

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

Jason Thelwell

To: The Chairman and Members of Buckinghamshire
And Milton Keynes Fire Authority

5 December 2016

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS
AND PUBLIC

Please note the content of
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury on **WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2016 at 11.00 am** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Graham Britten'.

Graham Britten
Director of Legal and Governance

Chairman: Councillor Busby
Councillors Brunning, Carroll, Clarke OBE, Exon, Glover, Gomm, Huxley, Lambert,
Mallen, Marland, McDonald, Reed, Schofield, Teesdale, Watson and Wilson



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Recording of the Meeting

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. Requests to take photographs or undertake audio or visual recordings either by members of the public or by the media should wherever possible be made to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk at least two working days before the meeting.

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, when members of the public are present, adjourn a Meeting to hear the views 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.

Prior to inviting the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) raise their hands to indicate their wish to speak at the invitation of the Chairman,
- (b) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (c) 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 and should be confined to times when the views of the public need to be heard.

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.

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. 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 or by fax*, 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.
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 19 October 2016 (Item 2) **(Pages 7 - 12)**

3. 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.

4. Chairman's Announcements

To receive the Chairman's announcements (if any).

5. Petitions

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

6. Questions

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

7. Vacancy for the Office of Vice-Chairman

To consider the election of a Vice-Chairman.

Under the Buckinghamshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996 Part III paragraph 17, the Authority may choose to elect a Vice-Chairman. If a Vice-Chairman has been elected, on a casual vacancy occurring in the office the Authority may choose to elect a person to replace the Vice-Chairman.

8. Committee Appointments: Executive Committee

To consider making an appointment to the vacancy of the Conservative seat on the Authority's Executive Committee in accordance with the Conservative Group Leader's wishes.

It is recommended that Councillor McDonald be appointed to the Executive Committee.

9. Lead Member Responsibilities

To consider the allocation of the vacant position of Lead Member for Finance, IT, Procurement and Control.

Responsibility	Lead Member
Community Protection	Councillor Carroll
Human Resources and Equality and	Councillor Reed

Diversity	
Finance, IT, Procurement and Control	
Health and Safety and Corporate Risk	Councillor Schofield
Property and Resource Management	Councillor Gomm

The Authority is recommended to approve the allocation of the vacant position of Lead Member for Finance, IT, Procurement and Control.

Background Papers: None

10. Recommendations from Committees:

Executive Committee – 23 November 2016

Members' Allowances

"That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2017/18".

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at Item 10
(Pages 13 - 46)

11. Annual Audit Letter

To consider Item 11 **(Pages 47 - 72)**

12. Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report

To consider Item 12 **(Pages 73 - 102)**

13. Fire Reform - Collaborative Working Update

To consider Item 13 **(Pages 103 - 118)**

14. Leading the way with innovative E-Learning

To Receive a presentation

15. Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 15 February 2017 at 11am.

If you have any enquiries about this agenda please contact: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – Tel: (01296) 744633 email: knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk

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Minutes of the meeting of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2016 at 11.00 am

Present: Councillors Brunning, Busby (Chairman), Carroll, Exon, Glover, Gomm, Huxley, Lambert (part), Mallen, Marland (part), Reed, Schofield, Teesdale and Watson

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development) D Sutherland (Director of Finance and Assets), M Hemming (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), K McCafferty (Head of Human Resources), N Boustred (Head of Service Delivery), P Holland (Head of Service Transformation), S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer), G Wylie (Property Manager), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager), A McCallum (Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer), D Beesley (Administrative Support Manager), J Wolfenden (Firefighter), C Westover (Firefighter), Mark Abinger (Managing Director - Hub Professional Services), J Castle (Principle Architect - Hub Professional Services), R Hicks (Technical Technician - Hub Professional Services) and M Goodwin (Mechanical & Electrical Services - Dunwoody LLP)

Apologies: Councillors Clarke OBE and Wilson

FA17 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 8 June 2016, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman's Announcements had been circulated in advance.

FA19 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Overview and Audit Committee – 14 September 2016

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Overview and Audit Committee held on 14 September 2016 relating to:

(a) Appointment of External Auditors

The Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee advised Members that this report had been reviewed by the Overview and Audit Committee on 14 September and the recommendation agreed was that the Authority be recommended to appoint an auditor using a sector led body arrangement. It was felt that the Authority would get a better value audit at a lower price from this arrangement.

RESOLVED -

That the Authority join a 'sector led body' arrangement".

(b) Independent Persons

The Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee advised Members that the five individuals named in the recommendations should be appointed as Independent Persons. The five individuals had varied levels of experience and may be called upon in the coming months or years. There would be a small financial implication as set out in the report received by the Overview and Audit Committee.

RESOLVED –

1. John Jones, Vasco Fernandes, Chris Ensor and Maureen Briggs as Independent Persons be appointed for a period commencing on 19 October 2016 and terminating at Midnight on 31 October 2020; and
2. Chris Fogden be appointed as an Independent Person for a period commencing on 1 July 2017 and terminating at midnight on 31 October 2020.

FA20

2017-18 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT: TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

The Chairman advised Members that this response was very detailed and was seeking clarity on fire and rescue authorities in the lower quartile being allowed to raise council tax by less than 2% or up to and including £5, whichever is the higher.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that although there were a lot of questions in the consultation, the Authority was only responding to two. Most of the questions were very technical and referred to business rates arrangements and retention. There were two key questions for the Authority, the first one was around guaranteed funding.

Members would be aware that they approved the Efficiency Plan which guarantees the Authority's Revenue Support Grant for the next four years. One of the Authority's responses was that the Authority urges the Government to consider guaranteeing the Fire Revenue Grant for four years rather than year by year which it does at present.

The main question was question three regarding the council tax referendum. Historically the Authority had been capped at 1.99%. The consultation was slightly ambiguous as there was no specific mention of fire and rescue authorities, but there was a freedom for lower quartile police and crime commissioners to raise council tax by up to £5, and also for district councils and flexibilities for county council's adult social care to increase council tax by an extra 1.99%. The Authority was potentially asking the Government for the freedom to increase up to £5 as a lower quartile fire and rescue authority. This did not necessarily mean the Authority would take the increase, but to ask the Government to consider the option which would give the Authority more

flexibility when it came to setting the budget in February 2017.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that if the £5 increase were an option, it would not be put in reserves, but would be put into plans on how the Authority could improve its service to the community.

Councillor Watson asked if other fire and rescue authorities would be asking the same and was advised that the understanding was that they would.

RESOLVED -

That the proposed response to the consultation be approved.

The Chairman advised Members that before the public and press were excluded a presentation would be given on the proposed Blue Light Hub.

Councillor Marland declared an interest as a Director of the Milton Keynes Development Partnership Board which owns the land.

The Property Manager introduced the team from the Hub Professional Services, who showed Members a presentation of the design, specification, procurement and operations of the building and how the property team would be able to manage the building after completion.

FA21

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED -

By virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the annex to the report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority; and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Communication and Consultation Manager, Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer, Administration Support Manager and the two Firefighters left the meeting.

(Councillor Marland left the meeting)

(Councillor Lambert joined the meeting).

FA22

BLUE LIGHT HUB FOR MILTON KEYNES

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the report was about the Blue Light Hub. There were a couple of key pieces of information that he wanted to advise Members. Firstly regarding South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS). The Director of Finance and Assets had been in constant touch with his opposite number and the latest position was that the SCAS Trust

Board met last month and discussed the proposal and at its next meeting on 30 November a decision would be made.

The Director of Finance and Assets also advised Members that there were no changes to the cost options set out in Annex 2. The Option 1 costs remained the same and showed how the project would be funded. The report should reassure Members of the affordability of the project. All the options were affordable but the dilemma today was whether SCAS would be joining the project or not. The decision was whether to go with Option 1, but if SCAS decided not to be included does the Authority go with Option 2 or 3. If SCAS didn't come on board and the Authority choose Option 2 there would be an increased funding requirement, but this option should still remained affordable.

Members also needed to decide whether the Authority should go ahead and build the second floor. In the report it gave the benefits of building the second floor not just for the Authority as an organisation, but for Milton Keynes as a whole. The second floor could be used for a number of requirements including community use, commercial use, other public sector services, a 'growth' space for any of the blue light hub services, or a mixture of any of the above. The return on investment would be worth the marginal cost of the build.

In light of his concerns about the timing of the earliest ratification by the SCAS Board of SCAS's intentions, the Director of Finance and Assets revised his recommendation. On consideration of the revised recommendation it was:

RESOLVED –

That the construction of a complex comprising Ground, 1st and 2nd Floor at the West Ashland site, housing all 3 blue light services in line with the estimated costs and funding set out in Annex 2 (exempt from publication) be approved on the proviso of an irrevocable commitment from SCAS to its capital contribution prior to 2 December 2016.

The Communication and Consultation Manager, Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer, Administration Support Manager and two Firefighters re-joined the meeting.

FA22

A UNITARY COUNCIL FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AUTHORITY

The Chairman advised Members that on the 22 September 2016 Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) approved a draft business case for the establishment of a single unitary council for Buckinghamshire to replace the existing two tier county and district structure and this report details the pros and cons of the proposal for the Authority.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that this report came about after a general monitoring of the wider world of local Government both locally and nationally. There was also

mention in the report of the parallel study by the four Buckinghamshire districts that was published last week. The general feeling was that the risks and issues that are likely to arise would be similar in nature but different in magnitude. It was very much a preliminary assessment. The report only considered the risks on behalf of the Authority.

In terms of the current risks that arose, most of those would occur during the transition period and whether it followed the blueprint that had been set out. If it was to go ahead, the Authority would appoint a lead officer to the transition programme, to represent the Authority's interest.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that in terms of the benefits, these would accrue when it had achieved a new future state. If it was to go for a single unitary model, there would only be one authority rather than the present configuration of five. In terms of the Authority's own view, yes there were risks for the transition period, but they were manageable and could be mitigated by good engagement with the transition programme and there could potentially be long term benefits that could be advantageous.

RESOLVED –

1. that the officers' initial assessment of the potential opportunities and risk arising from BCC's proposal (Appendix 1) be noted;
2. that Members acknowledge and recognise the benefits of the proposal.

It was agreed that the Chairman should write to the Secretary of State to convey to him, on behalf of the Authority, the Authority's support for Buckinghamshire County Council's proposals as set out in its business case.

FA23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Authority noted that the next meeting of the Fire Authority was to be held on Wednesday 14 December 2016 at 11.00am

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.25PM

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Executive Committee
DATE OF MEETING	23 November 2016
OFFICER	Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Adrian Busby, Chairman
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Members' Allowances
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowances before 1 April each year and, in so doing, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels of the constituent authorities when considering its own Scheme of Members' Allowances and confirm that it has done so when it gives public notice of the Scheme of Allowances.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council's terms of reference require a review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances to be undertaken every four years and this was carried out in January 2015 following a part review which was undertaken in 2013. The review carried out in January 2015 is attached at Appendix A.</p> <p>The Independent Remuneration Panel of the scheme for Milton Keynes Council undertook a review in March 2014 and this is attached at Appendix B.</p> <p>Previously the Authority agreed at its meeting on 14 December 2011 that the index linking for the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 – for basic and special responsibility (and co-optee) allowances – be the pay award for the Authority's staff on National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).</p> <p>It is recommended that the Authority continue this indexation for the period 2017/18.</p> <p>The NJC agreed an increase of 1% with effect from 1 July 2016 for 'Grey Book' staff for 2016/17.</p>
ACTION	Decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Authority be recommended to adopt the Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2017/18 (Appendix C).

RISK MANAGEMENT	The recommendation will have no adverse effect on the Authority's business.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is £72,780, including National Insurance.</p> <p>Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a newspaper circulating in its area. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £800.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	Set out above.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION	The making of a scheme of allowances is the responsibility of each individual authority defined in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The methodology for doing so is prescribed exclusively by those regulations.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	Not applicable.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>The Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances does not include any element for meeting costs incurred by a Member who has to arrange care in order to carry out their function as a Member of the Fire Authority.</p> <p>The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 exclude the Authority from including such a provision in its Scheme. However, with the exception of co-opted members, all Members are appointed by either Buckinghamshire County Council or Milton Keynes Council and are entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority. There are currently no co-opted members on the Authority.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	The recommendation is consistent with the extant Scheme of Allowances.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>BMKFA Scheme for Members' Allowances 2016/17:</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8814/5795/9302/MEMBERS_ALLOWANCES_2016_17.compressed.pdf</p>
APPENDICES	<p>Appendix A: Report of the Independent Panel on Member Allowances for Buckinghamshire County Council January 2015.</p> <p>Appendix B: Milton Keynes Council report of the Independent Panel of Members' Allowances March 2014.</p> <p>Appendix C: Draft Scheme for Members' Allowances 2017/18.</p>
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes.

REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Katie Nellist Knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744633
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5. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBER ALLOWANCES FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction: The Regulatory Context

1. The following report notes the proceedings and recommendations made by Buckinghamshire County Council's Independent Panel on Member Allowances.

2 The Panel was established under Regulation 20 of the Local Authorities (Member Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 No 1021) to produce a report and make recommendations as required by Regulation 21. These regulations, made under relevant provisions in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to maintain an Independent Panel on Member Allowances to review and make recommendations in respect of member allowances.

3. Councils are required to have regard to the recommendations of their Independent Panel before they make or amend a Member Allowances Scheme.

The Panel

Richard Benz, Partner, Kidd Rapinet, Solicitors, Aylesbury and founding Director and initial Chairman of Bucks Economic Partnership Alex Pratt JP BSc OBE, Managing Director, Serious Brands Ltd, and Chairman of Bucks Business First Lisa Williams, Managing Director of John Lewis, High Wycombe.

Terms of Reference

This review by the Panel is a whole-scheme review which has to be undertaken at least every four years. A part review was undertaken in 2012 and revisions made to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) after approval of the Panel's recommendations by full Council. The County Council also accepted the following Recommendations from the Panel in July 2013:

1 That the changes to the Scheme of Allowances mentioned above, and outlined in detail in Appendix 1 to this Report, be approved;

2 That an appropriate system of performance management for members be considered.

Interviews conducted by the Panel

The Panel met with the Party Group Leaders and the Chief Executive, individually, during the summer and invited comments from members of the Council on the Scheme and any changes that might be made. The Panel particularly invited comments on their recommendation from 2013 that a system of performance management for members should be developed.

Mr Martin Tett, Leader of the Council, and Mr Mike Appleyard, Deputy Leader of the Council.

Martin Tett and Mike Appleyard informed the Panel that, following the changes made in July last year, they were not proposing any further changes to the Member Allowances Scheme. They felt that the annual increase in rates linked previously to any officer pay award should be discontinued and the current rates of Special Responsibility Allowances, as outlined in Appendix 1 to this Report, should, therefore, be maintained. Other allowances in the Scheme should also continue at the current levels.

The Leader and Deputy Leader discussed their views on performance management of members with the Panel. In summary:-

They fully supported the principle but felt the development of a comprehensive system was not easy to achieve in practice. Members of the Council are elected every four years and this is a judgement in itself. Performance could not simply be gauged on the number of meetings a member attended, work in the community was as important. How would 'excellence' be judged and by whom? In the past when similar schemes have been discussed, the view has been that Group Leaders are not well placed to know what members do and contribute locally? How would contributions be 'moderated' between Groups? e.g. if one Group Leader thought his/her Group were all 'excellent' but another Group Leader were more challenging and rated his/her Group as only 'satisfactory'? No budget exists for further rewards and, in the light of the county's financial situation; the Council would probably have to reduce the standard Allowance to fund it. When services are being reduced and higher charges being made it is not an appropriate time to consider increasing allowances.

Mr Andy Huxley, Leader of the UKIP and Independent Group

Although he had some concerns over the number of SRAs paid, and felt that travel expenses paid were rather generous, Mr Huxley felt that the current system of Allowances works well. Whilst he supported the principle of performance management of members he was unsure how it could be applied in practice. Who would judge and on what criteria?

Mrs Avril Davies, Leader of the Liberal Democrat with Buckingham Labour Group

Mrs Davies felt that the existing rates in the Member Allowances Scheme were reasonable but expressed similar concerns about the number of SRAs paid. Travel expenses should be at paid at lowest petrol rate she felt. Mrs Davies supported the concept of performance management and shared with the Panel the performance management and review template that she uses with her Group. Mrs Davies wouldn't be against reward for excellence but was mindful of the budget implications. Money would be better spent on administrative support to her group, she felt.

Mrs Davies considered that the Council should pursue an accredited modular course of member development.

Mr Chris Williams, Chief Executive

Mr Williams explained the Council's Delivering Successful Performance (DSP) system of performance management for officers. It would be possible for a system of performance management to be developed for members, perhaps with a lower basic allowance and

then an "earned amount", but he appreciated all the issues mentioned by others that would make a system difficult to achieve.

Other Members of the Council

The Panel invited comments from all members of the Council on the current Allowances Scheme generally and, specifically, whether an element could possibly be built into the Scheme to reward excellence. In terms of the number of SRAs, and the levels of the allowances, there were no comments recommending that they be increased. There has been a historic link between the allowance rates and the annual officers pay award. The Council will need to decide whether the current rates of allowances should remain unchanged this year and, in future, how and when they are reviewed. The Council need to have "regard to" the views of the Panel before making changes to the Scheme of Allowances. The view of the Panel is that they should be delinked.

On the subject of "rewarding excellence", members were generally against this. Reasons such as budgetary implications, potential difficulties of fair and effective implementation (i.e. no "level playing field"), particularly in a political organisation, were mentioned.

Views of the Panel

The Panel are grateful to those members who gave up their time to meet with them and to the members who expressed their views in writing.

Contributors made the Panel aware of the Council's "Future Shape" proposals and for the Council to be more commercially aware in its approach. The Panel welcome this business-centred drive, particularly given the pressures local authorities are under in delivering quality services to the public with diminishing budgets. The ramifications of the "Future Shape" proposals are such that an even greater focus on a commercial approach and performance management is likely to be needed.

The Panel is aware that the Council will be under even more pressure, budget-wise, over the years ahead. Discussions will doubtless continue at national and local level about possible devolution of functions from central to local government and the debate about re-structuring local government in Buckinghamshire will gather pace. As a result of this, the Panel believes that the Council, as part of its business-centred approach, will need to give further consideration to performance management at all levels of the organisation. The Panel is disappointed that the Council has not yet acted on the recommendations it accepted in July 2013 and would urge the Council to act on them. In the view of the Panel, objections raised are not insurmountable and with careful thought and planning can be worked through and resolved. The Panel understands that other Councils are exploring the use of such a system and believes the Council should take the lead. The Panel notes that the Council uses it to measure the performance of its own staff.

The Panel consider that the "Future Shape" proposals are likely to require a reconsideration of the roles of elected members on the one hand and officers on the other- including (1) the traditional approach of elected members setting policy which is then implemented by officers and (2) in a cabinet-style system those involved in what could amount to a virtually full-time executive role being remunerated on a proper basis

for the time and effort put in, as opposed to simply receiving allowances. The Panel appreciates that these matters are outside of its terms of reference but proper consideration of them is, in its view, essential.

The Panel noted that the Council had recently been successful in achieving a refresh of the South-East Employers' (SEEMP) Member Development Charter. They congratulate the Council on this award and in their continuing commitment to member development. The Panel support the views of the SEEMP Panel judging the Award that the Council should, particularly, pursue the following areas of improvement:-

- All Members of Cabinet should be encouraged to have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and a target of 80% of all members having a PDP should also be set
- All elected members be invited to prepare an Annual Report setting out their achievements for the year which could be uploaded to the Council's website. This would increase the visibility and accountability for each individual member. The Council should also re-visit and use the role profiles for all elected members as part of the PDP discussion. The role profiles will need to be reviewed to reflect the changing role of the member.
- The provision of leadership development particularly for members of the Cabinet
- The Council's Member Development Working Group should pilot and implement a 360 degree process to assist with the support for individual members.

With regard to POPs, the Panel see the following headings as being useful:-

Performance against (Strategic Plan) objectives

- What has worked particularly well in performing your role?
- What has worked less well and what have you learned from this?
- Attendance and contribution at Scrutiny and Committee Meetings?
- Attendance and contribution at Council?
- Attendance and contribution at Group Meetings?
- Representing constituents through Casework?
- Performance as a Deputy Cabinet Member Spokesperson?

Setting Objectives for next 12 months

Objectives should cover the period from April to March.

Learning and Development Needs

How are you seeking to develop your role and how will you acquire the required skills and experience? What support from the group and council would help?

In addition to the above, the Panel feels that the Council could add the 360 degree process to the template.

The Panel believes that a system of performance does not necessarily mean that the total spend on allowances would increase. Even if it did, the increased performance in delivery of Council activities could result in efficiency savings outweighing any increased allowances.

The Panel considers that, as part of any future structural review of local government in Buckinghamshire, central government should look again at the way local councillors are remunerated to ensure that the rewards are sufficient to attract the calibre of people who will be needed to run a different type of organisation.

THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

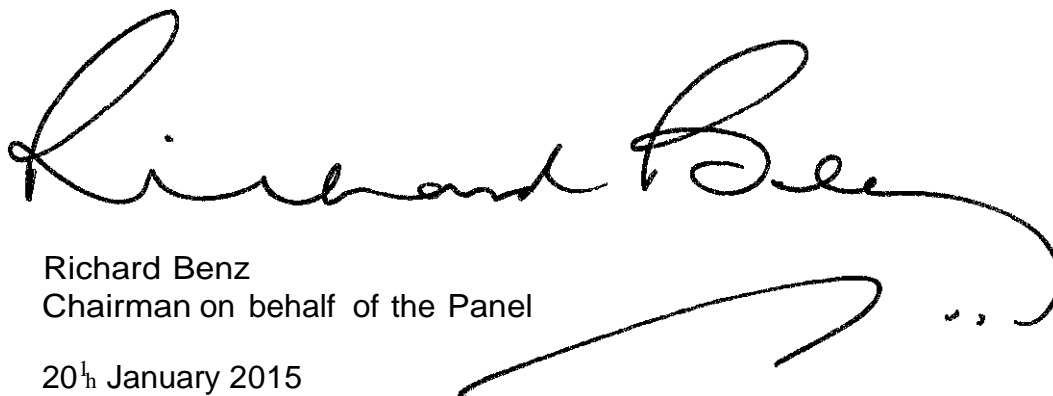
Following the four-yearly review the Panel recommends:-

1 That (having regard to the views of the Panel) the Council should decide whether the current rates of all Allowances in the Scheme should remain unchanged this year and, in future, how and when they are reviewed.

2 That the Council should take steps to implement the Panel's recommendations in its July 2013 report and continue to give due consideration to the development of a system of performance management for members starting with the initiatives outlined above.

3 That the Council should address in a timely way issues likely to result from the "Future Shape" proposals, having regard to the comments made in this report.

4 That the Council should invite the Panel to present and speak to this report.



Richard Benz
Chairman on behalf of the Panel

20th January 2015

APPENDIX 1

CURRENT SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

Post	SR Allowance (pa)	Total
Leader	£39,709	£39,709
Deputy leader	£26,473	£26,473
Cabinet Member (6)	£20,172	£121,032
Select Committee (Ch) x 4	£10,092	£40,368
Statutory Committee (Ch) x 4	£5046	£20184
Deputy Cabinet Members (7)	£5,046	£35,322
Group Leaders *		
Conservative (36)	£10,948	£10948
Liberal Democrat (6) (5 Lib Dem /1 Labour	£2,938	£2,938
UKIP (7) (6 UKIP /1 Independent)	£3,205	£3,205
Chairman of the Council	£12,610	£12,610
Vice-Chairman of the Council	£3,156	£3,156
Chairman of Police & Crime Panel **	£10,092	£10,092
Police and Crime Panel Representative	£1,500	£1,500
Basic Allowance x 49	£10,718	£525,182
TOTAL		£852719

*Allowances derived from formula: £1,336 basic plus £267 per member

** This is only payable in the case where the Panel elects the Buckinghamshire County Council's representative as its Chairman

**MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES:
MARCH 2014****Introduction.**

1. The Independent Panel on Members' Allowances met on Tuesday 18th February and Friday 7th March to make recommendations about the allowances to be paid to elected members. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 requires councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council's existing scheme was approved by Council in 2009 and the Panel's most recent work was in 2010 when it was tasked with reviewing the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs). It is for each local authority to decide its scheme and the amounts to be paid under that scheme but the Panel provides advice on the amounts to be paid and the Council must have regard to this advice. The Panel comprised:

Don Latham, Private Local Government Consultant (Chair)
John Moffoot, former Assistant Director Democratic Services
Julie Mills, Principal at MK College
Ruth Stone, Director of Community Action MK
Paul Griffiths, Chief Executive MK Chamber of Commerce
Helen Davies, Resident of MK

2. The Panel was made aware that the Council currently faces a significant budget shortfall and that in a time of austerity it is vital to ensure that public money is well spent and that all allowances are justified and merited. We noted that in line with staff pay there has been no increase in allowances in 2010/11/12 and only 1% in 2013. Nevertheless the Panel recognises that the allowances awarded to Members of Milton Keynes Council are above average when compared to other similar Councils and that the number of Councillors is being increased from 51 to 57 from May 2014 as recommended by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

3. Given the financial situation being faced by the Council the Panels overarching discussion was about the appropriateness of recommending an increase, albeit a small one, at a time when frontline services are being cut. The level of allowances did not appear to be a barrier to recruiting councillors but time commitment was the prime argument presented for increasing allowances. This is exacerbated by the specific structure and chair/vice chair scheme operated, through choice, by councillors. Caseload/constituency work was not presented to us as the real issue. Members seemed much more concerned about the workload linked to committees and other formal meetings. Nevertheless the overall financial package is being stretched by £60,000 (8.4%) on the appointment of 6 additional members and we considered, but have not recommended, that this be absorbed by reducing the Basic Allowance to £9,000 so that there would be no overall increase in the members' allowances budget.

4. The Panel considered the published material and comparisons with other Councils similar to Milton Keynes Council concerning remuneration of councillors. We were made aware of the National Census of Local Authority Councillors and also took into consideration the requirements of Government Regulations on Member Allowances. For reasons set out in our report we consider that the existing scheme is soundly structured and consider that the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are set at an appropriate level so would not recommend new allowances being introduced other than to provide an extra £60,000 required to fund the additional six Councillors

5. The Panel reviewed the National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010 and noted that

Councillors have various roles and work to carry out. Also councils have different decision making structures. The census information was considered in the changing context in which local government works, with economic and social pressures, and a growing public scrutiny in a time of austerity. There is now an increasing focus on councillors as community leaders and the main findings of the census showed that councillors as individuals are dedicated people who devote a great deal of their own time to serving their communities. Councillors spend on average 23 hours per week on Council business and this is consistent with surveys previously undertaken in both 2004 and 2006. The Panel believes that the situation in Milton Keynes Council reflects this national position.

6. The Panel would especially like to record its thanks to June Allen, Corporate Leadership Team Support Manager, who supported the Panel throughout the review; also to the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and other Members who presented their views verbally or in writing to the Panel. Careful consideration was given to all the points raised.

7. In the light of the information provided by members the Panel discussed four options:

a) That there be no increase in the Council budget for Member allowances in 2014/15 and that the additional cost of six additional members be absorbed by a reduction in existing allowances and that the workload of members be reduced by a streamlining of the democratic process.

b) That the existing scheme be updated from April by the increase in the NJC pay award. (This is the approved Index used in the existing scheme of allowances). Councillors expressed the view that particularly in the financial circumstances being faced by the Council that it would not be acceptable to increase allowances at a rate in excess of that applied to staff pay.

c) That after years of indexing, the scheme be consolidated (Annex 1) by rounding up allowances and simplifying expenses in a way to ensure control, ease administration and encourage transparency. Expressing the levels of SRAs in a way which makes their basis more evident may encourage future evaluation of performance for which, the Panel were pleased to note, job descriptions are already in place.

d) **That the new Council, to be elected in May, be encouraged to make urgent changes in the democratic process to reduce demands on Members' time** which was the prime argument presented to us for increasing allowances. This streamlining may well include Scrutiny. We consider this to be an early essential to avoid the Council falling back into existing patterns and make desired changes more difficult to achieve. The Panel did consider a reduction in allowances as a result of streamlining the democratic decision making process which could greatly reduce the demands on members' time. It could also be argued that six additional councillors will decrease workload for the extant 51 – an 11% increase in headcount with no increase in workload.

Panel Recommendations.

8. In the light of evidence examined and the input of Members **the Panel recommends that the existing Scheme be updated in April by the consolidation recommended in our report (Annex 1) and that £60,000 be added to the budget to fund six new councillors.**

Consolidated (updated) Scheme.

9. The Panel's recommendations for consolidation (the third option) are as follows :

- That £60,000 be added to the Budget to fund six new Councillors
- That the Basic Allowance be set at £10,000 for 2014 - 15. (Annex 2)
- That SRAs be updated and expressed as a % of the Basic Allowance. (Annex 3)
- The Civic Allowances paid to the Mayor be set at £11,000 and Deputy Mayor £5,500.
- That Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA.
- That the Co-opted Members allowance be set at £640.
- That the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £868 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee.
- That no changes be made to other aspects of the existing scheme other than for indexing where appropriate.
- That the Council takes appropriate action on the results of the current Government/Treasury consultation exercise on pensions - which is anticipated to happen in 2014. (Annex 4)
- That the costs of telephone and broadband be met by Members from their Basic Allowance from 1st April 2014.
- That the consolidated Basic and SRA allowances remain unchanged i.e. not indexed for three years until the Panel meets again.
- That the new Council, to be elected in May, be encouraged to make urgent changes in the democratic process to reduce demands on Members' time.

Basic Allowance.

10. **The Panel recommends that the Basic Allowance (including inflation) be set at £10,000 for 2014/2015.** (See Annex 2) It was suggested by the Labour Group that if some 'disentanglement' between remuneration and expenses could be made and discussed with HMRC that this could be helpful to members. The Panel takes the view that allowances compensate for expenses and are not intended to be a form of salary. (See Annex 4). This would be a matter for the Council to discuss with HMRC.

11. Members of Milton Keynes Council also receive reimbursement of telephone and broadband costs at a current annual cost of £7,700. We recommend that the Council streamlines the administration of the scheme, reduces costs and makes it more transparent by withdrawing this additional support with Members meeting these costs directly from their Basic Allowance from 1st April 2014. We were made aware, during our Member consultation that this could create problems for some low income earning Members but we believe with the Council under pressure to reduce costs of administration it should take this step that would also bring it into line with best practice. It would save costs and simplify administration.

Special Responsibility Allowances.

12. The Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those councillors it considers to have *significant, additional responsibilities* over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

13. The most significant is the Leader of the Council and the Panel recommend that the allowance be increased by £668 to £30,000 (3 x basic allowance). The Panel considered the current practice

of ring-fencing a total sum for the Cabinet, which is distributed per Cabinet Member. This has the benefit of enabling the Leader to determine the Cabinet structure without increasing the cost. The Cabinet Members are currently being paid £10,647, a total of £74,529 and the Panel recommends that this be rounded to and capped at £77,000. If the current Cabinet structure continues, the SRA per Cabinet Member, excluding the Leader, would be £11,000.

14. We were requested by a number of Members to consider additional SRAs but the Panel were totally agreed that there should be no additional SRAs. The Regulations make it clear that only *significant additional responsibilities* should be recognised and only a *minority of members* should receive an SRA. Our recommendations would result in 39% of the new Council receiving a SRA which would be in line with good practice. A case was made by a number of members for the introduction of SRAs for Vice Chairs. The reasons the Panel would not support this are set out in Annex 5. We do recommend that the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £868 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee.

15. We believe that SRAs are soundly structured but recommend that the use of the Basic Allowance as a bench mark for SRA calculations should be made explicit and that figures should be rounded as after a time of indexing they appear to have a degree of accuracy that cannot be justified. In other words we can re-establish a fresh baseline for the scheme which we believe, based on the work of previous Panels, establishes SRAs at an appropriate level.

16. It was suggested that consideration should be given to a "*de minimus*" payment for Group Leaders and the Panel recommend this should be £2,480 (i.e., £620 per Member for a notional minimum of 4 Members). The full details of our recommended changes are set out in Annex 3. This would produce an increase, including inflation, of £2,583 (1.2%) on the SRA budget of £211,713.

17. The Panel recommends, in line with current practice, that Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA. We do not support arguments for exceptions to this rule and we would not recommend the practice of transferability of allowances.

Co-opted Members of Committees

18. Persons co-opted to serve on Committees, Sub Committees or Panels, and who have voting rights, receive an allowance currently £634. This is paid in 12 equal, monthly instalments and will be liable for tax and National Insurance. All co-optees are eligible for travel and subsistence at the Members' rate when carrying out the duties for which they are co-opted. If the co-opted person ceases to serve the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of this allowance. **The Panel recommends that the Co-opted Members' allowance be increased to £640.**

Civic Allowances.

19. Currently the Mayor of Milton Keynes receives a civic allowance of £10,647 per annum, in line with that paid to Cabinet Members, paid in two equal instalments of £5,323 in May and November. The Deputy Mayor receives a civic allowance of 50% of the Mayor's allowance, i.e. £5,324 per annum, payable in two equal instalments of £2,662 in May and November. As part of a local agreement with HM Inspector of Taxes, these civic allowances are not liable for tax or National insurance contributions. In the event of a Mayor or Deputy Mayor ceasing to hold office the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of the Civic Allowance.

The Panel is recommending that Cabinet SRAs be increased to £11,000 and if this increase were also applied to Civic Allowances there would be a budget increase of £529 (3%). **The Panel recommends that the allowances paid to the Mayor be increased to £11,000 and Deputy Mayor to £5,500.**

Travel and Subsistence.

20. The Panel fully endorses the Council's existing arrangements for travel and subsistence. Reimbursement to councillors for travel and subsistence is paid at the current rates agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC) for the reimbursement of Council officers. In some instances Mileage claims may be liable for tax and National Insurance contributions. Councillors are reimbursed the full cost of travel by the most appropriate means of transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt (bus ticket etc) is produced to substantiate the claim. All reasonable claims for subsistence are paid for carrying out Approved Duties and as there is no profit element in the payment of subsistence, this allowance is not subject to tax or National Insurance contributions.

Child Care and Dependent Carer's Allowance.

21. The Panel recommends that the scheme should continue unchanged except that for child care the minimum wage rate applicable to the age of the carer should be updated to October 2013 wage rates, and should continue to be adjusted to meet any future changes in the applicable minimum wage:

£6.31 per hour (21 years and over)

£5.03 per hour (18 -20 year olds)

£3.72 per hour (for workers under 18 who are above compulsory school leaving age)

Some Members suggested that the Council should adopt the Living Wage but the Panel received no evidence that the allowance set at the present level discourages people standing.

Claimable Allowances.

22. The Panel noted and endorsed the Council's current scheme. There is a 3 month time limit for submitting claims i.e. Child Care and Dependent Carers Allowance and Travel and Subsistence Allowances. Any claims made outside of this limit will only be paid in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services and the Service Manager Audit and Risk Management.

Dual Authority roles.

23. The Panel notes the Council's decision that Councillors should not receive an allowance for more than one authority (e.g. Fire Authority) for the same duties. The Panel support the continuation of this position.

Forgoing Allowances.

24. A councillor may forgo all or part of any allowances to which he or she is entitled, provided he or she has given notice in writing to the Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services.

Suspension and Withholding Allowances.

25. The Panel confirms the existing arrangements. In the event of a councillor being suspended from duty following an investigation by the Council's Standards Committee allowances will not be paid to the councillor concerned during the period of suspension. If necessary, a pro rata calculation will be made based on the number of days in the Council year concerned to determine if an adjustment for under or overpayment needs to be made to ensure that the correct amount is withheld during the suspension period. The Council should reserve the right to recover any overpayments.

Approved Duties.

26. The Panel endorses the list of 'Approved Duties' under the regulations and note that these include attendance at conferences, seminars and other Member Development and training events as approved by the Council or Service Manager, Legal and Democratic Services. The Panel was mindful of the training costs of a new Council with the prospect of many new Councillors and for Member Development training being a priority. We understand that appropriate budget provision has been made. We also discussed how appraisal of performance could play an important role in a situation where Members work under great pressures.

We noted that attendance at casework surgeries organised at advertised times and venues within the Member's own ward is an Approved Duty. The Panel considered recommending that this cost should in future be incurred as part of the Basic Allowance. However, in the light of the answers to our questions by Members and the low cost, we are not recommending change. We do not agree with the request that general casework should be included. We considered other issues raised by the Leader of the Council but we do not propose changes to Approved Duties.

Indexing.

27. The Panel considered recommending that the NJC award for staff pay should continue to be used as the basis for updating allowances but that having set a new baseline for allowances in our report we recommend that there should be no indexation for three years of the Basic Allowance and SRAs until the Panel meets again. But we recommend that the Dependent Carer's allowance should continue to be indexed to the maximum hourly rates for minimum wage for age of carer/average hourly cost of Milton Keynes Council. Travel and Subsistence allowances should be paid at the same rates and conditions applicable to Officer and HMRC rates where applicable.

Pensions.

28. All Councillors are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Both Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance will be taken into account when calculating pension entitlement. The Panel noted that on 19th December 2012 the Local Government Minister, Mike Brandon Lewis, made a statement to the House of Commons setting out the Department's intention to remove access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014 (Annex 4) and that a separate paper be issued as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS - which is anticipated to be completed in 2014.

Basic Allowance

1. The Statutory Guidance is very specific on the questions a Panel must consider when arriving at the recommended Basic Allowance:

'Having established what Councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, Councillors ought to be remunerated.'

2. The underlying approach in setting the recommended Basic Allowance is based on the above statutory guidance as published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), par.67. As a result, the Panel is under a duty to arrive at answers for the following three variables when setting and recommending an appropriate Basic Allowance:

- a) Time required to fulfil roles of ordinary Members
- b) The voluntary principle, the notion that part of the time put in by a Member in their back bench roles should be unremunerated, often known as the Public Service Discount (PSD)
- c) The worth of a backbench Member's time, or rate of remuneration.

3. **Time required to fulfil back bench roles = 140 days annual equivalent.** The 2003 Panel acknowledged that the role of the back bench councillor was at least 60 hours per month, or at least 90 - 95 days per year. The 2010 Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) census of Councillors shows that Councillors not in senior positions put in at least 23 hours per week, but that includes all types of councils. The Panel has translated this research by the IDeA into just over half a working week, or equivalent of 140 days per year.

4. **Public Service Discount: = 30%.** The previous Panel made the assumption that anything over 60 hours per month was the voluntary element or public service. However the common discount applied to English authorities is around 30%. In other words, of the 142 days expected time input, one third has been determined as public service, say 42 days, with 98 being left as the remunerated time.

5. **Rate for the job = £102 per day.** The Local Government Association no longer provides advice on a recommended daily session rate. The annual average wage/salary in the UK is £26,500 which the Panel have translated into £102 per day.

6. Thus, following the statutory guidance with the variables outlined above produces the following Basic Allowance:

- Time for the job: 140 equivalent days per year
- Public Service 30% (42 days)
- Rate for the job £102 per day

98 remunerated days x £102 = £9,996 say £10,000 Basic Allowance 2014 - 2015.

7. This is paid in 12 equal instalments and is subject to both tax and National Insurance contributions where applicable. If a councillor ceases to be a councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance ceases and a pro rata calculation is made to ensure that the councillor receives the right amount of allowance. The Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.

8. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs, such as the use of their homes for council business.

Special Responsibility Allowances

The Panel believes that SRAs are soundly structured but recommend, in line with good practice, that the use of the Basic Allowance as a bench mark for SRA calculations be made explicit and that figures should be rounded as, after a time of indexing, they appear to have a degree of accuracy that cannot be justified. We did not have evidence to justify a significant increase or proposal for change in the existing scheme. We do recommend that the SRA for Chair of Budget Review be reduced by £1,000 to bring it into line with Chair of Audit Committee. What is set out below is a fresh baseline for the scheme which we believe, based on the work of previous Panels, sets SRAs at an appropriate level.

	Current £	Revised £	+/- £
Leader of the Council (300% basic allowance)	29,332	30,000	668+
Main Opposition Group Leader - per Group Member (16) (£614 increased to £620)	9,824	9,920	96+
Smaller Opposition Group Leader - per Group Member (15) (£614 increased to £620)	9,210	9,300	90+
Cabinet Members (7) - (Pool Cap of £77,000) (110% basic allowance)	10,647	11,000	2,471+
Chair of Development Control Committee (80% basic allowance)	8,051	8,000	51-
Chair of Licensing & Regulation Committees (80% basic allowance)	8,051	8,000	51-
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (75% basic allowance)	7,368	7,500	132+
Chair of Budget Review Group (55% basic allowance)	6,368	5,500	868-
Chair of Audit Committee (55% basic allowance)	5,368	5,500	132+
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Select Committee (5) (45% basic allowance)	4,549	4,500	245-
Chair of Executive Scrutiny Panel (45% basic allowance)	4,368	4,500	132+
Chair of Standards Committee (30% basic allowance)	2,933	3,000	77+

This would increase the SRA budget (including inflation) of £211,713 by £2,583 (1.2%).

Written Ministerial statement of 19 December 2012 on Councillors Pensions.

On 12 September 2001, the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions announced plans to give taxpayer - funded pensions to councillors, through access to the LGPS. The proposals came into force in 2003. The Councillors' Commission report of the last administration noted that 912 councillors in England had joined that pension scheme by 2004. A Taxpayers' Alliance survey in February 2009, across the whole United Kingdom, found that 3,527 councillors had pensions as of 2007 to 2008; a further survey in January 2012 found that figure had increased to 4,548 councillors by 2010 to 2011. The trend is clear.

Abolition of taxpayer-funded pensions

Ministers in this government take a fundamentally different view from the last administration. We do not believe that taxpayer-funded pensions are justified. Councillors are volunteers undertaking public service; they are not and should not be employees of the council and on the municipal payroll. They are not professional, full-time politicians, nor should they be encouraged to become so. Councillors do not receive a salary; rather, they receive allowances to compensate for their out-of-pocket expenses. Yet following changes made by the last administration, allowances have slowly become a form of salary, a situation worsened by the state-funded pensions. This is a corrosive influence on local democracy and independent thought, blurring the distinction between council staff and councillors. Every bit of the public sector needs to do its bit to help pay off the deficit inherited from the last administration. Local government grants are being reduced. Ministers have cut and then frozen their salaries. Public sector pensions, including parliamentary pensions, are being reformed to reduce the burden on taxpayers. It is only right that councillors do their bit as well. We do not believe that an occupational pension scheme intended for employees, and paid for by taxpayers, is an appropriate vehicle for councillors.

Existing pension rights

Subject to consultation, we propose that there will be no access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014. In the interests of fairness, those councillors already in the scheme would have their accrued rights up to April 2014 fully protected, but would not be able to accrue any further benefits after that date in the existing scheme. This will not prevent councillors contributing to a personal pension: if they put aside part of their (taxable) allowances into such a pension, then that is a matter for them; they will continue to receive income tax relief like any ordinary member of the population, subject to the prevailing tax rules. Although central records on councillors' participation in the scheme are not held by my department, initial rough estimates suggest that this could save £7 million a year in taxpayers' money. There is absolutely no case for increasing councillor allowances to compensate. Instead, councils may want to consider earlier, voluntary closure of the scheme to their councillors as a sensible saving.

Civic duty

Eligibility regulations for the LGPS are overseen by my department. Although this is a centrally mandated change (as was its original introduction), we believe these reforms will assist localism and local democracy by encouraging a greater separation between councillors and officers. Robust local scrutiny of council spending requires councillors to be substantively independent of means and of thought from the body they are overseeing. Civic duty should not be bought. We do not believe it will have any detrimental effect on people choosing to become councillors. The best thing we can do to encourage more people to take part in municipal public life is to decentralise power to local communities so being a councillor is a meaningful and rewarding role.

Elected mayors

We recognise that there is a greater expectation that an elected mayor is a full-time position. We therefore propose to consult on allowing elected mayors to remain in the scheme as a voluntary option (but not as an expectation), subject to local scrutiny, challenge and determination. The salaries of the mayor of London, members of the Greater London Assembly and police and crime commissioners will remain pensionable.

Timing

Statutory consultation is required and will commence in due course, as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS. We will consult with the Welsh Assembly government in respect of access to the LGPS for councillors in Wales.

As a former councillor myself, I would like to pay tribute to their often unsung and on-going work in standing up for their local residents. We hope these reforms will further strengthen the integrity and independence of councillors and increase the respect within their communities for the voluntary work they undertake as champions of the people.

Vice Chair Allowances

1) A number of Councillors including the Leader and in particular the Labour Group, in a written submission, made the argument for payment of Vice Chairs as follows:

'For some years now, it has been the practice of the Council to have two Vice-Chairs of each Select Committee, one each from the parties not holding the Chair. This, we feel, can ensure cross-party buy-in to the Select Committee process, a factor that we think is specifically important for the Administration Party. The effectiveness of the scrutiny system relies on effective planning meetings, which involves the vice chairs every bit as much as the Chair. This is not an assertion we make wildly - the planning meetings are documented and I am sure agendas, and notes, will be made available to the Panel by Officers. It has been said, perhaps with some justification that the only thing the Chair does which the Vice-Chairs don't, is to chair the meetings. We feel that this situation should again be reflected in the Allowance system, as it was for some years in the past.

We feel there is a particular injustice with respects the Vice-Chairs of the Licensing and Regulatory Committees. Here also, the bi-party arrangement re Vice Chairs operates. The Vice-Chairs are constitutionally required to chair hearings panels in the absence of the Chair. They frequently do this and we can supply supporting evidence if this is required. There must be an injustice here and we invite the Panel to consider it.'

2. There are a number of reasons why the Panel would not support in principle the payment of SRAs to Vice Chairs.

Basic Allowance. Setting the Basic Allowance at an above average rate of £10,000 implies that the whole membership is widely engaged in the work of the Council. For some members fulfilment, satisfaction, training and experience can be gained through a vice chair role. For others it may be joint working, task and finish groups, working with other agencies or a priority for community engagement. The Basic Allowance set at this level assumes all those activities are covered. Some Councils will have a lower Basic Allowance and more Members on SRAs. But it is regarded as bad practice to pay the majority of members a SRA.

Significant Additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a councillor is the clear guidance of the Regulations. The Panel has an obligation to take heed of the New Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, republished by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 5th May 2006.

Can a small allowance - even if it were allowed to be taken out of the Chair's allowance - be an indicator of significant additional responsibilities? The Panel was informed that for this reason it was, in the experience of the Chairman, common for Panels not to recommend such payments. The Panel were made aware of the challenge that had been made previously to such payments and the response of the District Auditor. We were aware of the legal arguments but our decision is based solely on the merits of the case and the principle of keeping SRA payments to the minimum (1/3rd) in line with best practice.

Minimum number of Councillors should be receiving a SRA. If the majority of members of a council receive a SRA the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Indeed this was questioned on the audit of another authority on the Audit of Accounts and the District Auditor supported the member of the public in their challenge and the allowances were withdrawn.

The current scheme provides for 22 allowances in a membership of 51 shortly to increase to 57 (39%). Vice chair allowances would have the potential to double the number of SRAs being paid. The reality is that 6 should be a maximum additional allowances to keep within the spirit of the Regulations. If they are small they can be challenged and they would add to the overall budget cost in a time of austerity when staff and services are being reduced.

Cost of politics is a matter of concern to the Panel. Recognising the challenges of being in a 'hung council' we do not believe that the additional costs of being in that position should fall on the community. We believe that political balance can be achieved without it having to be built in at Vice Chair level. We would much prefer to have a realistic Basic Allowance. Indeed, with the 'non-political' roles of the Regulatory Committees, it could be seen to be more above politics not to have politically defined Vice Chairs. We were pleased to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels were chaired by members of the minority parties. Sometimes the hidden agenda may be to find ways of financially rewarding those members of minority groups who are not the Administration. The move to vice chair allowances can be used as a mechanism to get the majority of members on a SRA. This can be the 'hidden agenda' but we believe is not the case in Milton Keynes where there is a history of parties working together for the benefit of the community.

Summary

The arguments against making provision for SRAs for Vice Chairs have been set out clearly by previous Panels and we concur with their views. We strongly believe that the existing scheme provides allowances at the right level and would not recommend a proliferation of smaller SRAs. In the end this is a matter for the Council to determine but the Panel would strongly recommend against such a move.



**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON
KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

***MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES
2017/18***

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. This Scheme is governed by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 – “the regulations.”
2. Elected Members of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Combined Fire Authority may claim basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties in accordance with the provisions of this scheme.
3. Appointed (non elected) members may claim co-optees allowance, travelling allowances and subsistence allowances for approved duties specified in this scheme.
4. "Year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.
5. The Scheme has four Schedules attached which are:
 - (a) Schedule 1 - Special Responsibility Allowances
 - (b) Schedule 2 - Payment of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances
 - (c) Schedule 3 - Duties Excluded from the Allowances Scheme
 - (d) Schedule 4 - Rates of Allowances

Creation and Amendment of the Scheme

6. This scheme comes into effect on 1 April 2017.
7. For subsequent changes in basic allowances, special responsibility allowances and co-optees allowances, new rates will be payable from the date the amendment takes effect as set out either in this scheme or the Regulations.
8. The Fire Authority will be responsible for amending the scheme and in doing so will have regard to any recommendations to its constituent councils of the independent remuneration panels set up by them.

Basic Allowances

9. The Fire Authority will pay equally to each Member of the Authority a basic allowance of an amount specified in Schedule 4.
10. Where the term of office of a Member begins or ends in the course of a financial year entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
11. Basic Allowances are payable monthly and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Special Responsibility Allowances

12. The Fire Authority will pay each year to the Members of the Fire Authority who have special responsibilities by reason of the office(s) they hold the special responsibility allowances set out in Schedule 1.
13. Where a Member takes up or relinquishes any post that carries a special responsibility allowance in the course of a financial year the entitlement will be apportioned in accordance with the Regulations. The apportionment will not take place where a Member's term of office lasts less than one month.
14. Special responsibility allowances are payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions. Where a Member is eligible for more than one special responsibility allowance (whether payable by the Fire Authority or another authority for Fire Authority duties) only the highest one will be payable, with the exception that a Lead Member may claim one Lead Member's Allowance in addition to one other Special Responsibility Allowance payable.

Approved Duties

15. Travelling and Subsistence Allowances are payable monthly and are only payable to Elected Members of the Fire Authority for the approved duties set out in Schedule 2.

Co-optees Allowance

16. A Co-optees Allowance may be paid to appointed members (i.e. non-Elected Members whether voting or not) for the performance of any approved duty as defined by this document.
17. The allowance will be payable in monthly instalments and are subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

18. The term "Member" for the purpose of travelling and subsistence allowances applies to any person who is a Member of the Fire Authority, or who is a member of any committee, sub-committee or panel of the Fire Authority, and so includes appointed non-elected members of those bodies. The payment of these allowances is dependent upon the performance of an "approved duty" which is an attendance as a member at a meeting, or the carrying on of a duty, set out in Schedule 2.
19. The rates for travel and subsistence allowances are specified in Schedule 4.

Allowances are Maxima

20. The scales for all allowances are maxima and there is no obligation on any Member to claim any or all of the allowances.
21. A Member shall give notice in writing to the Chief Finance Officer that he/she elects to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under the scheme.

Social Functions and Occasions

22. Elected Members on occasions are invited, or feel it necessary to attend functions, or occasions which have a social element. No allowances are paid to Members of the Fire Authority on these occasions unless the Member is undertaking the performance of a positive duty and one of significant size, e.g. making a speech or distributing prizes when travel and subsistence allowances may be paid. Merely to attend because the member is interested or represents people in the district is insufficient to justify payment of any allowances.

Conference Expenses

23. If attendance at a conference has been approved by the Authority, conference expenses which are obligatory and outside the control of the Member, will be paid in advance on request or will be reimbursed. These expenses will include the conference fee. The actual cost of accommodation, meals and the like, will only be met or reimbursed if it is part of the inclusive charge for the conference or it is a requirement of the conference or its organisers that the Member should stay at a particular hotel.
24. Travel and subsistence allowances are payable where appropriate.

Telephones

25. A mobile phone will be provided to the Chairman of the Fire Authority, with the cost of supply, rental and business calls being met by the Fire Authority.

Avoidance of Duplication

26. A claim for an allowance under this scheme must include, or be accompanied by, a statement signed by the claimant that no other claim has been, or will be made for the matter to which the claim relates.

Records of Payments

27. Records of payments made to Members are available for inspection free of charge by any local government elector of the Fire Authority.
28. A person entitled to inspect a record may make a copy of any part of it.
29. Details of total payments made to each Member for allowances under this scheme will be published as soon as practicable after the end of the year to which they relate.

Claim Forms

30. All information requested on the claim form must be provided, including details of start and finish times, journeys made and meetings attended. (It is always advisable for Members to make contemporaneous notes in their diary to assist in the completion of claims).
31. Claims for expenses should only be made when actually incurred, ie rail/bus, taxis, hotel accommodation. Receipts should be provided.
32. Claims for the same expenses (mileage, travel and subsistence etc) must not be made from more than one body.
33. Claim forms should be completed and submitted to the Chief Finance Officer, preferably within seven working days after the end of each calendar month.
34. Payments for basic and special responsibility allowances will be paid monthly in arrears and travel and subsistence payments will be paid monthly in arrears on the submission of a claim form.
35. No claim from a Member for traveling or subsistence allowances which is submitted more than three months after the costs were incurred and no later than the end of April for the preceding financial year will be entertained.

SCHEDULE 1

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES FROM APRIL 2017

Special Responsibility Allowance per annum

• Position	£
• Chairman	12,094
• Vice-Chairman	4,052
• Chairman – Executive Committee	4,989
• Chairman – Overview and Audit Committee	3,268
• Chairman – Human Resources Sub-Committee	1,636
• Group Leaders	3,629
• Lead Members	3,153

SCHEDULE 2

PAYMENT OF TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

The duties in this Section have been approved for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances:

- (a) Attendance at a meeting of the Fire Authority;
- (b) Attendance at a meeting of any committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority;
- (c) Attendance at a meeting of any section, panel, working party or other meeting authorised by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority or a joint committee of the Fire Authority and one or more other authorities to which the member has been specifically appointed provided that it is a meeting to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- (d) Attendance at a meeting of an association of authorities of which the Fire Authority is a member and to which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority to represent it.
- (e) Attendance at ad hoc meetings with other authorities, organisations or bodies authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (f) Attendance at briefing meetings to which Members of at least two political groups have been invited authorised by a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable.
- (g) Attendance at seminars and conferences arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions.
- (h) Attendance at specific visits arranged by the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority, or the Director of Legal and Governance on the advice of the relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman if this is not practicable, about any of its functions and where Members of at least two political groups have been invited.
- (i) Attendance at a meeting of any body or authority upon which the member has been appointed by the Fire Authority or a committee or sub-committee of the Fire Authority to represent it.

- (j) Attendance in connection with the discharge of any function of the Fire Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Fire Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- (k) Attendance at meetings of bodies where the Fire Authority makes appointments, where the Fire Authority has a major influence at national, regional, county or district level. These bodies are listed below:
- (i) Local Government Association
 - (ii) Fire Commission
- (l) Attendance at any disciplinary, grievance, dismissal or appeals sub-committee or panel.
- (m) The following duties if approved by the Fire Authority or a Committee:
- Attendance at briefing meetings held for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Fire Authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.
 - Attendance at the official opening of new Fire Authority establishments or projects.
 - Attendance by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority and of committees at official functions in a representative capacity.
 - Duties undertaken by Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Fire Authority, committees or subcommittees acting in an official capacity.
 - Members' delegations to Government Departments.
 - Town Centre Management Meetings and Parishes.
- (n) Meetings organised by the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer or Director of Legal and Governance or their nominated representatives with external bodies or persons to further the business and aims of the Fire Authority which the relevant officer certifies requires the attendance of members on the grounds of urgency which prevents approval being obtained from the Fire Authority, a committee or sub-committee

Note: In authorising attendances in accordance with the above, no member, official or officer of the Fire Authority shall act in a discriminatory manner reflecting party political preference. Members, officials and officers should take care to ensure that their actions can not be construed as having been discriminatory.

SCHEDULE 3

DUTIES EXCLUDED FROM THE ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The duties in this Section are those for which the Fire Authority has decided that no allowances will be paid.

- Members' surgeries
- Political activities

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SCHEDULE 4

RATES OF ALLOWANCES

From April 2017 the following rates of allowances will apply

Basic Allowance:

£1,211 per annum

Special Responsibility Allowances:

See Schedule 1

Co-optees Allowance

£303 per annum

Travel Allowances

(a) Car

The rate for travel by a Member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family or otherwise provided for his/her use, other than a solo motor cycle, shall be 45 pence for the first 10,000 miles and 25 pence for each mile after that.

(b) Motorcycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own motorcycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall be 24 pence per mile.

(c) Bicycle

The rate for travel by a Member's own bicycle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family, or otherwise provided for his/her use, shall not exceed 20p a mile.

(d) Public Transport

Members can claim the full cost of travelling on public transport at standard class rates whilst carrying out Approved Duties, provided a valid receipt, bus ticket etc is produced to substantiate the claim.

Subsistence

The rate of subsistence allowance shall not exceed the amounts which can be claimed under the Buckinghamshire County Council Members Allowances Scheme applicable at the time when the cost is incurred.

Uplift for Inflation

Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees allowances will be adjusted for inflation each year until, but not beyond 1 April 2018, in line with the pay award for the Authority's staff on National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service (Grey Book).

Travel and Subsistence allowances will be adjusted for inflation each year in line with the Buckinghamshire County Council Members Allowances Scheme applicable at the time when the cost is incurred.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	14 December 2016
OFFICER	Mark Hemming – Deputy Director of Finance and Assets
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor David Watson
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2016
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The appointed auditor is required to issue an annual audit letter to the Authority following completion of their audit procedures for the year. The full letter is shown in Appendix A.</p> <p>Some of the key results and conclusions highlighted in the report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unqualified opinion was issued on the Authority's and Pension Fund's financial statements. • The auditors concluded that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of our resources. • The Governance Statement was consistent with the Auditor's understanding of the Authority. • In 2017/18 the deadline for having audited statements will move to 31 July (currently 30 September). In 2015/16 the Authority met this earlier deadline which the Auditor states "is a great achievement".
ACTION	Decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2016 be considered and approved for publication.
RISK MANAGEMENT	No direct impact.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	No direct impact. No additional audit fee was required for the year.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	Regulation 20 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires that the Authority (or committee of the Authority) must meet to consider an audit letter as soon as reasonably practicable after its receipt.

	<p>Consideration of the audit letter is delegated to the Overview and Audit Committee in the Authority's standing orders, but with that committee's meeting of 7 December 2016 being vacated the Authority can undertake the role in its stead.</p> <p>The Authority is required to publish (which must include publication on the Authority's website) the audit letter and, if requested, make copies available for purchase by any person for which it may charge a reasonable sum.</p>
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION	No direct impact.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	No direct impact.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	No direct impact.
USE OF RESOURCES	No direct impact.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2016 (October 2016, Ernst & Young LLP)
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Mark Hemming mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744687</p>

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2016

October 2016

Ernst & Young LLP

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In April 2015 Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued ‘Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies 2015-16’. It is available from the Chief Executive of each audited body and via the PSAA website (www.psaa.co.uk)

The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The ‘Terms of Appointment from 1 April 2015’ issued by PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and statute, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This Annual Audit Letter is prepared in the context of the Statement of responsibilities. It is addressed to the Members of the audited body, and is prepared for their sole use. We, as appointed auditor, take no responsibility to any third party.

Our Complaints Procedure – If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with your usual partner or director contact. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Steve Varley, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

A hand with white nail polish is writing on a document with a blue pen. In the background, there is a calculator, a laptop, and a white mug. A yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

We are required to issue an annual audit letter to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) following completion of our audit procedures for the year ended 31 March 2016.

Below are the results and conclusions on the significant areas of the audit process.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Opinion on the Authority's and Pension Fund's: ▶ Financial statements	Unqualified – the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and Pension Fund as at 31 March 2016 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended.
▶ Consistency of other information published with the financial statements	Other information published with the financial statements was consistent with the Annual Accounts.
Concluding on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness	We concluded that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Reports by exception: ▶ Consistency of Governance Statement	The Governance Statement was consistent with our understanding of the Authority.
▶ Public interest report	We had no matters to report in the public interest.
▶ Written recommendations to the Authority, which should be copied to the Secretary of State	We had no matters to report.
▶ Other actions taken in relation to our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	We had no matters to report.

Area of Work	Conclusion
Reporting to the National Audit Office (NAO) on our review of the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts return (WGA).	The Authority is below the specified audit threshold of £350 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack.

As a result of the above we have also:

Area of Work	Conclusion
Issued a report to those charged with governance of the Authority communicating significant findings resulting from our audit.	Our Audit Results Report was issued on 27 July 2016.
Issued a certificate that we have completed the audit in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice.	Our certificate was issued on 27 July 2016.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Authority's staff for their assistance during the course of our work.

Maria Grindley

Executive Director
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Purpose



Purpose

The Purpose of this Letter

The purpose of this annual audit letter is to communicate to Members and external stakeholders, including members of the public, the key issues arising from our work, which we consider should be brought to the attention of the Authority.

We have already reported the detailed findings from our audit work in our 2015/16 Audit Results Report to the 27 July 2016 Overview and Audit Committee, representing those charged with governance. We do not repeat those detailed findings in this letter. The matters reported here are the most significant for the Authority.



Responsibilities

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Appointed Auditor

Our 2015/16 audit work has been undertaken in accordance with the Audit Plan that we issued on 9 March 2016 and is conducted in accordance with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office.

As auditors we are responsible for:

- ▶ Expressing an opinion:
 - ▶ on the 2015/16 financial statements; and
 - ▶ on the consistency of other information published with the financial statements.
- ▶ Forming a conclusion on the arrangements the Authority has to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- ▶ Reporting by exception:
 - ▶ if the annual governance statement is misleading or not consistent with our understanding of the Authority;
 - ▶ any significant matters that are in the public interest;
 - ▶ any written recommendations to the Authority, which should be copied to the Secretary of State; and
 - ▶ if we have discharged our duties and responsibilities as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Code of Audit Practice.

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO) on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The Authority is below the specified audit threshold of £350 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the return.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for preparing and publishing its statement of accounts accompanied by an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). In the AGS, the Authority reports publicly each year on how far it complies with its own code of governance, including how it has monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in year, and any changes planned in the coming period.

The Authority is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Financial Statement Audit

Financial Statement Audit

Key Issues

The Authority's Statement of Accounts is an important tool for the Authority to show how it has used public money and how it can demonstrate its financial management and financial health.

We audited the Authority and Pension Fund's Statement of Accounts in line with the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland), and other guidance issued by the National Audit Office and issued an unqualified audit report on 27 July 2016.

Our detailed findings were reported to the 27 July 2016 Overview and Audit Committee.

The key issues identified as part of our audit were as follows:

Significant Risk	Conclusion
<p>Risk of management override</p> <p>A risk present on all audits is that management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly, and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.</p> <p>Auditing standards require us to respond to this risk by testing the appropriateness of journals, testing accounting estimates for possible management bias and obtaining an understanding of the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions.</p>	<p>We obtained a full list of journals posted to the general ledger during the year, and analysed these journals using criteria we set to identify any unusual journal types or amounts. We then tested a sample of journals that met our criteria and tested these to supporting documentation.</p> <p>The most significant accounting estimates in the financial statements relate to the net pension liability and property valuations. We found no indication of management bias in these estimates.</p> <p>We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.</p> <p>We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.</p> <p>We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Authority's normal course of business.</p>
<p>Milne vs GAD</p> <p>In May 2015 the Pension Ombudsman, an independent organisation that investigates complaints about pension administration, published Mr Milne's determination for Firefighters' Pension Scheme regarding commutation</p>	<p>Additional payments of £726k resulting from the Milne v GAD ruling were made by the Authority in advance of year-end. The associated grant was also received by the Authority in advance of year-end. This significantly reduced the risk of disclosure error.</p> <p>We tested a sample of payment calculations, and tested the completeness of</p>

factors. The Pension Ombudsman ruled that Government Actuary's Department (GAD) failed to review commutation factors within the firefighters' pension scheme.

The Ombudsman ordered that a new commutation factor be prepared as if a factor review had been carried out in December 2004.

The Authority has determined the additional payments required. The sum of these payments is estimated to be £484k which is material to the Pension Fund.

payments made.

Since these are material transactions, they have been appropriately shown as separate line items within the account.

We have no matters to report from this work.

Joint Control Room

The Joint Control Room (with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority) became operational in April 2015.

This will be the first year that this will need to be disclosed within the financial statements and there is a risk that this will not be accounted for correctly. In particular the disclosures made and ensuring that the correct split of costs is used.

We have received the signed agreement between the three Authorities which details the agreed upon apportionment model in place.

An additional disclosure was required within the Related Parties note to reflect the agreement in place.

We also tested the expenditure incurred from the joint control room.

We have no matters to report from this work.

A close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a stack of coins. The coins are stacked vertically, with some showing their edges and others showing their faces. The lighting is warm, highlighting the metallic texture and the ridges on the edges. A bright yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Value for Money'.

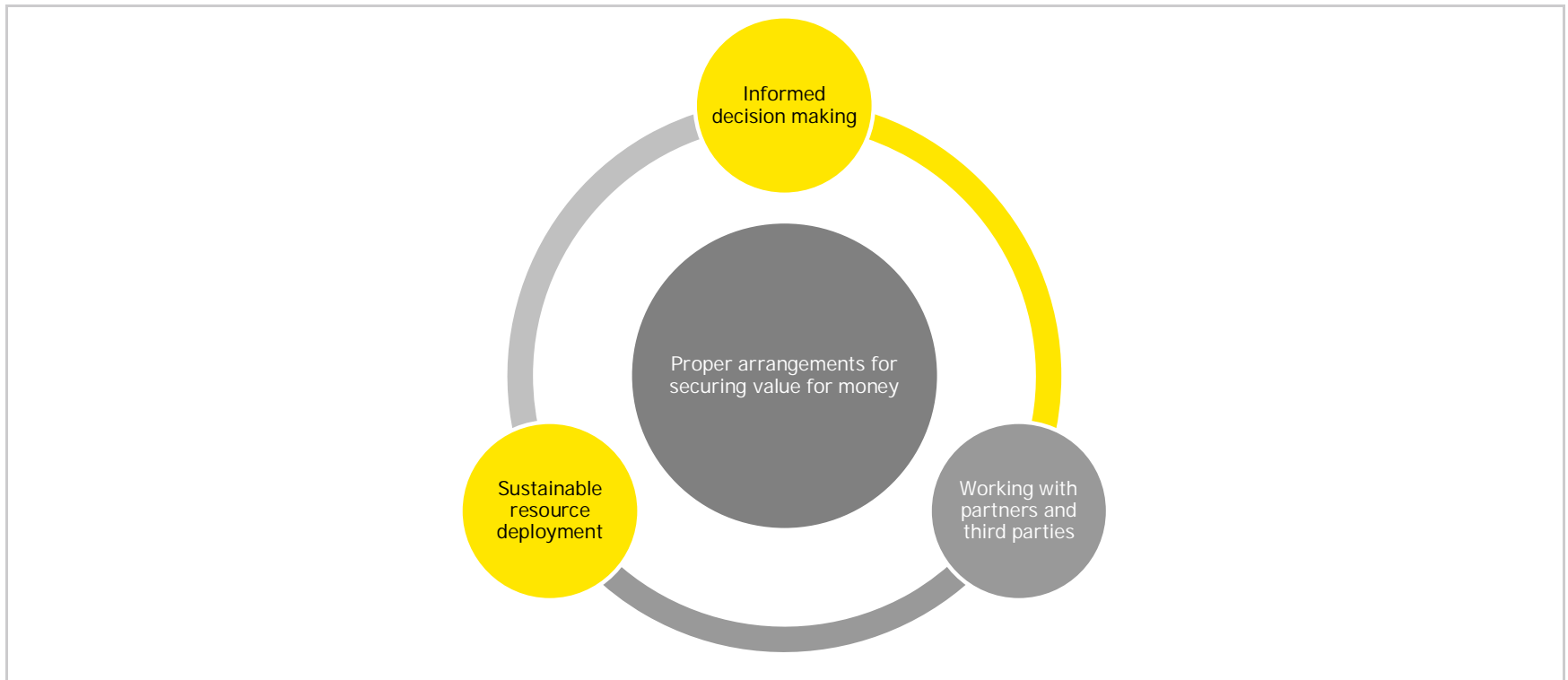
Value for Money

Value for Money

We are required to consider whether the Authority has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. This is known as our value for money conclusion.

Proper arrangements are defined by statutory guidance issued by the National Audit Office. They comprise your arrangements to:

- Take informed decisions;
- Deploy resources in a sustainable manner; and
- Work with partners and other third parties.



We issued an unqualified value for money conclusion on 27 July 2016.

We identified the following significant risk in our audit plan:

Significant risk	Conclusion
<p>The Authority will not be able to plan its finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions.</p>	<p>We have used PSAA's value for money profile tool to assess Authority's spending against similar Fire Authorities.</p>
<p>The Authority continues to face financial challenges with a cumulative budget gap, on the current medium term financial plan, of £2.6 million in 2018/19.</p>	<p>We reviewed the Authority's financial planning to date and the latest medium-term financial plan as well as the assumptions made by the Authority in drawing up the plan. This includes a number of efficiency initiatives to reduce the budget gap in future years.</p>
<p>The medium term financial plan sets out the Authority's strategic approach for closing the budget gap and key deliverables that are critical to the future financial sustainability of the Authority.</p>	<p>The Authority's strategic plan appeared reasonable.</p>
<p>Continued reductions in government grants is one of the key drivers of the need for significant savings.</p>	
<p>The Authority continues to seek alternative solutions to ensure that local services can be maintained and supported in the future, in line with local need.</p>	



Other Reporting Issues

Other Reporting Issues

Whole of Government Accounts

The Authority is below the specified audit threshold of £350 million. Therefore, we did not perform any audit procedures on the consolidation pack.

Annual Governance Statement

We are required to consider the completeness of disclosures in the Authority's annual governance statement, identify any inconsistencies with the other information of which we are aware from our work, and consider whether it is misleading.

We completed this work and did not identify any areas of concern.

Report in the Public Interest

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether, in the public interest, to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit in order for it to be considered by the Authority or brought to the attention of the public.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

Written Recommendations

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to designate any audit recommendation as one that requires the Authority to consider it at a public meeting and to decide what action to take in response.

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a written recommendation.

Objections Received

We did not receive any objections to the 2015/16 financial statements from members of the public.

Other Powers and Duties

We identified no issues during our audit that required us to use our additional powers under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Independence

We communicated our assessment of independence in our Audit Results Report to the Overview and Audit Committee on 27 July 2016. In our professional judgement the firm is independent and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff has not been compromised within the meaning regulatory and professional requirements.

Control Themes and Observations

It is the responsibility of the Authority to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Authority has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

We have adopted a fully substantive approach and have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm that it is not misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Authority.

A close-up photograph of a person's face as they look through a pair of black binoculars. The person's eyes are focused on the lenses. A bright yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Focused on your future".

Focused on your
future

Focused on your future

Area	Issue	Impact
Faster close	From the 2017/18 financial year, the deadline for preparing the Authority's financial statements will move to 31 May from 30 June. In addition, the deadline for completing the statutory audit will move to 31 July from 30 September.	<p>The faster closedown timetable requires the Authority to adjust its timetable for preparing the accounts, and may impact on the budget setting process and the timing of committee meetings.</p> <p>It requires upfront planning to identify areas of the accounts that can be prepared earlier, before the 31 March, and there will be a need to establish robust basis for estimations across a wider number of entries in the financial statements.</p> <p>In 2015/16 the Authority met the timelines for having audited statements by the end of July 2016 which is a great achievement.</p> <p>For the 2016/17 audit, we are working with officers to identify more ways in which we can support and embed the transition ahead of the new deadlines in 2017/18.</p>

Appendix A

Audit Fees



Appendix A Audit Fees

Our fee for 2015/16 is in line with the scale fee set by the PSAA and reported in our 27 July 2016 Audit Results Report.

Description	Final Fee 2015/16 £	Planned Fee 2015/16 £	Scale Fee 2015/16 £	Final Fee 2014/15 £
Total Audit Fee – Code work	31,379	31,379	31,379	41,838

We confirm we have not undertaken any non-audit work outside of the PSAA's requirements.

EY | Assurance | Tax | Transactions | Advisory

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ED None

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Combined Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	14 December 2016
OFFICER	Julian Parsons – Head of Service Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor David Schofield
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Annual Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2015/16
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service Health, Safety and Well-being performance report, 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 which highlights some excellent achievements as detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall best performing Service in our family group; • Achieving eleventh position of forty-five in the DCLG national statistics for the number of injuries to firefighters; • A substantial improvement in the RoSPA audit score of BFRS's safety management system from 65.7 per cent to 88.4 per cent; • Successful integration of CCTV systems on vehicles which have been welcomed by staff and have already provided hard evidence surrounding vehicle accidents protecting the driver and the Authority.
ACTION	For Information.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the performance of the Service in terms of Health, Safety and Well-being be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>A crucial part of risk management is the adoption and implementation of a robust health and safety management system to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all employees, visitors, contractors and the communities we serve.</p> <p>It is essential that this safety management system is monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation, to benchmark against our peers and to continually improve.</p> <p>This report details the performance and achievements for 2015/16 by the Service in terms of health and safety which demonstrates a strong health and safety culture throughout the Service.</p>

<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>If the management of risk is not controlled effectively it can potentially lead to serious injury and breaches of legislation which can have significant financial implications by way of claims or fines for the Authority. There is also the potential for reputational damage.</p> <p>The number and severity of Health & Safety incidents also has a direct impact on insurance premium expenditure. At present the Authority has a good record in this regard and this has contributed toward a reduced premium budget from 2017/18.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>The safety management system is well embedded throughout the Service and its performance is subject to regular monitor and review in order to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the Authority’s employees, contractors, visitors and the communities it serves, in addition to ensuring compliance with legislation. If this scrutiny does not take place there is the potential for a breach of health and safety legislation.</p>
<p>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION</p>	<p>In line with the tri-service memorandum of understanding on collaboration this report identifies areas where collaboration has and is taking place. The use and procurement of Analytical Risk Assessment pads and the installation of CCTV systems are such examples.</p> <p>There is also significant collaboration on health and safety matters with other Services and partners which is detailed within the report. An example of this is the joint regional work on the Fire Service specific H&S audit tool.</p>
<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p>	<p>This report demonstrates BFRS compliance with health and safety legislation through the production and implementation of its safety management system which is subject to external and internal scrutiny through audit and review.</p>
<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>There are no people impacts arising from this report.</p>
<p>USE OF RESOURCES</p>	<p>There are no use of resources implications.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>This report has been presented to both the Performance Management Board and Strategic Management Board for approval for onward transmission to the Fire Authority. Detailed below are links to the Health, Safety and Well-being report for 2014/15 and performance statistical information for January to July 2016.</p> <p>Health and Safety Annual Report 2014/15</p>

APPENDICES	Appendix A: Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2015-16
TIME REQUIRED	15 minutes.
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Health, Safety and Well-being

Annual Report

2015-16



Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue
Service



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Forewords

"The audit of Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service resulted in a significant overall improvement of performance in all sections. The Service achieved an overall Health and Safety Performance Rating of 88.4% and represents a good improvement compared to the previous audit which achieved a score of 65.7%. The Service and the Health and Safety team in particular should be complimented for their work in these areas. The Service should also be complimented for choosing challenging indicators rather than selecting the easier options".

Michael Collins
Lead Auditor
RoSPA QSA Audit

"The Authority is committed to achieving the very highest standards of health and safety for our employees, visitors, contractors and our communities and as such are constantly striving for continual improvement. It has been a very busy year with emphasis on improving the health and well-being of our employees through our fourth strategic aim – People. This year has seen the introduction of CCTV on front line appliances, improvement across the board in an audit of our health and safety management system and greater collaboration with our partner agencies to name but a few. This annual report is an opportunity to review performance and progress.

Jason Thelwell
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire
Authority

Executive Summary

Employee Well-being: This year has seen considerable progress in identifying and implementing ways to achieve the objective of '*Promoting employee well-being to improve contribution*' through signing up to the **MIND** Blue Light pledge and participation in the Global Corporate Challenge.

Training: It has been another good year for health and safety training following approval of funds by the Training Strategy Group. Details of courses provided and qualifications gained can be found on page 9 of the report.

Significant Event Procedure: Testing of this procedure took place in an exercise in January 2016 demonstrating that it is robust and fit for purpose and compliments the Death in Service procedures already in place. This procedure is now live.

RoSPA QSA Audit: In October a team of auditors from participating South East Services spent a week in Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) auditing the health and safety management system in place across the whole organisation. The results were excellent with our overall score increasing from **65.7% in 2009 to 88.4%**.

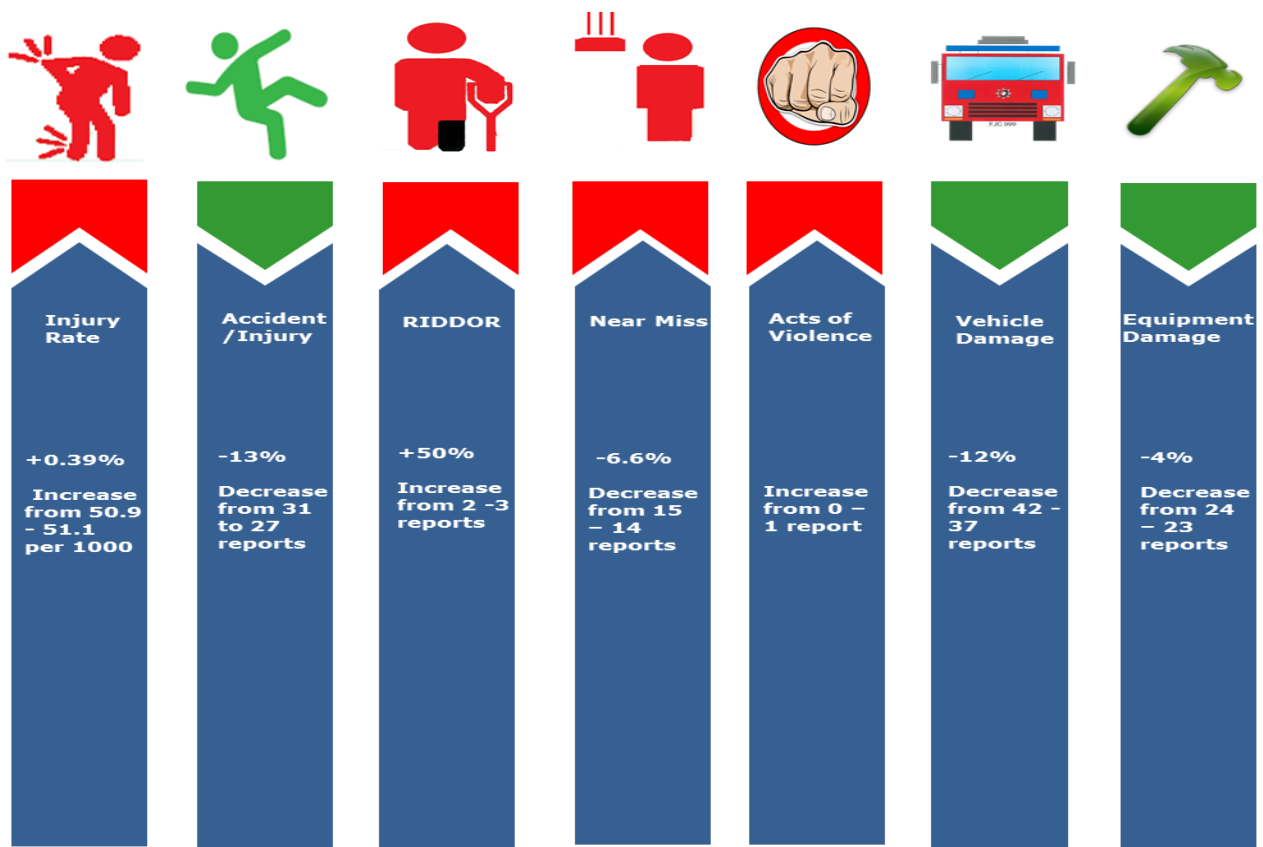
Didcot Power Station Collapse: This incident attracted national political and media interest. BFRS sent the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team from Aylesbury to search for three missing persons.

CCTV Update: Installation is well under way with systems being fitted when appliances come into Workshops for their annual service.

eSafety: is a web based safety event reporting and investigation system which will be accessible to all members of staff who may be required to report a safety event or, if a member of management, be required to investigate one.

Our Performance: The statistical analysis for 2015/16 detailed in the appendix at the end of this year's report provides valuable comparisons with last year's DCLG returns and against those Services of a similar size and structure (our peer group). Overall, BFRS is the best performing service in our family group.

Our performance at a glance



Statistics collated by BFRS throughout the year and stored on eSafety database.
Note: the 'near miss' reports (shown in red) dropped by one for 2015/16.

SE Region Figures 2015 - 2016

	RBFRS	Hants	Bucks	W Sussex	E Sussex	Kent	Oxford	IOW	Surrey
Employee No.	616	1579	497	701		1850	573	204	811
Total accidents	76	114	27	41		63	49	16	56
% had accidents	12	7	5	6		3	9	8	7
Acc days lost	20	37	5	19		17	16	3	13
Acc no days lost	56	77	22	22		46	33	13	43
Minor 0-7	65	98	24	31		57	41	16	50
Mod RIDDOR 7+ /8-28	6	11	3	4		6	2	0	4
Maj RIDDOR spec /or 29+	5	5	0	6		0	6	0	2

Employee Well-being

This year has seen considerable progress in identifying and implementing ways of achieving the objective '*Promoting employee well-being to improve contribution*' set out in the strategic aim 'People'.

MIND Blue Light pledge - One such initiative was to sign up to the MIND Blue Light pledge to increase mental health awareness amongst our staff. MIND are a charity who provide advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding of mental illness. Signing up to this pledge will:

- Allow staff to speak openly about mental health and seek support when they need it, enabling them to look after themselves, their team, colleagues and members of the public;
- Allow staff to come forward with ideas and good practice as to how their well-being can be better supported in the workplace;
- Demonstrate to staff that the people in charge value them and care about their well-being.

As a result, Managing Mental Health at Work courses were provided for line managers to increase their awareness within their working environment which proved to be very successful.

Looking after well-being in the workplace can also have a positive effect on productivity and help to increase the effectiveness of staff.

The appointment of 'Blue Light Champions' demonstrates the Authority's intent to embed mental health awareness and put it on a sustainable footing.

It should be noted that at the time of receiving the training, representatives from MIND commented that the Fire Service is ahead of both the Police and the Ambulance services in terms of mental health awareness and care.

Stress is one of the top three causes of workplace absence and as such is an area that the Health, Safety and Well-being department have been working closely with Human Resources (HR) on. A generic stress risk assessment, a 'return to work' risk assessment and 'wellness action plan' have been created and firmly embedded as part of occupational health requirements.

Global Corporate Challenge – As a means of improving the fitness of our staff the Authority signed up to the Global Corporate Challenge and paid for any member of staff who wished to participate. This was a very successful initiative which resulted in BFRS entering thirty four teams and coming second place after Cheshire FRS.

Fighting Fit –As a result of the Authority’s holistic approach to physical and mental health and to improve communication to staff, ‘Fighting Fit’, an area of the intranet, was launched providing useful resources to assist staff in managing their mental and physical well-being as well as improving and maintaining their fitness.

There are 6 different areas

- Well-being
- Health and Fitness
- Women’s Zone
- Men’s Zone
- What’s going on
- Staff room

Within these areas there is information on various topics such as diet and fitness, PTI Zone, rehabilitation, pregnancy and baby guide, offers, articles of interest, and details of forthcoming events.



Health and Safety (H&S) Training

It has been another good year for health and safety training following approval of funding by the Training Strategy Group. The following is a breakdown of the training that has been carried out.

External Providers

A further **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH)** and risk assessment training was carried out in December to capture those who require such a qualification as part of their role. Attendees included the Health and Safety Manager, Water Officer, Workshops Manager and Asset Technician.

Accident Investigation training for the remaining Level 2 Accident Investigators took place in April. This has ensured that all staff have received the same training and to the same standard which has resulted in a more consistent and appropriate standard of investigation and subsequent reports. It is planned to hold regular standardisation meetings moving forward.

An **IOSH Managing Safely** course took place in January for both operational and support staff who were new to role. As part of the course, following the examination, the Health, Safety and Well-being department conducted training on hazard reporting, safety event and near miss reporting and investigation. This input was well received and is now an integral part of future courses.

The Health and Safety Manager and Technician attended an IOSH Behavioural Safety course which was hosted by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and attended by many of the South East region fire and rescue services. The course objectives were to provide tools such as:

- Techniques that help delegates to understand safety culture and how it can be improved and sustained;
- How to appreciate how behaviours are prompted by activators, reinforced by consequences and the need to develop good safe habits;
- How to have a clear understanding of how behaviours and the nature of human error contribute to accidents in the workplace;
- How to understand the tools and techniques required to create a safety culture that encourages a 'want to' rather than a 'have to' approach to managing risk.

Fire Warden training also took place due to staff transferring department or leaving, to ensure the appropriate number of wardens for the occupancy and type of premises.

Finally, it was necessary to run a **First Aid at Work** course for support staff to increase the number of qualified staff in order to ensure continued compliance

with the First Aid at Work Regulations 1981. Service Headquarters is an area where succession planning is required.

In- house

Health and Safety – employee responsibilities Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 delivered via the HEAT e-learning system. This training package details what responsibilities employees have in relation to taking care of themselves and others during their workplace activities, including: when driving for work; stress; COSHH; Manual Handling and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and as such is a mandatory completion for all staff on an annual basis.

A training package for **Fire safety emergency arrangements** for all staff on induction and as an annual refresher was developed on the HEAT e-learning system by the Health and Safety and Learning and Development Departments with input from Fire Safety Officers. Completion of this training package is mandatory.

Management of Risk

The installation of **Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)** is well under way with systems being installed when an appliance is due a service or requires maintenance. The presence of the cameras has been readily accepted by crews who appreciate that it is there for their protection. Footage has been accessed by investigators to provide factual evidence in several safety events. Footage was also requested by the Police to assist them with a criminal investigation.

The **Significant Event** procedure was tested in an exercise which took place at headquarters in January. The exercise simulated the death of a Flexi Duty Officer whilst en-route to an incident during flooding and a member of the public in a road traffic collision. Overall, the procedure worked well and following feedback from the exercise debrief some amendments were made to improve it further. The procedure has now been approved by the Strategic Management Board (SMB) and is live.

Driving for work - Due to a decrease in the number of pool and station vehicles and the need for our staff to work more flexibly, there is the potential requirement for staff to use their own vehicle on occasions when driving for work. Private vehicles, when used for driving for work, are designated as 'Grey Fleet'. Without appropriate control measures this activity could present a risk to the Authority in terms of the roadworthiness of the vehicle and compliance with the law in relation to insurance, tax and MOT. To eliminate this risk, a robust procedure has been written and a system introduced whereby anyone wishing to use their own vehicle must enter their vehicle details, insurance, road tax, MOT, service and vehicle checks details into an online system already used by the

Authority for driving licence checks. Approval is also to be sought from the Fleet Manager and mileage claims will not be paid if this process has not been complied with.

Fire Safety Audit of Authority premises - In February of this year our Protection team, under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, carried out a series of fire safety audits on Authority premises which included Service Headquarters. The outcome of these resulted in the requirement for a fire safety emergency arrangements induction training package to be introduced for all staff. Specifically that a robust process is in place for ensuring visitors, contractors and ad hoc external workers are aware of the fire safety emergency arrangements and for the fire risk assessments to be suitable and sufficient. With these requirements in place and on re-audit, a clean bill of health was given for the headquarters site.

RoSPA Audit- As part of an agreement between the Fire Services in the South East region, a programme of auditing each Service's health and safety management system is in place. In October, a team of auditors from four of those Services spent a week in BMKFRS auditing the health and safety management system in place across the whole organisation. They looked at the suite of health and safety policies and procedures in existence and then, through interviews and observation, determined the level of implementation of those policies and procedures from the grass roots level to the most senior managers.

The areas covered in the audit with the associated percentage scores were:

Policy – 100% (83)

Organising – 91% (71)

Planning & Implementing – 86% (64)

Measuring Performance – 84% (66)

Audit & Review – 88% (51)

Risk Control Performance Indicators – 81% (67)

The figures in brackets were the percentage scores in 2009.

At the closing meeting the results were shared with senior managers including the CFO and other relevant stakeholders. **It was excellent news!** Our overall score had increased from **65.7% in 2009 to 88.4%**.

The audit report highlighted seventeen recommendations for consideration and/or action; eight high priority and nine medium. Work is well underway on this in preparation for a progress review by the lead auditor in November of 2016.

These results are testament to the concerted efforts of all staff in ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all, including visitors, contractors and the communities they serve.

Didcot Power Station collapse - In February 2016 Aylesbury's USAR team participated in the search for three workers who were missing following the partial collapse of the power station's boiler house. Given the protracted nature of the incident and high levels of political and media interest, it was important that the risk assessment process was robust, suitable and sufficient. Although the Health and Safety Executive took primacy over the incident, they found the rigour with which Officer in Charge of USAR had undertaken the analytical risk assessments to be such that they adopted them for use across the incident ground by all participating agencies.

Breathing Apparatus (BA) procedures – Procedures governing the use of BA nationally have changed with the rescinding of 'Technical Bulletin 1/97' and the introduction of the 'Operational Guidance on Breathing Apparatus' document. As a result a gap analysis was carried out and measures implemented to meet the requirements of the new document. The new procedures went live in June 2015.

Incident Command Manual – Collaboration between the three Thames Valley fire and rescue services on implementation of the new procedures across the board was explored. However, the other two Services were not in a position to go live on the determined date. Following implementation of the small amendments needed to meet the requirements of the new Incident Command manual, go live for the Service was on the 1 May 2016.

eSafety This system is bespoke to the requirements of the Service and has been built by the provider and the health and safety department. The benefits of this system are:

- The ability to report an event on occurrence rather than having to wait until a computer is available;
- A more simplified and less onerous process for all;
- Non reliance on external bodies such as Thames Valley Fire Control;
- Speedy electronic processing to ensure safety events are reported and investigated within the prescribed timeframes.

The system went live in September (2016) and will be rolled out across the Service next spring (2017).

Working Time Regulations – Work is progressing well on a system for employees to record the hours worked and rest taken when working for the Authority. As we innovate and use our staff more flexibly, many employees work to more than one contract, this system identifies the employee through their National Insurance number and picks up all contracts worked. The employee has the responsibility to record those hours worked and rest taken on a weekly basis. The system is to be trialled with the Specialist Firefighters when they commence their roles at the end of May 2016 and will run for four months.

Performance Overview



Performance Overview

You will note from the graph in '*Our performance at a glance*' that, in comparing performance between 2014/15 and 2015/16 there has been an increase in Injury rate of 0.39% despite a reduction in personal injuries – thirty one in 2014/15 and twenty seven in 2015/16. This is because there are less employees – 609 in 2014/15 and 528 in 2015/16.

There has also been an increase in Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable incidents from two in 2014/15 to three in 2015/16. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of 'acts of violence' against employees; there were none in 2014/15 and one in 2015/16.

With regard to proactive monitoring there has been a decrease in the number of 'near miss' reports for this year from fifteen in 2014/15 to fourteen in 2015/16. However, this trend has since reversed following the health and safety department visiting stations and watches to deliver training on proactive reporting which encompasses 'near misses' and hazard reports.

Bench-marking between Fire Services' provides statistical data for comparison and is an important part of performance management. The South East region fire services share safety event statistics on an annual basis. Please see graph in '*Our performance at a glance*'.

The information is broken down as follows:

- Number of employees;
- Total accidents;
- Accident days lost;
- Accident no days lost;
- Minor safety events;
- Moderate safety events
- Major RIDDOR 7 day or more than 29 days sickness safety events.

The results highlight that BFRS are again placed second after the Isle of Wight with twenty seven safety events for an employee head count of 497 (a percentage of 5%) compared to sixteen safety events for an employee head count of 204 employees (a percentage of 8%). In effect, BFRS have more than double the number of employees but have had less safety events giving a lesser percentage. Kent Fire and Rescue Service shows a percentage of 3% however, they do not record safety events in the same way as the other fire services in the region.

The performance statistical data received from DCLG for 2015/16 has been grouped, by the health and safety department, in Services of similar 'employee

numbers' to provide a more accurate comparison of performance between BFRS and their peers.

It should be noted that DCLG have changed the criteria for reporting which is reflected in all data. Total employees now only includes operational personnel. There were twenty one injury safety events for the year for a total of 259 operational personnel which using the HSE formula equates to an incident rate of 8108; a slight increase on last year's figures.

Again, this year's statistics highlight an increase in injury rate for 2015/16 of 5.4% despite a reduction in the **total number of injuries** – twenty two in 2014/15 to twenty one in 2015/16. This is again attributable to decreasing numbers of employees -286 in 2014/15 and 259 in 2015/16.

Whilst there has not been an increase in the number of over **7 day RIDDOR reportable events**, BFRS has moved from first place in the league table to third with two events; this is due to the fact that two other Services had only one event.

The total number of **injuries sustained during routine activities** has seen an increase of three compared with 2014/15. Unfortunately this has resulted in a slip from first position in the league table to fourth. However, it should be noted that the top three Services all had the same number of injuries - six compared with seven for BFRS.

It is disappointing to note that there has been an increase in the number of **vehicle accidents** – thirty in 2014/15 to thirty seven in 2015/16. BFRS's position in the league table has slipped from fourth position to seventh. Of these thirty seven, eight were 'unavoidable' consisting of the following:

- Animal strike – deer hitting a car (1)
- Stone chips (2)
- Hit by third party (3)
- Vehicle crimes (2)

On a more positive note there has been an improvement in performance in **total number of injuries** at fires from seventh to fourth in the league table with a reduction of two from seven to five and in the **total number of injuries at special service calls** from third to second in the league table with a reduction of one from three to two.

BFRS has maintained the top position in the league table for the least number of injuries for the second year in **total number of injuries during training; total number of major injuries** and **annual incidence** rate.

The national league table provided by DCLG identifies BFRS in eleventh position out of the forty five fire and rescue services in the country – a laudable

achievement and is again, testament to the commitment to health and safety by all operational staff.

Health and Safety Team Performance

The demonstration of commitment to health and safety across the Authority from the senior management team, the Lead Member on the Fire Authority for Health, Safety and Well-being, to those at grass roots level is excellent and this was highlighted in the audit report. One recommendation from the audit was for senior managers to carry out 'health and safety' tours at stations and sites to visibly demonstrate this commitment and to gauge the level of awareness, amongst staff, on health and safety matters. A programme of visits by the Head of Service Development and the Health and Safety Manager are planned for the end of 2016.

Every half year the Health and Safety Manager presents the report on the frequency and types of safety events occurring at operational incidents and training events. The period of 1 January to 30 June 2016 is captured in the latest report with the statistics highlighting a total of **fifteen** safety events occurring relative to the total number of incidents attended of **4838**, giving a percentage of safety events in total of **0.35%**.

A comparison has been carried out between the first six months of the year and the same period in 2015 with the following outcome:

- January to June 2015 - **4119** incidents and **twenty four** safety events resulting in a percentage of **0.58%**
- January to June 2016 - **4838** incidents and **fifteen** safety events resulting in a percentage of **0.35%** - another reduction.

It is pleasing to note the continuing downward trend.

Working with others

Thames Valley - the health and safety managers for each of the Thames Valley fire services meet regularly to explore opportunities to collaborate. We now jointly procure Analytical Risk Assessment (ARA) pads and wristbands for exposure to hazardous substances. Royal Berkshire asked to join our CCTV procurement project and used our workshops area for their installations. Discussions around operational alignment continue with work streams in place which the Health and Safety Departments feed into.

South East regional health and safety work continues to further improve common ways of working, good practice and 'lessons learnt' from other Services. The group continues to meet quarterly and is attended by either one or both members of the Health and Safety team. With the implementation of the new

Incident Command manual, the South East region are bidding for their ARA template to be adopted nationally.

Work is progressing well with the fire service specific health and safety audit tool with CFOA keen to endorse it for use nationally. The next stage is to determine the level of qualification for auditors and the lead auditor, write the guidance for auditors and decide on a scoring mechanism. The plan is for this to be trialled early 2017 to be formally released in 2018.

Performance Indicators

Budgets

Once again, the training needs analysis for health and safety training identified that the training budget would be fully utilised for 2015/16 which was realised. The procurement of the eSafety system meant that the Health and Safety budget saw a slight overspend due to paying support and hosting services up front.

The forecast for the end of the next financial year is a likely to be a balanced budget despite a 'one off' cost for specialist scientific advisors coming into the Service to conduct air sampling at some stations to identify if our crews are being exposed to high levels of diesel exhaust emissions. It is very pleasing and reassuring to note that this is not the case and actual levels of exposure are very low and no remedial action is required.

Objectives for 2015/16

The Authority's vision is "that Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes is the safest place in England in which to live, work and travel". To support this vision the Corporate Plan 2015/20 sets out five strategic aims. Whilst health and safety runs through all of them it is clearly stated in Strategic Objective three 'To provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets and resources in relation to risk and demand' and in Strategic Enabler one 'To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people'. The Corporate Plan can be accessed via the BFRS website.

Health and Safety objectives for 2015/16 have been set in line with the Authority's Public Safety Plan and will be reviewed at the end of the financial year.



Incident Number 33159, 21st September 2016.

M40 Junctions 2 to 1a Southbound – Mobile Crane Well Alight.

This incident caused widespread disruption and created news headlines with reports of explosions, which were actually the crane's tyres exploding in the fire. This was a hazardous and challenging incident which our crews dealt with quickly and safely.

Appendix 1

Family peer group performance comparison tables 2014/15 and 2015/16

The H&S department are required to report on BFRS end of year accident statistical returns to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 31 May 2016 for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

Summary:

The Health and Safety Department provided returns for:

HS1- Injuries during operational incidents, encompassing both Whole-time and On-Call employees and sub divided into injuries at fires, at road traffic collisions and at other Special Service calls.

HS2- Injuries during training and routine activities also encompassing Whole-time and On-Call employees and sub-divided into injuries during operational training, fitness training and routine activities.

VE1- Vehicle accidents displayed as a comparison against our peer group.

Findings:

HS1 – there has been a reduction in the number of personnel injured at operational incidents from twenty two to twenty one for this reporting period which is very pleasing.

HS2- Injuries at training events have seen a reduction from eight to seven on last year's figures which is good, however injuries during routine activities has seen an increase of three from four to seven.

Reason: On analysis, most of these injuries were appliance related. Examples of which were employees shutting their hand in the appliance door; jarring their wrist on an appliance locker and falling backwards when mounting the appliance and twisting their ankle. It would appear that crews are not as focussed when carrying out routine activities.

These figures are calculated using the Annual Incidence Rate which is calculated by the number of reportable injuries in the financial year divided by the average number employed during the year x 100,000, giving the number of injuries per 100,000 workers. This calculation provides a more accurate picture of the overall health and safety performance in the operational arena.

Nationally BFRS holds eleventh position out of forty five in the league table, a significant achievement which reflects the fact that BFRS has one of the best

safety records in the country for operational employees especially when compared to peers of similar size and demographics – a record that everyone

Total Number of Persons Injured	2014/15	Total Number of Persons Injured	2015/16
Buckinghamshire	22	Buckinghamshire	21
West Sussex	33	Wiltshire	30
Wiltshire	34	Warwickshire	35
Oxfordshire	40	Hereford and Worcester	38
Northamptonshire	49	Oxfordshire	38
Dorset	57	West Sussex	42
Bedfordshire	59	Dorset	50
East Sussex	61	Suffolk	61
Suffolk	67	Northamptonshire	63
Berkshire	68	Berkshire	64
East Sussex	77	Bedfordshire	75
Cambridgeshire	89	Norfolk	76
Hereford and Worcester	48	East Sussex	82
Warwickshire	45	Cambridgeshire	98

should be extremely proud of.

There has been a reduction of one in the total number of persons injured. BFRS remain top of the league table. A testament to operational personnel of the continued dedication to ensuring the safety of themselves and others.

Total Number of injuries at fires	2014/15	Total Number of injuries at fires	2015/16
Wiltshire	5	Buckinghamshire	5
Buckinghamshire	7	Hereford and Worcester	7
West Sussex	7	Oxfordshire	7
Dorset	9	Warwickshire	7
Bedfordshire	11	West Sussex	7
Northamptonshire	11	Wiltshire	7
Berkshire	18	Bedfordshire	9
Suffolk	19	Dorset	14
Norfolk	20	Berkshire	16
Oxfordshire	20	Norfolk	16
Cambridgeshire	23	Northamptonshire	16
East Sussex	29	Cambridgeshire	17
Hereford and Worcester	10	Suffolk	18
Warwickshire	17	East Sussex	20

There has been a reduction of two in the total number of injuries at fires which demonstrates the commitment to health and safety by staff in the operational arena.

Total Number of injuries at Special Services	2014/15	Total Number of injuries at Special Services	2015/16
Oxfordshire	1	Warwickshire	1
West Sussex	2	Buckinghamshire	2
Buckinghamshire	3	Oxfordshire	2
Northamptonshire	3	Hereford and Worcester	3
Berkshire	4	Wiltshire	4
Dorset	4	Berkshire	5
Wiltshire	6	Dorset	5
Bedfordshire	7	Suffolk	6
Norfolk	11	Bedfordshire	7
Suffolk	13	Norfolk	8
Cambridgeshire	15	Northamptonshire	10
East Sussex	20	West Sussex	12
Hereford and Worcester	3	East Sussex	15
Warwickshire	6	Cambridgeshire	18

There has been a reduction of one in the total number of injuries at Special Services from three to two which has seen BFRS rise to second place from third.

Total Number of injuries during routine activities	2014/15	Total Number of injuries during routine activities	2014/15
Buckinghamshire	4	Hereford and Worcester	6
Dorset	6	Oxfordshire	6
Oxfordshire	8	West Sussex	6
Wiltshire	8	Buckinghamshire	7
Suffolk	9	Wiltshire	7
East Sussex	9	Dorset	8
West Sussex	10	Suffolk	11
Northamptonshire	11	Norfolk	12
Berkshire	12	East Sussex	15
Bedfordshire	14	Warwickshire	16
Norfolk	15	Northamptonshire	22
Cambridgeshire	21	Berkshire	23
Hereford and Worcester	11	Bedfordshire	26
Warwickshire	9	Cambridgeshire	29

There has been an increase of three in the total number of injuries during routine activities. Of these occurrences most were appliance related with examples of employees shutting their hand in the appliance door, jarring their wrist on an appliance locker and falling backwards when mounting the appliance and twisting their ankle.

Total Number of injuries during Training	2014/15	Total Number of injuries during Training	2015/16
Buckinghamshire	8	Buckinghamshire	7
Wiltshire	11	Warwickshire	11
Northamptonshire	16	Wiltshire	12
West Sussex	16	Northamptonshire	15
Oxfordshire	20	West Sussex	17
Cambridgeshire	24	Berkshire	20
Bedfordshire	25	Hereford and Worcester	22
Dorset	27	Dorset	23
Suffolk	27	Oxfordshire	23
East Sussex	28	Suffolk	26
Berkshire	29	East Sussex	32
Norfolk	40	Bedfordshire	33
Hereford and Worcester	22	Cambridgeshire	34
Warwickshire	11	Norfolk	40

There has been a reduction of one injury in this area with BFRS retaining the top position.

Total Number of over 7 day injuries	2014/15	Total Number of over 7 day injuries	2015/16
Buckinghamshire	2	Dorset	1
East Sussex	2	Wiltshire	1
West Sussex	3	Buckinghamshire	2
Dorset	5	Cambridgeshire	2
Bedfordshire	7	West Sussex	3
Suffolk	7	Northamptonshire	4
Northamptonshire	8	Hereford and Worcester	5
Oxfordshire	8	Warwickshire	5
Wiltshire	10	Oxfordshire	6
Berkshire	10	Suffolk	6
Norfolk	12	East Sussex	8
Cambridgeshire	20	Bedfordshire	10
Hereford and Worcester	7	Berkshire	12
Warwickshire	11	Norfolk	22

Total Number of Major injuries	2014/15	Total Number of Major injuries	2015/16
Buckinghamshire	0	Buckinghamshire	0
Norfolk	0	Berkshire	0
Bedfordshire	0	Cambridgeshire	0
Oxfordshire	0	Hereford and Worcester	0
Dorset	0	Norfolk	0
West Sussex	1	Northamptonshire	0
Berkshire	1	Suffolk	0
Suffolk	1	Warwickshire	0
Wiltshire	2	Dorset	1
Northamptonshire	6	West Sussex	1
East Sussex	6	Wiltshire	1
Cambridgeshire	13	Oxfordshire	2
Hereford and Worcester	1	East Sussex	3

There has been no change in numbers in this category.

BFRS remains top of the league table with no major injuries.

Vehicle Safety Events 2015/16	
Fire & Rescue Service	Total Number of safety events
Suffolk	18
West Sussex	23
Bedfordshire	28
Warwickshire	31
Cambridgeshire	33
Oxfordshire	34
Buckinghamshire	37
Berkshire	42
Wiltshire	48
Dorset	49
Hereford and Worcester	52
Northamptonshire	65
East Sussex	68
Norfolk	70

There has been an increase of seven reported safety events for 2015/16, however, on analysis eight of these were 'unavoidable' resulting from animal

Annual Incidence Rate			
Fire & Rescue Service	Total Number of employees	Total number of safety events	Incident Rate
Buckinghamshire	259	21	8108
West Sussex	314	42	13376
Warwickshire	246	35	14227
Hereford and Worcester	264	38	14394
Wiltshire	197	30	15228
Oxfordshire	229	38	16593
Berkshire	385	64	16623
Dorset	242	50	20661
East Sussex	382	82	21466
Northamptonshire	275	63	22909
Bedfordshire	270	75	27778
Norfolk	264	76	28778
Suffolk	210	61	29047
Cambridgeshire	237	98	41350

strikes, being hit by a third party, vehicle crimes & stone chips.

For 2015/16 the DCLG changed the criteria for reporting which is reflected in the data above. Total employees now only includes operational personnel. There were twenty one injury safety events for the year for a total of 259 operational personnel which equates to 8108, a slight increase on last year's figures.

Position across all 45 services 2015/16	
Fire & Rescue Service	Annual incidence rate
Greater London	4086
Cleveland	4683
Durham	5096
Tyne & Wear	5357
Nottinghamshire	5432
Shropshire	5899
West Midlands	6258
Derbyshire	7022
Merseyside	7591
Kent	7808
Buckinghamshire	8108

These health and safety performance statistics, produced by central government, highlight that nationally, of the **forty five Fire and Rescue Services, BFRS holds eleventh position** in the league table a truly great achievement for which operational personnel should be commended.

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Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	14 December 2016
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Roger Reed
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Fire Reform - Collaborative Working update
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report provides an update on collaborative working primarily within the Thames Valley. Also included is the Authority's contribution on a range of national and regional collaborative programmes which support the Authority's reform agenda and in time will enhance Thames Valley collaborative outcomes.</p> <p>At its meeting on 10 June 2015 Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) approved a 'Fire and Rescue Collaboration in the Thames Valley' Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire Authorities. The purpose of this MOU is to commit each fire and rescue service to look at collaboration within the Thames Valley as a first option, to reduce cost, improve quality and improve resilience.</p> <p>At its Executive Committee meeting on 29 July 2015, a further MOU; Property Sharing and Co-Location of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in the Thames Valley was approved for signature by the Chairman.</p> <p>The Property Sharing MOU was also approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley.</p> <p>Annex A of this report details Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services' main collaboration achievements to date, building on the establishment of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS), which is the most significant example of collaboration in action.</p> <p>Annex B outlines a range of national and regional examples of collaborative working which are both beneficial to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) and the wider public sector. These examples also support the Government's reform agenda, set out more recently by the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service 'Three Pillars of</p>

	<p>Reform’ priorities.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fire-minister-speaks-at-cfoa-conference</p>
ACTION	Information.
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>1. That the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services collaborative achievements to date, set out in Annex A, are noted;</p> <p>2. That the range of national and regional examples of collaborative working, set out in Annex B, are noted.</p>
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>Maintaining resilience and focus on day to day service delivery is ensured by allocating dedicated resources to the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services collaboration programme as required. For example a dedicated Programme Manager has been recruited.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services collaboration programme maintains its own risk register. Procedures are in place to escalate to Steering Group and beyond as part of the programme protocols and standard programme management arrangements.</p> <p>External local government and potential governance model reviews within the Thames Valley may impact on senior management capacity to maintain the required pace of Thames Valley and broader collaborations. This risk could be mitigated by a programme of sharing senior officers across the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services, to free up further capacity.</p> <p>The major national and regional collaboration programmes also maintain appropriate risk registers and these are managed through defined project management guidelines.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The financial benefits of collaboration will naturally vary depending upon the type of service or procurement. The recent collaborative work between the Thames Valley Fire Authorities produced savings on collective budgets of well over £700k over the four years in which vehicles will be procured. This in itself has generated a move toward standardising the equipment on those vehicles which in turn will generate more savings and incidentally will be a significant aid toward use standard operating procedures.</p> <p>National and regional collaborations that require funding are either covered within existing budgets or established Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) funding mechanisms.</p>

<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>To support collaboration to become more widespread at a local level, the Government set out in "Enabling Closer Working between the Emergency Services: Consultation response and next steps", its intention to introduce a new statutory duty on the three emergency services to consider opportunities to collaborate and to give effect to collaboration proposals where it would be in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness.</p> <p>The result has been the Policing and Crime Bill which will introduce this new statutory duty. It does not specify how the services should collaborate except for high level provisions and restrictions; neither does it affect the scope of any existing powers of the emergency services to exercise their functions jointly or on behalf of one another or otherwise cooperate.</p> <p>It provides for collaboration agreements to be made between police bodies, fire and rescue bodies and ambulance trusts. This would not affect the status of existing collaborations, such as those detailed in Annexes A and B to the report. However, they must include at least two different emergency services and can involve more than one of each emergency service. The legislation would permit local authorities, health bodies and the voluntary sector to be joined in a collaboration agreement</p> <p>There will be specific requirements for the police, fire and rescue and emergency ambulance services to keep under consideration opportunities to collaborate with one another, and further, where it would be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness of at least two of the services, for those services to give effect to such collaboration by entering into a collaboration agreement</p>
<p>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION</p>	<p>The Authority has committed to a default position of collaboration with Thames Valley Fire Authorities unless a clear business case favours an alternative collaborative option.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Fire Services Collaboration Programme set out in Annex A demonstrates significant collaborative working.</p>
<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p>	<p>Collaborative working options to deliver health and safety services are included within the Thames Valley Collaboration programme, for consideration.</p>
<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>Considerations of equality and diversity issues are built into individual collaboration programmes.</p>
<p>USE OF RESOURCES</p>	<p>Strategic context; The vision for Thames Valley Fire Services</p>

	<p>Collaboration is: 'By 2020, provide aligned service delivery and a workforce development strategy that delivers interoperability and flexible deployment across the Thames Valley. This is supported by three critical success factors outlined in Annex A.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders;</p> <p>A joint communications programme has been developed which aims to optimise stakeholder engagement and employee involvement. Timing of key communications will be coordinated.</p> <p>The system of internal control;</p> <p>A Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group is in place, represented by a director lead from each service, accountable for delivering the programme.</p> <p>The Thames Valley programme is managed by a recently appointed Programme Manager, operating established Prince 2 methodology.</p> <p>Each national and regional programme has its own governance arrangements.</p> <p>The management of the asset base;</p> <p>Collaborative opportunities will always be actively sought that allow for efficient use of property and equipment assets between authorities, whether that be shared use, shared procurement or shared back office resources and systems in respect of asset management.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Property Sharing and Co-Location of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in the Thames Valley – Executive Committee 29 July 2015: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5614/3740/2436/ITEM_1_2_Memorandum_of_Understanding_with_PCC_occ_rbf_a_2_with_appendix.pdf</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding with (MOU) with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services – Fire Authority 10 June 2015: http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7314/5563/7856/ITEM_1_5_Memorandum_of_Understanding_with_Royal_Berks_hire_and_Oxfordshire_Fire_and_Rescue_Services.com_pressed.pdf</p> <p>Enabling Closer Working between the Emergency Services: Consultation response and next steps, HM Government 26 January 2016 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/495371/6.1722_HO_Enabling_Closer_Working_Between_the_Emergency_Services_Consult....pdf</p> <p>Policing and Crime Bill:</p>

	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/policing-and-crime-bill</p> <p>Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, Brandon Lewis, addresses audience at the 2016 Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) conference:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fire-minister-speaks-at-cfoa-conference</p> <p>Fire Reform – delivering the Authority’s Workforce Reform Programme (Executive Committee 21 September 2016):</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/2114/7333/8207/ITEM_8_Fire_Reform_Report_Executive_21092016_Appendices.pdf</p>
APPENDICES	<p>Annex A Collaboration across Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services</p> <p>Annex B Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services National and Regional Collaborative Initiatives</p>
TIME REQUIRED	15 minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development</p> <p>lswift@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744679</p> <p>Marie Crothers, Programme Manager(BFRS)</p> <p>mcrothers@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744430</p>

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Annex A - Collaboration across Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services

1. Purpose and summary of report

This report provides Members with an update on progress towards Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) collaboration across the Thames Valley. The Thames Valley Collaboration programme is focussed on the achievement of the shared key objective: "Sharing resources on a fair and equitable basis, to support achievement of excellent outcomes for communities across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire."

This key objective is supported by two critical success factors:

- Deliver better outcomes for the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire
- Make changes that result in more effective and efficient services
- Increase resilience levels across all the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services

The Programme Blueprint to support the vision is currently being detailed and will cover organisational change holistically across people, process, technology/equipment/facilities and data/management information (MI).

The benefits realisation plan is also being established to ensure that any investment/change effort into collaborative improvement evidences a tangible return by being identified up front, baselined and tracked.

This relies on data and management information which will require some development before we can use it for the Programme.

2. Background and supporting information

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by the 3 Thames Valley Fire Services in June 2015, the Collaboration Steering Group, represented by a Director Lead from each service, has developed a programme of linked collaboration projects. These projects are focussed on the vision and critical success factors identified above.

Over the last 12 months, significant progress has been made on the first portfolio of agreed projects and more projects are being reviewed for the next phase of delivery. Key achievements to date are outlined below.

In addition, there are informal conversations taking place at all levels about how we might share knowledge to work more effectively across the region.

To assist in driving the programme forward, a new Thames Valley FRS Collaboration Programme Manager has been appointed. Julie Pickford is an experienced programme manager with previous FRS experience and has led a number of complex programmes of transformation. Julie has a regular presence at each FRS headquarters.

3. Key achievements to date

a. Standardised Type B Appliances

Following a joint procurement process, all Services will now be buying the same type B appliance. Over the next four years, 37 Volvo appliances, all built to a standard specification will be procured. During this period, savings are estimated to be £720,704. The estimated delivery timeline is May to June 2017 and the new appliances are aimed to be placed at stations which most frequently cross borders to improve deployment efficiency. This is a great example of how joint working can improve service delivery and reduce our service costs.

b. Standardised Inventory

All Services have reached agreement regarding a standardised inventory to be carried on the Thames Valley standard fire appliance. This will maximise the benefit of the standard appliance as well as support the introduction of common operating procedures across the region.

c. Operational Alignment

A joint TV FRS project team has been working with the aim of creating standardised procedures and incident response across the Thames Valley Services using National Operational Guidance recommendations. This builds on the work originally started within the Thames Valley Fire Control project. Initial recommendations cover incident responses, training and the provision of equipment that will support alignment from original call to incident closure.

This project is a critical aspect of the collaboration work programme and will influence future business requirements for training, procurement and operational alignment of new appliances and equipment and, as it develops, will lead to a reduction in the duplication of resources and facilitate flexible workforce deployment.

d. Operational Training Review

An independent review has identified a range of benefits that can be achieved through developing shared operational training. This review forms the basis of a project to map shared training in areas where operational alignment has taken place.

e. Creating Knowledge and Expertise

A group of 12 staff (four from each service) will be attending a three day course to become 'Thames Valley Collaboration Transformation Practitioners'. This will create 'collaboration champions' with expertise to drive and manage future collaboration throughout each partner organisation.

The course is accredited by Canterbury Christchurch University and CFOA and commences in December 2016.

From December there will be monthly updates cascaded for management regarding the TV Collaboration Programme and they will be made available to all staff via the intranet.

Members of the Collaboration Team will also attend each FRS SMT as required and offer short coffee break updates on the programme and benefits being delivered at a variety of service locations.

f. Collaboration Event and Information

On 28 November 2016, the Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity and senior staff from the 3 Thames Valley FRS attended a workshop to discuss collaborative working progress in more detail and heard from a leading expert in collaboration to achieve business change.

A collaboration Newsletter has been created and will be updated monthly and uploaded to each service's intranet. This will support the monthly programme highlight report provided by the Steering Group.

The team are also establishing an overview of all of the collaboration taking place or being planned. This will help to manage interdependencies as well coordinate effort and resources to maximise efforts in a timely way.

The team are also ensuring linkages to external work going on around national operational guidance and standards to ensure that best practice is adopted whilst service delivery is standardised to improve resilience.

The next '**Collaboration Update**' newsletter will be published before Christmas and will include a full list of collaboration underway as well as the TV Collaboration Programme scope in more detail.

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Annex B – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) National and Regional Collaborative Initiatives

Introduction

The purpose of this Annex is to provide Members with an overview of other national and regional collaborative initiatives that fit with the national agenda, which support the Authority's reform agenda and in time will enhance Thames Valley collaborative outcomes.

In recent speeches setting out the Government's Fire Reform agenda, the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Brandon Lewis) emphasises the direction of travel expected of Fire and Emergency Services. The Minister's vision outlines 'Three Pillars of Reform': Efficiency and Collaboration, Accountability and Transparency and Operational Integrity.

Our Thames Valley Fire and Police partners are also involved with some of these initiatives and this is predicted to increase over time.

A number of factors are considered when determining the Authority's role in national and regional initiatives.

For example:

- Increasing value for money for the tax payer.
- Increasing capacity, sustainability and resilience.
- Timing is critical – some topics may not be right 'for now' however better suited for future consideration.
- Ways of piloting models across a range of services with various cultures and governance models – to increase the pace of delivering workforce reform.

The initiatives set out in this Annex align with the Three Pillars of Reform.

1. Efficiency and Collaboration

UK Research and Development Function

This project seeks to deliver a research and development capability centrally for UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRS). BFRS are members of the implementation board alongside Tyne and Wear and Hampshire FRSs. The aim is have the function established by April 2017.

Resource Management

The BFRS Resource Management Team (RMT) is well established and has attracted significant interest from a number of other services. BFRS are working with Northamptonshire FRS to consider a range of options as they seek to establish a resource management function to enable flexible working for their operational staff.

The aim of this collaboration is to consider options for sharing a resource management function, operating to a single set of policies and procedures to support flexible resourcing. The agreed scope is to identify opportunities to operate initially as two services and potentially as a single resource operating across the two organisations.

Procurement

This organisation is in early discussions with Thames Valley Police regarding options for the provision of professional procurement services in the future.

A joint outsourced Occupational Health service provision is currently being procured with Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire Fire Services. BFRS also support a range of national procurement initiatives including Training frameworks, IT, smoke alarms, PPE and collaborative Estates projects.

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS)

The Authority already has an effective co-responder scheme established at jointly agreed locations across the county which has seen us attend over 4000 calls since it started in 2014.

BFRS is working with SCAS at a strategic level to identify opportunities for shared resourcing, joint medical training and shared premises. Areas of consideration are:

- BFRS employees being available to SCAS to work shifts as co-responders, drivers etc to assist with peak periods of demand.
- Shared buildings to support a more collaborative approach to operating at all levels of the organisation.
- SCAS are a key partner in the Blue Light Hub in Milton Keynes.
- Access to BFRS sites has been offered to SCAS.
- A joint training programme for firefighters to up skill their medical skills has been agreed and will commence in 2017.

Thames Valley Police (TVP)

BMKFA has a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TVP for the shared use of premises. This will deliver a more collaborative approach to support joint operating out of single sites and for staff to engage at all levels and for opportunities for future initiatives to be developed through this less formal and more collaborative approach.

TVP are currently working out of our Broughton fire station site and are part of the design for the new blue light hub in Milton Keynes. BFRS is also in discussion with TVP regarding operating out of Newport Pagnell, Gerrards Cross and Princes Risborough fire stations.

2. Accountability and Transparency

Legal and Governance

BMKFA has worked since 2012 with Milton Keynes Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Borough Council to pool arrangements for shared Independent Persons to achieve low cost and effective regulatory compliance. This has enabled the advertising and recruitment processes to undertaken at no cost to BMKFA. The retaining fee is shared amongst the authorities and the Independent Persons maintain their competencies and interest in a wider caseload than would otherwise be the case.

There is an agreement in place with Buckinghamshire County Council for reciprocal deputy monitoring officer arrangements to enable regulatory compliance and resilience.

Incident Recording System (IRS) and Data Analysis

BFRS are involved with a project looking at the capability of collecting IRS data in the mobile environment with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. The purpose of this is that IRS data can be collected in the field and automatically synchronised into an IRS system. This will provide faster more accurate IRS data. This data can then be used to refine our Prevention, Protection and Response strategies with the most up to date incident data. The Home office is currently in the process of making a decision in relation to replacing the existing system. The outcome of this decision will dictate the next steps in relation to this initiative.

3. Workforce Reform

Fire Professional Framework (FPF)

The aim of the FPF is to deliver a 'fit for purpose' National Learning and Development Strategy, supported by a framework based on relevant national standards and a 'one stop shop' web portal for all staff employed within the sector to easily access from any device. A cross directorate CFOA Steering Group oversees five focused FPF work streams with BFRS leading on the overall programme.

The majority of the FRSs and the wider fire sector employers actively support the framework through funding and a significant and increasing number provide resources.

The aims of this initiative are:

- Easy access to the tools to translate the relevant standards and qualifications into competency frameworks and training specifications covering current and future roles, skills and attributes required across the FRS sector.
- Provide supporting tools to enable FRSs to embed the FPF in to all aspects of their training, development, organisational design, resourcing, workforce planning and career path management to fit with their risk and demand profiles.
- Support a culture of collaboration, sharing information and notable best practice reducing 'reinvent the wheel' syndrome.
- Provide a 'one-stop-shop', accessible by all employees and from all devices and networks, addressing the development needs and career guidance for all employees. This is increasingly important with a wider and diverse range of duty systems, flexible working arrangements, partnerships and increased menu driven learning.

The FPF is well placed to support any future independent standards body and inspectorate arrangements. The target go live date for the FPF is the 26 January 2017.

Menu driven E-Learning

BFRS have hosted two national E-Learning 'Blue Light Group' meetings through our current learning management supplier. This has led to an increase in the sharing of resources between Services and a project to develop a 'Blue Light' catalogue of E-Learning content for Emergency Services.

A CFOA led national meeting is scheduled for 1 December 2016 to determine how the sector can progress E-learning collaboration to align with the National Operational

Guidance(NOG) programme to optimise procurement options and move towards a 'Do it once' culture.

Apprenticeships

BFRS are members of an employer consortium led by Staffordshire FRS to develop a new firefighter Trailblazer standard for apprenticeships. This will replace the existing framework being phased out. BFRS's approach to recruiting 22 firefighter and 4 support services apprentices has attracted significant interest. BFRS recently presented at the CFOA national apprenticeships workshop in late September and has also hosted a shared learning event for twelve FRSs.

BFRS is now working in collaboration with Police, Health, Ambulance and other Fire and Rescue services to developing an emergency services contact handler trailblazer apprenticeship.

BFRS are also working alongside a small number of Fire Services to find solutions with the Department of Education to minimise the time gap between apprenticeship framework removal and Trailblazer approval for firefighter apprenticeships.

Employment Related Policy

BFRS are part of a national HR group that have agreed to develop new employment related policy templates once. This group includes over two thirds of fire services nationally and members are currently piloting the first two templates which are due for release in December 2016. The next phase of the work programme will support apprenticeships and broader workforce reform topics.

Conditions of Service

Building on the Authority's workforce reform agenda to move to local terms and conditions of employment, an increasing number of fire services have expressed interest in our approach. The recent publication of the Conditions of Service for Fire and Rescue staff published 3 November 2016 covers a range of workforce reform recommendations which the Authority is currently considering. A regional briefing workshop is planned for early in the New Year to share ideas and determine if there are any collaborative options which will jointly increase the pace of workforce reform.

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