



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	13 February 2019
<b>OFFICER</b>	Julian Parsons, Head of Service Development
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Jean Teesdale, Lead Member Community Protection
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan: "Listening &amp; Engagement" Research</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>At the Fire Authority meeting on 12 December 2018, Members were advised of some consultation work with the public being undertaken on the Authority's behalf, by Opinion Research Services (ORS), via a series of five focus groups held across the areas served by the Authority.</p> <p>This early consultation work was designed to help inform the development of the next Public Safety Plan (2020 – 2025 PSP) by exploring the participants':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general awareness of / perceptions of risk and understanding of the Fire and Rescue Service and the issues facing it (without being given any significant background information);</li> <li>• views and expectations after being more acquainted with the issues and challenges facing the Authority / Service and some potential ways that it could respond to these.</li> </ul> <p>In total 58 people participated across the five focus groups. ORS used a deliberative approach that enabled participants to reflect in depth about the issues facing the Authority / Service. Also, participants were able to do this without the constraint of worrying about any imminent changes to local Fire and Rescue service provision.</p> <p>The consultation embraced consideration of a wide range of issues and topics relevant to the development of the next PSP and the direction of the Service more generally including amongst other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness / perceptions of, and attitudes towards current and future risks and challenges;</li> <li>• General awareness of and expectations of BFRS (including whether they or someone they know had ever thought of working for the FRS);</li> <li>• Perceptions of Service costs and value for money;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on incident attendance times;</li> <li>• Awareness of strategic issues and challenges facing the Authority;</li> <li>• Preferences in relation to dealing with funding challenges and opportunities (specifically in relation to respective scenarios of there being less or more funding available for the Service).</li> </ul> <p>The outcomes of the consultation are contained in the annexed ORS report. Because recruitment to the focus groups was inclusive and the participants diverse, ORS advise that the outcomes of the consultation are broadly indicative of how informed public opinion as a whole would incline in similar discussions.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Preparation of the 2020 - 2025 PSP is currently underway with a view to officers presenting a draft for Members to approve for a formal 12 week public consultation at the 12 June 2019 Fire Authority meeting. Further stakeholder consultations are planned throughout the PSP development process in line with National Framework requirements.</p> <p>Also, it should be possible to re-convene the five focus groups reported on in the attached report, once Members have approved the draft 2020-2025 PSP for consultation, which means that it will receive scrutiny from a more informed perspective than would be possible with fresh groups of people drawn from the wider public. This will help the Authority to demonstrate that it has met the National Framework requirement for active and informed participation in PSP consultations.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Noting
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>A detailed risk assessment was carried out with ORS at the project planning stage with a risk log established within the Project Initiation Document (PID) &amp; appropriate measures identified to control the identified risks. The key corporate risks arising out of the research process include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the range of views expressed are not representative of the public as a whole;</li> <li>• That the research is poorly executed and fails to meet the specified requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Both of these risks could impair the decision making process in relation to the development of the PSP were they to crystallise.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	The cost of Phase One of the research is £13,550

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>	which will be paid during the 2018/19 financial year. The cost of the second phase of the research which will take place in the next financial year (2019/20) is £16,150 (as well as a further five focus groups this includes provision of an online consultation channel to facilitate a wider response from members of the public, Authority staff and other external stakeholders). These costs will be met from existing revenue budget resources.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The approach complies with National Framework requirements by ensuring that consultation is undertaken at appropriate points in the IRMP/PSP development process. The outcomes of the consultation are not binding on the Authority. However, it is required to have regard to them in reaching decisions associated with the integrated risk management planning process where relevant.
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	The National Framework requires every fire and rescue authority to produce its own IRMP/PSP. However, officers share thinking on approaches to IRMP/PSP development and consultation practices with other fire and rescue services, in particular our Thames Valley partners.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct implications arising from this initial consultation work.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	The participant selection process was designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public is consulted as detailed in the risk management section above. Details of the participants' demographic profile are set out at paragraph 8 on page 7 of the appended report.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	The consultation work is being resourced from within existing budgets and staff capacity. The outcomes of the consultation work will be used to help inform decision making in relation to future Authority resource allocation.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018):  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2</a></p> <p>Public Consultation – Pre-IRMP 'Listening &amp; Engagement' Research, Paper to 18 December 2013 CFA Meeting:  <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8314/5555/0771/PUBLICCONSULTATIONPREIRMPfeb14.compressed.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8314/5555/0771/PUBLICCONSULTATIONPREIRMPfeb14.compressed.pdf</a></p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	2020-2025 Public Safety Plan: Report of Engagement Phase Focus Groups, Opinion Research Services,

	January 2019.
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	15 Minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager <a href="mailto:sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk">sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744435