



Property Sharing and Co-Location of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in the Thames Valley

**A Memorandum of Understanding
between**

- (1) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley**
- (2) The Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police**
- (3) Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority**
- (4) Oxfordshire County Council**
- (5) Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding are:

- (1) The Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley of The Farmhouse, Thames Valley Police Headquarters, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2NX.
- (2) The Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Police Headquarters, Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2NX.
- (3) Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP20 1BD
- (4) Oxfordshire County Council, Sterling Road, Kidlington, Oxford OX5 2DU
- (5) Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to establish a clear commitment to prepare and deliver a programme of work for sharing property and co-locating police and fire and rescue services across the Thames Valley, wherever such arrangements are efficient, and effective in terms of meeting the needs of communities.

Background

The signatories to this MoU regard collaboration as a key element in the process of continuing to deliver important outcomes for communities, whilst balancing their respective budgets in the face of increasing downward financial pressure. It has been agreed that an early area of focus for police/fire collaboration will be property sharing and co-location of police and fire and rescue services.

The police and fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley have a substantial property portfolio. Buildings are spread over a total of 202 sites, which are distributed across the four organisations on the following basis:

ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF SITES
Thames Valley Police	139
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service	20
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	24
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service	19

Furthermore, as part of Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service operates within an organisation that owns over 1300 property assets.

To date, Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the three fire and rescue services have a variable, but improving, track record associated with taking advantage of

opportunities to property share and co-locate operations. In aggregate there are numerous examples of such collaboration across the three counties but more progress has been made in some areas and others, and there is now a strong appetite to be consistently more ambitious across the whole Thames Valley area. The recent successful bid by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and TVP for Central Government funding to build a new, joint fire station with police accommodation in Milton Keynes was an excellent example of such ambition in practice.

This MoU is a commitment by the signatories to establish a strategic alliance that will see a Thames Valley-wide programme for property sharing and co-location being developed and delivered. The focus of the programme will be to reduce cost, whilst ensuring the operational requirements of the organisations involved are addressed, statutory duties are discharged and the needs of communities effectively met.

Objectives

1. To reduce the cost of maintaining fit-for-purpose buildings which satisfy operational requirements and effectively meet the needs of communities across the Thames Valley.
2. To take advantage of other opportunities for greater police/fire collaboration that emerge as a result of property sharing and co-location.

Guiding Principles

1. All parties will focus on what is in the best interests of the communities they serve.
2. Whenever a need is identified to reconfigure estate arrangements, there will be a presumption to achieve associated changes through collaboration where practical.
3. Collaboration will be used as a mechanism to share best practice.
4. Collaboration will be used to minimise capital and revenue costs.
5. Any collaboration between the signatories will reflect TVP security requirements
6. Opportunities will be sought to share-property and co-locate services with other public sector partners where appropriate [reflecting TVP security requirements].
7. Governance arrangements will be agreed in writing between the signatories to properly balance the requirement for effective oversight, with the need to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.

Costs

All costs and benefits arising from any collaboration entered into pursuant to this MoU will be the subject of written agreement setting out the sharing or apportionment arrangements.

In the absence of any written agreement the signatories agree that each party will bear their own costs in fulfilling their commitments under this MoU.

Any signatory incurring costs pursuant to this MoU without the express permission of any other relevant party will be responsible for bearing any costs so incurred.

Term and termination

This MoU shall commence on the date of signature by the parties.

The MoU may be terminated by agreement in writing of all parties.

Variation

This MoU may only be varied by written agreement of the parties.

Status

This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the parties from this MoU. The parties enter into the MoU intending to honour all their obligations.

Nothing in this MoU is intended to, or shall be deemed to, establish any partnership or joint venture between the parties, constitute any party as the agent of any other party, nor authorise any of the parties to make or enter into any commitments for or on behalf of the other party.

Anthony Stansfeld

Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley

Francis Habgood

Chief Constable – Thames Valley Police

Councillor Adrian Busby
Chairman – Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Councillor Rodney Rose
**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, Emergency Planning
and Community Safety – Oxfordshire County Council**

Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman – Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Dated: