BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
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Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Louise Harrison

To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

23 November 2026

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

Dear Councillor

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.** on **WEDNESDAY 2 DECEMBER 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, Banks, Carroll, Exon, Geary, Gomm, Hall, Hughes, Hussain A, Hussain M OBE, Hussain N, Khan, Rouse, Sherwell, Stuchbury & Wilson

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/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q

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

Adjournment and Rights to Speak – Public

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

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

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

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

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

Rights to Speak - Members

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

Petitions

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

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

Questions

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

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees and Lead Members.

2. To determine the following issues after considering recommendations from the Executive Committee, or in the case of 2(a) below, only, after considering recommendations from the Overview and Audit Committee:

   (a) variations to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

   (b) the medium-term financial plans including:

      (i) the Revenue Budget;

      (ii) the Capital Programme;

      (iii) the level of borrowing under the Local Government Act 2003 in accordance with the Prudential Code produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy; and

   (c) a Precept and all decisions legally required to set a balanced budget each financial year;

   (d) the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;

   (e) the Treasury Strategy;

   (f) the Scheme of Members' Allowances;

   (g) the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan;

   (h) the Annual Report.

   (i) the Capital Strategy

3. To determine the Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Overview and Audit Committee.

4. To determine all other matters reserved by law or otherwise, whether delegated to a committee or not.

5. To determine the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent.

6. To approve the Authority's statutory pay policy statement.

AGENDA

Item No:

1. Apologies

2. Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 16 September 2026 (item 2) **(Pages 7 - 22)**

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Meetyings

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 – 18 November 2026

<u>The Recommendation below is a recommendation from officers to the Executive Committee. Revisions by the Executive Committee, if any, will follow.</u>

Performance Management Q2 2026/27

"It is recommended that the Performance Management – Q2 2026/27 be noted." **(Pages 23 - 88)**

9. Precept Flexibility Request 2027-28

To consider item 9 **(Pages 89 - 96)**

10. Appointment of an Independent Co-opted Member to the Overview and Audit Committee

To consider item 10 **(Pages 97 - 112)**

11. Health & Safety Annual Report

To consider item 11 **(Pages 113 - 140)**

12. White Ribbon Update

To receive a presentation **(Pages 141 - 150)**

13. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

14. Exempt Minutes

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 16 September 2026 (item 14).

15. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next Meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 24 February 2027 at 11 am in the Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, 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 16 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 11 AM.

Present: Councillors Adoh, Banks, Carroll, Exon, Geary, Gomm (part), Hughes, A Hussain, M Hussain OBE (part), N Hussain, Khan, Monger, Sherwell, Stuchbury and Wilson

Officers: S Tuffley (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Service Improvement), A Hussain (Head of Finance and Assets), L Carson (Station Commander Operational Learning and Assurance), L Power (Property Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager) and K Nellist (Business Support Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Hall and Rouse

Online: R Davidson (Director of People), A Burch (Head of Prevention and Protection)

The Chairman opened the Meeting of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

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/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q

FA18 MINUTES

Subject to a typo correction be made in Minute FA15 it was:

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority held on 10 June 2026, be approved.

FA19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman advised Members there was the following matters arising from the previous minutes:

FA12 – ANNUAL REVIEW 2025-2026

A Member was pleased that the rural community had been mentioned along with the differences in the climate. The Member would like to arrange a meeting with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer regarding some of the key messages in the report that he would like to take back to the farming community. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised he would seek to arrange a meeting with the Member to discuss current arrangements and preventative work in place as well as any future opportunities to work more closely with the farming communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

FA20 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

None.

FA21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced:

HMICFRS Inspection Report

Members will be aware that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services published its latest inspection report for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in August.

I want to acknowledge what an exceptional achievement this report represents. It demonstrates a remarkable improvement journey over recent years and reflects the dedication, professionalism and determination of all staff, officers, Members and representative bodies across the organisation.

The report provides strong independent assurance that the Service is delivering for our communities and should give Members confidence that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is continuing to move in the right direction. On behalf of the Authority, I would like to congratulate everyone involved in this success.

White Ribbon Accreditation

I am pleased to report that Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority has successfully retained its White Ribbon Accreditation for a further three years. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to challenging and bringing an end to violence against women and girls, promoting equality and respect, and ensuring that our Service continues to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all.

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I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to achieving this reaccreditation. I look forward to receiving an update at our December meeting on this year's 16 Days of Action campaign and the wider programme of work planned to support this important agenda throughout the year.

People Awards 2026

In July, we held our annual People Awards, recognising the outstanding contribution made by colleagues across the Service. It was particularly encouraging to see the volume and quality of nominations received, reflecting the dedication, professionalism and values demonstrated by so many of our people. I would like to congratulate all those who were nominated and recognised.

I was especially proud to present the Chairman's Award to Craig Newman, recognising his exceptional commitment and contribution to the Service.

National Firefighters' Memorial Day Service

On 7 September, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer Doug Buchanan attended the National Firefighters' Memorial Day Service at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, alongside our Ceremonial Team.

The service provides a poignant opportunity to remember and honour firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty. It was a fitting tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their communities and a reminder of the courage, commitment and professionalism shown by firefighters across the country every day.

Emergency Services Open Day at the Blue Light Hub

On Sunday 6 September, the fifth annual Emergency Services Open Day was held at West Ashland Fire Station, the Blue Light Hub. The event was a huge success, attracting a record number of visitors from the local community. More than £4,200 was raised, including £2,000 which will be donated to the Fire Fighters Charity. This achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of all those involved in organising and supporting the event, and I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who contributed to its success.

Emma Kirkman's English Channel Success

I would like to recognise an outstanding personal achievement by one of our firefighters, Crew Commander Emma Kirkman.

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After narrowly missing out on completing an English Channel crossing last year, Emma returned with even greater determination, undertaking months of intensive training before making a second attempt in July.

I am delighted to share that Emma successfully completed her solo swim of the English Channel in an impressive 14 hours and 23 minutes.

Emma's remarkable achievement is made even more special by her fundraising efforts for the Fire Fighters Charity. She also completed her crossing in the centenary year of the first woman to ever make a solo channel crossing, and she has become one of less than a thousand women to achieve this incredible challenge. On behalf of the Authority, I would like to congratulate Emma on an inspirational achievement of which she, her family and the Service can be immensely proud.

A Member responded regarding White Ribbon Accreditation wishing to highlight the importance of challenging the behaviour of Members if deemed inconsistent with White Ribbon Accreditation.

In respect of a query from a Member about the People Awards 2026, the Chair reminded Members of the upcoming Long Service Awards Ceremony being held on 1 October to which all Members were invited.

FA22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2026

(a) Performance Management Q1

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Members that he was presenting the Quarter 1 Performance Report covering April to June 2026. Although the Service experienced hot and dry conditions in May, this report does not include the impacts of the summer pressures experienced during July and August.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager highlighted several changes to the report format, which were detailed in the introduction. These included minor amendments to the layout and presentation to improve readability, such as revising the RAG indicators so that they now reflect positive performance. A small number of targets had also been updated, including absence reporting measures, to align with changes in national reporting requirements.

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Members' attention was drawn to two measures highlighted in the covering report: deliberate primary fires and accidental non-domestic property fires. Both exceeded their targets during the quarter and, as a result, additional narrative had been provided to explain the performance.

In closing, he reminded Members that the measures included in the report represent a selected subset of a much wider range of performance indicators that were monitored and challenged monthly. This enabled the Service to respond quickly where improvements were required and to regularly assess the effectiveness of any changes implemented.

A Member asked if there were any patterns that were emerging over causes of incidents over 2026 and also with non domestic property fires, there was a rise particularly garages and shed fires.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised there was no specific trends with regard to time of day, location etc., but the Service did mirror the country at the time with these kind of fires. What it does allow was the Service to focus its social media messaging on this subject.

A Member asked how the collaboration on deliberate fires was working with Thames Valley Police (TVP).

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that they shared data on a regular basis and TVP would ask if they needed further information. They were aware of every fire that was marked as deliberate (not caused by the owner). The Service also does a lot of prevention work in conjunction with TVP.

A Member asked about the absence rates for support staff, had this been looked at.

The Director of People advised that officers were heat mapping, looking at local areas where sickness absence was high and doing a number of interventions such as management training, looking at return to work processes, occupational health support and looking to see improvements in the coming months.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that this had improved by September.

A Member asked about the availability of wholetime, the commentary talked about appliance degradation due to resourcing deficiencies. Why does appliance degradation take an appliance off the run?

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The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that appliance availability could occasionally reduce to 11 appliances at short notice due to factors such as unexpected sickness absence. During the summer, resources were prioritised to ensure specialist vehicles, including the new water carriers and off-road vehicles, were available to respond to heightened seasonal risks. This may have resulted in resources being reallocated from standard appliances, with any resulting reduction in appliance availability referred to as degradation, typically due to crewing availability.

A Member asked about the uptick in mobilisations out of BFRS grounds, was this due to anything happening in neighbouring services.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that this had increased, although the reasons were not yet clear. Contributing factors may include major incidents across the border and requests for assistance when Service appliances were available. Officers were reviewing appliance availability data, but the full picture was not yet available.

A Member asked about appraisal objectives being very low.

The Director of People advised that significant work had been undertaken on appraisals, management training, and aligning objectives with the Service's strategic priorities. Delays in returning objectives were partly due to administrative issues with the current system, which is being streamlined to improve the submission process. Further management training will reinforce the importance of objective setting and appraisals in supporting both Service objectives and individual career development.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance Management – Q1 2026/27 be noted

FA23 HIGH WYCOMBE FIRE STATION REDEVELOPMENT – BUSINESS CASE

The Head of Finance and Assets advised Members that redevelopment of High Wycombe Fire Station had been under consideration for many years due to the ageing estate, operational requirements and staff welfare needs. As a key operational site, the proposal was supported by a robust business case and affordable funding strategy, following extensive assessment of the estate, operational needs and redevelopment options.

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The recommended approach balanced operational resilience, value for money, improved staff facilities and long-term sustainability. The project represented an investment in both a key operational hub and the firefighters and staff who serve the community, providing a sustainable solution to support future service delivery.

The Property Manager gave Members an in-depth presentation of the High Wycombe Fire Station redevelopment business case.

The business case proposed the comprehensive refurbishment and reconfiguration of High Wycombe Fire Station to ensure it remained a safe, effective and sustainable operational facility. The station, dating from the 1960s, required significant investment to address ageing infrastructure, maintenance liabilities, recurring repairs, contaminants management, accessibility, staff welfare and modern operational requirements.

Condition and structural surveys identified maintenance and repair needs but confirmed the main structure could be retained as a long-term asset. This created an opportunity to secure the benefits of redevelopment without the higher costs, carbon impact and planning risks associated with demolition and rebuilding.

A range of options were assessed, including do nothing, refurbishment, partial rebuild, full redevelopment and relocation. The constrained town-centre site, flood-risk designations and planning restrictions, particularly for highly vulnerable developments such as fire stations, make rebuilding options more complex and less deliverable.

Using a weighted appraisal of operational resilience, health and safety, accessibility, asset performance, deliverability and affordability, comprehensive refurbishment achieved the highest overall score. The preferred option provided the best balance of operational outcomes, staff facilities, value for money and long-term sustainability.

The recommendation was therefore to approve comprehensive refurbishment and reconfiguration of High Wycombe Fire Station, with an £8 million capital budget to enable further design, planning, procurement and delivery work.

The Head of Finance and Assets advised that the current project forecast was £7.994 million against the requested £8

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million capital budget. The largest element was the estimated construction cost of £5.995 million, with the remainder covering professional fees, temporary operational arrangements during construction, project staffing and a 15% construction contingency.

The contingency reflected the uncertainty inherent in a major refurbishment of an existing building and would help manage risks as design development and further investigations improve cost certainty. It was not additional funding but forms part of the overall project budget. Costs would continue to be monitored and refined to ensure the scheme remained within the £8 million budget.

The Property Manager summarised that the evidence demonstrated a clear requirement for significant investment at High Wycombe. The structural work gave officers confidence that the existing structure could be retained and substantially improved. Officers had considered the principal alternatives, including partial and complete rebuild and relocation. Comprehensive refurbishment provided the strongest overall balance of operational outcome, long-term asset benefit, affordability and deliverability.

A Member asked that when exploring suitable sites were there discussions with Thames Valley Police (TVP) and South-Central Ambulance Service (SCAS).

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that discussions had been ongoing for several years, dating back to the former High Wycombe District Council. While SCAS explored a potential site at Handy Cross, relocating the fire station there would significantly impact response times, making the current town centre location operationally preferable. The existing site was too constrained to accommodate SCAS, and TVP has no plans to relocate following recent investment in its custody facilities.

A Member asked if in taking this forward, were there plans to work with local councillors in the area to help get things done.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that officers would be engaging with local councillors as this moves forward as their views were very valuable. The first part of the project would be to do a full stakeholder mapping exercise and consultation and communication plan. It was very important to keep people engaged and consulted.

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A Member asked about sustainability and would the station have EV charging points and solar panels.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that one of the key drivers was to reduce energy costs and these would be explored.

A Member asked if Members could visit the site which may help them with their discussions.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that he had previously made an offer for Members to contact him to make an individual visit to the Station, as 17 Members visiting at once would not be manageable given the constraints of the site as already discussed.

A Member asked if this presentation could be given to the High Wycombe Town Committee.

The Head of Finance and Assets advised Members that this had been considered, and he would discuss with the Member how to organise.

The Head of Finance and Assets would liaise with the Member as requested.

The Head of Finance and Assets

A Member asked about the temporary arrangements for decanting, whilst the work was underway.

The Head of Finance and Assets advised that the Service was keeping its options open in terms of where it would be located. Officers had spoken to Buckinghamshire Council, and they had identified some potential sites the Service may be able to use. Officers were waiting until the business case was approved to go and have those discussions.

The Director of Finance and Assets also advised that when the Service goes out to the market for procurement, it would ask for two options, how much it would cost to be moved off site and how much would it cost to stay on site with at least one bay operational and welfare facilities. This would be more expensive, but would be compared with the cost of creating a decant site. Officers would go with the best cost benefit option in terms of value for money versus operational sustainability. Members would be kept updated.

A Members asked given that the High Wycombe Fire Station redevelopment and the building of a new training centre at Westcott Venture Park were happening at the same time, was there cost savings in combining building materials.

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The Director of Finance and Assets advised that in terms of combining the contracts and construction costs for the two projects, this was not feasible as they were very different designs. Westcott was primarily a modular building, and High Wycombe would be a significant overhaul of existing buildings. There might be some efficiencies in terms of professional services across the two projects.

A Member asked why this had not been done before and why the urgency now. The Member was also concerned about costs as the initial maintenance costs were based on a 2022 condition survey and a structural survey completed in July. Had the structural survey influenced the amount of money required for redevelopment. The Member also asked what was the time frame if this was agreed today.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that progress had previously been constrained by discussions with the former District Council, the need to explore options with TVP and SCAS, and a lack of available funding. The current proposals had been informed by feasibility, affordability and the findings of the latest structural survey.

The Property Manager advised that significant works would be required to ensure the building's long-term resilience, including full recladding, roof replacement, flood mitigation measures and fuel tank improvements. The estimated costs reflect these requirements, together with any associated planning considerations.

The proposed timeline remains indicative pending market testing and engagement with contractors experienced in the construction of fire stations.

The Property Manager advised that a comprehensive communication plan was in place and that all key stakeholders had been identified. Officers intended to engage with local councillors and attend relevant council meetings; however, priority would be given to informing station personnel, who were directly affected by the project, before wider stakeholder engagement commenced.

A Member asked if there was any chance of bringing any aspects forward.

The Head of Finance and Assets advised that the proposed timeframe had been extended to provide Members with a realistic delivery programme. Officers would seek to

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accelerate the timetable where opportunities arose, while ensuring that projections remained achievable.

RESOLVED –

1. That the comprehensive refurbishment and reconfiguration of High Wycombe Fire Station as the preferred option be approved
2. That a capital budget of £8 million from capital reserves by approved.

FA24 HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) – BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (BFRS) INSPECTION REPORT 2025-27

The Head of Service Improvement presented the final outcome of the HMICFRS inspection undertaken earlier this year. The inspection, conducted during February and March, involved extensive review of performance data, documentation, staff interviews and focus groups, providing an independent assessment of the Service.

The inspection report recognised the significant progress made since 2023. HM Inspector Roy Wilsher noted the Service had improved its performance through strong governance, stable leadership, and better use of data and intelligence.

Key outcomes included:

- No Causes of Concern, with all previous Causes of Concern now closed.
- Areas for Improvement reduced from 26 to 8.
- Six areas graded 'Good' and four 'Adequate', with seven areas improving by two grades.
- Recognition for Innovative Practice through the Service's Leadership and Behaviour Framework.

The Head of Service Improvement advised that, while the report marked a significant milestone and reflected the successful improvements made during and following the 'Engage' period, work would continue to address the remaining Areas for Improvement. Progress would be monitored and reported through the Annual Plan and Executive Committee reports.

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The Head of Service Improvement recorded her thanks to all staff for their professionalism, commitment and contribution to achieving this outcome.

A Member felt that the 'adequate' was concerning especially when it comes to Equality and Diversity and asked if they could contribute or help with anything.

The Head of Service Improvement agreed that all areas remained important to the Service. While continuing to build on areas of strength, particular focus was being given to those assessed as adequate, with the aim of embedding improvements through business-as-usual activities to ensure long-term sustainability. The Culture and Ethics Steering Group was leading work on equality, diversity and inclusion and would welcome Members input.

A Member advised that in 2021 the Service had good 'for responding to fires and other emergencies' and 'responding to major multi-agency incidents' but the Service had gone downhill on those two things. How easy would it be to just take those two areas and to improve them from adequate to good.

The Head of Service Improvement advised there was one thing to note was that in 2021-2023 there was no 'adequate' grading. Officers acknowledged that they needed to focus on the adequate areas, and that would be the focus over the coming months, while also looking at how the Service could get to 'outstanding'.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that officers acknowledged there was still work to do, the areas for improvement would be built into the Annual Plan. This had been a team effort and could be built upon moving forward. It was going to be challenging as noted by the Inspector around the funding being below the national average.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer thanked Members past and present for their support and their focus on performance management which had helped build improvements.

A Member asked where we stood against other fire and rescue services.

The Head of Service Improvement advised that each fire and rescue service faced different risks and operating environments, making direct comparisons difficult. Officers would review findings from other recently inspected services to identify good practice and learning opportunities. While

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the Service was performing well, meaningful comparisons across the sector would only be possible once all inspections had been completed.

A Member welcomed the positive governance findings, noting that these would provide reassurance to the public. The Member emphasised the need to balance aspirations with available funding and asked what additional resources would be required to achieve an outstanding rating. The Member also acknowledged the significant progress made over the three-year inspection period and congratulated all those involved.

The Director of Finance and Assets acknowledged the link between performance aspirations and available funding. Members were advised that the Service was among the lowest-funded standalone fire and rescue services on a per-capita basis and that this presented challenges in achieving an outstanding rating. The Director of Finance and Assets noted that greater flexibility in setting the precept would be required to strengthen the Service's funding position and support further improvement.

The Chairman welcomed the inspection outcomes and expressed the view that the areas relating to public safety through fire regulation and fairness and diversity merited a higher grading than adequate. The Chairman also noted concerns regarding the terminology used within the inspection framework and reiterated the impact of ongoing funding pressures on the Service. The Chairman congratulated the Chief Fire Officer and all staff involved on the progress achieved.

RESOLVED –

1. That the BFRS HMICFRS 2025-2027 inspection report (Appendix 1) be noted; and
2. It be noted that progress against the Areas for Improvement will be monitored by the Executive Committee via the Annual Plan update.

(Councillor M Hussain OBE left the meeting)

FA25 ARMED FORCES COVENANT UPDATE PRESENTATION

The Station Commander (Operational Learning and Assurance) provided an update on the Service's Armed Forces Covenant activities. Members noted that Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to hold the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award and was due for

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re-evaluation next year, reflecting its commitment to supporting reservists, veterans and their families through recruitment, retention, advocacy and engagement activities.

The Service has also participated in national and regional Armed Forces networks and events, including the National Transition Engagement Event, to promote employment opportunities and support personnel transitioning to civilian careers. Members were advised that staff could volunteer as Armed Forces Champions to support veterans and raise awareness of Covenant commitments. It was further noted that the Station Commander (Operational Learning and Assurance) had been selected to represent the Service at the Remembrance Day Parade in London.

The Service also supported monthly veteran drop-in sessions at West Ashland and Marlow, providing facilities for veterans and their families to access support from charities, agencies and community organisations. Over 800 attendees had accessed these sessions across both sites during the previous 12 months. Members noted that these partnerships also provided opportunities for free training and support networks for both veterans and all Service staff.

FA26 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED –

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

All officers left the meeting apart from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Director of Legal and Governance, Director of Finance and Assets and the Business Support Officer.

(Cllr Gomm left the meeting)

FA27 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

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That the Exempt Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Fire Authority held on 10 June 2026, be approved.

FA28 DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE APPOINTMENT

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

RESOLVED –

1. The Fire Authority approve the appointment of Ronnie Davidson, to the role of Director of People commencing on 23 September 2026 on the salary package detailed.

FA29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 2 December 2026 at 11 am

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13.20 pm

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 18 November 2026

Report title: Performance Management – Q2 2026/27

Lead Member: Councillor Llew Monger, Chairman

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 Approval

Recommendation:

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

1. It is recommended that the Performance Management – Q2 2026/27 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 Q2 2026/27. This includes detail that shows performance alongside relevant trend information and where needed commentary.

The report will also include details of changes made to both the report layout and individual measures, should any changes have been made since the last report.

At the end of Q2, 56 measures reported with a Blue, Green, Amber or Red status, with one currently being used for monitoring purposes only.

BRAG	Total	%
B	13	23%
G	24	43%
A	9	16%
R	9	16%
-	1	2%

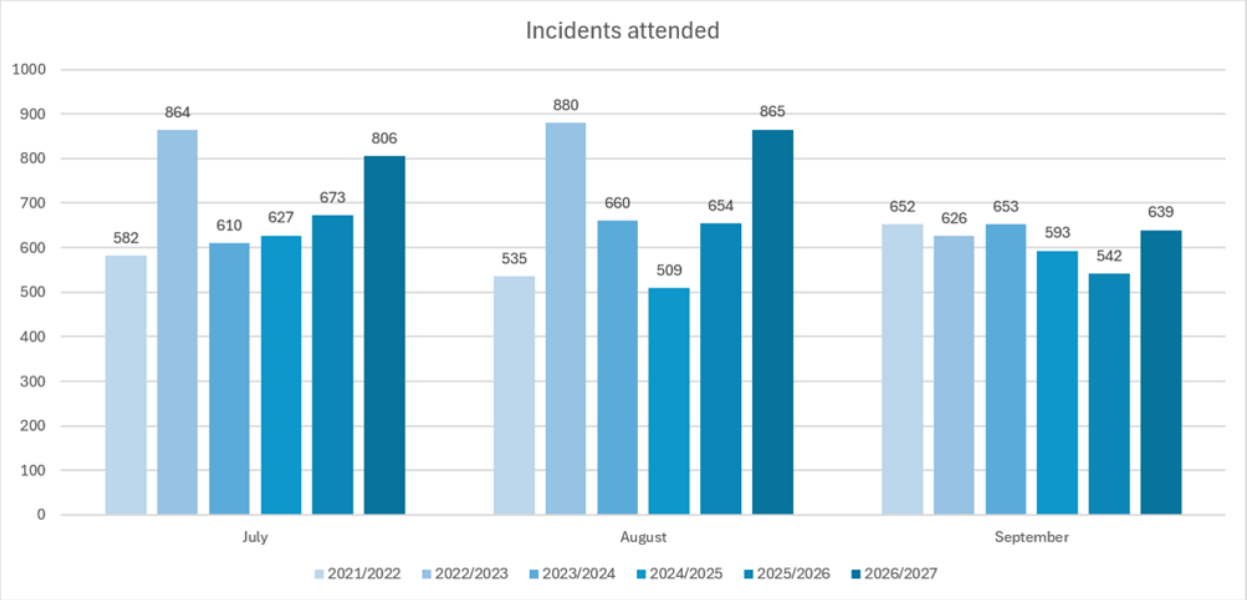
Highlighted measures:

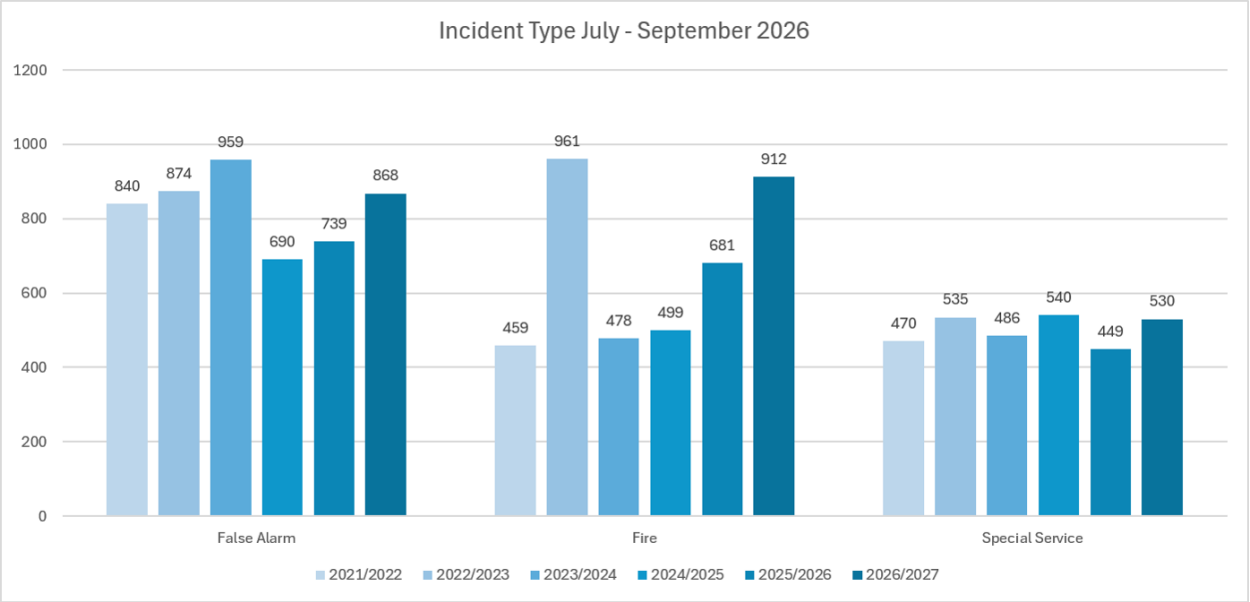
RSP 1.07 Total Incidents

The quarter two performance pack shows a 20% increase in the total number of incidents attended between July and September, with a 36% increase recorded in August. The number of fires attended during the quarter increased by 48%.

Incidents occurring during prolonged periods of hot, dry weather can require greater resources to be deployed for longer durations. However, following the Fire Authority's support and approval, the Service's new rural firefighting vehicles were deployed throughout the summer, reducing the number of pumping appliances required at incidents such as fires in the open.

An overview of incidents and calls can be found within the following tables;





As would be expected, Thames Valley Fire Control Service were also impacted by the increase in demand, with a 57% increase in calls when compared with the same period in 2024.

A separate presentation is being shared with the Fire Authority in relation to this year's summer pressures.

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	27 October 2026	Approved
Executive Committee	18 November 2026	
Fire Authority	02 December 2026	

Next steps -

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

Background papers:

Fire Authority, 16 September 2026: Performance Management – Q1 2026/27
FIRE-AUTHORITY-AGENDA-AND-REPORTS-16-SEPTEMBER-2026_min.pdf

Fire Authority, 10 June 2026: Annual Report – 2025/26

(Public Pack) 2025-2026 Annual Report for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	BFRS Key Performance Measures – Q2 – 26-27	N/A


BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2026-2027
Quarter two - July to September 2026
FIRE & RESCUE

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Introduction

Welcome to Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue's Quarter Two Performance Pack for 2026/2027. This pack provides an overview of the Service's performance during the reporting period, structured around the six service-wide objectives and enablers set out in our Community Risk Management Plan. It brings together key performance information and supporting commentary to explain the results achieved and the operational context in which the Service delivered its activities.

An extended period of hot and dry weather significantly influenced a number of performance measures this quarter. Where appropriate, the accompanying commentary identifies how these conditions contributed to the outcomes reported, helping readers distinguish the effects of seasonal pressures from wider performance trends. A separate presentation is being shared with the Fire Authority with a more detailed examination of the pressures experienced over the summer and the Service's response.

Despite the challenges presented by increased demand on crews and appliances, the evidence captured during this period demonstrates the importance of operational preparedness and the ability to adapt deployment arrangements as conditions changed. These capabilities enabled the Service to respond to demand within its response standards while deploying appliances better suited to the incidents encountered. A particular priority was the use of Rural Firefighting Vehicles at fires in the open, reducing the number of pumping appliances required at these incidents.

Alongside its operational response, the Service maintained good performance in its non-incident-related priorities. Home fire safety visits and fire safety audits continued to meet their monthly targets, demonstrating that these prevention and protection activities were sustained despite the additional operational pressures experienced during the summer.

REDUCING RISK AND KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE



Home Fire Safety Visits – PRV.1.01

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

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

What is good?	More is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
	Actual	**456**	**466**	**398**	**397**	**430**	**430**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	400	800	1200	1600	2000	2400	2800	3200	3600	4000	4400	4800
	Actual	**456**	**922**	**1320**	**1717**	**2147**	**2577**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, a total of 1,257 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) were completed across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, exceeding the quarterly target of 1,200 visits by 57 visits (4.8%). This sustained level of delivery demonstrates the Service's continued commitment to reducing risk and improving safety within our communities through proactive prevention activity. Despite the increased operational pressures and demand experienced during the summer period, HFSV delivery remained consistently above target throughout the quarter.

Year-to-date performance remains strong, with 2,577 HFSVs completed against a cumulative target of 2,400, placing the Service 177 visits (7.4%) ahead of target at the halfway point of the financial year. This provides confidence that prevention activity is being maintained at the scale required to support the objectives of the Community Risk Management Plan.

Home Fire Safety Visits - % Vulnerable – PRV.1.02

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.

B	=> 80%
G	=> 70%
A	=> 60%
R	< 60%

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	National average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
	Actual	**75.0%**	**75.5%**	**81.2%**	**88.5%**	**77.6%**	**83.5%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**G**	**B**						
Yearly Avg	Target	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
	Actual	**75.0%**	**75.3%**	**77.1%**	**80.1%**	**79.6%**	**80.2%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**B**	**G**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, 83.2% of Home Fire Safety Visits were delivered to households containing a vulnerable person, significantly exceeding the Service target of 70%. This represents a continued improvement on Quarter 1 performance and provides strong assurance that prevention resources are being effectively targeted towards those individuals and households at greatest risk from fire and other domestic safety concerns.

The consistently high proportion of visits delivered to vulnerable residents demonstrates the effectiveness of the Service's risk-based prevention approach and the strength of referral pathways from both internal and external sources. By prioritising those most at risk, the Service continues to maximise the impact of its prevention activity, helping to reduce vulnerability, improve safety outcomes and support wider community wellbeing.

Performance remained above target throughout the quarter, with two of the three months achieving the highest performance threshold.

This strong performance supports the objectives of the Community Risk Management Plan and reinforces Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of the community through evidence-led prevention activity.

Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF) – PRV.1.03

The 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. This does not include properties such as hotels/hostels and residential institutions.

R	> 30% of target
A	> 20% of target
G	Within 20% of target
B	< 20% of target

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Five year average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	24	23	23	19	17	23	24	24	25	25	21	21
	Actual	**29**	**23**	**22**	**27**	**26**	**26**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**R**	**R**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	24	47	70	89	106	129	153	177	202	227	248	270
	Actual	**29**	**52**	**74**	**101**	**127**	**153**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the Service attended 79 accidental dwelling fires, compared with a target of 59 incidents for the reporting period. This contributed to a year-to-date total of 153 accidental dwelling fires, which is 24 incidents (18.6%) above the cumulative target of 129. Whilst this represents an increase against the benchmark, accidental dwelling fire numbers remain relatively low in the context of the volume of households across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and should be viewed alongside the Service's ongoing prevention and response activity.

The absence of a significant monthly spike suggests that the increase reflects sustained underlying risk rather than a single exceptional event or short-term trend. As such, continued analysis of incident causation, occupancy characteristics and vulnerability factors remains important to inform future prevention activity.

Further analysis of the incidents recorded during Quarter 2 indicates that much of the increase can be attributed to fires that originated externally, including fences, sheds, vegetation and other outdoor structures, before spreading to residential properties. Whilst these incidents are recorded as accidental dwelling fires for reporting purposes, they differ from traditional accidental dwelling fires where ignition occurs within the home itself. This pattern is consistent with the increased number of outdoor fires experienced during the summer period and highlights the importance of public safety messaging relating to outdoor fire risks and fire spread.

ADF Fire Related Fatalities – PRV.1.04

The 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.

R	> 3 a year
A	> 0 a year
G	0
B	

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, one fire-related fatality was recorded, bringing the year-to-date total to one. The fatality occurred following a gas explosion at a residential property. Whilst fatalities remain thankfully rare events, every loss of life is a tragedy that has a profound impact on families, friends and communities.

A Serious Incident Review was undertaken following the incident to identify lessons and opportunities for improvement. The review identified an opportunity to further enhance the Service's prevention offer by incorporating greater consideration of gas safety within Home Fire Safety Visits and wider community safety activity. Building on the excellent prevention work already taking place, formal partnership arrangements are being developed with SGN and Cadent Gas to create additional opportunities for collaboration, strengthen referral pathways, and provide residents with even more comprehensive safety information and access to support.

In addition, the Service used Gas Safety Week during September to deliver targeted prevention and communication campaigns aimed at raising public awareness of gas-related risks, recognising warning signs and encouraging residents to undertake appropriate gas safety checks. These initiatives demonstrate the Service's commitment to learning from incidents and translating that learning into practical actions that reduce risk within our communities.

ADF Fire Related Serious Injuries – PRV.1.05

The 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.

R	> 4 a year
A	> 2 a year
G	< 3 a year
B	

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

It is encouraging to report that no serious injuries were recorded as a result of accidental dwelling fires during Quarter 2. This maintains the positive position reported during Quarter 1 and provides assurance that, despite attending a number of accidental dwelling fires across the reporting period, the impact on life and wellbeing has remained limited.

Whilst the Service recorded one fire-related fatality during Quarter 2 following a gas explosion at a residential property, no other incidents resulted in serious injury. This highlights that although fire-related casualties remain relatively rare, the consequences of fire can be severe and maintaining a strong focus on prevention continues to be essential.

The continued absence of serious injuries reflects the combined impact of targeted prevention activity, increased public awareness of fire safety, effective protection measures and a strong operational response. During Quarter 2, more than 83% of Home Fire Safety Visits were delivered to vulnerable households, ensuring prevention resources remained focused on those most at risk from fire and other domestic hazards.

Deliberate Dwelling Fires – PRV.1.06

The 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.

R	> 4 per month
A	> 2 per month
G	<= 2 per month
B	<= 1 per month

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3	< 3
	Actual	**1**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**3**						
	Status	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**	**B**	**A**						
Cumulative	Target	< 3	< 5	< 7	< 9	< 11	< 13	< 15	< 17	< 19	< 21	< 23	< 25
	Actual	**1**	**4**	**4**	**7**	**7**	**10**						
	Status	**B**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the Service attended six deliberate dwelling fires, with incidents recorded in July and September and no deliberate dwelling fires recorded during August. The year-to-date total at the end of Quarter 2 was 10 incidents, which remains within the Service's expected performance range. Whilst deliberate dwelling fires remain relatively infrequent, each incident has the potential to place residents, firefighters and members of the wider community at significant risk, as well as causing substantial damage to property.

Average attendance times to dwelling fires remained consistently below the Service's ten-minute standard, with attendance times to accidental dwelling fires averaging between seven and eight minutes throughout the quarter. This provides assurance that crews remained well positioned to intervene quickly, helping to reduce the potential for fire spread, property damage and risk to life.

Deliberate Primary Fires (to other's property) – PRV.1.07

The 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.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Five year average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	14	14	16	19	22	12	11	9	7	9	9	12
	Actual	**24**	**25**	**11**	**37**	**16**	**15**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**B**	**R**	**B**	**R**						
Cumulative	Target	14	28	44	64	85	98	109	118	125	134	143	155
	Actual	**24**	**49**	**60**	**97**	**113**	**128**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, analysis of deliberate primary fire incidents has been enhanced through the inclusion of property type and geographical location data. This provides greater insight into the nature of incidents and the communities most affected. The data shows that woodland and forest locations accounted for almost half of all deliberate primary fires during the quarter, with additional concentrations involving vehicles, residential properties and other outdoor structures. Geographically, the highest numbers of incidents were recorded within the West Ashland, Aylesbury, Beaconsfield and High Wycombe station grounds.

Prevention teams share localised incident profiles with the relevant station commanders and crews to inform community safety activity, and local risk reduction campaigns. The information is also be used to strengthen partnership working with organisations such as local authorities, Thames Valley Police, The Parks Trust, local landowners and other community safety partners, enabling interventions to be focused in those areas experiencing the highest levels of deliberate fire-setting.

Deliberate Secondary Fires (to other's property) – PRV.1.08

The 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.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Five-year average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	37	34	36	41	44	22	23	20	12	12	15	21
	Actual	**44**	**58**	**33**	**69**	**62**	**36**						
	Status	**A**	**R**	**G**	**R**	**R**	**R**						
Cumulative	Target	37	71	108	148	192	215	238	258	269	282	297	318
	Actual	**44**	**102**	**135**	**204**	**266**	**302**						
	Status	**A**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, analysis of deliberate secondary fires incorporated both property type and geographical location data, providing a clearer understanding of incident patterns across the county. The findings indicate that loose refuse, grassland, tree and scrub fires accounted for the majority of incidents, reflecting the seasonal influence of warmer, drier weather during the summer period. Incident activity was most concentrated within the West Ashland and Broughton station grounds, which together accounted for almost 60% of all deliberate secondary fires attended during the quarter.

This intelligence is used by Prevention teams to support targeted intervention activity with local stations and communities. Information is shared with the relevant station commanders to inform local prevention campaigns and community safety initiatives in areas experiencing higher levels of deliberate fire-setting. The data also supports partnership working with local authorities, Thames Valley Police, landowners, housing providers and community safety partnerships, enabling a coordinated approach to addressing anti-social behaviour and reducing opportunities for deliberate fire-setting.



PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM RISK IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Fire Safety Audits – PRT.1.01

The 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.

B	> 70 per month
G	> 59 per month
A	> 49 per month
R	< 50per month

What is good?	More is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66	66
	Actual	**59**	**70**	**72**	**78**	**61**	**73**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**G**	**B**						
Cumulative	Target	66	132	198	264	330	396	462	528	594	660	726	792
	Actual	**59**	**129**	**201**	**279**	**340**	**413**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Audit delivery remained strong during Q2, with 212 audits completed against a quarterly target of 198. This brings the year-to-date total to 413 against a profiled requirement of 396, placing delivery approximately 4% ahead of target at the halfway point of the financial year. The results demonstrate sustained delivery of the planned audit programme, alongside the wider reactive and statutory demands placed on Protection. However, delivery remains sensitive to the availability of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

The Service enters Q3 ahead of its cumulative audit target, providing a margin against future fluctuations in activity, although this does not remove the dependency on qualified staff. The high proportion of non-satisfactory audit outcomes reported through internal monitoring also supports the view that risk-based targeting is identifying premises with fire safety deficiencies.

Non-Domestic Property Fires - Accidental – PRT.1.02

The 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.

R	=> 16 per month
A	< 16 per month
G	=< 10 per month
B	< 5 per month

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Actual	**13**	**14**	**11**	**17**	**14**	**8**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**R**	**A**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
	Actual	**13**	**27**	**38**	**55**	**69**	**77**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

There were 39 accidental non-domestic property fires during Q2, compared with the quarterly reference of 30. Of the 39 incidents, 18 involved private ancillary buildings, 12 garden sheds, five private garages and one summer house, representing approximately 46% of the quarterly total. The remaining incidents occurred across a range of commercial, industrial, education, residential care and other premises.

The underlying premises classifications are important when interpreting the result. Almost half of Q2 incidents involved private ancillary buildings, which are included in the national non-domestic fire classification.

There were, however, incidents within premises that required regulatory activity. These included fires in education, residential care and industrial settings. The dataset also records two accidental incidents classified as recycling premises during August.

Non-Domestic Property Fires - Deliberate – PRT.1.03

The 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.

R	> 4 per month
A	> 2 per month
G	=< 2 per month
B	< 1 per month

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Actual	**2**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**A**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
	Actual	**2**	**5**	**6**	**10**	**13**	**14**						
	Status	**G**	**A**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

Eight deliberate non-domestic property fires were recorded during Q2, compared with the quarterly reference level of six. The relatively small numbers mean individual incidents can materially affect the reported result, and the quarterly total should be considered alongside the circumstances and distribution of those fires.

Deliberate fires reduced throughout the quarter, with September recording the lowest monthly total since June. Incidents occurred across a range of premises classifications, including a private garden shed, private garage, public toilets, two multi-storey car parks, two retail premises and another private non-residential building. No fire-related casualties were recorded within the deliberate-fire dataset and there is no clear concentration within one premises category or station ground.

Non-Domestic Property False Alarms – PRT.1.04

The 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.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	2025/2026 figures

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	62	62	46	65	66	66	71	78	56	66	49	59
	Actual	**53**	**83**	**63**	**56**	**83**	**81**						
	Status	**B**	**R**	**R**	**B**	**R**	**R**						
Cumulative	Target	62	124	170	235	301	367	438	516	572	638	687	746
	Actual	**53**	**136**	**199**	**255**	**338**	**419**						
	Status	**B**	**G**	**A**	**G**	**A**	**A**						

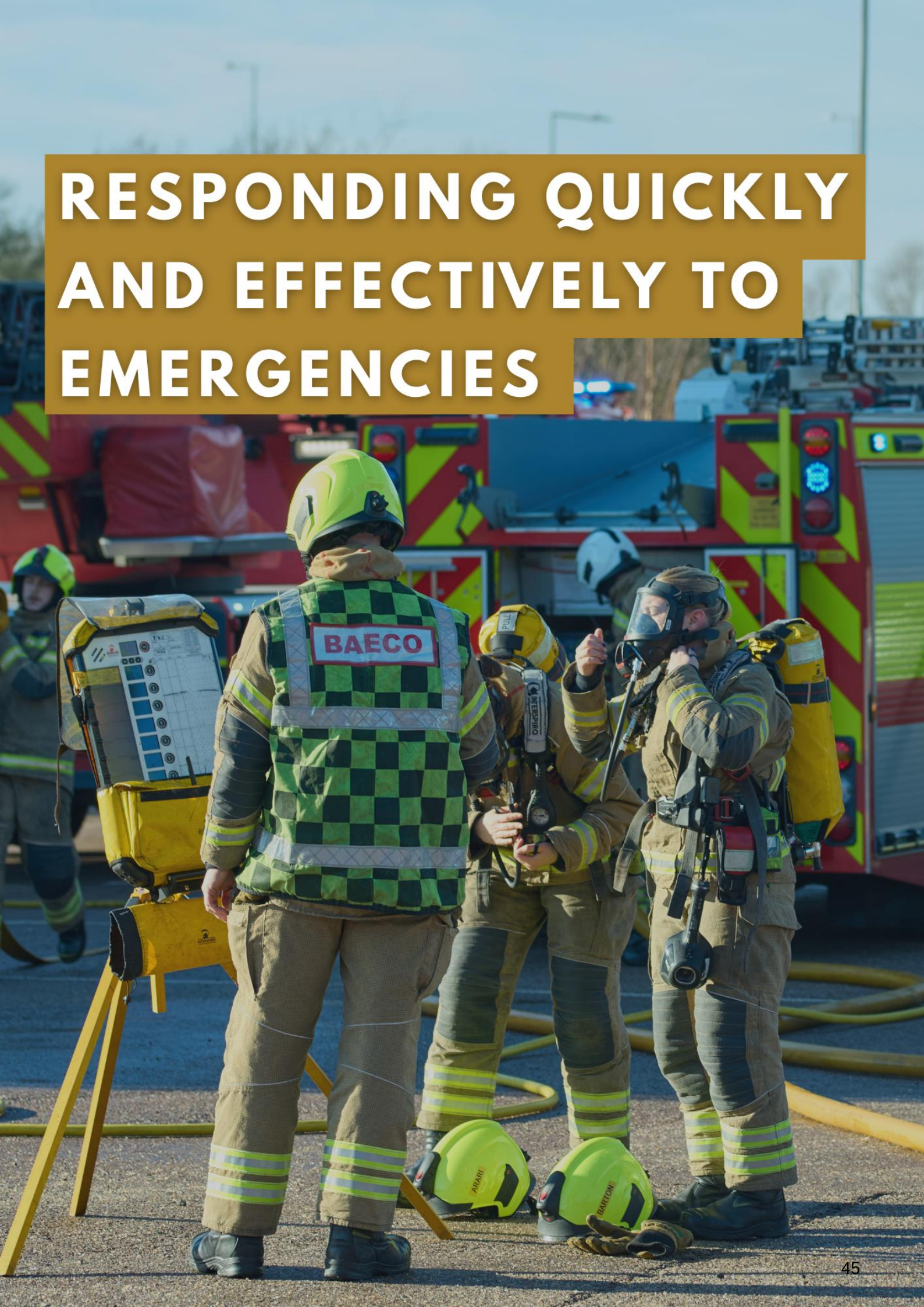
Supporting Commentary

There were 220 non-domestic false alarms during Q2, against a comparative figure of 197 based on the corresponding 2025/26 period. Of the quarterly total, 176 were apparatus-related, accounting for 80% of incidents. The remaining calls comprised 38 good-intent false alarms and six malicious calls. The results indicate increased operational demand, particularly from fire detection and alarm system activations.

Education premises accounted for 60 incidents and residential homes for 69, together representing approximately 59% of Q2 false alarms. In September alone, these sectors accounted for 53 of the 81 calls.

The quarterly increase supports a more focused review of unwanted fire signals, particularly within education and residential care settings. Business Engagement efforts during Q2 included a newsletter issued in July in collaboration with Prevention and Marketing and Communications, in response to UwFS trends in schools and care settings. Monthly incident information informed the selection of these sectors for targeted engagement.

RESPONDING QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO EMERGENCIES



Average Attendance Time To All Incidents – RSP.1.01

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.

R	=> 10:00
A	> 09:30
G	=< 09:30
B	=< 08:30

What is good?	Quicker is better
Target	Set times

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00
	Actual	**09:10**	**08:56**	**09:12**	**09:58**	**09:58**	**08:56**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**G**						
Yearly Avg	Target	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00
	Actual	**09:10**	**09:02**	**09:05**	**09:22**	**09:31**	**09:25**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

It's pleasing to report our average attendance time still fell within our agreed response standard albeit did see a slight increase.

This is directly related in the increase in demand during both July and August as is described in Total Incidents – RSP.1.07 performance measure in the pack.

This shows an over 20% increase in incidents attended in July and a 33.5% increase in August

Average Attendance Time To Accidental Dwelling Fires – RSP.1.02

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.

R	=> 10:00
A	> 09:30
G	=< 09:30
B	=< 08:30

What is good?	Quicker is better
Target	Set times

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00
	Actual	**09:45**	**07:37**	**07:26**	**07:54**	**07:19**	**08:10**						
	Status	**A**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						
Yearly Avg	Target	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00	<10:00
	Actual	**09:45**	**08:49**	**08:25**	**08:16**	**08:05**	**08:06**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

Despite increased demand, our attendance times to accidental dwelling fires remained well within our response standard. This helps to affirm that our wholetime appliances are in the right locations. Furthermore, it shows that our dynamic resourcing decisions over the summer in terms of prioritising specialist appliances, didn't have a major impact on our attendance times to accidental dwelling fires.

Availability - Wholetime –RSP.1.03

The availability of BFRS wholetime pumps (fire engines) 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.

B	99% - 100%
G	98% - 98.99%
A	96% - 97.99%
R	< 96%

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	Actual	**98.5%**	**97.6%**	**96.5%**	**95.7%**	**95.3%**	**95.3%**						
	Status	**G**	**A**	**A**	**R**	**R**	**R**						
Yearly Avg	Target	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	Actual	**98.5%**	**98.1%**	**97.5%**	**97.1%**	**96.7%**	**96.5%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

During the summer pressures (July to September), we made informed dynamic decisions to prioritise the availability of specialist appliances, accepting the impact on the availability of our wholetime pumps.

Despite choosing to prioritise specialist appliance availability, wholetime pump numbers never dropped below eleven.

A summer pressure review is underway, and this will surface any learns and recommendations to support the service in its preparedness for future extreme periods of weather.

Bank Shifts – RSP.1.04

The number of banks shift utilised per month.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	2025/2026 Figures

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	191	254	193	294	379	300	212	213	225	7	27	83
	Actual	**149**	**169**	**221**	**180**	**215**	**238**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**R**	**B**	**B**	**B**						
Cumulative	Target	191	445	638	932	1311	1611	1823	2036	2261	2268	2295	2378
	Actual	**149**	**318**	**539**	**719**	**934**	**1172**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

Overall, we have seen a positive reduction in the use of Bank Shifts and this was through a period of high demand due to summer pressures. This is also impacted through an increase in staff taking leave through this period.

We recognise this is positive on one hand, but equally we acknowledge that this is in part because people didn't take up bank shifts to get us to 12 immediate response appliances in some cases.

It has to be recognised this may be down to our staff were worked incredibly hard over the summer period and required deserved rest periods.

Again, the summer pressures review should surface that link between resourcing and staff welfare requirements.

Availability On-Call – RSP.1.05

The availability of BFRS On-Call pumps (fire engines) 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.

B	=> 50%
G	=> 35%
A	=> 25%
R	< 25%

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%
	Actual	**31.6%**	**30.5%**	**32.2%**	**31.5%**	**25.6%**	**27.3%**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						
Yearly Avg	Target	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%
	Actual	**31.6%**	**31.1%**	**31.4%**	**31.5%**	**30.3%**	**29.8%**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

Q2 performance indicates an improving underlying position in On-Call operational availability compared with the same period in 2025, although month to month performance remained variable.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2026/2027 (12)	31.6%	30.5%	32.2%	31.5%	25.6%	27.3%						
2025/2026 (adjusted for 2026/2027 - 12)	27.2%	25.8%	23.5%	22.3%	15.4%	23.3%	24.1%	16.4%	14.8%	41.2%	40.5%	34.7%

Availability declined in August, reaching its lowest level of the 2026/27 financial year. High levels of annual leave across the service were identified as a significant contributing factor.

The Service remains committed to improving it’s On-Call availability through the On-Call Improvement Programme (OCIP).

Performance also continues to be reviewed regularly with station commanders through resourcing meetings, providing ongoing oversight and an opportunity to address emerging pressures.

Availability On-Call – Immediately Available – RSP.1.06

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.

B	> 33%
G	=> 20%
A	< 20%
R	< 10%

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	Actual	**17.3%**	**16.8%**	**18.1%**	**17.2%**	**15.2%**	**15.7%**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						
Yearly Avg	Target	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
	Actual	**17.3%**	**17.1%**	**17.4%**	**17.4%**	**16.9%**	**16.7%**						
	Status	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

Overall, Q2 performance was below target and vulnerable to seasonal resourcing pressures, annual leave, and dual contracted staff.

Although the target was not achieved, On-Call availability still saw a marked improvement in first line availability compared with the same periods in 2025.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2026/2027 (12)	17.3%	16.8%	18.1%	17.2%	15.2%	15.7%						
2025/2026 (adjusted for 2026/2027 - 12)	16.9%	15.8%	14.4%	12.6%	8.7%	12.9%	13.3%	10.9%	8.5%	25.3%	22.8%	19.9%

Availability is expected to remain variable while OCIP objectives are realised, assured and embedded. Continued scrutiny through regular resourcing meetings with station commanders will be important to maintain progress and improve performance against the Service's target.

The Service remains committed to improving it's On-Call availability through the On-Call Improvement Programme (OCIP).

Total Incidents – RSP.1.07

The total number of incidents attended within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (excluding co-responder incidents).

R	> 10.0% of target
A	> 2.5% of target
G	Within 2.5% of target
B	< 2.49% of target

What is good?	Monitor Only
Target	Five year average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	565	567	601	671	648	613	601	581	548	570	480	514
	Actual	**542**	**680**	**580**	**806**	**865**	**639**						
	Status	**B**	**R**	**B**	**R**	**R**	**A**						
Cumulative	Target	565	1132	1733	2404	3052	3665	4266	4846	5394	5964	6445	6959
	Actual	**542**	**1222**	**1802**	**2608**	**3473**	**4112**						
	Status	**B**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

This shows an over 20 per cent increase in incidents attended in July and a 33.5 per cent increase in August.

It's pleasing to report that although the demand significantly increased, the service continued to meet its attendance standards.

During the quarter, it is reported that the service attended 912 fires, which constitutes to a 48.3 per cent increase based on comparisons with the average for the same period in the preceding five years.

This increase in demand was also seen across the sector both locally and nationally and additional pressures placed on control rooms.

OTB Mobilisations into BFRS Grounds – RSP.1.08

The number of mobilisations of appliance from Over The Border (OTB) into BFRS grounds.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Five year average

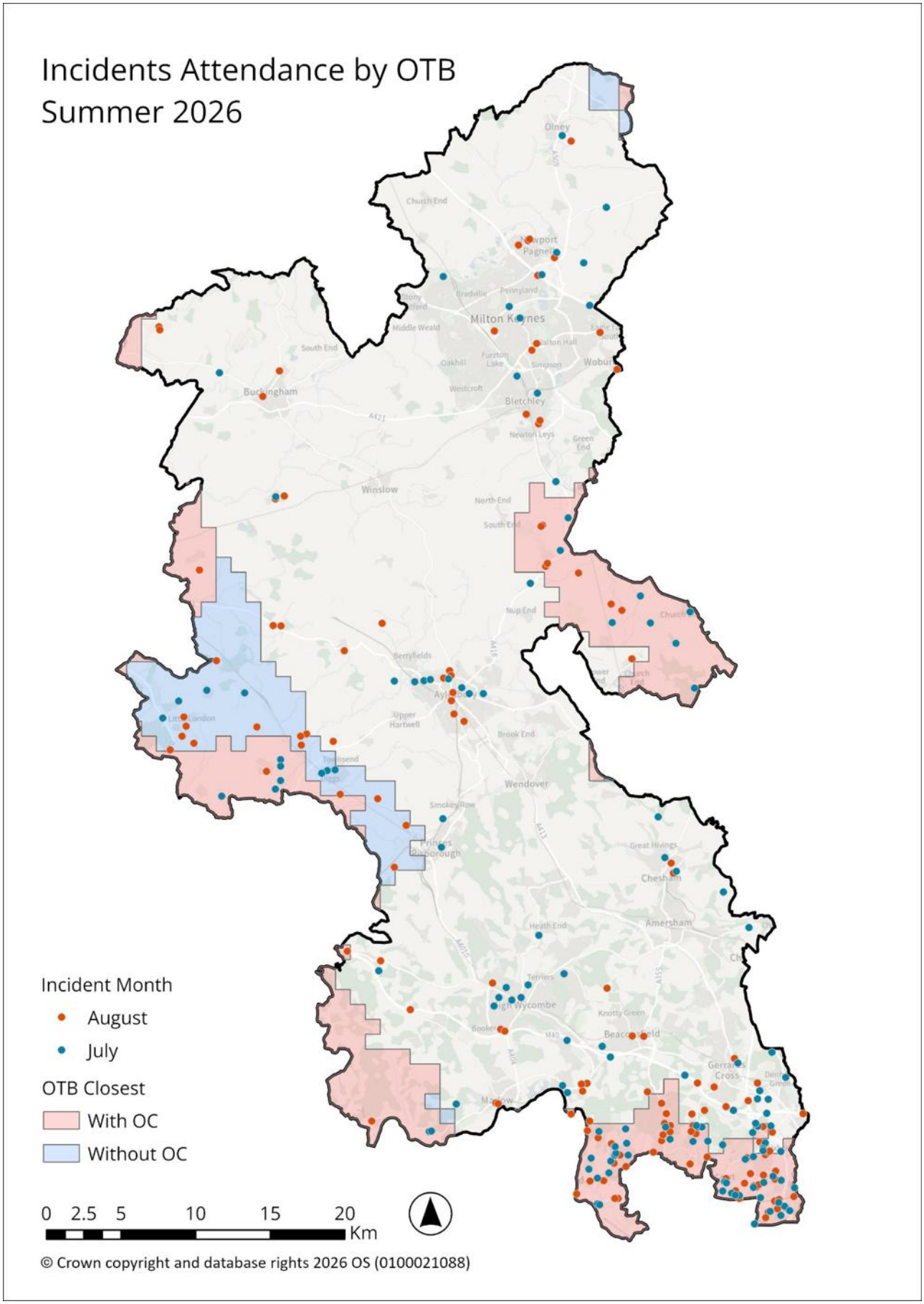
		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	145	145	170	254	220	163	146	154	162	132	116	124
	Actual	**144**	**136**	**153**	**339**	**353**	**162**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**B**	**R**	**R**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	145	290	460	714	935	1098	1244	1397	1559	1691	1807	1931
	Actual	**144**	**280**	**433**	**772**	**1125**	**1287**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**R**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

During both July and August we saw an increase in the number of mobilisations into BFRS grounds. This is to be expected through our mutual aid arrangements and our mobilising principles of 'quickest is quickest' in the Thames Valley.

This also has a direct correlation with the increase in demand in these months, as well as the incident types that may require a higher number of appliances in one location.

As detailed in the next measure, there was a greater increase in OTB mobilisations out of BFRS grounds in comparison with those coming into BFRS grounds.


Incidents Attendance by OTB
Summer 2026
Incident Month
August
July
OTB Closest
With OC
Without OC
0 2.5 5 10 15 20
Km
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OTB Mobilisations out of BFRS Grounds – RSP.1.09

The number of mobilisations of appliance from BFRS into Over the Border (OTB) grounds.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Five year average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	45	57	53	64	59	46	53	41	37	42	35	44
	Actual	**60**	**84**	**77**	**149**	**144**	**49**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	45	102	155	219	278	324	378	418	455	497	532	576
	Actual	**60**	**144**	**221**	**370**	**514**	**563**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

As with the number of over the border appliances coming into BFRS grounds, there was an increase in the number of mobilisations out of BFRS grounds. A breakdown of these mobilisations can be seen below;

Service	Mobilisations
Berkshire	131
Oxfordshire	72
Bedfordshire	58
Northamptonshire	51
Hertfordshire	19
London	11
Total	342

Specialist Appliances	Mobilisations
Aerial - West Ashland	10
Aerial - High Wycombe	10
Water Carrier - Princes Risborough	10
Command Unit - Aylesbury	6
Rual Firefighting Vehicle - West Ashland 1	5
Water Carrier - Broughton	4
Rual Firefighting Vehicle - Buckingham	4
Rual Firefighting Vehicle - Chesham	4
Rual Firefighting Vehicle - West Ashland 2	1
USAR - Aylesbury	1
USAR - Aylesbury	1
USAR - Aylesbury	1
Water Rescue Unit - Beaconsfield	1

Pumps	Mobilisations
Gerrards Cross - Wholetime	54
Beaconsfield - Wholetime	39
Broughton - Wholetime	32
West Ashland 1 - Wholetime	27
High Wycombe 1 - Wholetime	27
Buckingham - Wholetime	20
High Wycombe 2 - Wholetime	18
Aylesbury 1 - Wholetime	16
Newport Pagnell - Wholetime	12
Amersham - Wholetime	11
Olney - On-Call	6
West Ashland 2 - Wholetime	5
Marlow - On-Call	5
Aylesbury 2 - Wholetime	3
Winslow - On-Call	3
Brill - On-Call	2
Princes Risborough - On-Call	2
Broughton - On-Call	1
Aylesbury - On-Call	1



AN INCLUSIVE, HEALTHY AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE

Actual vs Establishment - Wholetime – PPL.1.01

The total number of people in Wholetime roles v's budgeted establishment as at the last day of the month.

B	Within 0% of target
G	Within 3.5% of target
A	Within 5.0% of target
R	Outside 5.0% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
	Actual	**312**	**310**	**310**	**310**	**310**	**309**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Yearly Avg	Target	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301	301
	Actual	**312**	**311**	**311**	**311**	**310**	**310**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the Wholetime establishment remained broadly stable, with establishment levels reducing marginally from 310 FTE in July and August to 309 FTE in September. Throughout the quarter, staffing levels were closely monitored to ensure the Service maintained operational resilience and sufficient capacity to meet service demands.

Staff turnover remained low throughout the quarter, supporting workforce resilience and continuity. The projected monthly Wholetime leaver rate was 0 for July and August, increasing marginally to 0.3 in September following the departure of one firefighter, which reduced firefighter establishment from 180 to 179. This remains within expected workforce planning assumptions and provides continued assurance that the Service is maintaining a stable workforce.

Significant progress was made in strengthening the future operational workforce pipeline during the quarter. Recruitment activity remained a key focus, three transferees were appointed and three wholetime apprentice candidates progressed through pre-employment checks in preparation for joining the Service.

Overall, Quarter 2 demonstrated a stable operational workforce position, supported by proactive workforce planning, targeted recruitment activity and effective management of establishment levels. Continued monitoring of vacancies, retirements, turnover and recruitment pipelines will remain essential to maintaining operational resilience and ensuring that the Service is well-positioned to meet future workforce requirements.

Actual vs Establishment – On-Call – PPL.1.02

The total number of people in On-Call roles v's budgeted establishment (FTE).

B	Within 5% of target
G	Within 10% of target
A	Within 15% of target
R	Outside 15% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
	Actual	**59.3**	**59.8**	**59.9**	**60.3**	**60.2**	**59.7**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						
Yearly Avg	Target	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
	Actual	**59.3**	**59.5**	**59.6**	**59.8**	**59.9**	**59.8**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the On-Call establishment remained broadly stable, with Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) capacity reducing modestly from 60.33 in July to 59.67 in September. This movement reflects normal changes in contracted availability within a flexible workforce model, rather than a direct equivalent reduction in employee headcount. The budgeted establishment of 96 FTE represents the total level of contracted cover required and may be delivered by multiple individuals working different availability patterns.

Workforce capacity was strengthened during July by three Wholetime employees taking on additional On-Call duties and by an increase in one employee's contracted hours. These gains were offset over the remainder of the quarter by reductions in availability and by two employees ceasing their On-Call commitments while remaining in substantive Wholetime roles. Overall, the quarter-end position represents a limited net reduction in available capacity. The Service will continue to monitor establishment, contracted availability and operational cover to inform targeted recruitment and retention activity and maintain a resilient On-Call provision.

Throughout the quarter, work continued to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of On-Call workforce data and planning arrangements. This activity supports the development of accurate workforce intelligence and enhanced establishment reporting.

Actual vs Establishment - Support – PPL.1.03

The total number of people in Support roles v's budgeted establishment as at the last day of the month (FTE).

B	Within 0% of target
G	Within 7.5% of target
A	Within 10% of target
R	Outside 10% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1
	Actual	**129.1**	**130.1**	**131.1**	**129.1**	**127.3**	**128.0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Yearly Avg	Target	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1	137.1
	Actual	**129.1**	**129.6**	**130.1**	**129.9**	**129.4**	**129.1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the Support establishment target remained at 137.11 FTE. Actual establishment was 129.13 FTE in July, reducing to 127.31 FTE in August before increasing slightly to 127.98 FTE in September. The establishment therefore remained below target throughout the quarter, reflecting the combined impact of recruitment activity, employee turnover and planned workforce movement across support functions.

The quarter-end variance of 9.13 FTE against the establishment target will continue to be monitored through workforce planning arrangements. Recruitment activity and the strategic deployment of existing capacity will remain focused on maintaining resilience in priority support functions and ensuring that resources are aligned with service requirements.

Across the quarter, the Support workforce experienced a degree of expected employee movement, including recruitment activity, internal restructures, role changes and employee departures. Despite the actual establishment remaining below target, staffing levels have remained stable to support service delivery, with ongoing workforce planning activity focused on managing vacancies and maintaining operational effectiveness.

Staff Turnover – PPL.1.04

The percentage of employees who leave the Service, expressed as a percentage of the total workforce.

R	=> 2% per month
A	< 2% per month
G	< 1% per month
B	

What is good?	Less is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
	Actual	**0.8%**	**0.6%**	**0.2%**	**0.4%**	**0.8%**	**0.4%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	<1%	<2%	<3%	<4%	<5%	<6%	<7%	<8%	<9%	<10%	<11%	<12%
	Actual	**0.8%**	**1.4%**	**1.6%**	**2.0%**	**2.8%**	**3.2%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the organisation recorded a total of eight employee leavers. The majority of departures occurred within the Support workforce (seven employees), with one Operational Firefighter leaving the Service during the period.

The reasons for leaving were varied and included four resignations, one redundancy, one retirement, one dismissal, and one employee who was unable to fulfil the requirements of their contract. Whilst August experienced a higher level of turnover than the other months, overall employee turnover remained relatively low and within manageable levels.

The turnover profile indicates that workforce movement during the quarter was largely driven by individual circumstances rather than any emerging trend of workforce instability. The limited number of operational leavers also supports continued resilience within frontline service delivery.

Overall, workforce stability remains positive across the Service. Turnover trends will continue to be monitored closely to support effective workforce planning, identify any developing resourcing pressures, and ensure appropriate staffing levels are maintained across both Operational and Support functions. This proactive approach will help the Service maintain organisational resilience while supporting future recruitment and retention activity where required.

Maintenance of Operational Competence – PPL.1.05

The progress against maintenance of operational competencies by:
- Wholetime firefighters and supervisory managers
- On-Call firefighters and supervisory managers

Where a firefighter has dual roles, only their primary role is counted.

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

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Wholetime	Target	12%	24%	36%	36%	48%	60%	60%	72%	84%	84%	96%	96%
	Actual	**33.8%**	**42.8%**	**56.5%**	**65.0%**	**71.0%**	**75.0%**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						
On-Call	Target	12%	24%	36%	36%	48%	60%	60%	72%	84%	84%	96%	96%
	Actual	**18.7%**	**23.7%**	**31.8%**	**40%**	**44.3%**	**48.0%**						
	Status	**B**	**G**	**A**	**B**	**G**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

Wholetime MOC performance improved steadily throughout the quarter, increasing from July to September and finishing at 75%, exceeding the Service target of 60%. Overall performance demonstrates strong engagement with the maintenance of operational competence and reflects continued progress across the Wholetime workforce. Whilst the target has been achieved, some specialist and less frequently exercised operational competencies are behind the strongest-performing subjects and should remain a focus during the next quarter to ensure competence levels are maintained consistently across all operational requirements.

On-Call MOC performance also improved during the quarter but concluded at 48.0%, remaining 12.0% below the Service target of 60%. Although there is evidence of positive progress, performance continues to be inconsistent across stations and operational competencies, resulting in overall compliance remaining below the required level. Continued management focus, targeted training activity and support for lower-performing stations will be required throughout the next quarter to increase completion rates and move the On-Call workforce closer to achieving the Service target.

Mandatory E-Learning – PPL.1.06

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.

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

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Wholetime	Target	11%	22%	33%	44%	55%	66%	77%	88%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	Actual	**20%**	**34%**	**49%**	**62%**	**67%**	**68%**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**G**						
On-Call	Target	11%	22%	33%	44%	55%	66%	77%	88%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	Actual	**20%**	**34%**	**43%**	**65%**	**73%**	**70%**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**G**						
Support	Target	11%	22%	33%	44%	55%	66%	77%	88%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	Actual	**17%**	**28%**	**45%**	**52%**	**54%**	**67%**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the focus of staff mandatory e-learning within Heat shifted from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) to Health and Safety.

Throughout the quarter, completion rates increased steadily from 62% to 68%, maintaining performance above the KPI target. This improvement was supported by regular management reporting, which highlighted areas requiring attention and enabled managers to target staff who had outstanding mandatory e-learning modules.

During Quarter 2, a new mandatory e-learning package, Prevent, was introduced. While this increased the total number of modules required and had an impact on the overall completion rate, performance remained above target.

Managers continue to be encouraged to promote completion of mandatory training and to utilise the team completion reports available within Heat to monitor progress.

During Quarter 3, the focus will shift to Data Protection and Prevent training. Quarter 4 will then provide an opportunity for employees to complete any remaining outstanding mandatory e-learning modules, supporting achievement of full compliance across all packages.

Appraisal and Objectives Completion – PPL.1.07

The percentage of all staff that have received their:

- 2025/2026 end of year review (appraisal).
- 2026/2027 objectives
- 2026/2027 half year review

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

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Appraisal	Target	30%	60%	90%	95%	95%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**68%**	**80%**	**83%**	**89%**	**91%**	**96%**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
	Status	**B**	**B**	**A**	**A**	**A**	**G**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Objectives	Target	30%	60%	90%	95%	95%	95%	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**20%**	**54%**	**66%**	**80%**	**85%**	**96%**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
	Status	**A**	**A**	**R**	**R**	**A**	**G**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Review	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	25%	50%	75%	80%	80%	80%
	Actual	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**						
	Status	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**						

Supporting Commentary

During Quarter 2, the focus was on encouraging all managers to complete and submit outstanding end of year and objective setting appraisals in preparation for the launch of the half year appraisal process in September.

Through regular reporting and targeted follow-up activity, we successfully achieved and exceeded the KPI targets of 95% for end of year appraisals and 25% for objective-setting appraisals, representing a significant achievement.

Attention has now shifted to supporting managers to arrange and complete half-year appraisals for their teams. This process is particularly important as appraisal completion may have an impact on employees' pay progression and awards from July next year.

Regular reporting continues to be provided to managers, enabling them to monitor appraisal completion across their teams. We also continue to offer support and training through Thrive and one-to-one sessions, helping managers to conduct meaningful development conversations and manage performance with confidence.

Absence Rate – Wholetime Staff – PPL.1.08

The average number of shifts lost per wholetime firefighter due to sickness vs the average of the national average of the previous three years.

This covers short and long-term sickness.

R	> 20% of target
A	> 10% of target
G	= 10% of target or less
B	< 20% of target

What is good?	Less is better
Target	National Average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.95	0.95	0.95						
	Actual	**1.54**	**1.14**	**1.19**	**0.94**	**0.75**	**1.05**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**G**	**B**	**A**						
Cumulative	Target	0.84	1.68	2.52	3.47	4.42	5.37						
	Actual	**1.54**	**2.67**	**3.86**	**4.80**	**5.55**	**6.60**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

The Wholetime absence rate is 1.05 against a target of 0.95, placing the measure in the amber performance band. Performance has fluctuated during the quarter, moving from green to blue and then amber, reflecting changes in the balance between long-term cases and shorter, more frequent absences.

Q2 working days lost reduced by 23.9% compared with Q1, driven by a 50% reduction in long-term sickness days. However, short-term days and episodes increased, with 102 short-term episodes recorded during Q2. The main themes were musculoskeletal conditions, mental health, gastrointestinal illness and respiratory or ENT-related absence.

The overall Wholetime position shows progress in reducing the duration and impact of long-term absence, but the increase in short-term frequency requires further attention. The Q2 focus will therefore be a detailed review of repeat episodes, common reasons, station patterns and seasonal factors. Middle Manager attendance reviews will continue, supported by return-to-work discussions, timely Occupational Health referrals and earlier consideration of alternative duties, modified duties and phased returns.

Absence Rate – On-Call Staff – PPL.1.09

The average number of calendar days lost per On-Call firefighter due to sickness vs the average of the national average of the previous three years.

This covers short and long-term sickness.

R	> 20% of target
A	> 10% of target
G	= 10% of target or less
B	< 20% of target

What is good?	Less is better
Target	National Average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.36	1.36	1.36						
	Actual	**1.06**	**1.21**	**1.79**	**1.40**	**1.25**	**1.11**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**R**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	1.18	2.36	3.54	4.90	6.26	7.62						
	Actual	**1.06**	**2.27**	**4.06**	**5.46**	**6.71**	**7.82**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

The On-Call absence rate is 1.11 against a target of 1.36, placing the measure in the green performance band. This represents a positive position, with the average level of absence remaining below the national benchmark.

Q2 working days lost reduced by 13.2% compared with Q1, while the number of episodes remained broadly stable. Musculoskeletal and mental-health-related absence, including stress, remain the principal themes, and the overall position continues to be influenced by a small number of prolonged cases.

The On-Call position is positive and the focus will be on maintaining this performance while continuing active oversight of individual long-term cases. Further review will focus on stress-related absence, prolonged musculoskeletal cases and identified station hotspots. Occupational Health advice, welfare support, phased returns and alternative or modified duties will continue to be considered where appropriate. Where employees hold both Wholetime and On-Call contracts, the impact on each contract will continue to be recorded and monitored.

Absence Rate – Support Staff – PPL.1.10

The average number of shifts lost per support staff employee due to sickness vs the average of the national average of the previous three years.

This covers short and long-term sickness.

R	> 20% of target
A	> 10% of target
G	= 10% of target or less
B	< 20% of target

What is good?	Less is better
Target	National Average

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.77	0.77	0.77						
	Actual	**1.12**	**1.36**	**1.29**	**0.80**	**1.04**	**1.11**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**G**	**R**	**R**						
Cumulative	Target	0.74	1.48	2.22	2.99	3.76	4.53						
	Actual	**1.12**	**2.48**	**3.77**	**4.57**	**5.61**	**6.72**						
	Status	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

The Support Staff absence rate is 1.11 against a target of 0.77, placing the measure in the red performance band. The rate is influenced by a relatively small number of longer-term cases, which have a proportionately greater effect because of the smaller workforce.

Despite the current rate, Q2 working days lost reduced by 19.4% compared with Q1 and the number of episodes reduced from 50 to 46. Long-term days also reduced by 28.6%. Musculoskeletal conditions were the largest identifiable theme, while the remaining position was influenced by individual physical-health cases across a range of absence reasons.

The immediate focus will be a detailed review of prolonged cases, repeat episodes and the Support Staff departments recording the highest levels of working days lost. Management reviews will be undertaken with the relevant department leads to confirm that return-to-work discussions have been completed, attendance triggers have been acted upon and appropriate case-management action is in place. Occupational Health advice, workplace adjustments, phased returns, alternative duties and welfare support will be considered at the earliest appropriate opportunity. Benenden Health will also be promoted to support quicker access to diagnostics, GP advice and physiotherapy. Progress will be monitored closely through the Attendance Management Improvement Plan.

Grievances – PPL.1.11

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.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	<2	<4	<6	<8	<10	<12	<14	<16	<18	<20	<22	<24
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**3**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Throughout Quarter 2, two new grievance cases were opened, both categorised as Internal Process.

The first case remained open for 44 days before being closed, with the outcome resulting in identified process improvements. The second case remains open and has been ongoing for 57 days.

The case opened during Quarter 1 also remains open and has now been ongoing for 107 days. All other cases from this reporting period have been closed.

The average time taken to close grievance cases year to date is 44 days.

Due to the low volume of cases, no specific trends have been identified. We remain committed to addressing concerns promptly and at the most appropriate level. All grievances are managed with transparency, fairness and respect, and the number of grievances raised demonstrates employees' confidence in the process.

Where a concern involves an employee, it is managed fairly and proportionately. We ensure that each matter is addressed through the appropriate procedures, with suitable resources allocated to support a thorough investigation and appropriate support provided to all parties involved. Our aim is to resolve concerns as efficiently as possible and within a reasonable timeframe.

Disciplinaries – PPL.1.12

The number of new disciplinaries recorded each month.

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

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	<2	<4	<6	<8	<10	<12	<14	<16	<18	<20	<22	<24
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Throughout Quarter 2, one new disciplinary case was opened, which was categorised as Misconduct.

This case remained open for 71 days before being concluded and closed.

We remain committed to addressing concerns promptly and at the most appropriate level. All disciplinary cases are managed with transparency, fairness and respect.

Where a concern involves an employee, it is handled fairly and proportionately. We ensure that each matter is addressed through the appropriate procedures, with suitable resources allocated to support a thorough investigation and appropriate support provided to all parties involved. Our aim is to resolve matters as efficiently as possible and within a reasonable timeframe.

Independent Reporting Line Calls – PPL.1.13

The number of independent reporting line calls received each month.

R	
A	
G	
B	

What is good?	Monitor
Target	N/A

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**0**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**2**						
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cumulative	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**0**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**12**	**16**						
	Status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Supporting Commentary

Throughout Quarter 2, seven new Safecall cases were opened and categorised as follows:

- Inappropriate Conduct (4)
- Inappropriate Conduct and Behaviour (2)
- Unfair Treatment (1)
- Discipline / Work Performance (1)

Of the seven cases opened during the quarter, three remain open and have been ongoing for an average of 22 days. Of the seven cases opened during Quarter 1, two remain open and have been ongoing for an average of 108 days.

The concerns raised originate from a range of staff groups across the Service and are being managed through the assessment panel process, with investigations progressing as appropriate. Due to the variety and low volume of cases, no clear patterns or trends have been identified.

It is positive to see that employees continue to feel confident in raising concerns through the Safecall platform. The Service remains committed to ensuring that all reports are assessed thoroughly, managed fairly, and investigated in line with established procedures.

Compliments – PPL.1.14

The number of compliments received each month.

B	> 5 per month
G	=> 0 per month
A	
R	

What is good?	More is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**4**	**6**	**14**	**14**	**12**	**14**						
	Status	**G**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						
Cumulativ	Target	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**4**	**10**	**24**	**38**	**50**	**64**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

During Q2 2026, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service received 40 compliments from members of the public and partner organisations.

The majority (40%) related to operational incident response. 20% recognised Home Fire Safety Visits and 10% related to community engagement activities. 20% fell within a miscellaneous category including partnership working, inspections, recruitment and ceremonial activities. 10% recognised educational, public engagement and awareness activities.

Feedback received throughout the quarter consistently highlighted the professionalism, compassion, expertise and community focus demonstrated by staff across a wide range of activities.

One particularly noteworthy compliment was received following a significant fire at a sheltered housing scheme. The organisation responsible for the premises praised attending crews for their rapid response, successful rescue of an unconscious resident, professionalism and effective incident management. They highlighted the speed of attendance, the quality of the rescue operation and the minimal damage caused during firefighting activities, describing the crews' actions as "commendable".

Complaints – PPL.1.15

The number of complaints received each month. This does not identify if the complaints were upheld.

R	> 2 per month
A	2 per month
G	<= 1 per month
B	

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2	<2
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	<2	<3	<4	<5	<6	<7	<8	<9	<10	<11	<12	<13
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**2**	**4**	**5**	**6**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

During Q2 2026, a total of four complaints were received during the reporting period.

Two complaints related to staff conduct and concerned the actions and behaviour of Service personnel. Both matters were reviewed in accordance with the Service's complaints procedure, with appropriate enquiries undertaken to establish the circumstances and determine whether the standards of conduct expected by the Service had been met.

One complaint related to the operation of a Service vehicle. The complainant raised concerns regarding the use of audible warning equipment within a densely populated residential area during a late evening period, citing the potential disturbance caused to residents. The matter was reviewed and assessed in line with relevant operational policies and procedures.

One complaint concerned community engagement activities associated with a Service Open Day. The complainant expressed dissatisfaction with the planning and provision of parking arrangements for visitors attending the event. The concerns raised were reviewed by the relevant department and considered as part of the event evaluation process.

All four complaints were formally recorded and managed in accordance with the Service's complaints process. Of the four complaints received, two were upheld following investigation, and detailed responses were issued to the complainants outlining the findings and any actions taken as a result.

Injury Rate – PPL.1.16

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

R	=> 10 per month
A	< 10 per month
G	< 8 per month
B	< 5 per month

What is good?	Less is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8
	Actual	**3.8**	**3.8**	**1.9**	**11.5**	**9.6**	**5.8**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**R**	**A**	**G**						
YTD Avg	Target	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8	<8
	Actual	**3.8**	**3.8**	**3.2**	**5.3**	**6.1**	**6.1**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Injury rates increased during Q2, primarily due to slips, trips and falls and manual handling incidents.

Following a peak in July, performance improved throughout the quarter and returned below target in September. All incidents are investigated at the appropriate level, with trends monitored through the Service's health and safety governance arrangements to identify learning and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Detail of injuries can be found under measures such as PPL.1.17 - Workplace Injuries.

Workplace Injuries – PPL.1.17

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

R	=> 6 per month
A	< 6 per month
G	=< 2 per month
B	0 per month

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3	<3
	Actual	**2**	**2**	**1**	**6**	**6**	**3**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**R**	**R**	**A**						
Cumulative	Target	<3	<5	<7	<9	<11	<13	<15	<17	<19	<21	<23	<25
	Actual	**2**	**4**	**5**	**11**	**17**	**20**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**A**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

During the quarter, 15 workplace injuries were recorded, of which 10 were classified as minor and 5 as moderate. The moderate injuries arose from a range of operational, training and workplace activities and included slips, trips, manual handling-related incidents, environmental factors and ill health.

Each event has been reviewed through the Service's established health and safety processes to identify learning opportunities and, where appropriate, implement measures to further reduce risk. No significant trends or systemic issues have been identified; however, the Service will continue to monitor incident data and promote safe systems of work, effective supervision and risk-aware behaviours across all activities.

RIDDOR Reportable Incidents – PPL.1.18

The number of incidents that required reporting to the HSE under RIDDOR 2013.

R	> 2 per month
A	=< 2 per month
G	=< 0.5 per month
B	

What is good?	fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**A**	**G**	**G**	**A**						
Cumulative	Target	<1	<2	<2	<3	<3	<4	<4	<5	<5	<6	<6	<7
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

One RIDDOR report was submitted in Q2. The incident became RIDDOR reportable as the injured person was unable to undertake their normal work duties for more than seven consecutive days as a result of the injury.

The RIDDOR incident involved a firefighter who slipped down a single step while carrying out operational duties at an incident, resulting in an injury to the knee.

An investigation is ongoing to establish the circumstances and identify any learning opportunities.

Near Miss Events Recorded – PPL.1.19

Number of near miss events recorded across the Service where a safety event occurs, but no personal injury, damage or financial loss results.

R	=> 10 per month
A	= 0 or => 5 per month
G	Between 1 and 5 per month
B	

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Actual	**0**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**6**	**3**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**A**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	<5	<9	<13	<17	<21	<25	<29	<33	<37	<41	<45	<49
	Actual	**0**	**2**	**5**	**10**	**16**	**19**						
	Status	**A**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Fourteen near-miss events were recorded during the quarter, of which ten were assessed as minor and four as moderate. The moderate events related to occupational health considerations during community safety activity, equipment availability, fleet maintenance processes, and contractor safety management at Service premises. All incidents were reviewed through established reporting and governance arrangements, with appropriate actions taken to address the immediate issues and identify learning opportunities. While the incidents arose from a range of unrelated circumstances, no recurring or systemic concerns have been identified. The Service will continue to monitor trends and strengthen controls where appropriate to support the safety of staff, contractors and service delivery.



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR FINANCES AND ASSETS

Forecast – Outturn (£000's) – Fin.1.01

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.

R	> 2% of target
A	Within 2.0% of target
G	Within 1.0% of target
B	Within 0.5% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	-	-	43,880	43,880	43,880	43,880						
	Actual	**-**	**-**	**43,555**	**43,770**	**43,764**	**43,701**						
	% Difference	**-**	**-**	**-0.7%**	**-0.2%**	**-0.3%**	**-0.4%**						
	Status	**-**	**-**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

For more information, please see the detailed Q2 monitoring report within the Fire Authority Pack.

Forecast – Wholetime and On-Call Cost (£000's) – Fin.1.02

The financial measure compares the approved revenue for our wholetime and On-Call operations budget (target) against the forecast revenue outturn position (forecast). Negative % difference indicates an underspend whereas positive % difference indicating an overspend.

R	> 2% of target
A	Within 2.0% of target
G	Within 1.0% of target
B	Within 0.5% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Wholetime	Target	-	-	23,654	23,654	23,760	23,760						
	Actual	**-**	**-**	**24,025**	**24,025**	**23,984**	**23,994**						
	% Difference	**-**	**-**	**1.57%**	**1.6%**	**0.9%**	**1.0%**						
	Status	**-**	**-**	**A**	**A**	**G**	**G**						
On-Call	Target	-	-	1,557	1,557	1,572	1,572						
	Actual	**-**	**-**	**1,420**	**1,420**	**1,523**	**1,531**						
	% Difference	**-**	**-**	**-9.65%**	**-8.8%**	**-3.1%**	**-2.6%**						
	Status	**-**	**-**	**R**	**R**	**R**	**R**						

Supporting Commentary

For more information, please see the detailed Q2 monitoring report within the Fire Authority Pack.

Forecast – Capital Spend (£000's) – Fin.1.03

R	> 2% of target
A	Within 2.0% of target
G	Within 1.0% of target
B	Within 0.5% of target

What is good?	Closer to target
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	-	-	10,330	10,330	10,330	10,330						
	Actual	**-**	**-**	**10,330**	**10,330**	**10,330**	**10,300**						
	% Difference	**-**	**-**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**						
	Status	**-**	**-**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

For more information, please see the detailed Q2 monitoring report within the Fire Authority Pack

Energy Usage – Electricity (000's – Kilowatts per hour) – Fin.1.04

Monthly usage (kWh) of Electricity across the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Estate

R	=> 10% of target
A	> 5% of target
G	Within 5% of target
B	< 5% of target

What is good?	Less is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Actual	**125**	**119**	**106**	**154**	**166**	**111**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**B**	**R**	**R**	**B**						
Cumulative	Target	120	240	360	480	600	720	840	960	1,080	1,200	1,320	1,440
	Actual	**125**	**244**	**350**	**504**	**670**	**781**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**R**	**A**						

Supporting Commentary

Usage since July 2025 has been monitored using smart meters to establish a baseline target. Usage will continue to be monitored closely during the remainder of 2026-27.

Energy Usage – Gas (000's – Kilowatts per hour) – Fin.1.05

Monthly usage (kWh) of Gas across the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Estate

R	=> 10% of target
A	> 5% of target
G	Within 5% of target
B	< 5% of target

What is good?	Less is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	160	120	100	100	100	110	150	220	240	260	220	210
	Actual	**143**	**111**	**74**	**57**	**53**	**59**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						
Cumulative	Target	160	280	380	480	580	690	840	1,060	1,300	1,560	1,780	1,990
	Actual	**143**	**254**	**328**	**385**	**438**	**497**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

Usage since July 2025 has been monitored using smart meters to establish a baseline target. Usage will continue to be monitored closely during the remainder of 2026-27.

Overdue Internal Audits – Fin.1.06

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.

R	> 2
A	2
G	< 2
B	

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						
Cumulative	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

The Service has had one overdue audit action this quarter.

Thew action relates to Core Financial Controls and the 'Separation of Duties in management of the Finance Systems'. The latest update is:

"An automated audit enquiry report has been explored, but it has not managed to capture and summarise the information in a usable format. Alternative methods of reporting are to be investigated. The updated target date will be December 2026"

Audits and their subsequent actions are reported to each Overview and Audit Committee meeting. The last update was taken on the 14th October 2026 and can be found here:

OVERVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 14 OCTOBER 2026 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Projects – Fin.1.07

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.

R	> 4 off track
A	3-4 off track
G	< 3 off track
B	0 off track

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
On Track	Target	-	-	-	-
	Actual	**20**	**24**		
	Status	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Risk to Progress	Target	<3	<3	<3	<3
	Actual	**3**	**7**		
	Status	**A**	**R**		

Supporting Commentary

There are 34 items on the 2026/27 Annual plan including 8 carried over from last year.

One new project was added in Q2, linked to our retention processes.

Attention is currently focused on the seven projects assessed as at risk. Targeted reviews are underway to establish the factors impacting delivery, strengthen recovery plans, and ensure the appropriate resources, decisions, and governance are in place to return projects to a stable trajectory.

One evaluation has been completed this quarter:

1) Introduce a new Maintenance competency system

All projects are scrutinised at our monthly internal governance meetings with major project providing detailed highlight reports to our Programme Board. An annual plan update is submitted to Member's via the Executive committee. The last update was taken on the 9th September 2026 and can be found here: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - 9 SPETEMBER 2026 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service



OPTIMISING OUR TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

Website – Active Users (000's) – 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.

B	> 15 per month
G	> 10 per month
A	=> 8 per month
R	< 8 per month

What is good?	More is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
	Actual	**14.6**	**14.9**	**11.2**	**15.3**	**20.0**	**8.8**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**A**						
Cumulativ	Target	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
	Actual	**14.6**	**29.5**	**40.7**	**56.0**	**76.0**	**84.8**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**B**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

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

The total number of unique engagements with our social media content across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

B	=> 30 per month
G	=> 20 per month
A	< 20 per month
R	< 16 per month

What is good?	More is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Actual	**45.9**	**34.9**	**26.0**	**31.8**	**60.1**	**8.4**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**G**	**B**	**B**	**R**						
Cumulativ	Target	20	40	60	80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240
	Actual	**45.9**	**80.8**	**106.8**	**138.6**	**198.7**	**207.1**						
	Status	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**	**B**						

Supporting Commentary

Performance exceeded the monthly target in July and August, supported by a rich mix of summer warning and informing messages, interest in incidents, employee success stories, events and fundraising activity.

September's performance fell below target, reflecting temporary capacity pressures, including a staff secondment, alongside increased demand from major organisational projects. Communications resources were prioritised across other channels to meet the Service's immediate needs.

Performance is expected to increase in October as planned campaigns launch, with team capacity anticipated to return to its planned level from November. Cumulative performance at the end of Q2 remained above target, at 207.1 against 120.

Intranet – Active Users – 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.

B	=> 98%
G	=> 90%
A	=> 80%
R	< 80%

What is good?	Higher is better
Target	Set numbers

		Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Monthly	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
	Actual	**94%**	**95%**	**96%**	**98.1%**	**95.2%**	**95.4%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**B**	**G**	**G**						
YTD Avg	Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
	Actual	**94%**	**95%**	**95%**	**96%**	**96%**	**96%**						
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**						

Supporting Commentary

Intranet usage remained consistently high throughout Q2, with monthly staff access ranging from 95.2% to 98.1%, above the 90% target. Year-to-date average usage stood at 96% at the end of September.

This sustained usage is encouraging following the intranet refresh, which moved from team-based sections to navigation organised around themes and staff needs. There is no indication of a reduction in access following the changes, with the intranet continuing to provide a widely used channel for staff information and organisational updates.

Reportable Data Breaches – DDT.1.04

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.

R	> 0
A	
G	0
B	

What is good?	Fewer is better
Target	Set number

		2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027
Yearly	Target	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Actual	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
	Status	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**	**G**

Supporting Commentary

There were no recorded data breaches between 1st July 2026 and 30th September 2026.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 2 December 2026

Report title: Precept Flexibility Request 2027-28

Lead Member: Councillor Niknam Hussain

Report sponsor: Louise Harrison, Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

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

Action: Decision

Recommendations: That the submission of the letter in Appendix 1 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government be approved.

Executive summary:

Every year, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) sets referendum principles for the maximum amount by which authorities can increase council tax without the need for a local referendum.

Although the referendum principles for 2027-28 have not yet been confirmed, there has not yet been information to suggest they will be any different to the 2026-27 principles for combined fire authorities, which was an upper threshold of £5.00.

The letter in Appendix 1 sets out the rationale for requesting additional precept flexibility for 2027-28 to enable the Authority to increase council tax by up to £10.00 in 2027-28.

Financial implications:

Additional precept flexibility of £5.00 (i.e. a total increase of £10.00 on the annual amount for a Band D property) would generate an additional £1.7m in council tax receipts in 2027-28. The notional council tax adjustment within the Fair Funding Review resulted in a loss of income of £1.5m per year.

Risk management:

The risk to the Service's financial sustainability is the highest rated risk on the corporate risk register, with a probability of 4 (likely) and an impact of 4 (high). If precept flexibility of £10.00 were to be permitted and the increase approved by the Authority at its meeting in February 2027, it is anticipated that the risk score would reduce significantly.

Legal implications:

The Local Government Act 2003 gives the responsible finance officer, namely the Director of Finance and Assets of the Authority under s112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the responsibility to report to Members of the Authority on his assessment of the robustness of the estimates used within the budget and on the adequacy of reserves.

Every year MHCLG lays The Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report pursuant to section 52ZD(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as inserted by Schedule 5 to the Localism Act 2011. Under section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 each precepting authority must determine whether its relevant basic amount of council tax for a financial year is excessive decided in accordance with any sets of principles contained in such annual MHCLG Report.

For 2026-27, the relevant basic amount of council tax of a combined fire authority would have been considered excessive if the authority's relevant basic amount of council tax for 2026-27 was more than £5.00 greater than its relevant basic amount of council tax for 2025-26.

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: None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Precept Flexibility for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) – Request for £10 on Band D for 2027-28	None

Appendix 1

Precept Flexibility for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) – Request for £10 on Band D for 2027-28

We are writing to you in reference to the Final Local Government Finance Settlement: England, 2026-2027 to 2028-2029, to highlight our financial concerns and to request the ability to raise the precept by more than the £5 referendum limit.

The Service is one of the lowest funded fire and rescue services in terms of core spending power per capita and precept level. Despite this, we have made significant improvements in the last few years. This is demonstrated in our most recent inspection report from HMICFRS, with graded judgements improving by at least one or two grades across the board. While everyone in the Service deserves a huge amount of credit for their efforts and professionalism, this was only made possible through the utilisation of reserves, with HMICFRS acknowledging how key this was to our improvement. To make this level of performance sustainable, additional funding will be required.

The Service has ambitious plans in place to build a local training centre and to undertake a comprehensive refurbishment and overhaul of an existing station to ensure it meets the modern standards our Firefighters deserve. This is alongside investment in pumping appliances, specialist vehicles, operational equipment and IT, which have been carefully prioritised to maintain longer term affordability. However, we continue to find ourselves in an extremely challenging financial position, exacerbated by the recent Fair Funding Review.

Grant Funding

The resources adjustment element of the calculation means that the Service has been disproportionately affected, and our funding allocation is significantly lower than our assessed need:

Assessed Need	**£41,727,140**
Resource Adjustment	-£31,667,926
Council Tax	£30,164,902
Net Impact of Council Tax	**£40,224,116**
Deficit	**£1,503,024**

This deficit is approximately equivalent to an additional £5 above the existing referendum limit (i.e. a total precept increase of £10 for 2027-28).

To increase fairness for taxpayers, provide better value for money, and enable areas to rebalance disparities in their council tax levels should they wish to, the Provisional local government finance settlement 2026 to 2027 set out the criteria for authorities not to have any referendum principles in 2027-28 and 2028-29 if they meet the following criteria:

- Are upper tier local authorities;
- Would have 95% of their income protected; and
- Have council tax levels lower than average.

The only one of these criteria that the Service does not meet, is that it is not an upper tier authority. The same principles of fairness must also be applied to fire and rescue services (FRSs).

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2027-28 Budget

In 2024-25, the Service achieved efficiency savings of £238k (2.2% of non-payroll budgets) with a further £341k in 2025-26 (2.8% of non-payroll budget). These have been built into the 2027-28 budget and MTFP. This means that there is limited scope to make further savings without substantial change or cutting services.

During 2025-26 the Authority approved ambitious plans to improve the overall effectiveness and resilience of the on-call model within the Service. However, these changes are not designed to deliver cashable savings, as any savings are to be reinvested in the on-call to ensure it can provide the resilience required as part of our Community Risk Management Plan.

Medium Term Financial Plan

The MTFP includes what we believe are reasonable assumptions and factors in the multi-year provisional settlement. Many of the key emerging pressures identified since the start of the current financial year are consistent with those being experienced across the sector by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and include:

- Increasing Prevalence of Extreme Weather Events (including Wildfires and Flooding) – the Service has recently invested in two new rural firefighting vehicles, upgrading the offroad capability of an existing fire appliance, and two new water carriers. However, a significant further investment of £500k (plus ongoing costs) is required to provide dedicated wildfire PPE to enhance firefighter safety and improve operational resilience against ever increasing climate related risks.
- PPE – recent developments in PPE and contaminants management have identified ways in which staff safety can be enhanced. This requires investment in new PPE and a significant increase in the number of times that PPE requires professional cleaning and other maintenance performed on it. It is estimated that the cost of the new national PPE contract to the Service will increase by at least £250k per year (subject to successful supplier).
- Cybersecurity – a report published in October 2026 by HMICFRS entitled “Cybersecurity in police forces and fire and rescue services" identified that “Lack of funding is a barrier to improving cybersecurity, particularly in the fire and rescue sector”. Further investment is required in this area to protect the Service against the high and increasing risks posed in this area.

Furthermore, the Service is facing overall capacity pressures resulting from historic funding decisions that have been exacerbated by the Fair Funding Review.

In their most recent inspection report HMICFRS noted that “The service has seen increased overall funding since our last inspection but is still required to manage its resources within a tight budget. In the year ending 31 March 2025, the service cost £43.46 per head of population, which is less than the England average of £51.71.” This tight operating budget limits the pace at which the Service is able to continue to improve outcomes for the public and our staff. A number of the improvements noted in our most recent HMICFRS report were delivered using temporary staff funded from reserves, which is clearly unsustainable.

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Capital Programme

Since 2019, when no capital programme existed, we have endeavoured to improve and replace aging buildings, equipment and fire appliances. Our plans include the essential replacement of at least six pumping appliances and two turntable ladders planned, a major structural refurbishment of one of our key wholetime stations, and construction of a new local training centre.

The lack of any capital grant means that these investments are funded largely via our revenue budget. Given the Service has one of the lowest core spending powers per capita of any FRS, this puts a huge strain on already very tight budgets.

In addition to the work identified above, further modernisation is required across our estate beyond normal levels of maintenance, including a significant refurbishment and reconfiguration of another key wholetime station, which is not affordable within our current capital programme.

Should no additional funding be forthcoming, it is likely we will need to delay or cancel some of these projects despite significant preparatory investment so far.

Reserves

By the end of the MTFP period our usable reserves are forecast to fall to £2.3m, the vast majority of which is our risk assessed general fund balance. This is clearly insufficient to fund all the future investment required in the Service:

Reserve	**2025-26 £000**	**2026-27 £000**	**2027-28 £000**	**2028-29 £000**	**2029-30 £000**	**2030-31 £000**
General Fund	2,040	2,040	2,040	1,940	2,040	2,040
Other Earmarked	241	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Investment	11,840	5,283	2,907	1,687	617	270
Total	**14,121**	**7,323**	**4,947**	**3,627**	**2,657**	**2,310**

Core Spending Power (CSP)

Comparing the CSP per capita for FRSs is the clearest indicator of the relative resources each FRS has available to deliver its Community Risk Management Plan.

Charts 1 and 2 in Appendix A show that:

- In 2026-27 the Service has the fourth lowest CSP per capita of any standalone FRS (£47.27 vs. an average of £52.65)
- By 2028-29 the Service will have the **second lowest CSP per capita** of any standalone FRS (£50.16 vs. an average of £56.20)

The only FRS with a lower CSP per capita in 2028-29 (by 18p) is Northamptonshire FRS, who were granted additional precept flexibility in 2026-27. The third lowest ranking FRS has a CSP per capita £1.09 higher than the Service.

Precept

The Service currently has the **second lowest precept of any standalone FRS** (Chart 3, Appendix A). The only FRS with a lower precept is West Midlands FRS, which as a metropolitan service has a much larger tax base and also receives a much lower proportion

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of its funding from council tax. The Service's precept of £89.46 is significantly below the national average of £100.44.

I have considered the information set out above along with the contextual information provided in the appendix below and wish to request the ability to increase the Service's precept by £10.

As much as I would prefer not to have to ask the public to pay more, I believe an extra 20p per week for a Band D council taxer payer is a reasonable ask and necessary for financial stability of the Service.

If this provision is not made available, the sustainability and resilience of the Service could be significantly compromised.

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Appendix A

Chart 1

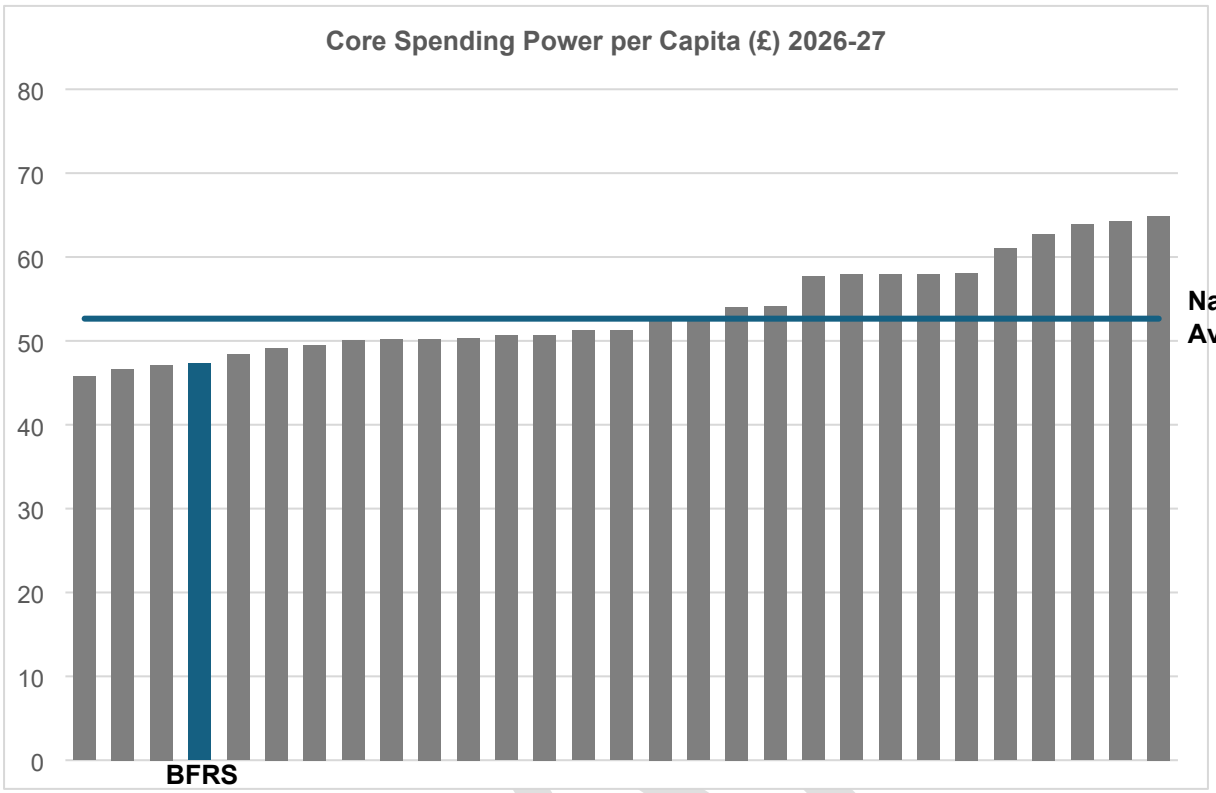


Chart 2

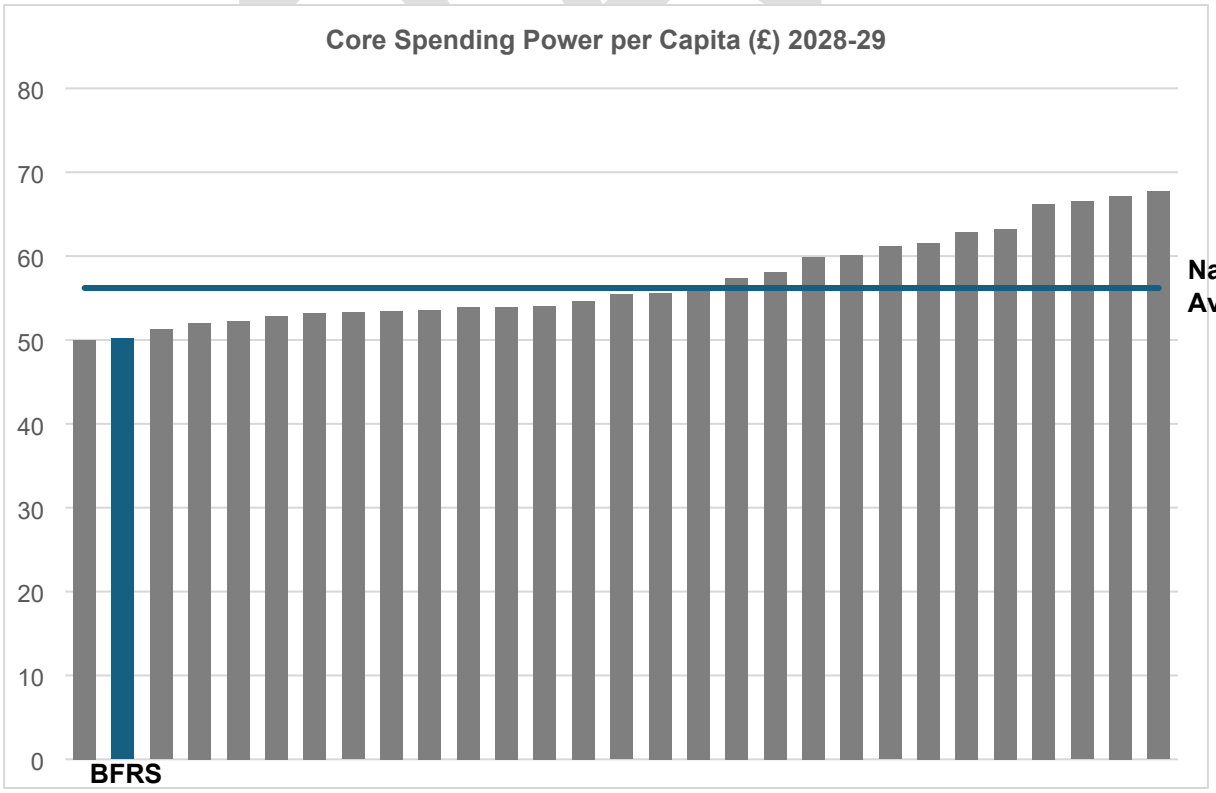
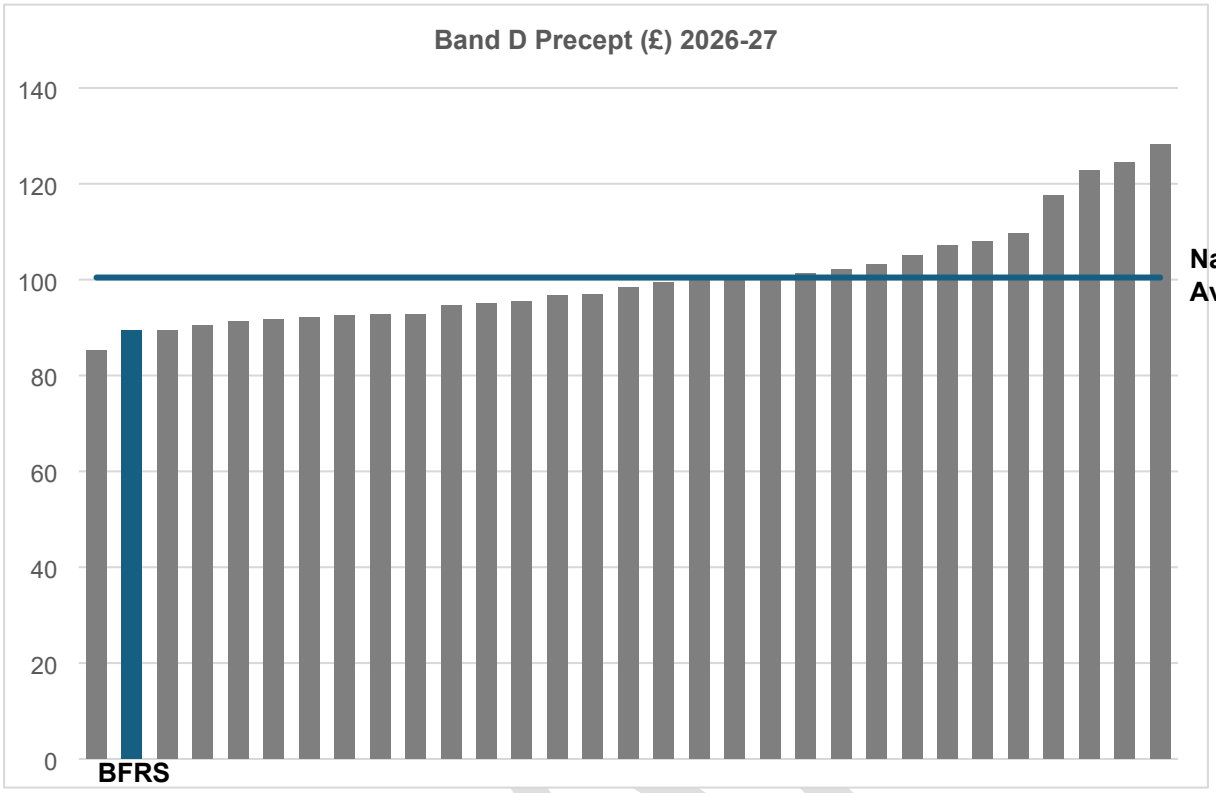


Chart 3



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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 2 December 2026

Report title: Appointment of an Independent Co-opted Member to the Overview and Audit Committee

Lead Member: Chairman of the Authority

Report sponsor: Chief Fire Officer, Louise Harrison

Author and contact: Graham Britten, Director of Legal & Governance

Action: Decision

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. The recruitment of one Independent (i.e Co-opted) Member to serve on the Overview and Audit Committee be approved.
2. The recruitment process set out in Appendix 1 be approved.
3. The Job Description and Person Specification attached at Appendix 2 be approved with authority to the Monitoring Officer to make amendments in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee before commencement of the recruitment process.
4. The Independent Co-opted Member be appointed by a future meeting of the Authority for a fixed term of four years, subject to confirmation by the Authority following a recommendation from the recruitment panel.
5. The Members' Allowances Scheme be amended to provide an Allowance of £1,200 per annum for the Independent Co-opted Member of the Overview and Audit Committee together with reimbursement of approved travel and subsistence expenses.
6. Standing Orders and Overview and Audit Committee Terms of Reference be amended as necessary to reflect the appointment of an Independent Co-opted Member and submitted to a future Authority meeting for approval.

Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to recruit and appoint an Independent Co-opted Member to the Authority's Overview and Audit Committee.

The proposal supports the continued strengthening of the Authority's governance and assurance framework and reflects developments in national best practice. The

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommends that local authority audit committees include independent members to supplement elected member expertise and strengthen the committee's independence and effectiveness. CIPFA recommends that authorities include at least two co-opted independent members where legislation does not otherwise require independent representation.

The proposal is also consistent with the direction of travel established by the Redmond Review into local authority audit and with the new statutory framework introduced through Section 94 of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, which requires provision to be made to ensure that at least one member of an audit committee is an independent person.

Recruitment of an Independent Co-opted Member will strengthen the Committee's collective knowledge, provide additional external challenge and support effective oversight of governance, risk management, internal control and financial reporting arrangements.

Financial Implications:

The annual cost of the proposal is estimated at:

- Allowance: £1,200 (indexed linked per other Members' allowances);
- reasonable travel and subsistence costs;

The MKCC IRP Report November 2025, recommended that its Co-optees should 'receive an allowance of £720 per annum (indexed linked). The role will also receive travel, subsistence and other expenses in accordance with the scheme applicable to councillors.'

The Buckinghamshire Council IRP Report January 2025 recommended that 'It is possible that the council will have an independent person on the Audit and Governance Committee, this will involve attendance at each committee meeting reading the associated meeting papers and contributing in the meetings themselves[…]' and that 'if appointed, the independent person on the Overview and Audit Committee receive an SRA of £1,200'

The costs (including advertising using existing online channels) can be met from existing governance budgets and are not considered material.

Risk Management:

Failure to strengthen audit committee capacity and expertise may reduce the Authority's preparedness for future governance and audit reforms particularly if competing with other local authorities who have yet to undertake an appointment process.

Appointment of an Independent Co-opted Member will mitigate governance risks by:

- strengthening independent challenge;
- improving committee resilience;
- broadening available expertise; and
- supporting compliance with emerging legislative requirements.

Although the regulations have yet to be made the enabling legislation will require them to include 'that at least one member of an audit committee is an independent person, as defined by the regulations'. Although the definitions are not yet known the criteria for prohibitions to eligility in the proposed recruitment are based on extant definitions of an independent member in The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2017

Legal Implications:

The Buckinghamshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996, Part IV paragraph 20, applies section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 to the effect that the Authority may co-opt persons who are not members of the Authority onto its committees, other than a committee for regulating and controlling its finances, as non-voting members of the committee.

The Authority has powers to appoint co-opted committee members and to determine its committee structures through its Constitution.

The proposal is consistent with:

- the Local Government Act 1972;
- the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004;
- CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance 2022 (Appendix 3); and
- the audit committee provisions introduced through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 (by introducing a new section 33A into the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014).

The Authority when adopting a Scheme of Members' Allowances must have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels (IRP) of the constituent authorities.

Constitutional amendments will be required following approval.

Privacy and Security Implications:

The recruitment process will involve processing personal data. Existing recruitment and data protection procedures will apply. A separate Data Protection Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

Duty to Collaborate:

There are no direct implications arising from the duty to collaborate.

Health and Safety Implications:

None identified.

Environmental Implications:

None identified.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications:

The recruitment process will be conducted openly and fairly and will seek to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Appointments will be made solely on merit against the approved person specification.

Consultation and Communication:

The proposal has been discussed with:

- the Chair of the Overview and Audit Committee;
- the Director of Finance and Assets; and
- Internal Audit.

A communications plan will be developed following approval.

Next Steps

Following approval:

1. Advertise the vacancy.
2. Receive and shortlist applications.
3. Conduct interviews.
4. Present a recommendation to the Authority (February 2027).
5. Amend the Constitution and Members' Allowances Scheme (February 2027).
6. Provide induction and training for the successful candidate.

Background Papers:

- The audit committee member in a local authority 2022 edition, CIPFA (copyrighted).
- Guiding the audit committee 2022 edition Supplement to the audit committee member guidance, CIPFA (copyrighted)
- Redmond Review: Independent Review into the Oversight of Local Audit and Transparency of Local Authority Financial Reporting 8 September 2020

- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026, Section 94

- Report of the MKCC IRP November 2025

  Buckinghamshire Council Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel 30 January 2025

- BMKFA Members' Scheme of Allowances 2026-27
- Announcement CIPFA updated Position Statement for Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2026

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	The recruitment process	
2	Independent Co-opted Member – Overview and Audit Committee: Job Description and Person Specification	
3	CIPFA Audit Committee Position Statement 2022	

1. Background

1.1 The Overview and Audit Committee is a key component of the Authority's governance framework. It provides independent assurance to the Authority regarding:

- governance arrangements;
- risk management;
- internal control;
- financial reporting;
- treasury management; and
- the effectiveness of internal and external audit.

1.2 In 2020 the Redmond Review recommended that local authorities should appoint at least one independent member to their audit committees to strengthen expertise and challenge.

1.3 In 2022 CIPFA updated its 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police' and guidance (Appendix 3), recommending: "each authority audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise".

1.4 A significant number of local authorities have since appointed independent audit committee members.

1.5 The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act 2026 introduced a statutory framework for audit committees. Section 94 provides for regulations relating to audit committee membership and requires provision to ensure that at least one member of an audit committee is an independent member.

1.6 Whilst regulations have yet to be made, the Authority has an opportunity to align its governance arrangements with emerging statutory requirements and established best practice.

1.7 In October 2026 CIPFA further updated its 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police' to now include that 'Audit committees in England should, in preparation for expected additional guidance, arrange to appoint at least one co-opted independent committee member.'

2. Proposal

2.1 It is proposed that the Authority appoint one Independent Co-opted Member to the Overview and Audit Committee.

2.2 The Independent Co-opted Member would:

- participate fully in meetings;
- contribute expertise and external perspective;
- challenge and scrutinise reports and decisions;
- support the Committee's oversight role; and
- act as a non-voting member unless future constitutional changes provide otherwise.

2.3 The appointment would complement the existing skills and experience of elected members whilst providing additional continuity outside electoral cycles.

3. Recruitment Process

3.1 The position will be advertised openly through:

- the Authority website;
- Authority's established social media channels.

3.2 Applicants will be invited to submit:

- a curriculum vitae; and
- a supporting statement demonstrating how they meet the person specification.

3.3 Following shortlisting, interviews will be conducted by a panel comprising:

- the Chair of the Overview and Audit Committee;
- the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Audit Committee;
- the Director of Finance & Assets **or** the Head of Finance and
- the Director of Legal & Governance.

3.4 The panel will recommend a preferred candidate to the Authority for formal appointment.

3.5 The appointment will be for a term of four years with eligibility for reappointment following a further assessment process.

4. Allowances

4.1 The Authority's current Members' Allowances Scheme retains a Co-optees annual allowance (a vestige from when there was a statutory requirement for the Authority to have a Standard Committee with independent/co-opted members on it). Like all allowances under the Members' Allowances Scheme, it is index linked and is currently (2026/27) £389 per annum (plus reimbursement of approved travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the Authority's normal arrangements).

4.2 Benchmarking indicates that councils commonly provide an annual allowance for independent audit committee members.

4.3 It is proposed that the Scheme of Allowances be amended to provide:

Independent Co-opted Member, Overview and Audit Committee: £1,200 per annum

4.4 The allowance reflects:

- meeting attendance;
- preparation time;
- training requirements;
- the responsibilities associated with the role;
- due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the Authority's constituent councils.

Appendix 2

Independent Co-opted Member – Overview and Audit Committee

Purpose of the Role

The Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is seeking to appoint an Independent Co-opted Member to serve on its Overview and Audit Committee.

The Committee provides independent assurance regarding governance, risk management, internal control and financial reporting arrangements.

The Independent Co-opted Member will contribute external expertise, scrutiny and independent challenge to support good governance and public accountability.

Key Responsibilities

The Independent Co-opted Member will:

- Consider and comment on reports from External Audit.
- Consider and comment on the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Audit Plan.
- Review internal audit reports and management responses.
- Consider significant issues arising from audit work.
- Review the Annual Governance Statement.
- Review the Statement of Accounts.
- Review treasury management arrangements and strategies.
- Monitor the effectiveness of risk management arrangements.
- Review arrangements for preventing fraud, corruption and misconduct.
- Support the Committee in discharging its terms of reference.
- Undertake relevant training and development.

Experience

Applicants should have senior-level experience in one or more of:

- audit;
- accountancy;
- governance;
- risk management;
- legal services;
- regulation;
- fire and rescue services;
- public administration; or
- corporate leadership.

Skills

Applicants must demonstrate:

- sound judgement and independence;
- ability to understand complex reports;

- analytical and questioning skills;
- understanding of governance and accountability;
- integrity and discretion;
- effective communication skills.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Not be a member, co-opted member or employee of the Authority.
- Not be a member, co-opted member or officer of a parish council in the area of the Authority.
- Not be a member, co-opted member or officer of Buckinghamshire Council or Milton Keynes City Council.
- Not be a relative or close friend of one of the above.
- Not a be member, co-opted member or officer of the authority or parish council or either Buckinghamshire or Milton Keynes City councils in the last five years.

Time Commitment

The Committee typically meets four times each year in Aylesbury or Milton Keynes commencing 10am on Wednesdays. Additional time will be required for preparation, training and occasional briefing sessions.

Term of Appointment

Four years, subject to Authority approval. There will be a requirement to sign an undertaking to comply with the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members.

CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022

Scope

This position statement includes all principal local authorities in the UK, corporate joint committees in Wales, the audit committees for PCCs and chief constables in England and Wales, PCCFRAs and the audit committees of fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales.

The statement sets out the purpose, model, core functions and membership of the audit committee. Where specific legislation exists (the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016), it should supplement the requirements of that legislation.

Status of the position statement

The statement represents CIPFA's view on the audit committee practice and principles that local government bodies in the UK should adopt. It has been prepared in consultation with sector representatives.

CIPFA expects that all local government bodies should make their best efforts to adopt the principles, aiming for effective audit committee arrangements. This will enable those bodies to meet their statutory responsibilities for governance and internal control arrangements, financial management, financial reporting and internal audit.

The 2022 edition of the position statement replaces the 2018 edition.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Office support this guidance.

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CIPFA's Position Statement 2022: Audit committees in local authorities and police

Purpose of the audit committee

Audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. The committee's role in ensuring that there is sufficient assurance over governance risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.

In a local authority the full council is the body charged with governance. The audit committee may be delegated some governance responsibilities but will be accountable to full council. In policing, the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and chief constable are both corporations sole, and thus are the individuals charged with governance.

The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

Independent and effective model

The audit committee should be established so that it is independent of executive decision making and able to provide objective oversight. It is an advisory committee that has sufficient importance in the authority so that its recommendations and opinions carry weight and have influence with the leadership team and those charged with governance.

The committee should:

- be directly accountable to the authority's governing body or the PCC and chief constable
- in local authorities, be independent of both the executive and the scrutiny functions
- in police bodies, be independent of the executive or operational responsibilities of the PCC or chief constable
- have rights of access to and constructive engagement with other committees/functions, for example scrutiny and service committees, corporate risk management boards and other strategic groups
- have rights to request reports and seek assurances from relevant officers
- be of an appropriate size to operate as a cadre of experienced, trained committee members. Large committees should be avoided.

The audit committees of the PCC and chief constable should follow the requirements set out in the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice and be made up of co-opted independent members.

The audit committees of local authorities should include co-opted independent members in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Where there is no legislative direction to include co-opted independent members, CIPFA recommends that each authority audit committee should include at least two co-opted independent members to provide appropriate technical expertise.

Core functions

The core functions of the audit committee are to provide oversight of a range of core governance and accountability arrangements, responses to the recommendations of assurance providers and helping to ensure robust arrangements are maintained.

The specific responsibilities include:

Maintenance of governance, risk and control arrangements

- Support a comprehensive understanding of governance across the organisation and among all those charged with governance, fulfilling the principles of good governance.

- Consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements. It should understand the risk profile of the organisation and seek assurances that active arrangements are in place on risk-related issues, for both the body and its collaborative arrangements.

- Monitor the effectiveness of the system of internal control, including arrangements for financial management, ensuring value for money, supporting standards and ethics and managing the authority's exposure to the risks of fraud and corruption.

Financial and governance reporting

- Be satisfied that the authority's accountability statements, including the annual governance statement, properly reflect the risk environment, and any actions required to improve it, and demonstrate how governance supports the achievement of the authority's objectives.

- Support the maintenance of effective arrangements for financial reporting and review the statutory statements of account and any reports that accompany them.

Establishing appropriate and effective arrangements for audit and assurance

- Consider the arrangements in place to secure adequate assurance across the body's full range of operations and collaborations with other entities.

- In relation to the authority's internal audit functions:

    - oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and conformance to professional standards

    - support effective arrangements for internal audit

    - promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework.

- Consider the opinion, reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.

- Contribute to the operation of efficient and effective external audit arrangements, supporting the independence of auditors and promoting audit quality.

- Support effective relationships between all providers of assurance, audits and inspections, and the organisation, encouraging openness to challenge, review and accountability.

Audit committee membership

To provide the level of expertise and understanding required of the committee, and to have an appropriate level of influence within the authority, the members of the committee will need to be of high calibre. When selecting elected representatives to be on the committee or when co-opting independent members, aptitude should be considered alongside relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Characteristics of audit committee membership:

- A membership that is trained to fulfil their role so that members are objective, have an inquiring and independent approach, and are knowledgeable.

- A membership that promotes good governance principles, identifying ways that better governance arrangement can help achieve the organisation's objectives.

- A strong, independently minded chair, displaying a depth of knowledge, skills, and interest. There are many personal skills needed to be an effective chair, but key to these are:

    - promoting apolitical open discussion

    - managing meetings to cover all business and encouraging a candid approach from all participants

    - maintaining the focus of the committee on matters of greatest priority.

- Willingness to operate in an apolitical manner.

- Unbiased attitudes – treating auditors, the executive and management fairly.

- The ability to challenge the executive and senior managers when required.

- Knowledge, expertise and interest in the work of the committee.

While expertise in the areas within the remit of the committee is very helpful, the attitude of committee members and willingness to have appropriate training are of equal importance.

The appointment of co-opted independent members on the committee should consider the overall knowledge and expertise of the existing members.

Engagement and outputs

The audit committee should be established and supported to enable it to address the full range of responsibilities within its terms of reference and to generate planned outputs.

To discharge its responsibilities effectively, the committee should:

- meet regularly, at least four times a year, and have a clear policy on those items to be considered in private and those to be considered in public
- be able to meet privately and separately with the external auditor and with the head of internal audit
- include, as regular attendees, the chief finance officer(s), the chief executive, the head of internal audit and the appointed external auditor; other attendees may include the monitoring officer and the head of resources (where such a post exists). These officers should also be able to access the committee members, or the chair, as required
- have the right to call on any other officers or agencies of the authority as required; police audit committees should recognise the independence of the chief constable in relation to operational policing matters
- support transparency, reporting regularly on its work to those charged with governance
- report annually on how the committee has complied with the position statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance. The report should be available to the public.

Impact

As a non-executive body, the influence of the audit committee depends not only on the effective performance of its role, but also on its engagement with the leadership team and those charged with governance.

The committee should evaluate its impact and identify areas for improvement.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 2 December 2026

Report title: Health and Safety Annual Report 2025-26

Lead Member: Councillor Robin Stuchbury

Report sponsor: Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance

Author and contact: Jason Manders, jmanders@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the Fire Authority note the health and safety performance as detailed in the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2025-26

Strategic Enabler 1: Workforce – An inclusive, health and engaged workforce.

Executive summary: The Health and Safety Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and highlights:

- A reduction in personal injury safety events, RIDDOR-reportable incidents and the overall injury rate
- Significant progress in strengthening the Service's approach to managing contaminants and protecting firefighters from exposure risks
- Continued investment in workforce health and safety competence through training and development
- Increased workforce engagement and strengthening the safety culture, evidenced by a substantial increase in hazard reporting
- Ongoing focus on reducing vehicle-related safety events

Financial implications: If health and safety risks are not effectively identified, managed and controlled, they may result in injury or ill health to employees, breaches of statutory obligations and enforcement action. Such outcomes could have significant financial implications for the Authority, including compensation claims, legal costs and regulatory fines.

Risk management: Effective risk management enables the Service to identify, assess and control risks that may otherwise impact on employees, service delivery and organisational objectives. The Health and Safety Annual Report provides assurance regarding the effectiveness of the Service's risk management

arrangements and highlights key areas of focus for continuous improvement.

Legal implications: The Service's health and safety management system remains embedded throughout the organisation and is subject to internal monitoring, annual audits and independent peer review arrangements through the NFCC South East Region Health and Safety Audit Protocol. These arrangements provide assurance of legislative compliance and support the continuous improvement of health and safety performance.

Privacy and security implications: The Data Protection Impact Assessment for this report has been reviewed. There are no personal details provided in this report and statistical data is generic rather than specific to protect the identity of those involved. The data collected as part of personal injury safety events is name, date of birth, gender and home address when required for Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR 2013) – a legislative requirement.

The Service continues to utilise the Visor safety event reporting system, which incorporates consent arrangements and controls to ensure personal information relating to safety events is managed appropriately and shared only where necessary.

Duty to collaborate: Collaboration continues with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service partners across a range of health and safety activities. This includes joint working through the Thames Valley Driving Centre, the continued development of the Visor safety event reporting system and collaborative review of vehicle-related safety events. The Service also remains an active member of the NFCC South-East Region Health and Safety Committee and South-East Contaminants Network, supporting the sharing of learning, best practice and emerging health and safety information across the sector.

Health and safety implications: The report provides an overview of the Service's health and safety performance during 2025/26 and identifies key trends relating to personal injury events, vehicle-related incidents, hazard reporting and workforce safety. Analysis of these events enables lessons to be identified, risks to be managed proactively and preventative measures to be implemented to protect employees and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Environmental implications: The Service has continued to strengthen its contaminants management arrangements during 2025/26. This includes, but not limited to:

- Enhanced monitoring
- Improved zoning arrangements
- Review of ventilation systems
- Development of contaminant exposure recording processes
- Ongoing environmental assessment activities

These measures contribute to both employee protection and improved environmental management.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: The data collected as part of

personal injury safety events is name, date of birth, gender and home address when required for RIDDOR 2013 reporting. Where the number of personal injury safety events is so low that there is the potential for affected individuals to be identified, they are reported generically rather than specifically. In addition, safety event data is routinely reviewed to identify any emerging trends or themes that may indicate a disproportionate impact on any group of employees.

Consultation and communication: As this report summarises health and safety performance during 2025/26, there is no requirement for formal consultation. However, the report has been subject to review through the Service's governance arrangements and will be published as part of the Fire Authority meeting papers.

Approval pathway:

People Delivery Group – 8 October 2026

Community Risk Management Plan – 20 October 2026

Strategic Leadership Board – 10 November 2026

Fire Authority – 2 December 2026

Background papers: None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Health and Safety Annual Report 2025/26	

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2025-26

Health and Safety Annual Report

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Forewords

I am very pleased to be writing the foreword to the Annual Health and Safety report.

The small, dedicated and professional Health and Safety team continues to support all our staff in providing a safe working environment. The performance is testament to how all employees understand that health and safety is paramount to themselves and to the public that we serve in an ever-changing environment.

As always, the key message is prevention. However, when a safety event occurs, no matter the scale, the Service is committed to reviewing and learning from the events and taking active steps to prevent any recurrence. Minded at the same time as being committed to keeping the Service in a sustainable position for the future. All of which has been recognised in the recent HMICFRS Report

This is credit to all employees and a great reflection on the Health and Safety Team's work, whilst keeping an eye on future challenges!

Councillor Robin Stuchbury
Lead Member for Health and Safety
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

"Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are committed to ensuring the highest standards of health and safety are in place to keep our staff safe in the workplace. We take a proactive approach to risk management and invest in training and equipment to reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents and injuries. We also work closely with colleagues from across the fire sector to identify best practice. As such, it is really pleasing to see a positive trend in our overall safety events in 25/26.

Where safety events do occur, we investigate, and we monitor trends to promote a learning culture to support future activities. One of the big challenges the sector currently faces is the management of contaminants, and the Service continues to invest and improve in this critical area - making good progress in mitigating and managing the associated impacts, working collaboratively with colleagues from other fire and rescue services, so we can keep our staff safe.

A cost cannot be placed against death or serious injury, which is why we must continue to maintain a positive health and safety culture which is inclusive for all."

Louise Harrison

Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Executive Summary

Our Performance

The safety event statistics for 2025/26 identified a **25.6% reduction in accident/injury events** compared with the previous year. However, there was a **23.7% increase in vehicle-related incidents**, which remains a key area of organisational focus.

Protecting Our Staff Against Contaminants:

The Health and Safety Team continues to support the Contaminants Working Group - a group focused on reducing the exposure and risk from contaminants that may result from work activity and/or environments. This work builds upon the robust processes that are already in place and factors in regional and national best practices, reducing the risk for all staff.

Utilising the air quality monitoring devices embedded into practice throughout the past year, the Health and Safety team have been monitoring results received - the results did not identify any significant concerns or require additional control measures within monitored locations.

Training Investment

As part of the Service's ongoing commitment to ensuring employees are afforded the best opportunity to undertake their roles safely, over £41,000 was invested in Health and Safety related training during 2025/26. The investment supported employees across the organisation, including operational personnel, Station Commanders, support staff, managers, senior leaders and directors.

Engagement and safety culture

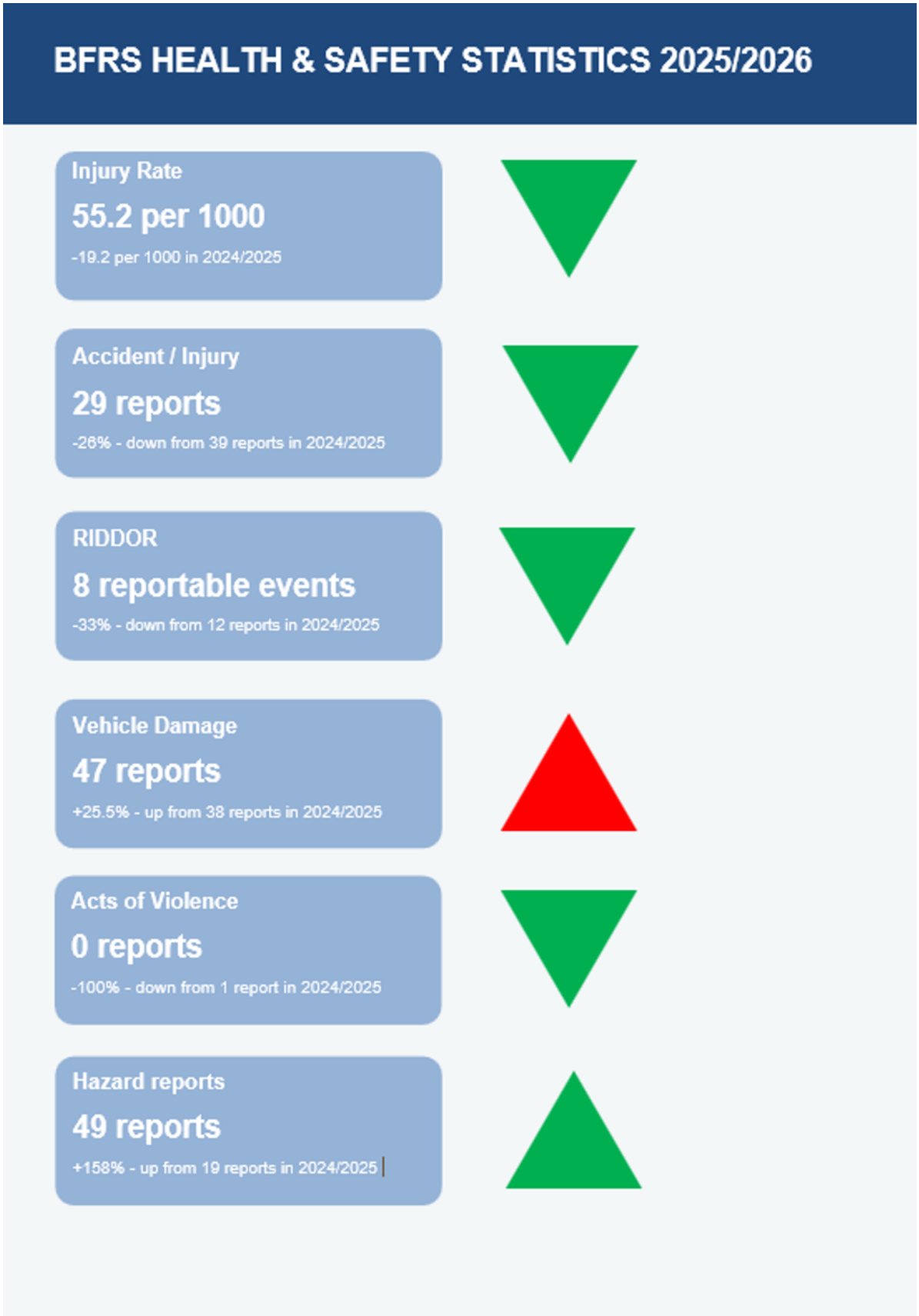
A further significant positive development during the past year has been the continued strengthening of the Service's reporting culture, evidenced by the logged hazard reports increasing from 19 to 49. This followed targeted engagement through Toolbox Talks (staff engagement sessions), station visits and workforce communications alongside a simplified process for reporting of hazards. The improvement in reporting ensures hazards are identified prior to them becoming a safety event.

The latest Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS report provides positive independent assurance of the Service’s health and safety arrangements. HMICFRS found that the Service continues to have “effective and well-understood health and safety policies and procedures”, supported by strong governance, staff wellbeing support and measures to protect firefighter safety.

Overall Assessment

Overall, the results for 2025/26 demonstrate continued improvement in key health and safety performance indicators, supported by strong governance arrangements, targeted investment in workforce competence and a positive reporting culture. Whilst vehicle-related incidents remain a key area of organisational focus, the overall reduction in personal injuries, RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable events and acts of violence towards employees, provides assurance that the Service continues to manage health and safety risks effectively.

Our Performance at a Glance



Performance Overview

In 2025/26, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) attended 6,534 incidents and recorded 12,986 mobilisations, which includes appliances providing cover as part of stand-by moves. These figures do not include co-responding incidents or officer mobilisations. The overall number of incidents attended increased from 6,476 in the previous year (2024/25).

The data demonstrates that despite the increase in incidents attended, there has been a reduction in the number of personal injury safety events, RIDDOR-reportable events, the overall injury rate, and acts of violence against employees, as detailed in the "Our Performance at a Glance" section. These positive results reflect the Service's continued commitment to effective health and safety management, workforce engagement, and proactive risk reduction.

There has, however, been an increase in vehicle-related safety events, which have risen from 38 in 2024/25 to 47 in 2025/26. This remains an area of focus for the Service. Near-miss reporting has also increased slightly from 26 to 27 reports. A summary of performance is provided below.

Personal Injury

The injury rate is calculated by dividing the number of reported personal injury incidents by the number of employees and multiplying the result by 1,000.

For 2025/26, the injury rate was 55.2 per 1,000 employees, compared with 74.4 per 1,000 employees in 2024/25. In terms of actual personal injury events, there was a reduction from 39 incidents in 2024/25 down to 29 incidents during the same period for 2025/26.

Of the 29 personal injury incidents recorded:

- 14 incidents (48%) occurred during routine activities.
- 10 incidents (34%) occurred during training activities.
- 5 incidents (17%) occurred during operational activities.

The severity of safety events is determined using the criteria set out within the Hazard, Near Miss and Safety Event Procedure 2025.

A **Minor Safety Event** ranges from no injury through to injuries requiring only first aid treatment and self-care, with no professional medical treatment required. It may also include events resulting in minimal financial loss or damage.

A **Moderate Safety Event** is one which typically requires professional medical treatment, may result in short to medium-term incapacity, and could involve moderate financial loss, reputational impact, environmental implications, or business disruption.

A **Major Safety Event** includes fatalities, major injuries (as defined by the Health and Safety Executive), or events resulting in significant financial loss, business interruption, environmental impact, or reputational damage.

Of the 29 personal injury safety events recorded during 2025/26:

- 19 (66%) were classified as Minor.
- 10 (34%) were classified as Moderate.
- 0 (0%) were classified as Major.

Looking into the details of the 10 Moderate events:

- 4 (40%) occurred during training activities.
- 4 (40%) occurred during routine activities.
- 2 (20%) occurred during operational activities.

Analysing this further, and reviewing the routine activity injuries, the most common underlying cause identified was "Unavoidable" and "Insufficient Resources for the Job." The unavoidable events primarily related to injuries sustained whilst undertaking normal movements associated with everyday tasks, whilst the "Insufficient Resources for the Job" category related to situations where suitable equipment was not readily available to complete the task safely.

Within the training-related injuries, the most common contributory factors were "Hazards Not Corrected or Controlled" and "Pre-existing Medical Condition or Injury."

No significant causation trends were identified from operational activity injuries. All investigations resulted in actions being implemented to address the specific identified contributory factors in those cases and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

Further analysis identified Handling, Lifting and Carrying activities as the most significant injury mechanism, accounting for 38% of all personal injuries. Sprains and strains were the most common injury type, accounting for 24% of all injuries recorded.

In response to these findings, the Health and Safety Team, Human Resources Department and the Service's Lead Personal Trainer Instructor are working collaboratively to enhance the current manual handling training package. This includes the introduction of a formal practical training programme that will be fully auditable, providing additional assurance regarding competence, compliance and the effectiveness of manual handling arrangements across the Service.

Regular joint meetings between Health and Safety and Human Resources have been established to monitor sickness absence trends and identify any emerging themes associated with workplace injuries. The aim is to reduce the occurrence of work-related injuries, alongside providing appropriate support to affected employees when incidents do take place.

Through Toolbox Talks and ongoing engagement with teams across the Service, the Health and Safety Team continues to promote the proactive use of Occupational Health services. Employees are encouraged to discuss any pre-existing injuries or relevant medical conditions with their line managers so that appropriate support, advice and reasonable adjustments can be considered where necessary.

This approach aims to reduce work-related musculoskeletal injuries and ensure sickness absence, associated with such injuries, remains at the lowest reasonably practicable level.

As highlighted during discussions at last year's Fire Authority meeting, the high proportion of personal injury events occurring during training activities identified supervision as a key area for improvement.

In response, the Service is investing in supervision training of higher risk activities, to strengthen leadership capability, enhance oversight during training, and support the consistent application of safe working practices.

Whilst injury rates have reduced during the current reporting period, the Service remains committed to rolling out this training focusing on areas of higher risk activity, recognising the important role effective supervision plays in preventing incidents and maintaining a positive safety culture.

RIDDOR

Serious workplace injuries, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences are reportable to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

The Service recorded 8 RIDDOR-reportable events during 2025/26, compared with 12 during 2024/25.

These 8 events consisted of:

- 1 Dangerous Occurrence involving Breathing Apparatus equipment (12.5%).
- 0 Major Injuries (0%).
- 7 Over-Seven-Day Injury Reports (87.5%).

The reduction in RIDDOR-reportable events is a positive indicator and reflects the Service's continued focus on identifying hazards, managing risk and learning from incidents.

Vehicle-Related Safety Events

During 2025/26, the Service recorded 47 vehicle-related safety events, compared with 38 during 2024/25. Slow-speed manoeuvring continues to account for the largest proportion of vehicle-related incidents and increased from 10 events in 2024/25 to 16 events during 2025/26.

Whilst these incidents are generally low in severity, they continue to result in avoidable costs, operational disruption and increased organisational risk. Consequently, vehicle-related incidents remain a key area of focus for the Service.

Within the 47 vehicle-related safety events, 21 were reportable to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) where there was a vehicle

collision that was classified as a vehicle accident involving Fire and Rescue Authority vehicles where the Service was deemed at fault.

Analysis of vehicle-related incidents is undertaken jointly by the Health and Safety Team, Driving Training School and Operational Training and Assurance Department to identify trends, contributory factors and learning opportunities. This work is strengthened through collaboration with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, enabling both organisations to share learning, compare performance and identify opportunities to improve driving standards and reduce risk.

Throughout the year, incident trends, learning outcomes and emerging risks have been shared through direct engagement and communication/s. Particular emphasis has been placed on issues relating to slow-speed manoeuvring, situational awareness and safe vehicle movement.

All vehicle-related incidents are subject to investigation and review through a robust sign-off process involving the Health and Safety Team, Driving Training Centre Manager and line management. Where appropriate, drivers may be required to undertake additional assessments, development activities or driver training before returning to operational driving duties.

The Service has also enhanced the visibility of driver incident histories within the reporting system. This enables Duty Officers to make informed decisions regarding a driver's continued operational deployment following an incident and supports the identification of any underlying factors that may have contributed to the event. This provides an additional safeguard for both the individual and the organisation by ensuring that competency, welfare and operational risk considerations are appropriately assessed.

Whilst the increase in vehicle-related incidents remains a concern, the Service remains committed to understanding the underlying causes, sharing learning and implementing targeted interventions aimed at reducing vehicle-related incidents and improving driver safety during 2026/27.

As part of that commitment, the Service has commissioned a structured review of all work-related driving activities, policies, procedures and risk assessments to ensure:

- Compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Effective and proportionate management of driving risk
- Clear accountability for driver competence and assurance
- Accessible, current and understood policies and guidance

The outcomes of that review will be actioned and shared as appropriate.

Vehicle-related safety performance will continue to remain a standing item within organisational health and safety governance arrangements throughout 2026/27, ensuring that trends continue to be monitored, learning is shared and targeted interventions are reviewed for effectiveness.

Acts of Violence Against Employees

No acts of violence against employees were recorded during 2025/26, representing a reduction from one incident recorded during 2024/25. To maintain this, it has been agreed that de-escalation training will commence this year to all operational staff and other support teams as required.

Hazard Reporting and Near Misses

The Service recorded 27 near-miss reports during 2025/26, compared with 26 reports during the previous year. More significantly, hazard reporting increased to 49 reports in 2025/26, increasing from 19 reports in 2024/25.

This increase is viewed positively and is considered evidence of a strengthening and increasingly proactive health and safety culture across the Service. Throughout the year, the Health and Safety Team has actively promoted hazard reporting through Toolbox Talks, station visits, Keeping Safe Briefs (the Health and Safety quarterly newsletter) alongside direct engagement with operational crews and support departments.

A key objective of this engagement programme is to encourage employees to identify and report hazards before they result in accidents, injuries, vehicle damage or other safety events. Evidence suggests that this approach is having a positive impact, with noticeable increases in hazard reporting frequently occurring following engagement sessions.

Increased hazard reporting also provides valuable intelligence, enabling risks to be identified and addressed at an early stage before they escalate into more significant incidents. This aligns with established health and safety management principles, which recognise that organisations with a good reporting culture are better placed to identify risk, learn from experience and implement effective preventative measures.

Feedback received from employees following Toolbox Talks has been positive, with many reporting a greater understanding of the reporting process and increased confidence in raising safety concerns. This demonstrates growing workforce engagement and a stronger collective commitment to improving health and safety across the Service.

The Health and Safety Team remains committed to further strengthening this positive reporting culture during 2026/27 through continued engagement activities, targeted communications, and regular consultation with representative bodies. By encouraging employees to identify and report hazards at the earliest opportunity, the Service continues to improve its ability to manage risk proactively and prevent harm before incidents occur.

Working Time Regulations compliance: The Resource Management Team monitors the hours worked by operational personnel focusing on those who have more than one contract with the Service.

This is managed via the resource management system and has proved to be very successful in preventing breaches of the Working Time Regulations.

A breach may occur when a worker does not have a full 24-hour uninterrupted rest break in any 7 days or 48 hours in 14 days, or the total of hours worked per week exceeds 84. The Service has implemented a limit on the number of hours worked at 78 per week to build in extra protection against fatigue for staff. Two periods of 24-hour uninterrupted rest are also given in line with the national terms and conditions for firefighters, the Grey Book.

From April 2025 to March 2026 there were 2,334 bank shifts worked and of those there were 0 breaches. This is the fourth consecutive year in which no breaches have occurred, which provides assurance of the positive work the Service has taken to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations.

Risk Management

Health and Safety audits and fire risk assessments continue to be undertaken annually across all Service stations and premises to provide assurance that health, safety and fire safety arrangements remain effective and compliant. The audit process includes consideration of statutory requirements, local risk controls and Service-specific priorities, including the ongoing management of contaminants within the workplace.

During 2025/26, a revised audit process was introduced for station audits and fire risk assessments. Under this process, Station Commanders complete the self-assessment and fire risk assessment and submit them to the Health and Safety Team 30 days prior to the scheduled audit date. Health and Safety, Facilities, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and the Station Commander are invited to attend the audit. The Health and Safety Team then reviews the completed self-assessment and fire risk assessment, inspects the site, and provides a score rating at the conclusion of the inspection.

The audits provided valuable assurance regarding compliance, workplace standards and the effectiveness of local risk management arrangements. Where areas for improvement were identified, action plans were developed jointly by the Health and Safety and Property teams to address the findings and deliver ongoing improvements. Progress against identified actions is monitored and reported through the quarterly Health and Safety Committee, ensuring appropriate governance, oversight and accountability.

Protecting Our People Against Contaminants

Reducing the risks associated with contaminants remains a key priority for BFRS. Firefighters and other operational employees may be exposed to harmful contaminants generated during firefighting, training and other operational activities. National research and learning from across the UK fire and rescue sector continue to highlight the potential long-term health impacts associated with such exposure, including an increased risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and other serious health conditions.

The Service remains committed to reducing exposure to contaminants so far as is reasonably practicable and continues to strengthen its controls, facilities, procedures and staff awareness arrangements. The Health and Safety Team plays a key role within the Service's multi-disciplinary Contaminants Working Group, working collaboratively with colleagues from Technical Services, Property, Operational Learning and Assurance, Training and Representative Bodies to identify risks, drive improvements and implement practical measures designed to protect all employees.

BFRS also continues to work collaboratively with regional partners through both the South-East Contaminants Network and the partnership across the Thames Valley to share learning, adopt emerging good practice and promote a consistent approach to contaminants management wherever possible.

Key Achievements During 2025/26

Significant progress has been made during 2025/26 to further strengthen the Service's contaminants management arrangements, including:

- Delivery of the Contaminants Working Group Action Plan, resulting in improvements to contaminant control arrangements, employee awareness, monitoring activities and governance oversight.
- Review and adoption of National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance and personal decontamination principles to ensure local arrangements remain aligned with national best practice.
- Development and enhancement of contaminants zoning arrangements, including improvements to station zoning plans and proposals for updated site signage to further reinforce clean, transitional and contaminated areas.
- Comprehensive review and update of contaminants-related policies, procedures and guidance documents to ensure employees have access to clear and consistent information.
- Creation of a dedicated contaminants intranet hub, providing a central source of information, guidance, awareness materials and updates for all employees.
- Increased monitoring and assurance activities at incidents and within Service premises, with contaminants considerations incorporated into audits, operational feedback arrangements and station self-assessment processes.
- Extension of contaminant control measures to a wider range of staff including all operational and support teams.
- Continued investment in respiratory protective equipment controls through the face fit testing programme, increasing capacity and helping to maintain compliance with the new recognised standards and best practice.
- Utilising air quality monitoring devices across selected locations within the Service estate to better understand workplace conditions and identify opportunities for further improvement.
- Development of proposals, in partnership with Bureau Veritas, to undertake specialist contaminant surface sampling and provide additional assurance regarding the effectiveness of current control measures and support evidence-based decision-making.

- Development of a Contaminant Hazard Record process to support the recording of contaminant exposure events and contribute to future occupational health surveillance and long-term employee wellbeing.
- Engagement with national contaminants and PPE forums, as well as the Fire Service College, to review practices, share learning and ensure emerging evidence continues to inform local arrangements.
- Development of revised procedures covering the management, cleaning and laundering of contaminated equipment and clothing, further strengthening the Service's contaminant control framework.

It should be noted that the Health and Safety Team routinely reviews and analyses the environmental monitoring data generated by the air quality monitoring devices and relays the findings to the Contaminants Working Group to support evidence-based decision making. Results this year did not identify any significant concerns or need for additional controls. This reflects the effectiveness of the Service's ongoing investment in contaminant control measures and the positive progress being made in protecting employee health and wellbeing.

The considerable amount of work completed throughout the year has strengthened the Service's contaminant management arrangements and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to protecting employees from one of the most significant long-term health risks facing the current Fire and Rescue Service.

Looking Forward

The Service recognises that contaminants management remains an evolving and developing area, requiring continued focus, investment and organisational commitment.

During 2026/27, work will continue to strengthen operational procedures, improve facilities, expand monitoring and assurance activities, and further embed contaminants awareness throughout the organisation. Particular focus will be placed on progressing environmental monitoring, implementing contaminant exposure recording arrangements, reviewing estate facilities and continuing to align local practices with emerging national guidance and best practice.

This investment will increase monitoring coverage and provide greater visibility of workplace conditions, enabling the Service to build a broader evidence base regarding air quality and the effectiveness of contaminant control measures. The enhanced monitoring programme will support the identification of trends, provide additional assurance regarding workplace environments and help inform future improvements aimed at reducing contaminant exposure risks across the organisation.

The Health and Safety Team will continue to work closely with the Contaminants Working Group, Thames Valley partners, representative bodies and partner departments to drive continuous improvement, monitor emerging evidence and ensure BFRS remains at the forefront of protecting employees from the risks associated with contaminant exposure.

Through the continued investment in people, training, governance and risk management arrangements, BFRS will continue to strengthen its positive health and safety culture and ensure that employees remain protected whilst delivering services to the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Working With Others

Peer Audits

BFRS remains committed to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) South-East Region Health and Safety Audit Protocol and the associated guidance for Fire and Rescue Services – specifically health and safety audits. Through this arrangement, each Fire and Rescue Service within the South-East region undertakes a peer health and safety audit on a five-year cycle – the audit for BFRS was rescheduled and is now planned to take place in November 2026.

These audits are conducted using the principles of ISO 45001 and are considered Stage 2 Peer Audits. They provide valuable independent assurance regarding the effectiveness of health and safety management arrangements, whilst also identifying areas of good practice and opportunities for improvement. The findings and recommendations provide a benchmark against which Services can assess performance, drive continuous improvement and share learning across the region.

Regional Arrangements

The Health and Safety Team continues to play an active role within the NFCC South-East Region Health and Safety Committee. The committee meets quarterly and provides a valuable forum for sharing information, emerging risks, incident trends, best practice and lessons learned from across the Fire and Rescue sector. The committee also acts as a conduit between the National Health and Safety Committee and regional services, ensuring that national developments, guidance and learning are effectively communicated and considered locally.

Local Arrangements

The Thames Valley Driving Centre partnership between BFRS and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) continues to provide a consistent and collaborative approach to emergency response driver training and driver development. The partnership enables both Services to monitor incident trends, share learning and review training arrangements to support continual improvement in driving standards and reduce avoidable vehicle-related safety events.

Collaborative working between both Services also supports the review of vehicle-related incidents and the identification of common themes, enabling targeted interventions and sharing of best practice to help improve driver competence and reduce operational risk.

Safety Event Reporting System

The Service continues to work closely with both the developer of the Visor safety event reporting and investigation system and OFRS (who also utilise the platform). This collaborative approach between the two authorities and Visor has enabled the continued development and refinement of the system, ensuring it

remains effective in supporting the reporting, investigation and management of safety events.

During 2025/26, further enhancements were introduced to improve performance monitoring and governance, including the automation of escalation reporting where investigation or action deadlines are not achieved. These developments have strengthened managerial oversight, improved accountability and supported the timely completion of safety event investigations and corrective actions.

In addition, BFRS also introduced a significant enhancement to the hazard reporting process through the development of a dedicated hazard reporting module within the Visor health and safety reporting system. This improvement was implemented directly in response to feedback received from employees during station visits, Toolbox Talks and workforce engagement activities, where a common theme was the need for a more streamlined and user-friendly process for reporting hazards. The enhancement has simplified the reporting process, strengthened accountability and improved the timely management of hazards. It demonstrates the Service's commitment to listening to employees and implementing practical solutions that improve the health and safety culture and feedback loop from engagement.

Health and Safety Training

Health and safety training continues to be a key component of BFRS's commitment to ensuring employees have the knowledge, skills and competence required to undertake their roles safely and effectively. All employees receive health and safety training as part of the Service's induction programme, with refresher training provided for subjects such as Manual Handling and Display Screen Equipment, to comply with legislative requirements.

In addition, role-specific health and safety training is provided where required, ideally as acquisition training before an individual commences a new role. Face to face training continues to be viewed as the most effective method, with feedback from delegates and training outcomes consistently reflecting the benefits of an interactive person to person learning environment. This approach also remains consistent with that adopted by many Fire and Rescue Services across the South-East region.

The Service invested £41,220 in health and safety related training during 2025/26, supporting the continued development of operational and support employees across the organisation.

External Training Providers

Training delivered during the year included:

- Two **Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely** courses, **attended by 24 employees** from both operational and support functions.
- **Three employees** attended an **Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Executive and Director** course.
- One **National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) General Certificate** course, **attended by 12 employees**.
- One **Level 2 Accident Investigation** course, **attended by 5 employees**.
- **Two members** of the Health and Safety Team successfully completed the **BSI Internal Auditor** Course, supporting the Service's continued alignment with the principles of ISO 45001.
- **One member** of the Health and Safety Team successfully completed the NEBOSH **Level 6 Diploma** for Occupational Health and Safety Management Professionals
- One **First Aid at Work Refresher** Course, **attended by 8 employees**.
- One **First Aid at Work Initial** Course, **attended by 12 employees.**

Internal Training and Development

The Health and Safety Team has continued to support wider organisational development through the delivery of risk-critical training and professional development programmes. This has included contributions to the Supervisory

Managers Acquisition Programme, support to the delivery of IOSH courses, and the provision of specialist health and safety advice and input to a range of organisational projects and development initiatives.

The continued investment in training and professional development ensures that managers, supervisors and employees maintain the competence required to effectively identify, assess and manage risk, whilst contributing to the development of a positive and proactive health and safety culture across BFRS.

Overall, health and safety training and development opportunities were provided to 64 employees during 2025/26.

A Look Forward

Peer Audits

BFRS remains committed to the NFCC South-East Region Health and Safety Audit Protocol and the principle of independent peer review. The Service is scheduled to undergo its next peer health and safety audit in November 2026, following the postponement of the original audit date earlier in the year.

The Health and Safety Team will continue to support departments and employees involved in the audit process and will coordinate the Service's response to any findings or recommendations. The audit provides an important opportunity to obtain independent assurance, identify areas of good practice and highlight opportunities for further improvement. Following completion of the audit, learning and recommendations will be shared across the organisation and incorporated into future improvement plans where appropriate.

Workforce Engagement and Positive Safety Culture

Building upon the success of the Health and Safety Team's engagement programme during 2025/26, the Team will continue to work closely with operational crews and support departments through planned station visits, Toolbox Talks and direct engagement activities.

These interactions provide valuable opportunities to share organisational learning, discuss emerging risks, offer practical support and strengthen relationships with employees across the service. Just as importantly, they provide a platform to reinforce the importance of core health and safety protocols including proactive hazard identification, reporting and risk management.

The significant increase in hazard reporting during 2025/26 has provided evidence that increased engagement is having a positive impact on the reporting culture across the organisation. The Health and Safety Team will continue to build on this progress during 2026/27 by encouraging employees to identify and report hazards at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that risks can be addressed before they result in injuries, damage or other safety events.

By maintaining a visible presence within stations and departments, the Health and Safety Team aims to further strengthen workforce engagement, improve the quality of safety reporting and support the continued development of a positive and proactive health and safety culture across Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Performance Indicators

Health and Safety Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – 2025/26

The Health and Safety Team has established the following key performance indicators for 2025/26:

Toolbox Talks and Workforce Engagement

Key performance indicator:

- To deliver Health and Safety Toolbox Talks to all operational watches and support teams over the five-year period from April 2025 to March 2030.

During 2025/26, 135 employees received input, representing approximately 26% of the workforce, and the programme remains on track to achieve its target.

The programme continues to support workforce engagement, promote proactive hazard reporting and reinforce key health and safety messages across the Service.

Risk Assessments

Key performance indicator:

- The review and sign-off of all risk assessments within 21 days of receipt.

During 2025/26, 100% of risk assessments received were reviewed and returned within the required timescale, ensuring that managers received timely feedback and support in the management of workplace risks.

Health and Safety Audits

Key performance indicator:

- To complete all planned station and site Health and Safety audits during the 2025/26 financial year.

This target was fully achieved, with all planned audits completed within the reporting period. The audits provided assurance regarding compliance, the effectiveness of local management arrangements and the identification of opportunities for continuous improvement.

Progress against these key performance indicators is monitored throughout the year and reported quarterly to the Health and Safety Committee and relevant Delivery Groups.

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Buckinghamshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Making a difference together

White Ribbon Campaign

Our journey, commitment and future



Our journey to date



What have we achieved? 2023–2026

Highlights include:

- Strengthened domestic abuse policies and staff support arrangements
- Delivered Bystander Training, increasing awareness and confidence to challenge inappropriate behaviour
- Embedded domestic abuse awareness within leadership development programmes
- Enhanced visibility of support services across all Service locations
- Established White Ribbon governance through dedicated Steering and Working Groups
- Sustained workforce engagement to strengthen culture, behaviour and awareness



16 Days of Action

The 2026 White Ribbon UK theme is **It Takes All of Us**.

The campaign reinforces that:

- Ending violence against women and girls is everyone's responsibility.
- Men and boys must be part of the solution.
- Everyday sexism, misogyny and harmful behaviours must be challenged.
- Creating a culture of respect, safety and equality requires collective action.

Our focus is on engaging and educating our workforce, building awareness, confidence and advocacy for White Ribbon principles across the Service.



Our 16 Days of Action: What are we delivering



White Ribbon Day

25 November. Promote conversations and raise awareness through a Service-wide Wear White campaign.



16,000km Challenge

Service-wide Strava challenge, firefighter-led, encouraging participation, wellbeing and fundraising.



White Ribbon Quiz

Interactive quiz to engage teams, increase awareness and encourage friendly competition across the Service.



Station Visits

Q&A sessions and discussions with staff, led by middle and senior managers alongside White Ribbon representatives.



Community Engagement

A programme of community and partnership engagement activities, working with local and national organisations to raise awareness and support positive action.



Targeted Communications

Increase awareness of the support available to staff experiencing domestic abuse or concerned about someone they know.

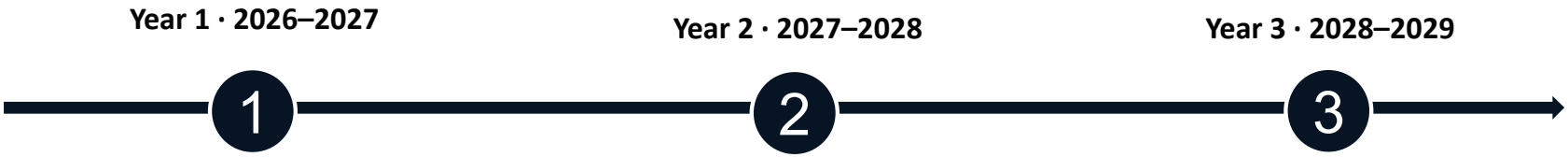
Embedding White Ribbon into Everyday Practice

Our ambition is to move beyond an annual awareness campaign and embed White Ribbon principles into everyday culture, behaviours and decision-making across the Service.

Our five delivery priorities

1. **Leadership and Governance**
2. **Education and Awareness**
3. **Workplace Culture**
4. **Support and Partnerships**
5. **Performance and Assurance**

Our Three-Year Roadmap



Establish and embed

- Finalise and submit the action plan by February 2027
- Strengthen staff engagement and awareness
- Identify gaps and development opportunities

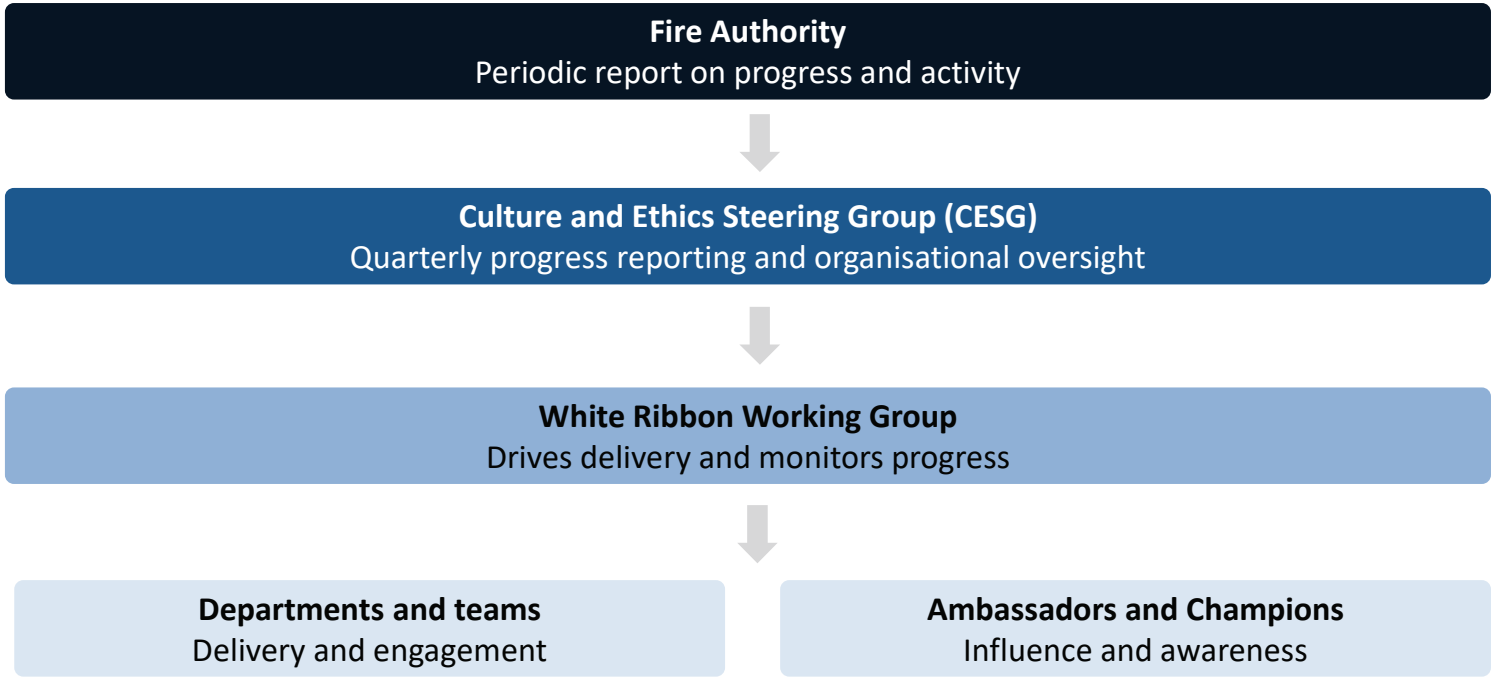
Deliver and strengthen

- Deliver agreed actions across all five priorities
- Expand training and engagement
- Develop external partnerships

Evaluate and sustain

- Evaluate impact and outcomes
- Identify remaining gaps
- Embed successful approaches into business as usual
- Prepare for the next reaccreditation cycle

Delivering and Monitoring Progress



Questions

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