the Project;
- e) The Safety Centre obtains funding from a third party which in the reasonable opinion of the Authority, undertakes activities that are likely to bring the reputation of the Project or the Authority into disrepute;
- f) The Safety Centre provides the Authority with any materially misleading or inaccurate information;
- g) Any member of the Governing Body, employee or volunteer of the Safety Centre has a) acted dishonestly or negligently at any time and directly or indirectly to the detriment of the Project or b) taken any actions which, in the reasonable opinion of the Authority, bring or are likely to bring the Authority's name or reputation into disrepute;
- h) The Safety Centre ceases to operate for any reason, or it passes a resolution (or any court of competent jurisdiction makes an order) that it be wound up or dissolved (other than for the purpose of a bona fide and solvent reconstruction or amalgamation);
- i) The Safety Centre becomes insolvent, or it is declared bankrupt, or it is placed into receivership, administration or liquidation, or a petition has been presented for its winding up, or it enters into any arrangement or composition for the benefit of its creditors, or it is unable to pay its debts as they fall due; or
- j) The Safety Centre fails to comply with any of the terms and conditions set out in this Agreement and fails to rectify any such failure within 30 days of receiving written notice detailing the failure.

Should the Safety Centre be subject to financial or other difficulties which are capable of having a material impact on its effective delivery of the Project or compliance with this Agreement it will notify the Authority as soon as possible so that, if possible, and without creating any legal obligation, the Authority will have an opportunity to provide assistance in resolving the problem or to take action to protect the Authority and the Grant monies.

Termination: Except where otherwise specified, the terms of the Agreement shall apply until the expiry of the Grant Period or for so long as any Grant monies remain unspent by the Safety Centre, whichever is longer.

The Authority may terminate the Agreement and any Grant payments on the first, second, or third anniversary on one month's written notice in advance should it be required to do so by financial restraints or for any other reason.

Payment Schedule

Amount of Grant Payable	Date of Payment
£25,000	1/4/2026
£25,000	1/10/2026
£25,000	1/4/2027
£25,000	1/10/2027
£25,000	1/4/2028
£25,000	1/10/2028
£25,000	1/4/2029
£25,000	1/10/2029



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 February 2025

Report title: 2026-27 Annual Delivery Plan

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger, Chairman

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Anne-Marie Carter, Head of Service Improvement –
acarter@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

1. That the 2026-27 Annual Delivery Plan be approved by the Authority.
 2. That approval of the reformatting of the document in line with corporate branding before publication is delegated to the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive.
-

Executive summary:

The 2026-27 Annual Delivery Plan (Appendix 1) details the Year two programme of work arising out of the 2025-30 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which was approved by the Fire Authority on 11 December 2024.

The Annual Delivery Plan will provide direction for the service for the next year within the context of the CRMP. It defines the scope of the Service's activities in terms of specific actions to deliver business change, and ongoing activities to mitigate and respond to risks in our community. It will match the activities of the Service to the environment in which it operates so that it maximises opportunities, minimises threats, and will synchronise the Service's activities to its resource capacity.

The Annual Delivery Plan supports the delivery of the Service's Objectives and Enablers.

- Prevention: Reducing risk and keeping our community safe
- Protection: Protecting People from risk in the built environment
- Response & Resilience: Responding quickly and effectively to emergencies
- People: An inclusive, healthy and engaged workforce
- Finance & Assets: Making the most of our finance and assets
- Digital, data and Technology: Optimising our technology and data

Ongoing progress against the Annual Delivery plan will be reviewed through the internal governance process monthly and up to Members annually.

Financial implications: The Annual Delivery Plan is set with reference to Medium Term Financial Plan.

Risk management: Alongside the Community Risk Management Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan, the Annual Delivery sets out how the strategic risks facing the Authority over the period to March 2030 will be mitigated.

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

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

Duty to collaborate: There are several items on the plan that will be approached in a collaborative manner.

Health and safety implications: There are no Health and Safety implications arising from this report. Some elements of the programme of activities set out in the Annual Delivery Plan may have health and safety implications. Detailed assessments of any health and safety implications will be conducted within the scope of the individual projects and work streams

Environmental implications: There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. Environmental impact assessments of changes arising from implementation of changes specified in the Annual Delivery Plan will be carried where required or appropriate.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: Where required, detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken within the scope of the individual projects and work streams identified in the Annual Delivery Plan.

Consultation and communication:

The Annual Plan will be available on the intranet to provide a single access point for all staff to view and see progress and to assist with planning and decision-making. In addition, it will be published on the BFRS website for the public.

Next steps -

- 2026-27 Annual Delivery Plan to be updated in line with our branding guidelines

Background papers:

12 February 2025 – Fire Authority: 2025-26 Annual Delivery Plan

[Fire Authority Meeting - 12 February 2025 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service](#)

11 December 2024 – Fire Authority: Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030

[Fire Authority Meeting - 11 December 2024 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service](#)

Fire Authority, 11 February 2026 | Item 12 – 2026/27 Annual Delivery Plan

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	2026-2027 Annual Delivery Plan	N/A

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Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Annual Delivery Plan

2026-2027

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
SERVICE AREA OVERVIEW	4
HOW WE SHAPED THIS PLAN	5
HOW IT ALL LINKS TOGETHER	6
OUR PROMISE AND OUR CULTURE	5
OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & ENABLERS	8
OUR ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2026/2027	9
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PREVENTION	10
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: PROTECTION	11
STRATEGIC ENABLER 1: PEOPLE	13
STRATEGIC ENABLER 2: FINANCE & ASSETS	14
STRATEGIC ENABLER 3: DIGITAL, DATA & TECHNOLOGY	15
COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT	16
FINANCES	17
GOVERNANCE	18
CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT	19
GLOSSARY	21

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Delivery Plan for 2026-2027. This document outlines our strategic priorities, key objectives, and the initiatives we will undertake to help ensure the safety and well-being of our community. Our commitment to excellence in fire prevention, emergency response, and community engagement remains steadfast as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of the coming year.

This year's plan is guided by our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which identifies and addresses the specific risks and needs of our community. The CRMP highlights our strategies for reducing risk, protecting people in the built environment, and responding effectively to emergencies. It also emphasises our dedication to fostering an inclusive, healthy, and engaged workforce, optimising our financial and physical resources, and leveraging technology and data to enhance our service delivery.

We strive to be an excellent, modern and agile fire and rescue service. Our professionalism is reflected in our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of fire and rescue sector. Inclusivity is at the heart of our workforce and community engagement efforts, as we aim to create a service that reflects and respects the diversity of our community. Agility is demonstrated through our ability to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging risks, ensuring that we can respond effectively and efficiently to any situation.

We encourage you to explore this plan and join us in our commitment to protect and serve the people of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.



Buckinghamshire
Fire & Rescue Service
Making a difference together

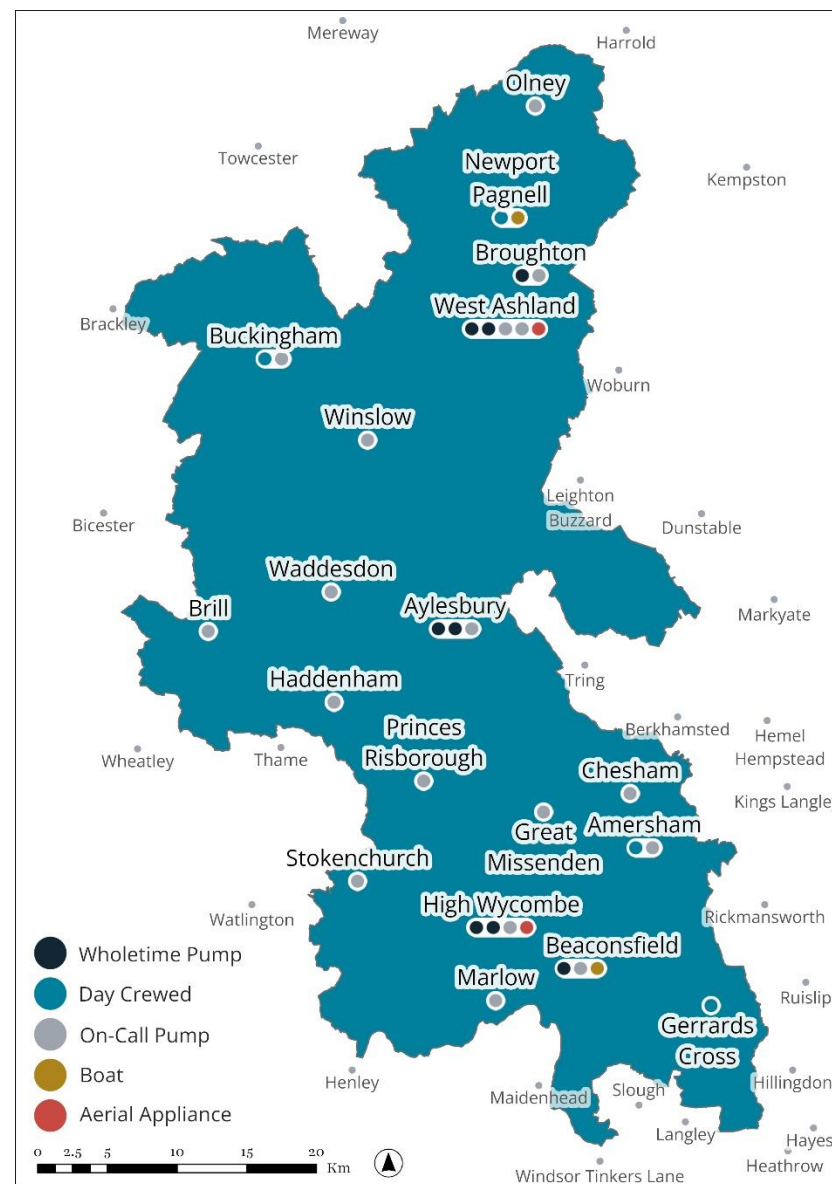
SERVICE AREA OVERVIEW

We serve over 800,000 people across diverse rural and city settings which includes the River Thames, the M1, M25 and M40 motorways, as well as rail infrastructure. This demands the expertise of approx. 500 highly skilled firefighters and support staff.

We currently operate 19 fire stations across our community, housing 30 fire engines (known as pumps) along with a range of specialist and support vehicles. We also host 1 of the 19 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams that are strategically located across England.

Our pumps are deployed to meet daily demands and provide resilience and capacity to handle occasional large-scale incidents or multiple, smaller incidents simultaneously.

Map A displays our fire station locations and pump types.



Map A: Station Locations and Pump Types

OUR PROMISE AND OUR CULTURE

Guided by our core values of Compassion, Integrity, and Respect, we are committed to provide an excellent fire service that is modern and agile, always focused on community needs and continuous improvement

Our promise is not only to the communities we serve but also to our staff. We strive to create a welcoming, engaging, and inclusive environment that inspires pride in our people. This is achieved through transparent communication and a culture where every staff member feels safe and confident in offering feedback, sharing ideas, and speaking up when things are not right.

The combination of our promise, values, and behaviours drives the direction of our culture, shaping how we engage with our communities and one another. These principles empower our staff to make the right decisions and deliver on the commitments of this Annual Delivery Plan over the coming year—and into the future.

Our Promise

COMMITTED	DEDICATED	TOGETHER
to providing an excellent, modern and agile FRS for our community.	to having the right people, at the right time, with the right skills, to keep you safe.	we will work to protect and safeguard people and places.

Our Core Values

 COMPASSION	 INTEGRITY	 RESPECT
--	---	---

Our Core Behaviours

 PROFESSIONAL	 CONNECTED	 EMPOWERING	 AMBITIOUS
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HOW IT ALL LINKS TOGETHER

At the core of everything we do is **Our Promise to the Public**, which shapes our approach and is the foundation upon which all of our actions are built.

This promise guides the development of our **CRMP**, a high-level strategic document that translates our promise into actionable strategies and goals.

The CRMP informs our **Annual Delivery Plan** (outlined in this document), detailing the specific actions we will take to achieve our goals over the year.

This Annual Delivery Plan is then used to build **Station and Team Plans**, ensuring every part of the service is aligned.

Every action we take is tied to our **Service behaviours**, ensuring a cohesive approach that reflects our promise to the public in everything we do.



HOW WE SHAPED THE PLAN

To make sure our Annual Delivery Plan is focused on the right priorities for our communities and our people, we reviewed a wide range of evidence, insight and feedback. This ensured that the actions we have set for the year ahead are risk led, data driven, aligned to statutory duties and best practice, and informed by what we have learned over the past 12 months.

In developing the plan, we considered:

- Our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP): including the risks and opportunities identified, our key aims, and the actions already underway to address them
- Last year's Annual Delivery Plan: assessing progress, learning from what worked well, and identifying areas where we need to go further
- HMICFRS reports: reviewing findings from our own inspection as well as learning from other fire and rescue services and State of Fire Report
- Staff Feedback: ensuring our plan reflects areas raised by our colleagues including our People Survey, station visits and the FBU Improvement Agenda
- Our Corporate Risk Register: making sure that organisational risks are managed, and that we prepare for emerging challenges
- Collaboration: aligning our work with national expectations, local partners and sector best practice
- Our Medium Term Financial Plan: ensuring our plan makes best use of the resources available

Together, this information has helped us set a clear and balanced plan that responds to risk, supports our workforce, improves our services, and strengthens community safety.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & ENABLERS

The risks we face are evolving due to factors such as climate change, new technologies, and changing legislation. In response to these challenges, our **2026-2027 Annual Delivery Plan** reflects the strategic direction set out in our **CRMP** and prioritises three key objectives: **Prevention**, **Protection**, and **Response**. These objectives are supported by three enablers: **Workforce**, **Finance and Assets**, and **Digital, Data and Technology**.

For each objective and enabler, we have identified clear actions and performance indicators that will guide our work throughout the year. These initiatives are directly aligned with the strategic priorities outlined in the CRMP but are tailored to ensure effective delivery for 2026-2027.

The successful implementation of these objectives relies on collaboration across the functional areas of prevention, protection, and response. We will continue to monitor progress against key performance indicators to ensure that we are making measurable progress in each of these areas. Further detail on these priorities and initiatives can be found on pages **9-15**.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES		
PREVENTION	PROTECTION	RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE
		
Reducing risk and keeping our community safe	Protecting people from risk in the built environment	Responding quickly and effectively to emergencies
STRATEGIC ENABLERS		
WORKFORCE	FINANCE AND ASSETS	DIGITAL, DATA AND TECHNOLOGY
		
An inclusive, healthy and engaged workforce	Making the most of our finances and assets	Optimising our technology and data

OUR ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2026/2027

Prevention

- Plan, resource, and deliver local and national road and water safety initiatives and campaigns.
- Develop a Youth Inclusion Programme
- Deliver the Prevention Community Engagement Communications Plan, ensuring consistent messaging across all Service Delivery Areas (SDA's)
- Embed the Domestic Dwelling Fire Targeting Methodology across all nine SDAs, monitoring and reporting on its effectiveness

Protection

- Work with partners to ensure effective management, enforcement, and ongoing implementation of fire safety remediation plans for multi-occupied residential properties
- Utilise station-based crews for targeted fire safety and protection initiatives
- Upgrade PRMS workflows and processes to achieve measurable efficiency improvements
- Transition the FFSIU and Thames Valley Fire Investigation team into business-as-usual delivery

Response & Resilience

- Define and deliver year two of our On-Call Improvement Programme
- Review our water rescue capacity & capability to understand long term requirements
- Complete a review of Working at Height (W@H) provision defining service needs

People

- Implement a refreshed People Directorate structure & function that enhances service delivery and meets future needs
- Develop advanced people analytics capabilities to provide real-time workforce insights and support data-driven decision-making
- Evaluate how newly introduced people frameworks and processes have been adopted and the difference they have made for staff and the service
- Implement a communication skills development initiative to improve internal collaboration and external engagement

Finance & Assets

- Deliver Year 2 of the property standards programme by investing £360k in station facilities
- Complete build of local training facility (subject to agreement)
- Secure funding and finalise plans for the redevelopment or refurbishment of High Wycombe Fire Station
- Commence scoping of Firefighting PPE and develop an implementation plan, to support delivery

Digital & Data

- Collaborate with other Thames Valley fire & rescue Services for the replacement of the Command & Control system (Year 1)
- Review provision of risk data within the current Command & Control system
- Embed branding standards across all departments and monitor compliance to ensure consistency in digital and physical assets
- Collaborate with national and regional partners to ensure operational and technical readiness for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme
- Develop a roadmap for AI integration across key functions and define next steps for implementation

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PREVENTION

Reducing risk and keeping our community safe

Our goal is to enhance the health, safety and wellbeing of our community. Our focus is on preventing fires and other incidents in homes, neighbourhoods, on roads and in the environment. To achieve this, we work closely with our partners to identify, safeguard and support those most at risk. Together, through community engagement and education, we aim to create a safer and more resilient environment for everyone.

We will continue to:

- Use our evidence base to identify who is at most risk in our communities to ensure our resourcing remains targeted
- Deliver Home Fire Safety Visits to the most vulnerable in our community
- Work in partnership with the Safety Centre to extend the reach of our Prevention work, utilising funding for future years
- Work with our partner agencies to ensure high quality referrals for the most vulnerable

In addition, we will

- Expand and integrate local and national road and water safety initiatives by leveraging data-driven insights, collaborating with partners, and introducing targeted campaigns for high-risk demographics
- Launch and evaluate the Youth Inclusion Programme, embedding measurable outcomes and exploring partnerships with schools, youth services, and community groups to maximise reach and impact
- Enhance the Prevention Community Engagement Communications Plan by incorporating digital engagement strategies, multilingual content, and real-time feedback mechanisms to ensure consistent and inclusive messaging across all SDAs
- Strengthen the Domestic Dwelling Fire Targeting Methodology by integrating predictive analytics, refining risk profiles, and introducing quarterly performance reviews to monitor effectiveness and adapt interventions

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: PROTECTION

Protecting people from risk in the built environment

Our goal is to enhance the safety and wellbeing of our community by reducing risks and incidents in the built environment. Fire safety legislation applies to around 30,000 buildings within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. We are committed to providing fire safety education to those responsible for keeping these buildings safe and, where required, taking proportionate and robust intervention. To achieve this, we will deliver efficient and effective protection activity ensuring our services are accessible to all members of the community.

We will continue to:

- Evolve our Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure it continues to priorities the highest risk buildings
- Deliver a comprehensive programme to build competency and capacity by upskilling the team and strengthening role-specific expertise.
- Maintain our business engagement programme fostering better communication and collaboration with local businesses
- Transition the Thames Valley Forensic Fire Investigation unit working with Thames Valley Police to business-as-usual operation

In addition, we will

- Strengthen partnerships for fire safety remediation by introducing joint governance frameworks, sharing best practice, and ensuring timely compliance monitoring for multi-occupied residential properties.
- Expand station-based crew involvement in targeted protection initiatives, supported by enhanced training to improve consistency and impact across all SDAs.
- Modernise PRMS workflows and processes by embedding automation, improving user experience, and introducing real-time performance dashboards to deliver measurable efficiency gains.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: RESPONSE & RESILIENCE

Responding quickly and effectively to emergencies

Our goal is to respond to emergencies in the most effective and safe way, prioritising the protection of, and limiting damage to, life, property and the environment. To achieve this, we are dedicated to ensuring operational preparedness as we respond safely and efficiently to all incidents. This includes acting independently as a single Service, collaborating seamlessly with local or regional Services and other partners, and actively engaging with the National Resilience Capabilities.

We will continue to:

- Ensure we maintain response standards by continuously optimising resource management and allocation
- Make available accurate, relevant and timely risk information supporting prevention, protection and resilience activities
- Implement the recommendations and learning from the Manchester Arena Inquiry
- Maintain operational preparedness through scenario-based resilience planning, leveraging cross-border collaboration to enhance readiness for complex and emerging risks

In addition, we will

- Deliver Year 2 of our On-Call Improvement Programme through contract reviews, systems refresh and resource optimisation, supported with targeted recruitment to help build a more competent, motivated, and resilient On-Call workforce
- Conduct a comprehensive review of water rescue capacity and capability, incorporating climate risk data, emerging national standards, and future technology options to define long-term service requirements
- Complete a Working at Height (W@H) provision review, translating findings into a clear service-wide plan, and training framework to ensure resilience and compliance

STRATEGIC ENABLER 1: PEOPLE

An inclusive, healthy and engaged workforce

Our goal is to optimise the contribution and wellbeing of everyone at BFRS. To achieve this, we are committed to being connected with our staff, ensuring wellbeing is prioritised and empowering all to be professional and ambitious in serving the community. This commitment starts from the moment someone expresses an interest in joining our Service. It continues throughout their working life with us, and even after they have left.

We will continue to:

- Maintain a culture that is unaccepting of inappropriate behaviours not in keeping with our values, by providing training on challenging unacceptable behaviour
- Build on our established equality, inclusion and diversity foundations by empowering staff networks, strengthening community partnerships, and embedding inclusive practices across all areas of the Service
- Identify and share organisational learning of local and national events to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence

In addition, we will

- Embed the refreshed People Directorate structure and function, ensuring clear accountability, streamlined processes, and alignment with future workforce needs through continuous feedback and improvement
- Advance our people analytics capability by introducing predictive workforce modelling, real-time dashboards, and actionable insights to support strategic workforce planning and evidence-based decision-making
- Assess and optimise adoption of new people frameworks and processes, using staff feedback, performance metrics, and impact analysis to refine approaches and maximise benefits for both staff and the Service

STRATEGIC ENABLER 2: FINANCE & ASSETS

Making the most of our finances and assets

Our goal is to make sure that we deliver the best possible service and value for money with the finances and assets that we have been trusted with. To achieve this, we are committed to upholding the highest professional standards in financial management and ensuring the provision of top-tier facilities and equipment essential for our staff to deliver our duties to our community effectively and safely.

We will continue to:

- Develop and agree a medium-term financial plan that sets a balanced budget for each financial year, and establish robust processes to monitor, manage, and report expenditure against it
- Evaluate and deliver 26/27 plans to develop, maintain and modernise our estate, fleet and equipment provisions, ensuring they are fit for purpose, cost effective, and consider the impact they have on the environment and service delivery
- Deliver improvements towards achieving the Government's carbon reduction targets and our own commitment to sustainability

In addition, we will

- Invest £360k in our fire stations, including updates to internal decoration, security and improved welfare facilities at stations across our estate
- Complete the build of the local training facility (subject to agreement), ensuring it meets operational requirements and supports modern learning approaches
- Secure funding and finalise redevelopment plans for High Wycombe Fire Station, incorporating future-proof design principles and community engagement opportunities
- Commence scoping of new national Firefighting PPE designed to enhance firefighter safety and reduce contaminant exposure, supported by a detailed implementation plan to enable phased rollout in future years

STRATEGIC ENABLER 3: DIGITAL, DATA & TECHNOLOGY

Optimising our technology and data

Our goal is to increase our use of data and business intelligence tools, through secure and resilient systems, to help us better understand and respond appropriately to the risks we, and our community, face. To achieve this, we will use technology to balance the need for security and resilience with the desire to innovate and introduce new, efficient ways of working.

We will continue to:

- Develop our system roadmap to incorporate future major systems including Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and Thames Valley Fire control mobilising
- Progress changes to our systems including greater integration to improve ease of use, productivity and data intelligence
- Develop how we see data to inform local plans, performance measures and frontline work – benchmarking our productivity against others where possible
- Maintain our system and cyber security through the delivery of comprehensive training programmes for all staff

In addition, we will

- Collaborate with Thames Valley fire & rescue services on the replacement of the Command & Control system (Year 1), ensuring interoperability, resilience, and alignment with future operational requirements
- Review provision of risk data within the current Command & Control system, improving data accuracy, integrity, and usability for risk-based decision-making
- Work with national and regional partners to maintain operational and technical readiness for the ESMCP, ensuring seamless transition and minimal disruption to service delivery
- Develop a roadmap for Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration across key functions, identifying priority user cases such as predictive analytics, automated reporting, and resource optimisation, and define next steps for phased implementation

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Our goal is to enhance communication both internally and externally, ensuring alignment with Service objectives. We aim to foster trust, encourage active engagement, and ensure that feedback is captured and used effectively to guide planning and decision making and support the delivery of our CRMP.

We will continue to:

- Utilise our Community Engagement and Events Framework facilitating regular, localised dialogue with community members and stakeholders through events, meetings, and activities. to ensure the safety and well-being of our communities.
- Work with Community Boards to bring together local people, organisations, and the council to work on local issues, with the goal to identify local needs and find ways to improve them.
- Hold an Annual Staff Survey gathering feedback from our staff on their working experiences, opinions about the service's culture, job satisfaction, and areas for improvement.

In addition, we will

- Embed and actively promote branding standards across all departments, introducing clear guidance and monitoring processes to ensure consistent application across digital platforms and physical assets
- Deliver a comprehensive communication skills development programme that fosters collaborative leadership, enhances digital engagement, and strengthens our ability to connect effectively with colleagues, partners, and communities

These actions provide the structure and tools to engage meaningfully with our staff, stakeholders, and the public. They also ensure that feedback is captured and incorporated, creating a two-way communication process that fosters collaboration and transparency.


FINANCES

As a public service we are committed to ensuring taxpayers’ money is spent efficiently. We work hard to ensure we deliver efficiencies without compromising on the quality of the services we deliver to the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Our funding comes from a combination of council tax, central government grants, and business rates. Our total net budget for the Service is £43.9 million. To manage this budget, we produce a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which outlines how we plan to manage our finances and respond to future financial challenges.

Our MTFP recognises the financial pressures that we face, including uncertainty around future funding levels, and the impact of increased costs. Additionally, potential future costs such as the control system refresh the emergency services network upgrade have been provisionally factored into future years’ budgets.

In 2025-2026 we successfully achieved our savings target of £341k (2.8% of our non-payroll budget) and will continue to meet the target of 2% efficiencies against non-payroll costs in 2026/27. We remain committed to investing in our Service with over £20 million allocated for capital investment in our buildings, vehicles, and equipment over the next five years.

	How we spend our money		
	Total Budget (£000)	£	43,880
	Employees	£	33,191
	Premises	£	2,771
	Transport	£	1,307
	Supplies and Services	£	6,485
	Income	-£	1,803
	Capital Financing	£	1,929

GOVERNANCE

It is important that management, strategic oversight and governance is in place to ensure that we deliver on our promises made within this plan. Our internal governance structure is embedded to continually support the delivery of the objectives and enablers within the CRMP. This year will also see an evaluation carried out on the effectiveness of our governance arrangements, including performance, to ensure they remain robust and fit for purpose

Delivery Groups

The Service Delivery Group will ensure delivery against all our objectives, while the people, and finance and assets delivery groups will ensure the enabling functions are working effectively to support delivery of the objectives. The delivery groups will all report into the CRMP Performance and Programme Boards to maintain strategic oversight of directorate plans and to ensure performance and risk is co-ordinated across all departments.

CRMP Performance Board

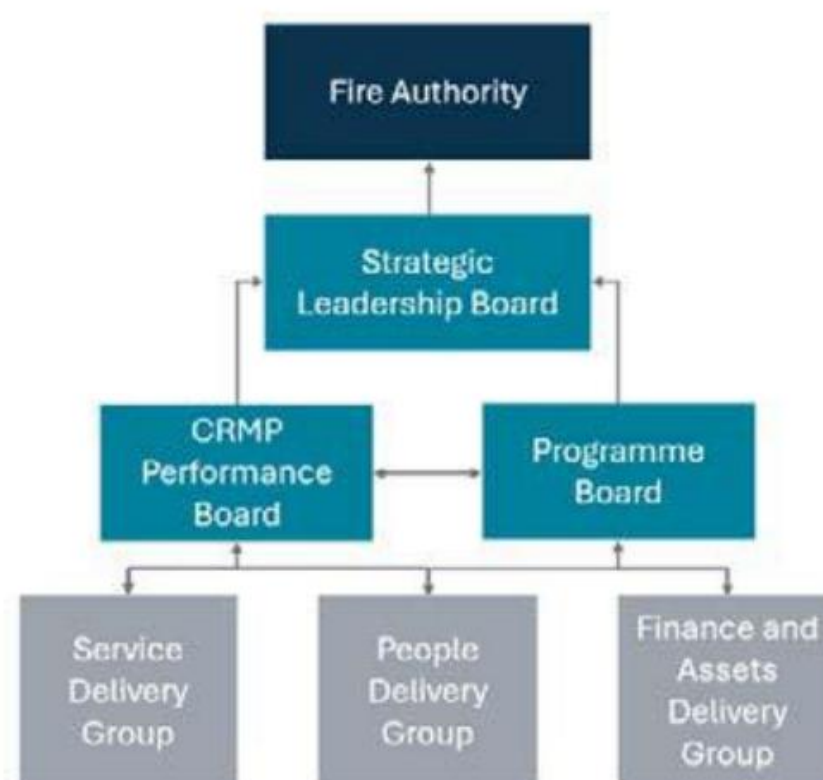
Ongoing analysis of performance data supports decision-making across the service. Management teams review and monitor data and information regularly. The CRMP Performance Board monitors performance across the Objectives and Enablers on a monthly basis.

Programme Board

The Programme Board is established to drive and support the change required to deliver our CRMP and Annual Delivery Plan, by providing strategic direction, monitoring progress, and addressing any issues that may arise during the execution of projects.

Strategic oversight will be provided by the Strategic Leadership Board and ultimately the Fire Authority (and its committees).

The Fire Authority consists of elected Members and is responsible for making decisions on policy, finance, and resources.



CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Corporate Risk Management is integral to our daily operations and service management, ensuring the protection of assets and reputation while supporting strategic priorities. Our Risk Management Framework outlines how we manage risks at all levels within the service, linking into broader processes for consistency.

Achievement of our objectives is influenced by various internal and external factors, creating uncertainty and risk. To address this, we have developed a comprehensive Risk Management Policy and framework for monitoring and managing risks. Each risk is scored on a Matrix (1-25) and recorded on the Risk Register. Strategic risks and high-scoring project or service plan risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register, monitored monthly by the Senior Leadership Team, and reported quarterly to the Audit and Governance Committee. Treatments are identified to minimise the likelihood or impact of risks, with regular reviews to monitor progress. Health and safety risks and community risks are managed separately through occupational health and safety management and the CRMP Programme.

Assurance

To ensure high-quality services and cost-effective spending, we undertake a number of assurance activities.

1) Statement of Assurance

Our statement of Assurance is an annual document that confirms that we have effective arrangements for managing operational, financial and governance matters. It provides assurance to the Government, stakeholders, and the community that the service meets the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. This includes details on how the service ensures high standards in areas like prevention, protection, response, and resilience. This can be found on our website.

2) Audit Plan

Audits are an important part of providing the Fire Authority and the public with the assurance that the Service is run properly and in ways that have been agreed by our Officers and Members. They demonstrate that the business is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation, Government expectations, good practice and organisational policy. The audits contribute towards the annual Statement of Assurance. Our Internal Annual Audit Plan is developed in collaboration with our auditors, Director of Finance & Assets, and approved by the Overview and Audit Committee. Each audit is linked to a risk on our Corporate Risk Register. In addition, a number of audits are performed on an annual basis to provide assurance around the effectiveness of internal controls.

3) **His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

Independent assurance is provided by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). HMICFRS inspects each fire and rescue service (FRS) approximately every two years, assessing 11 key areas that can be categorised into Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. We were first inspected in 2021 and again in 2023. Following re-inspection, all causes of concern and associated recommendations were closed.

We will be inspected again during 2026. The Inspection report will highlight any areas for improvement and potentially, causes for concern. Until HMICFRS have completed their inspection and published the report, these are unknown and so action plans to work on these will need to be scheduled into our planning and may affect our priorities and delivery of our Annual Plan. For more information on the inspection of fire and rescue services, please visit the HMICFRS website.

4) **Fire Standards**

The Fire Standards Board was established to create and uphold professional standards for fire and rescue services across England. To date, 19 standards have been released, detailing the necessary measures that services could implement to achieve the desired outcome, as well as the expected benefits of meeting the standard.

Performance

To maintain clear oversight of progress against the Annual Delivery Plan, we will provide monthly updates on the status of all plan actions. These updates will combine qualitative progress with supporting performance measures, using data and local intelligence to highlight achievements, identify risks and prompt early intervention where required.

We will use performance measures, to support our understanding of progress; however, our primary focus will remain on tracking the delivery and impact of the actions set out in this plan. Progress towards strategic priorities will be monitored by the Programme Board

We will continue to embed our approach to evaluating our work, ensuring our services are evidence based.

GLOSSARY

Building Safety Act

The Building Safety Act (BSA) 2022 is a law that regulates the design, construction, and management of higher-risk residential buildings in England. The BSA was introduced in response to the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017.

Contaminants Plan

A plan focusing on managing contaminants that firefighters may be exposed to, particularly in relation to incidents, vehicles, buildings, and equipment.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

A strategic document used to assess and manage the risks faced by a community, focusing on reducing incidents and improving safety.

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme ([ESMCP](#)) is a cross- government, multi-agency programme that will deliver a new communication system to the emergency services and other public safety users throughout Great Britain.

FireSense

Online training sessions for people who work with or support people across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to help them identify and reduce the risk of fire.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England is a strategic plan for managing risks that are too large or complex for local resources to handle. The framework is part of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Fire Standards Board

The Fire Standards Board has been set up to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for fire and rescue services in England.

High Speed 2 (HS2)

A high-speed railway project in the UK that may pose new infrastructure challenges and risks for emergency services.

Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC)

A service provided by fire services to assess and improve fire safety in homes, particularly for vulnerable individuals.

National Operational Guidance (NOG)

A set of guidelines developed for fire and rescue services to ensure consistent and safe operational practices across the country.

National Resilience

Refers to a country's ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from major disruptions like natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or economic crises, by maintaining essential functions and systems across its social, economic, environmental, and infrastructure sectors.

National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)

National Fire Chiefs Council is the professional voice of the UK fire and rescue service. NFCC drives improvement and development throughout the UK FRS, while supporting strong leadership.

On-Call Development Programme

A program focused on reviewing our On-Call provision to ensure the right resources are in place to meet 2025 – 2030 response standards.

Premises Risk Management System (PRMS)

A system we use to identify, assess, and mitigate risks associated with various properties and locations within a community.

Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP)

A process developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) that prioritises fire safety inspections of premises based on risk. It is part of the NFCC's Community Risk Programme (CRP), which aims to reduce community risk and vulnerability.

Risk Management Framework

A structured approach for identifying, assessing, and managing risks that could affect the performance and objectives of the fire service.

Safeguarding Review

A review process aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals in the community, particularly those at risk of harm.

Site-Specific Risk Information (SSRI)

A system for providing firefighters with specific information about the risks associated with a particular site or building.

Staywise

A 'one-stop shop' of applied learning resources for teachers and community safety practitioners to call upon, when delivering key messages.

Talent Management Programme

A program designed to develop and nurture talent within the fire service, focusing on career development and succession planning.

Thames Valley Forensic Fire Investigation Unit

A collaborative unit between fire services and Police in the Thames Valley region dedicated to investigating fire incidents and their causes.

Thames Valley Fire Control Mobilising

A system for managing emergency response operations within the Thames Valley area, specifically the mobilising of resources during incidents.

Youth Inclusion Coordination

A program or function designed to engage and support young people within the community, particularly in relation to fire safety and prevention initiatives.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 11 February 2026

Report title: Member Update on the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Improvement Agenda 2025

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger (Chairman)

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Simon Tuffley - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
stuffley@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the Buckinghamshire FBU 2025 Improvement Agenda Service Update report be noted.

Executive summary:

This report provides an in-year update to Fire Authority Members on Service progress against the 2025 Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Improvement Agenda which was first presented to the Strategic Leadership Team in January 2025.

Throughout the year, Officers have continued to consider and incorporate the improvements identified by the FBU where they align with Service objectives, operational priorities, and workforce wellbeing. The Agenda continues to provide a clear and constructive framework for identifying areas requiring attention and ensuring sustained dialogue between Officers and FBU representatives.

A notable achievement during the year so far has been the introduction of enhanced maternity and parental entitlements, providing up to 52 weeks of provision. This reflects the Service's ongoing commitment to supporting staff and improving the working environment.

Training has also been a major focus, with particular emphasis on water rescue capability. Funding has been approved for Module 2 training to be delivered in a controlled, purpose-built environment from 2026/27, reducing exposure risks from increasing river pollution and ensuring skills are maintained to the highest standard.

This in-year update forms part of the Authority's continued oversight of progress.

A comprehensive end-of-year report, to be jointly authored by Officers and the FBU Brigade Secretary is scheduled to be presented to the June 2026 Fire Authority

meeting, summarising performance against the full 2025 Improvement Agenda and identifying priorities for the year ahead.

Financial implications:

A number of the recommendations set out in the FBU improvement agenda have a financial implication. Where those recommendations align to the Service objectives, the funding implications have been built into financial planning.

Risk management:

Many of the improvement plan recommendations feature in the Corporate or Service level risk registers, accompanied by identified treatments. All risk registers are monitored through Service governance structures.

Legal implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Privacy and security implications:

There are no identified privacy issues or security implications arising from this report.

Duty to collaborate:

There are no specific collaboration requirements identified. However, a number of the areas identified by the FBU improvement agenda naturally align to existing collaborative arrangements.

Health and safety implications:

The FBU improvement agenda and the attached progress report seeks to enhance firefighter safety and wider health and safety matters.

Environmental implications:

The improvement agenda seeks to improve the way in which the service responds to environmental emergencies.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The FBU improvement agenda and the attached progress report seeks to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion.

Consultation and communication:

This in-year update reflects ongoing discussions between Officers and the FBU but is authored solely by Officers.

A jointly authored end-of-year report will be developed and submitted to the June 2026 Fire Authority meeting.

Background papers:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/FIRE-AUTHORITY-SUMMONS-AND-AGENDA-11-DECEMBER-2024-min.pdf>

<https://www.fbu.org.uk/campaigns/firefighters-manifesto-our-service-our-future>

The Fire Brigades Union (National) Firefighter Manifesto 2023

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Member Update on the Fire Brigades Union Improvement Agenda 2025	Not Protectively Marked
2	Buckinghamshire FBU Improvement Agenda 2025	Not Protectively Marked

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Appendix 1 In-Year Update: FBU Improvement Agenda 2025/26

The FBU Improvement Agenda has proven to be an invaluable framework for shaping priorities and constructive dialogue between Officers and FBU representatives.

Now in its second iteration, the Agenda has provided a clear prioritisation for the FBU as a key stakeholder, to bring forward critical issues that impact both operational effectiveness and workforce wellbeing.

This in-year position demonstrates strong progress across multiple areas, with several major improvements delivered and others embedded in multi-year work programmes. Constructive engagement, operational alignment and shared priorities continue to support meaningful progress for staff and the communities the Service serves.

By aligning these priorities wherever possible, the FBU have been able to move beyond transactional discussions and instead focus on collaborative problem-solving, ensuring that improvements are meaningful, sustainable, and reflective of the needs of our people and the communities we serve.

One of the most significant achievements so far this year has been the introduction of enhanced maternity and parental entitlements, delivering up to 52 weeks of provision, which is a milestone that reflects a joint commitment to creating a better working environment for all staff. This change demonstrates how constructive dialogue can lead to meaningful improvements that support our people.

Training has also been a major focus, with particular emphasis on water rescue capability. Funding has been approved for Module 2 training to be delivered in a controlled, purpose-built environment from 2026/27, reducing exposure risks from increasing river pollution and ensuring skills are maintained to the highest standard.

Alongside this, the Westcott Training Facility project continues to progress, representing a significant investment in modern, safe, and accessible training infrastructure.

Where progress has been limited, this has primarily been due to constraints around capacity and resources, availability of funding, and the need to prioritise and align actions with other ongoing workstreams.

Some items within the Agenda would require significant additional financial investment, such as reintroducing standard crewing models or implementing regional weighting allowances. Officers and FBU representatives recognise that these ambitions cannot be achieved easily in the short term; however, they should remain on the table as part of the longer-term priorities for the Service.

Additionally, national negotiations relating to pay and reward are an influencing factor, and these external dependencies must be considered when assessing what can realistically be delivered locally.

Importantly, there are very few areas where Officers and Representatives disagree, which reinforces the strength of the collaborative relationship and shared commitment to achieving meaningful improvements. While there is still work to do, the constructive relationships built through this Agenda give confidence that we are moving in the right direction together.

1. Improved Maternity, Adoption and Parental Support

Call for improvement

Buckinghamshire Fire Brigades Union has been calling for increased maternity provision since March 2018, in recognition of the support our female members need, and the added risks of our occupation, when it comes to fertility & breastfeeding. We have been frustrated by the lack of progress in this area and assert our call for 52 weeks maternity provision to be implemented without delay.

To supplement this, we would like to see a review of our return-to-work program and documentation, as well as pathways supported for alternate duties, to supplement recognised breastfeeding guidance. Fight for 52 | Fire Brigades Union

Update

Significant progress has been made in delivering enhanced support for staff during early parenthood. A new procedure now provides up to 45 weeks of

full pay, with the potential to extend to 52 weeks when leave allocations are taken into account.

Additional guidance has been introduced covering neonatal care, pregnancy loss, breastfeeding support, foster carer flexibility, and strengthened employment protections.

A full review and awareness programme will follow implementation, and after the first live case.

2. Training Infrastructure and Operational Competence

Call for improvement

We welcome the positive steps taking place around Westcott and in seeking a dedicated training venue for our staff, but far more is to be done in this area. We continue to be at the hands of third-party providers, with costs increasing, quality reducing and competing pressures rendering our access more and more difficult.

With the role out of a new training strategy, we need the correct infrastructure in place to ensure effectiveness of this approach, as well as ensuring a manageable distribution of work within our teams. We call on BFRS to:

- Increase the training team establishment and introduce at least another 2 additional area trainers.*
- To secure access to additional hot fire training venues*
- Ensure our water training venues are fit for purpose, with safety being paramount. If this cannot be done, all training must be moved to a controlled environment.*
- An increase in paid hours for training for on call members of staff and a review of skillset requirements*

Update

Progress continues in strengthening training provision. The Incident Command Training and Assessment team has been reintroduced, hot fire training continues through the Fire Service College, and water rescue training has undergone a full risk review with funding approved for Module 2

training to be delivered in a controlled, purpose-built environment from 2026/27.

The Westcott training facility project remains a major commitment for the future, aimed at reducing reliance on external providers and enhancing internal capability.

3. Mental Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion

Call for improvement

The FBU is conducting a scientific study into mental health within the fire & rescue sector, similar to our pioneering work with DECON, assisted by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). In support of this, we urge BFRS to:

- Offer full support to facilitate the research program, including time for staff to participate.*
- Review and improve our current offering for those suffering from mental health conditions*
- Improve understanding and facilitation of reasonable adjustments*
- Ensure adequate recognition of mental health conditions being occupational injuries*
- Professionally qualified welfare support*

Update

The Service has strengthened its wellbeing infrastructure, including full support for the UCLAN mental health research programme. The WAND network has been established to support accessibility, neurodiversity and disability considerations.

Neurodiversity training has been delivered and expanded professional supervision is being reviewed, along with a wider review of the wellbeing offer which is underway.

4. Skills Payments

Call for improvement

Buckinghamshire Fire Brigades union applauds the approach some services have taken, in recognising and rewarding staff who take on additional responsibilities, ensuring specialist skills and crewing of specialist vehicles are available to our communities. To that end we call on BFRS to enter negotiations to:

- Set a timeframe and anticipated completion period for implementation*
- Agree upon an appropriate rate and associated terms and conditions*
- Make provision within future budgets*

Update

Work on recognising specialist skills and responsibilities is progressing through an allowances review. Local implementation is likely to be influenced by live discussions on national pay structure changes for Grey Book Employees at the National Joint Council (NJC), after which the Service will focus on timescales, rates, and budget implications.

5. Strengthening the Day Crewing Model

Call for improvement

Understanding the importance of our day crewing stations in terms of community value and cost effectiveness cannot be understated. However, a number of ongoing issues need to be addressed, to ensure its longevity and future success. The following measures should be undertaken and reviewed, before the end of 2025:

- A full review of policies and procedures specific to the day crewing system.*
- Investment in housing stock*
- A return to a minimum of 12 substantive positions at each station, with equalization of rank structures and development pathways*
- Resolving the compensatory grant issue*
- Resolve the leave gap anomaly as well as clear guidance for booking off during on-call hours*

Update

Day crewing remains a key part of the Service's operational model. Establishment levels have recently increased to a minimum of 12 substantive posts per station, and the potential for housing investment has been approved within the CRMP. A full Day Crewing policy review is planned, including clarity on leave, booking-off procedures, and integration with on-call staffing during year three of the CRMP.

6. Standard Crewing

Call for improvement

Riding appliances with 4 (minimum crewing) has become a norm in Buckinghamshire, reducing our operational effectiveness in resolving incidents. This practice can pose a significant risk to the public and firefighters, in being able to implement safety critical roles and operating safe systems of work.

Standard crewing should be the gold standard we strive to achieve, and we would like to see plans in place to address this over the coming years, with:

- A prioritisation toward maintaining 5, especially in more remote locations of Buckinghamshire*
- An evaluation of our establishment number, forecasting any increases required to realise this aim.*
- Stopping the practice of dropping appliances crewed at 5 to 4, to back fill on call appliances.*

Update

Maintaining five-person crewing as standard remains an aspiration, although it is important to recognise that safe systems of work are routinely applied during incident response with a long-established minimum crewing of four firefighters with the requisite skills.

There has been a reduced reliance on wholetime standbys as a result of improving skillsets such as Emergency Response Drivers, and Officers have a stronger focus on specialist vehicle availability. Other current ongoing work includes a full establishment review to better understand long term operational resource needs.

7. CRMP – Investment, Growth and No Cuts

Call for improvement

Moving forward, the CRMP should be used as a platform to grow our service, with the aim of better providing for our communities and supporting firefighters within Buckinghamshire. We expect Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue service to be forthcoming with any proposed changes, with due regard for any proposal which could affect the terms and conditions of our members.

We would expect that the focus should remain on recruitment and retention. That our on call stations will be prioritised as an area of growth, with investment and all practicable measures taken to increase appliance availability.

As a union, we hope to work collaboratively to improve standards, yet will stand in opposition towards any cuts in our service or the fire and rescue sector.

To realise our collective ambitions, investment is sorely needed, and we urge BFRS to seek:

- A 3-year settlement*
- Precept flexibility*
- Increased Central government funding*

Update

The Service continues to advocate for sustainable funding, including through national consultations and NFCC-coordinated approaches. Constructive engagement remains in place around the on-call system, ensuring shared focus on service resilience.

8. High Wycombe Fire Station

Call for improvement

Whilst some minor remedial works have taken place over the last year at High Wycombe fire station, longer term planning is required to address some

substantial issues at this station. Major works are required to ensure that this station is fit for purpose and in keeping with a modern fire and rescue service. We assert our view that the station requires either extensive building work and development or, if this is not possible, a full rebuild. This should take account of the following:

- Response times in the short term should not be delayed as far as is reasonably practicable. Longer term, we should see no reduction in response from High Wycombe.*
- Any plans should fully recognise and implement DECON recommendations*
- Station welfare provision should be a top priority*
- Expansion and future proofing should be considered*
- Employee engagement will be inclusive and factored into decision making*

Update

A full site appraisal has been commissioned to explore options for major redevelopment or rebuild. The work includes considerations for DECON compliance, modern welfare facilities, future-proofing, and maintaining operational capability during any works.

9. Employee Benefits and Reward

Call for improvement

A wider scheme of employee benefits is essential to us recruiting and retaining members of staff within Buckinghamshire. Whilst a number of academic studies highlight the importance of workplace culture, and this is steadily improving, they also note that core wage is no longer the primary area of focus. A wider scheme of benefits, inclusive of reward and recognition packages is essential to us keeping step with more progressive Fire & Rescue services, whilst competing with the private sector. The following should be formally costed over the next year, with plans for introduction considered:

- A waiting allowance, to address the cost of living*
- Private Medical Insurance*

- *Milestone recognition and rewards schemes*
- *Costs covered for childcare to attend training*
- *The cap on loss of earnings for on call training removed*
- *Broader approach to pre-tax schemes/salary sacrifice*

Update

A full review of the employee benefits package is underway, exploring salary sacrifice schemes, childcare support for training, enhanced recognition programmes, and wider benefits to support recruitment and retention.

10. Incident Welfare

Call for improvement

Currently, our incident welfare provision is lacking and in need of redress. Firefighters can be in attendance at incidents for long durations, without access to adequate changing, sanitation or food provision. To this end, the following should be considered for inclusion, moving forward:

- *Our own dedicated special appliance for welfare*
- *A review of our major incident welfare provision*
- *Interim measures for changing/toilets/sanitation*
- *A proactive approach towards rotation/reliefs at incidents, to support current and developing policies and procedures*
- *Food and nutrition improvement*

Update

Significant improvements have been introduced to strengthen incident welfare, including interim welfare measures now being available for staff. A dedicated welfare appliance will be introduced for longer duration incidents, and work continues in this area.

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Region 12 Southern
Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire,
Berkshire, Hampshire & IOW
Region12.office@fbu.org.uk

Executive Council member
Steve Wright

Regional Secretary
Mark Chapman

Improvements Agenda 2025

1. Fight for 52

Buckinghamshire Fire Brigades Union has been calling for increased maternity provision since March 2018, in recognition of the support our female members need, and the added risks of our occupation, when it comes to fertility & breastfeeding. We have been frustrated by the lack of progress in this area and assert our call for 52 weeks maternity provision to be implemented without delay.

To supplement this, we would like to see a review of our return-to-work program and documentation, as well as pathways supported for alternate duties, to supplement recognised breastfeeding guidance.

[Fight for 52 | Fire Brigades Union](#)

2. Training

We welcome the positive steps taking place around Westcott and in seeking a dedicated training venue for our staff, but far more is to be done in this area. We continue to be at the hands of third-party providers, with costs increasing, quality reducing and competing pressures rendering our access more and more difficult.

With the role out of a new training strategy, we need the correct infrastructure in place to ensure effectiveness of this approach, as well as ensuring a manageable distribution of work within our teams. We call on BFRS to:

- Increase the training team establishment and introduce at least another 2 additional area trainers.
- To secure access to additional hot fire training venues
- Ensure our water training venues are fit for purpose, with safety being paramount. If this cannot be done, all training must be moved to a controlled environment.
- An increase in paid hours for training for on call members of staff and a review of skillset requirements

3. UCLAN Mental Health Research Project

The FBU is conducting a scientific study into mental health within the fire & rescue sector, similar to our pioneering work with DECON, assisted by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). In support of this, we urge BFRS to:

- Offer full support to facilitate the research program, including time for staff to participate.
- Review and improve our current offering for those suffering from mental health conditions
- Improve understanding and facilitation of reasonable adjustments
- Ensure adequate recognition of mental health conditions being occupational injuries
- Professionally qualified welfare support

4. Skills Payments

Buckinghamshire Fire Brigades union applauds the approach some services have taken, in recognising and rewarding staff who take on additional responsibilities, ensuring specialist skills and crewing of specialist vehicles are available to our communities. To that end we call on BFRS to enter negotiations to:

- Set a timeframe and anticipated completion period for implementation
- Agree upon an appropriate rate and associated terms and conditions
- Make provision within future budgets

5. Day Crewing

Understanding the importance of our day crewing stations in terms of community value and cost effectiveness cannot be understated. However, a number of ongoing issues need to be addressed, to ensure its longevity and future success. The following measures should be undertaken and reviewed, before the end of 2025:

- A full review of policies and procedures specific to the day crewing system.
- Investment in housing stock
- A return to a minimum of 12 substantive positions at each station, with equalization of rank structures and development pathways
- Resolving the compensatory grant issue
- Resolve the leave gap anomaly as well as clear guidance for booking off during on-call hours

6. Standard Crewing

Riding appliances with 4 (minimum crewing) has become a norm in Buckinghamshire, reducing our operational effectiveness in resolving incidents. This practice can pose a significant risk to the public and firefighters, in being able to implement safety critical roles and operating safe systems of work.

Standard crewing should be the gold standard we strive to achieve, and we would like to see plans in place to address this over the coming years, with:

- A prioritisation toward maintaining 5, especially in more remote locations of Buckinghamshire
- An evaluation of our establishment number, forecasting any increases required to realise this aim.
- Stopping the practice of dropping appliances crewed at 5 to 4, to back fill on call appliances.

7. CRMP – Growth, No Cuts

Moving forward, the CRMP should be used as a platform to grow our service, with the aim of better providing for our communities and supporting firefighters within Buckinghamshire. We expect Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue service to be forthcoming with any proposed changes, with due regard for any proposal which could affect the terms and conditions of our members.

We would expect that the focus should remain on recruitment and retention. That our on call stations will be prioritised as an area of growth, with investment and all practicable measures taken to increase appliance availability.

As a union, we hope to work collaboratively to improve standards, yet will stand in opposition towards any cuts in our service or the fire and rescue sector.

To realise our collective ambitions, investment is sorely needed, and we urge BFRS to seek:

- A 3 year settlement
- Precept flexibility
- Increased Central government funding

8. High Wycombe

Whilst some minor remedial works have taken place over the last year at High Wycombe fire station, longer term planning is required to address some substantial issues at this station. Major works are required to ensure that this station is fit for purpose and in keeping with a modern fire and rescue service. We assert our view that the station requires either extensive building work and development or, if this is not possible, a full rebuild. This should take account of the following:

- Response times in the short term should not be delayed as far as is reasonably practicable. Longer term, we should see no reduction in response from High Wycombe.
- Any plans should fully recognise and implement DECON recommendations
- Station welfare provision should be a top priority
- Expansion and future proofing should be considered
- Employee engagement will be inclusive and factored into decision making

9. Employee Benefits Package

A wider scheme of employee benefits is essential to us recruiting and retaining members of staff within Buckinghamshire. Whilst a number of academic studies highlight the importance of workplace culture, and this is steadily improving, they also note that core wage is no longer the primary area of focus. A wider scheme of benefits, inclusive of reward and recognition packages is essential to us keeping step with more progressive Fire & Rescue services, whilst competing with the private sector. The following should be formally costed over the next year, with plans for introduction considered:

- A waiting allowance, to address the cost of living
- Private Medical Insurance
- Milestone recognition and rewards schemes
- Costs covered for childcare to attend training
- The cap on loss of earnings for on call training removed
- Broader approach to pre-tax schemes/salary sacrifice

10. Incident Welfare

Currently, our incident welfare provision is lacking and in need of redress. Firefighters can be in attendance at incidents for long durations, without access to adequate changing, sanitation or food provision. To this end, the following should be considered for inclusion, moving forward:

- Our own dedicated special appliance for welfare
- A review of our major incident welfare provision
- Interim measures for changing/toilets/sanitation
- A proactive approach towards rotation/reliefs at incidents, to support current and developing policies and procedures
- Food and nutrition improvement

Brigade Committee
Buckinghamshire Fire Brigades Union



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