



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Overview and Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	20 November 2019
OFFICER	Calum Bell, Head of Service Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Steven Lambert
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Operational Assurance Improvement Plan
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the notable progress towards the delivery of the Service's approved Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP).</p> <p>The OAIP is a dynamic document, used to enhance our ability to capture, scrutinise and respond to operational learning originating from events such as our own operational debriefs, which in the past 12 months as resulted in six being completed, assurance visits and external reviews.</p> <p>Our internal approach toward how we now gather and assess learning from operational activity, has better enabled us to effectively identify emerging issues, as well as implement practical and corrective solutions, in order to improve operational performance. Recent examples being, the evident lack of underpinning knowledge amongst some of our operational staff in relation to performing the role of command support. Conversely, the improvements made in respect to the communication exchange between Thames Valley Fire Control Services (TVFCS) and our Duty Officer on the occasions when there is a non-mobilisation of our operational resources.</p> <p>An intrinsic part of the external review process continues to be the Authority's three year contractual agreement with Operational Assurance Limited (OAL). This agreement ensures the Service's risk critical operations are subject to regular independent scrutiny, thereby strengthening the Authority's ability to deliver the best possible public service and improve the safety of Firefighters by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving our performance at incidents; • Cope with future changes in the operational environment; • Drive development and innovation. <p>Discussions were held with representatives from OAL</p>

	<p>at a meeting on 9 October 2019, during which the following key topics were agreed to be the focus of the second review visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Rise Procedures • Command Support <p>The review visit commenced on 18 November 2019 and is expected to be over a 4½ day period.</p> <p>Once the visit has been completed, OAL will then detail within their final report, those improvement recommendations that are deserving of further consideration and inclusion onto the OAIP.</p>
ACTION	Noting.
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that the progress made against each improvement recommendation detailed within the updated OAIP is noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>Delivery of the OAIP will contribute toward ensuring the Service's operational safe systems of work are continuously improved to conform to the latest safety standards and are efficient, effective and responsive to significant changes in the external or internal environments.</p> <p>Failure to deliver the OAIP could expose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Service, its personnel and the public to operational, health and safety risks; • Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) to reputational and / or financial risks. <p>The OAIP will inform the ongoing development of our workforce plan particularly in relation to areas such as maintenance of operational skills, acquisition training and assessment.</p> <p>Equally, the OAIP does not appear to raise any immediate privacy issues.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Whilst there are no negative, financial implications associated with this report. It is nevertheless important to be reminded of the previously approved £50,000 per annum investment that has resulted in a contractual three year programme of assurance visits, intended to drive continual service improvement.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	There are no negative legal implications associated with this report.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	Although the Authority has committed to a default position of collaboration with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs), the OAIP relates specifically to BFRS operational activity, however any opportunity to collaborate will be explored, as will the

	sharing of any identified learning.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	There are no negative implications on health and safety associated with this report. The delivery of the OAIP will continue to promote and enhance the existing health and safety culture within the Service.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	No immediate issues identified in relation to the OAIP, however, IIAs and DPIAs will be completed for any changes that result from any subsequent activity, where there is the potential for equality, diversity and privacy issues to arise.
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>Communication with stakeholders</p> <p>Learning from operational activity or recommendations following assurance visits are routinely published and communicated to all staff, utilising either the I:Drive or Operational Assurance newsletter. This approach is intended to ensure there is a clear understanding and appreciation of the collective responsibility there is toward continuous improvement.</p> <p>The system of internal control</p> <p>From a monitoring and reporting perspective, the Head of Service Development leads on the improvement plan and is chair of the OAG.</p> <p>The Head of Operational Training and Assurance has responsibility for delivering the OAIP in conjunction with the OA team.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy</p> <p>Due to the previous frustrations and challenges experienced with developing the E-safety application into a functional active monitoring system. A growth bid for £8,500 was duly submitted for consideration at the BTB meeting held on the 1 August 2019. It was decided at that meeting bids below £25K would be accepted without the requirement for a full business case.</p> <p>The balance between spending and resources</p> <p>Adaptation of the already procured and purchased E-safety application is now no longer a sustainable option. Investment will therefore be required; hence, the reason for the recent growth bid submission that will support the development and introduction of an active monitoring system.</p> <p>Preliminary work has already commenced that will result in the information held on the OAIP, within its current spreadsheet type format, being transferred onto 'Viper'. This is intended to make it easier to both interpret and report on the progress relating to the various improvement recommendations, however the other work commitments involving the Senior Business Intelligence Analyst has caused a delay in</p>

	<p>the intended progress.</p> <p>The management of the asset base</p> <p>There are currently no identified impacts on the asset base.</p> <p>The arrangements to promote and ensure probity and propriety</p> <p>Delivery of the OAIP is expected to have a positive impact against these criteria by creating a more vigorous and transparent operational assurance environment within the Service.</p> <p>Environmental</p> <p>Delivery of the OAIP will enhance the Service’s ability to identify and manage potential environmental hazards in both the internal and external surroundings.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Background</p> <p>SMT 2 July 2019</p> <p>Overview and Audit Committee: 17 July 2019</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p>	<p>Appendix A - Operational Assurance Improvement Plan</p>
<p>TIME REQUIRED</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p>	<p>Steve Wells, Head of Operational Training and Assurance</p> <p>swells@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744426</p>