

## **Annex B**

### **BMKFA supported National and Regional Collaborative initiatives**

#### **Introduction**

This Annex provides Members with an overview of a range of national and regional collaborative initiatives that support the Authority's reform agenda and align with and will enhance elements of the Thames Valley collaborative outcomes set out in Annex A.

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

- Increasing value for money for the tax payer.
- Increasing capacity, sustainability and resilience.
- Working towards consistent methodologies and sector specific standards.
- Initiatives agreed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
- Improved effective and efficient use of resources.
- Initiatives which facilitate increasing the pace of delivering workforce reform.

The initiatives set out in this Annex align with the government's Fire Reform agenda; specifically the 'Three Pillars of Reform' explained in the background section of Annex A.

#### **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). Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) are currently members of the implementation board alongside Tyne and Wear and Hampshire FRSs, however our involvement is under review now that the programme has moved to 'business as usual' and is scheduled to deliver a research programme based on priorities agreed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

##### **Procurement**

This organisation is in early discussions with Thames Valley Police to identify and deliver collaborative opportunities. A joint contract register has been established, supported by a three year collaborative procurement work plan to be delivered by each professional procurement service.

Buckinghamshire procurement team have worked collaboratively with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire Fire Services to deliver collaborative contracts for Fire Appliances, Hydraulic Equipment, Ladders, PPV Fans, Power Tools, Tyres and Light Portable Pumps.

A joint outsourced Occupational Health service provision has recently been procured with Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire Fire Services.

## **2. Accountability and Transparency**

### **Legal and Governance**

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) has worked since 2012 with Milton Keynes Council, Luton Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire 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 be 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.

### **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 national Steering Group oversees five focused FPF work streams with Buckinghamshire FRS leading on the overall programme.

All UK FRSs and a number of wider fire sector employers actively support the framework through providing funding and a significant and increasing number provide resources to continue to develop and populate the portal.

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 designed to be well placed to support the future Independent Standards Body and Inspectorate arrangements as well as compliment any Programme management office (PMO) protocols being set up to manage NFCC work plans.

### **National Operational Guidance programme (NOG)**

The NOG Programme will deliver new on line operational guidance that is consistent, easily accessible and can be easily revised and updated. The Authority is committed to this programme and will wherever possible adopt NOG as its primary source of information to support our operational procedures, mobilising arrangements, information, training specifications and packages. The NOG programme also forms part of the Thames Valley operational alignment work stream covered in Annex A of this report.

### **National Procurement of Fire Fighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Throughout 2016/17, the Authority has been actively engaged in a national collaborative PPE procurement project for a complete fire fighter PPE ensemble solution, led by Kent FRS on behalf of the NFCC, but with direct involvement from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The project has explored ways of providing fire fighters with the next generation of fire fighter PPE which fully considers the work streams of a modern reformed workforce, delivering a wider range of public services whilst providing best value through collaborative working.

### **Menu driven E-Learning**

Buckinghamshire FRS (BFRS) actively support the national e learning work programme which seeks to build a learning platform for all UK based Fire and Rescue Services and share design costs and resources for core e learning packages rather than each FRS develop similar programmes.

The e learning work stream was launched nationally in autumn 2016 and it was agreed that the key aim was to determine how the sector could best 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.

BFRS have played a lead in the design of the e learning platform known as 'FRS Learn'.

Discussions are also planned nationally with the police to explore joint emergency services e learning possibilities.

### **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 in 2016 continues to attract

significant interest. BFRS presented at the CFA national apprenticeships workshop in late September 2016 and January 2017 and has also hosted a shared learning event for twelve FRSs.

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

BFRS is also represented in employer consortia led by Greater Manchester and London to develop Community Safety Advisor and Business Fire Safety Advisor trailblazer standards and most recently supporting the development of a Fire Engineering career pathway which seeks to improve the sector's ability to attract and retain Fire Engineers.

These sector specific trailblazer standards are critical to have in place for all Fire and Rescue Services to be able to recruit apprentices and maximise drawing down the apprenticeship levy, which for the 45 English FRS is in the order of £5.5million annually.

### **Employment Related Policy**

BFRS is part of a national Human Resources Collaborative group that has agreed to develop new employment related policy templates once rather than have over 40 variations nationally. This group already includes over two thirds of fire services nationally and members have launched the first phase of policy and guidance templates. The initial policy guidance focused on new legislation and complex outcomes from employment appeal tribunal cases. The current phase of the work programme is supporting apprenticeships policy, new legislation which impacts on employment policy and broader workforce reform topics.