

## **Annex B: Consultation Plan**

This plan is for the consultation associated with the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan. Individual plans will be developed for any further consultation deemed appropriate following agreement by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) on the plan and proposals for change arising from this.

### **Consultation Period**

A 12 week consultation period is proposed from Monday 14 July to Sunday 5 October 2014. The outcomes of the consultation together with any proposed changes to the Public Safety Plan arising as a result of it will be reported to the Fire Authority for approval at its December meeting. The timing and duration of the consultation are provisional and subject to confirmation.

### **Approach**

In November 2013 Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned under the National Framework agreement operated by the Fire Services Consultation Association\* to undertake some initial 'listening and engagement' research with the public.

This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan by exploring:

- The participants' general awareness and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);
- Their views and expectations after being more acquainted with the issues and challenges facing the Authority/Service and some potential ways that it could respond to these.

The consultation was also designed to create a pool of people who would be better informed about the fire and rescue service and the issues and challenges facing it than a typical member of the public and on whom we could draw on again in any future consultations associated with the development of the Public Safety Plan.

Some 50 people took part in this initial consultation across five focus groups held in the following locations:

- Milton Keynes
- Buckingham
- Aylesbury
- Chesham
- High Wycombe

We propose commission ORS again to reconvene these groups during the consultation period with, as far as possible, the original participants with additional recruitment to make any shortfall in the overall numbers and consult them on the issues, themes and proposals contained in the Public Safety Plan.

## **Annex B: Consultation Plan**

### **Benefits**

The main benefit of this type of approach is that it is more representative of the public than public meetings which experience shows are typically poorly attended or attract an audience that is not representative of the public or community as a whole. Also it allows participants to engage fully with the consultation materials, ask questions, debate and offer informed opinions and perspectives on what it proposed.

### **Other consultation activities**

In addition to the above we also propose to:

- publish the draft plan on the website and intranet to facilitate wider public and staff feedback;
- consult with the representative bodies;
- circulate the plan to –
  - Neighbouring fire and rescue services
  - Thames Valley Police
  - South Central Ambulance Service
  - Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Primary Care Trusts
  - Buckinghamshire County Council and District Councils
  - Milton Keynes Council
  - Town and Parish Councils and Meetings
  - A range of other public and voluntary organisations with whom we work in partnership
  - Chambers of Commerce and other organisations representing business interests.

To facilitate feedback from these also propose to provide an online consultation feedback facility which would be accessible via our own website and intranet but be hosted by ORS.

### **Follow on Consultations**

The Public Safety Plan identifies aspects of service provision, or the way in which this is delivered, that will be subject to change. Any detailed proposals arising from these will be consulted on an individual, case – by – case basis using methods appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the proposals. It will also be possible to re-convene the public focus groups again for any changes that would have a broad effect across the areas that we serve as a whole.