

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service

Training Partnership Proposal

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1. Purpose/Aim

This report is being presented to seek approval to work in a formal training partnership with the Fire Service College (FSC). This training partnership will enable the Service to operate in full the Training Strategy and Framework already approved by the Service's Strategic Management Board.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Service wide operational training function to include delivery, quality assurance and external validation.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 Members approve the training partnership with the Fire Service College procured through the 'Wider Public Sector Framework' for a period of one year.

4 Background

- 4.1 A Strategic Training Review Report was approved by the Strategic Management Board (SMB) in November 2014. The report included a new Training, Learning & Development Strategy and Framework for the Service. The framework identified the added value that a professional training partner would provide to the Service in the following areas:

- Quality assurance of BMKFRS Area Trainers.
- External validation of core maintenance of skill training through exercises at the FSC.
- A strategic price for training delivered to BMKFRS employees by the FSC.
- Exposure of BMKFRS area trainers to a commercial training environment with part of their role being based at the FSC.
- The opportunity for FSC courses to be delivered within BMKFRS with the delivery staff made up of BMKFRS trainers.

5 Introduction

- 5.1 Discussions have been taking place since June 2014 on the potential of a training partnership between Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service (BMKFRS) and the FSC.
- 5.2 The main drive of the partnership is to create a robust and affordable quality assurance (QA) and validation framework for training that will provide the Service with assurance to the competence of its operational employees. This assurance would be in the form of internal quality assurance of training via the new Area Trainer role as well as the external assurance of this QA structure by a national training provider.
- 5.3 The Fire Service College was chosen for these discussions due to the unique range and number of operational training facilities on one site. This supported our need to expose our crews to more realistic scenarios to better prepare them for the operational role they undertake on a daily basis. It will assist us to address the issue of reduced incident numbers and crews not gaining the exposure to incidents that provides the confidence and competence required to undertake their role.
- 5.4 A range of options have been explored with the FSC, however the proposed training partnership detailed below complements the recently approved 'BMKFRS Training Strategy and Framework'. The partnership is planned for an initial period of one year which enables both parties to test the 'proof of concept' as well as ensuring that the proposed benefits to each party are realistically achievable. There is opportunity to grow the partnership to include more FSC courses being delivered within BMKFRS across a much broader range however this will be subject to the success of this initial 12 month period.
- 5.5 The procurement option recommended by the BMKFRS Head of Procurement to enable us to purchase the training and exercising detailed within the partnership is through the HM Government's 'Wider Public Sector Framework' (WPSF). This was awarded to Capita L&D in 2012 with a 2 year contract (extended by 2 years in 2014) to deliver training to the public sector without the need for each individual organisation to have to complete a procurement exercise. As the FSC is part of the wider Capita group of companies the Authority is able to purchase training with them through this framework. Due to the cost to purchase the training and exercising element of the partnership, the WPSF would require BMKFRS to pay a fee of £18k to use the WPSF as the procurement option; this cost has been absorbed by the FSC as part of its commitment to the partnership and demonstrates its support for the initial 12 month 'proof of concept'. The FSC realises that if this model for training and assurance is successful it will become a marketable product for other FRSs to buy into.

5.6 During the next 12 months a full competitive procurement exercise will be undertaken with the successful bidder being awarded a multi-year contract with BMKFRS. The Authority is exploring opportunities for other fire and rescue services to buy into this partnership, initially amongst the Thames Valley fire and rescue services. The FSC will be actively marketing the partnership option with fire and rescue services in 2015.

6 Details of the Training Partnership

6.1 Aim

6.1.1 The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Service College have had a series of detailed discussions; the aim for both parties is to develop an innovative partnership with each other to:

- Increase training efficacy and quality for BMKFRS
- Reduce costs for BMKFRS and the Fire Service College
- Develop an advantageous delivery model which ensures resilience within BMKFRS staffing as well as independent assurance

This proposal addresses the following aspects of the longer term strategy:

- Increase the quality and capability of training provision, through external audit.
- Produce cost savings through innovating the way in which we train and develop personnel.
- Provide a reduction in our fixed costs by redeployment of training personnel.

6.1.2 The Fire Service College can assist BMKFRS in achieving this by working in partnership with Buckinghamshire FRS to achieve the aims by implementing the following:

- A Quality Assurance/ Instructor Assurance Programme for BMKFRS area trainers
- FSC support for BMKFRS learning cycle, through training innovation and validation exercises.
- Incident Command System (ICS) training using cutting edge FSC Bluehawk™ simulation technology and associated packages.

6.2 A Quality/Instructor Assurance Programme for BMKFRS instructors

6.2.1 There are several elements that make up this part of the training solution.

Based on the instructional capabilities provided to the FSC, there will be a need for some of the BMKFRS area trainers to attend the following courses:

- Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTTLS) programme
- Assessor Course

- Internal Quality Assurer course

6.2.2 These courses are required in order to not only fulfil statutory requirements in terms of teaching in the lifelong learning sector, but to provide the necessary foundation for the introduction of our own internal QA framework which will be supported by the FSC who will act as an External Quality Auditor (EQA).

6.2.3 This will be necessary to support BMKFRS in terms of any accredited courses we deliver locally as well as enabling our instructors to be used by the FSC in the future as operational trainers.

6.3 Implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework for Instructional Delivery (QAFID)

6.3.1 There will be a two tiered approach to assurance of BMKFRS instructors:

Tier 1- BMKFRS six area training instructors will need the full application of the QAFID. This process should take 10 days to achieve. During this time, several activities will take place with the six area instructors, such as:

- An orientation to the QAFID
- Teaching observations
- Professional discussions
- Knowledge and practical ability testing
- Setting up CPD portfolios and explaining how they will be undertaking **Tier 2** assurance.

Any instructor used by BMKFRS as an area trainer will be measured against the Tier 1 parameters. The initial 10 days set up may reduce once validation exercises start at the FSC as many of the QA activities need to be completed in a live environment.

6.3.2 **Tier 2-** The area training instructors will provide the necessary assurance of the watch-based activities/training that is being delivered locally by watch-based instructors. There will not be a requirement for these instructors to possess all the qualifications and accreditations, but there will still remain a requirement for BMKFRS instructors to conduct various aspects of the QA framework.

Aspects that will be covered at the Tier 2 level by BMKFRS Instructors will be periodically sampled by the FSC to provide a robust audit trail and ensure quality is a 'golden thread' running throughout. In the first year cycle, it is envisaged that sampling will take five days.

6.4 Utilisation of BMKFRS instructional staff to deliver FSC courses at Moreton-in-Marsh, within BMKFRS area and/or remote venues

6.4.1 By having BMKFRS instructors that are up-skilled and quality assured, the FSC would have a variable resource to call upon throughout the year at times when traditionally the FSC would use day rate 'associate tutors'.

6.4.2 As part of the partnership agreement it is proposed that the FSC will not pay BMKFRS for the use of these staff but instead will utilise these staff against the value built up from the provision of the instructor programmes and validation courses in the first instance. Once that value has been absorbed, further use of BMKFRS staff would result in the award of training credits that BMKFRS can then use for other training.

6.5 Fire Service College support for BMKFRS learning cycle, through training innovation and validation exercises

6.5.1 The FSC will develop and run, with assistance from BMKFRS area instructors, a series of 12 hour validation exercises which will take place at the FSC.

6.5.2 Carrying out these validation courses will negate the need for BMKFRS to conduct periodic refresher/assessment courses within Service for risk critical statutory training. It will also serve as the two yearly practical incident command assessment for level one commanders.

6.5.3 Prior to the exercises, there will be an expectation that training and assessment has taken place in Service so as to compliment the activities that will be taking place during the 12 hour exercise.

6.6 Re-validation Exercises

6.6.1 Within the 12 hour timeframe, for 10 delegates, it is envisaged that six scenarios will be needed of which three will be breathing apparatus (BA) related, and three will be special service incidents. This will allow for:

- Delegates to be fully assessed as BA wearers as required by national guidance
- Delegates to be fully assessed across six exercises
- Supervisory Officers to be fully assessed on at least one occasion for incidents listed above

6.6.2 Fire Service College venues will be selected to allow for complex compartment searches, and the testing of Fire Behaviour skills and BA skills at the same time. These courses will be assessed against the core NOS standards alongside BMKFRS against nationally agreed best practice.

6.6.3 Special service incidents will be selected by BMKFRS based on identified Service risks and the need for crews to be tested in specific incident types, for example, chemical incidents.

6.6.4 During the validation exercises, the FSC will provide two independent assessors for the Incident Command System to provide BMKFRS with an external assurance of its supervisory officers' capabilities. The FSC will also provide one further assessor to provide peer oversight on the assessment decisions of BMKFRS instructional staff in relation to BA and the special service incidents.

6.6.5 Based on BMKFRS operational staffing levels there is a requirement for 25 validation exercises per year, over a two year period to cover operational staff for ICS, BA & special service incidents.

6.7 Validation Exercise – Pilot

6.7.1 A pilot of the 12 hour exercises was conducted at the FSC on the night of the 18 December 2014. The feedback and learning from the event has been shared between the FSC and BMKFRS and it was in the main a success. The use of night shifts to run these exercises worked and created an extremely realistic environment for crews to work in. However, from the feedback the crews and the safety staff provided we are reviewing the arrangements for the night exercises as fatigue was a real issue the following morning, especially in regard to travelling back to their base fire stations. Work is on-going to investigate ways to mitigate the issues raised in the feedback and make night time exercising a viable option.

6.7.2 A second daytime validation exercise is planned for March 2015. This will test the On-call and Day Crewing staff to see how the 12 hour exercises fits in with their duty pattern. The cost of additional training hours is a factor to consider however as we will be reducing the number of occasions operational staff will need to attend central training events the cost is likely to be neutral. The cost of overtime related to training events will be monitored through the Training Strategy Group.

6.8 Initial Breathing apparatus training

6.8.1 The FSC is developing a modular approach to on-call firefighter breathing apparatus training to enable local delivery of a number of the modules with only two weekends required at the FSC.

6.8.2 All other initial training will be delivered locally as detailed in the training strategy and framework.

6.9 Incident Command System (ICS) training using cutting edge FSC Bluehawk™ simulation technology and associated packages

6.9.1 The FSC can offer BMKFRS both initial acquisition of skills training and routine refresher training using a blend of pre-course development, cutting edge simulation technology, and practical validation exercises on the incident ground.

6.9.2 In order for BMKFRS to facilitate the Fire Service Colleges Operational Incident Command courses, access to the ICS pre-course development along with Bluehawk™ software would be provided by the FSC.

6.9.3 The simulation element of the course can be delivered using the BMKFRS simulation suite in Marlow fire station or remotely at other sites using laptops and associated learning tools dependent on the chosen delegates i.e. may attend drill nights to complete this aspect or whole time equivalent. It is an assumption

that BMKFRS will complete the incident command practical aspect of the course during the validation exercises.

7. Financial

7.1 The anticipated costs below are provided for the first year's delivery only.

Element	Price (£)	Commentary
Validation Training	162,500	For up to 25 courses, based on a price of £6,500 per course
Instructor Assurance Programme	6,225	Provided at 50% of standard price
Instructor Development Programme	10,090	Provided at 50% of standard price
Total Programme Value	178,815	

7.2 Payment Scheme:

7.2.1 It is proposed that a monthly charge of £8,000 (£96,000 p.a.) to BMKFRS is levied and augmented by the provision of instructor resources by BMKFRS to the FSC, with a minimum commitment of 320 instructor days.

7.2.2 Appropriate levels of availability of BMKFRS instructors and notice periods for delivery will need to be agreed; however BMKFRS undertakes to make all reasonable efforts to provide the instructors as required.

7.2.3 Should FSC demand exceed 320 days, BMKFRS will receive a training credit to the same value (£250) for each additional day. Training credits may only be taken once accrued, normally in the year following delivery. The FSC have agreed that following this one year contract they will honour any credits built up by BMKFRS.

All prices quoted are subject to agreement and exclusive of VAT.

7.2.4 The training partnership will be financed from the existing Operational Training budget:

UBAOT	BA Training	81,520.00
UBAOT	Water Training	52,988.00

7.2.5 A review of water rescue training is underway to align it with the training strategy and framework with the delivery of this training being done locally with

Appendix 1

a robust QA process established to assure the Service of the quality of the delivery. This in addition to the BA training budget will provide the funding to meet the £96k cost of the Training Partnership.

- 7.2.6 Initial Training courses will be funded from within the £206k Learning and Development budget
- 7.2.7 The cost of the Area Trainers time to fulfil the 320 days at the FSC and the validation exercises will be funded from within the existing cost envelope for operational training.
- 7.2.8 Operational crews will attend the training courses within their working shift or in the case of the on-call staff within the existing training hours allocated for central training courses. Additional overtime payments are not predicted to increase.
- 7.2.9 Transport costs are for instructors and operational crews (in station transport) travelling to the FSC is not predicted to increase as they replace the existing requirement for crews to attend central training courses.

8. Performance Management

- 8.1 The Training Delivery manager (Station Commander) will be responsible for monitoring the performance of the partnership to ensure BMKFRS is delivering its part of the agreement and to ensure the FSC fulfils its requirements.
- 8.2 A report providing evidence of the Return on Investment (ROI) from the training partnership will be submitted to the Training Strategy Group (TSG) six monthly. Membership is made up of managers with the authority to make strategic decisions and set direction of training.
- 8.3 Quarterly Performance Indicator (PI) reports will be provided to the TSG, before being presented to the Performance Management Board and these will outline:
 - The number of instructor days provided to the FSC
 - Progress against the Instructor assurance programme
 - Assurance for the on-station core skills maintenance programme
 - Cost of overtime related to training events
- 8.4 PIs will be reviewed by the TSG to ensure that effective performance management is in place.
- 8.5 Directorate performance indicators for the training partnership will be reviewed monthly at the People & Organisational Development Directorate management team meetings.

9 Legal

Appendix 1

- 9.1 Mandatory training requirements for this FRS will be fulfilled by the training strategy and framework.
- 9.2 The Head of Procurement has been involved in the discussions with the FSC and has approved the use of the 'Wider Public Sector Framework' as the preferred option for the procurement of this Training partnership for a period of 12 months. During this 12 month period officers will complete a full competitive procurement exercise with the successful bidder being awarded a multi-year contract as the training partner.
- 9.3 By using the Wider Public Service Framework the Authority is complying with all HM Government and European procurement guidelines.

10 Provenance – The reports and documents below are relevant to this report.

- Strategic Training Review, Training Strategy and Framework Nov 2014
- Strategic Training Review Report, submitted to SMB Feb 2014
- L&D principles, SMB signed off in 2012
- Corporate Plan 2012/15
- Public Safety Plan 2015/20

11 Risks & Mitigations

11.1 A professional partner may terminate the partnership agreement leaving BMKFRS with limited resources and obvious gaps within the quality assurance and validation elements of the training framework.

BMKFRS will maintain for the twelve month duration of the pilot the structure, facilities and resources to continue to deliver the Training Strategy and Framework.

11.2 A partnership with a national training provider would link BMKFRS to this external organisation; this could lead to reputational issues if the professional partner is subject to negative publicity/performance.

The initial period of 12 months enables BMKFRS to monitor the performance and relationship with the FSC. The WPSF contains standard termination clauses (90 days) that would enable BMKFRS to terminate the partnership.

11.3 BMKFRS or the FSC fails to deliver on the requirement of the training partnership

Effective monitoring by the Training Delivery manager and management of underperformance will mitigate this. Performance indicators approved by the

Training Strategy Group and Performance Management Board (PMB) will be reported to the Service on progress against the requirements of the partnership.

12 Implementation Plan

April 2015

- Partnership commences with FSC
- BMKFRS Instructors trained in accordance with the Instructor Assurance Programme standard
- Internal assurance programme of core maintenance training commences

October 2015

- Validation exercise programme commences

October & April 2015

- Six monthly Training, Learning & Development Validation and Return on Investment reports submitted to TSG and then PMB.