

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Director of Legal & Governance, Graham Britten  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Brigade HQ, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BD  
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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**

Jason Thelwell

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

3 February 2020

**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 12 FEBRUARY 2020 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

Councillor Clarke OBE (Chairman)  
Councillors Brown, Carroll, Christensen, Clare, Cranmer, Exon, Glover, Hopkins,  
Lambert, Marland, McCall, McLean, Minns, Roberts, Teesdale, Watson



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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](mailto: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*, 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 Extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority held on 23 January 2020 (Item 2) **(to follow)**.

#### 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. Recommendations from Committees

##### Executive Committee – 5 February 2020

##### (a) Members' Allowances

"That the Authority be recommended to adopt a Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2020/21 (Appendix B)"

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at Item 7(a) **(Pages 7 - 32)**

##### (b) The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision

"That the Authority be recommended to approve:

1. the Prudential Indicators for 2020-21;
2. an increase in the Authorised Limit for 2019/20 of £2m to £8.797m; and
3. the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement"

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at Item 7(b) **(Pages 33 - 42)**

**(c) Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 to 2024/25**

“It is recommended that the Authority be recommended to:

1(a) Note and have due regard to the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 8 of Annex A).

1(b) Approve a Council Tax precept of £65.85 for a band D equivalent property (a 1.98% increase from 2019/20 – equal to 2.5p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1(a).

1(c) Approve the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2.

2. Not hold a referendum to increase Council Tax above the 2% threshold for 2020/21.

3. Note that a referendum may need to be considered for 2021/22 depending on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review”  
The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at Item 7(c)  
**(Pages 43 - 54)**

**(d) 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan Consultation: Feedback & Recommendations**

“That the Authority be recommended to approve that:

1. the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan be adopted;

2. Officer be directed to proceed with the further development of the strategy proposals set out at Page 32 of the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan (Annex 3) having regard to the consultation feedback as they are progressed and to undertake further consultations with stakeholders potentially affected by any specific changes arising from their implementation; and

3. the Chief Fire Officer be granted discretion to determine the sequencing and timing of the work required to further progress the proposals”

The report considered by the Executive Committee is attached at Item 7(d)  
**(Pages 55 - 174)**

**8. Annual Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2018/19**

To consider Item 8 **(Pages 175 - 200)**

**9. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21**

To consider Item 9 **(Pages 201 - 216)**

**10. FIREAID**

To consider Item 10 **(Pages 217 - 228)**

**11. Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2020-21**

To consider Item 11 (**Pages 229 - 250**)

**12. HMICFRS Inspection Findings Report - Action Plan**

To consider the Action Plan arising from the HMICFRS Inspection Findings Report (**to follow**).

**13. Date of next meeting**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 10 June 2020 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](mailto:knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk)



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Executive Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	5 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Chairman
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Members' Allowances</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<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>The Independent Remuneration Panel of the scheme for Milton Keynes Council undertook a review in January 2018 and this is attached at <b>Appendix A</b>.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire County Council's terms of reference required 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. A scheduled review by a new Independent Remuneration Panel for 2019 was postponed due to the proposed changes to governance arrangements. The Buckinghamshire Shadow Authority 2019 Order requires the Shadow Authority to prepare and make a scheme for the payment of allowances. The Independent Remuneration Panel has met and its report is due to go to the Shadow Authority Meeting on 27 February 2020.</p> <p>If the report is made available prior to the meeting of the Authority on 12 February, its recommendations will be circulated to Members before or by the date of the meeting.</p> <p>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</p>

	<p>indexation for the period 2020/21.</p> <p>The NJC Circular NJC/3/19 of 5 September 2019 confirmed a 2% pay award effective from 1 July 2019. The effects of a 2% increase are reflected in <b>Appendix B</b>.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the Authority be recommended to adopt a Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2020/21 ( <b>Appendix B</b> )
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	The recommendation will have no adverse effect on the Authority's business.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<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 (<i>£788.40 last year</i>).</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The making or amendment of the Members' Scheme of Allowances is a function reserved to a meeting of the Authority. An amendment may be made by the Authority in year. Regulation 10(4) of Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provides that "A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended."
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	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.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	Not applicable.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	<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</p>



	entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority. There are currently no co-opted members on the Authority.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	The recommendation is consistent with the extant Scheme of Allowances.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<a href="#">NJC/3/19</a> – NJC Circular 05/09/19
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A: Milton Keynes Council report of the Independent Panel of Members' Allowances January 2018. Appendix B: Draft Scheme for Members' Allowances 2020/21.
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	10 minutes.
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Katie Nellist <a href="mailto:Knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk">Knellist@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744633

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**REPORT BY  
THE MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL  
INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

**An Independent Review of Members' Allowances  
January 2018**

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## Executive Summary

Milton Keynes Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has been asked to prepare this report in order to help the Council fulfil its statutory duty to review its scheme of allowances at regular intervals.

The Panel took account of a range of information prior to formulating their recommendations. This included information on the governance arrangements and structures of the Council, the views of councillors – via both face-to-face interviews, written submissions and a short survey – relevant benchmarking data, the economic and financial climate within which the Council operates and the desire to encourage citizens to participate in local democracy. The Panel also considered the statutory framework for members' allowances, including the relevant statutory instruments and the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Panel took particular care to try to balance the need to ensure that citizens are able to participate in local democracy by standing for election against the reality of the prevailing financial climate. In doing so, the Panel have based their recommendations upon the existing scheme of allowances but have made a small number of recommendations in order to address the issues that they perceive to exist within the scheme.

In terms of the basic allowance, the Panel have also taken into consideration the increasing workloads of councillors and the demands in representing citizens and participating in decision making in one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing areas of the United Kingdom. While councillors expressed a general level of satisfaction with the level of the basic allowance, the Panel were conscious of the fact that the amount is not index linked and has therefore not changed for some time. The Panel hope that their recommendations will address this issue.

The Panel have given equally careful consideration to the special responsibility allowances payable to councillors who undertake additional duties, many of which are equivalent to a demanding full-time job. The Panel heard a range of views on these allowances, which they took account of alongside benchmarking data from other comparable authorities and the particular governance structures and political landscape at Milton Keynes Council. The Panel have taken the decision to leave this section of the scheme largely untouched, but have made some recommendations for the Council to consider. The first is the introduction of an index to ensure allowances keep pace with the rising cost of living. The second is the introduction of an allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council as Milton Keynes is almost unique in not recognising this position within its scheme of allowances.

The Panel would like to thank all of the councillors who took part in the review by answering the many questions that the Panel posed. The Panel believes that these recommendations, if adopted, will result in a scheme of allowances that is fair, transparent and affordable. The Panel hope that the Council will approve these recommendations.

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Council is required to make a scheme of allowances for its councillors in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulation 2003. The process for making and reviewing such a scheme is regulated so that the public can have confidence in the independence, openness and accountability of the process involved. The process requires that the Council must establish an independent remuneration panel and, before making or amending its scheme of allowances, must have regard to the views of the Panel.
- 1.2 This report presents the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the Council for consideration and approval.

## **The Panel**

- 2.1 In accordance with the Council's constitution, the current Panel was appointed following a recruitment process established by the Council. The Panel comprises the following members:
  - Ms Ruby Parmar. Ruby is the Senior Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers' Milton Keynes Office. Ruby also sits on the Board of Trustees of the Magic Bus India Foundation, a charity dedicated to providing children living in poverty the opportunity to shape their future.
  - Ms Jan Flawn CBE. Jan is the founder and Chair of PJ Care, a leading Milton Keynes-based provider of specialist neurological care and neuro rehabilitation for people with progressive or acquired neurological conditions.
  - Mr Stewart Bailey. Stewart is Managing Director of Virtual Viewing, a company specialising in computer generated work aimed at inspiring inward investment and interest in construction and design projects.The Panel was assisted in their deliberations by Paul Hanson, Democratic Services Manager from the LGSS Northamptonshire office.

## **Terms of Reference for the Review**

- 3.1 The Panel's terms of reference were based on the relevant statutory instrument (Members Allowances (England) Regulations 2003), as well as guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances). It should be noted that the Panel is required to take these documents into account when preparing recommendations on the Council's scheme of allowances.
- 3.2 In line with the statutory requirements relating to schemes, the Panel's agreed terms of reference were as follows:
  - To determine the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to councillors;

- To determine the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and the amount of such allowances;
- To determine the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and the amount of such allowances;
- Whether the Council's allowances scheme should include an allowance in respect of the expenses of arranging for the care of children and dependants and the amount of this allowance and the means by which it should be determined; and
- Whether annual adjustments of allowance levels should be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run.

3.3 The Panel also agreed the following set of broad principles within which the review of allowances was undertaken:

- In line with the statutory guidance, the Panel took into account the principle that an element of the role of councillor must be voluntary, but that should not mean that councillors should suffer significant financial loss as a result of undertaking the role;
- Allowances should not be designed to reward councillors, but neither should the level of allowances prohibit individuals from considering standing for election; and
- The Panel were mindful that a reasonable percentage of councillors that should be eligible to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance.

### **The Evidence Considered**

4.1 The Panel considered a range of qualitative and quantitative evidence, as well as benchmarking data. In the area of basic and special responsibility allowances, the Panel attributed greatest weight to the written and verbal testimony of councillors.

4.2 Benchmarking evidence was considered, however, the Panel had to be cautious in the application of this data. This was because the data, while helpful in determining the relative position of allowances paid by Milton Keynes Council in comparison to other comparable (statistical nearest neighbour) authorities, the data does not reveal the reasons for any discrepancies, nor the detail of the range of responsibilities covered by each post.

4.3 The Panel issued an open invitation to all councillors to meet with them and share their views. Individual interviews were conducted with ten councillors over the course of the review, representing all of the political groups on the Council. A simple questionnaire was also circulated at the Panel's request and nine responses were received. A range of opinions were heard, relating not just to allowances but also to the nature of the role of councillor, the time commitment involved and other forms of support that are available to councillors. Input was received from councillors who were employed, self-employed and retired.

4.4 There was a general consensus that the current rate of basic allowance is broadly sufficient, but some concerns were expressed about the lack of any form of indexation within the scheme and the long-term effect this could have on the viability of allowances. The Panel

felt that the basic allowance must be set at a level that allows councillors to make the not-inconsiderable time commitment required in order to fulfil their roles effectively, particularly now given the rapid growth within the Milton Keynes area.

- 4.5 On the issue of special responsibility allowances, a diverse range of opinions were expressed. There was a broad consensus on the level of allowances attached to such roles as group leaders and committee chairs, but rather less consensus about roles such as committee vice-chairs. The Panel took careful account of this information and used benchmarking data to determine how such roles were treated in other comparable authorities.
- 4.6 In terms of the expenses that may be claimed in the course of carrying out their roles, councillors were generally satisfied with the arrangements in place. Some small changes to the scheme were suggested, however, and the Panel has made recommendations based on their own views as to the fairness and transparency of this aspect of the scheme.
- 4.7 Some councillors expressed the view that a form of means testing could be used to ensure that the budget for allowances is apportioned efficiently. The Panel noted this issue but were mindful of the fact that the legislative framework which underpins local authority allowances provides no freedom to do this.
- 4.8 The Panel noted that most formal committee meetings take place in the evenings in order to make the best use of councillors' time and reduce the impact on those councillors who are in paid employment. The Panel welcomed the efforts made by the Council but felt that the Council could, and should, do more to support councillors who are also employed, particularly where they undertake additional roles within the Council.
- 4.9 In formulating recommendations about the special responsibility allowances within the new scheme, the Panel sought to examine the nature of the roles undertaken by councillors and determine the position of each role within the hierarchy of allowances. This approach was based on the principles that underpin every review of allowances and takes into account factors such as
- The level of decision making responsibility associated with each role;
  - Other responsibilities associated with each role (such as responsibility for chairing a committee, and attendance at outside meetings associated with the role);
  - The time requirement of each role; and
  - Any other specialist skills, knowledge or other factors needed to be able to carry out each role effectively.

## **The Panel's Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 5.1 In undertaking their review, the Panel were mindful of the fact that their recommendations would be subject to considerable internal and external scrutiny and would have to be supported by the evidence considered. The Panel also considered whether the current



financial and economic climate should inform their recommendations. The Panel took the view that this was an important factor and the public would rightly expect it to form part of the Panel's considerations. The Panel also felt, however, that it had to be balanced against other factors such as the need to encourage democratic diversity and participation in local democracy.

5.2 The councillors whose views were provided to the Panel represented a range of backgrounds, including employed, self-employed and retired members. The Panel took the view that no-one should be prevented from undertaking the role of councillor as a result of their personal circumstances. Having considered the range of information presented to them, they took the view that while there is evidence to suggest that allowances play a part in this issue, factors such as the time commitment required of councillors also has a direct bearing. The Panel have sought to make recommendations that will enable a diverse range of citizens are able to consider standing for election.

### **The Basic Allowance**

6.1 The Panel considered a range of evidence and opinion about the basic allowance. The Panel felt that, although there was general satisfaction with the level of basic allowance currently paid to councillors, care needed to be taken to ensure that the allowance properly covers the costs associated with undertaking the role of councillor, particularly for councillors in full or part-time employment who may need to take unpaid leave and experience a corresponding loss of pensionable pay in order to undertake their role. The Panel were also cognisant of the additional workloads placed on all councillors as a result of the rapid growth taking place in Milton Keynes and the increasing complexity of the role as a result of this.

6.2 The Panel feel that the basic allowance should be seen as covering the reasonable costs associated with holding the office of councillor. In light of the above, the Panel recommend that the basic allowance should be set at £10,500 per year from 1 April 2018

6.3 The Panel also recommend that the basic allowance should increase by 2% every year from 1 April 2019 for a period of four years. This increase is the same as that recently announced for local government staff. The Panel feels that this recommendation will address a shortcoming of the Council's current scheme of allowances in a sensible and sustainable way.

### **Special Responsibility Allowances**

7.1 On the subject of special responsibility allowances (SRAs), the Panel heard a wide range of views on the different roles that are necessary in order to facilitate the operation of the new governance arrangements. In some cases the message was fairly clear and consistent, while in other cases – such as committee vice chairs - there was far less consensus.

7.2 The Panel reviewed each role individually, using the evidence supplied by councillors, as well as written material supplied by the Council, as the basis for evaluating each role and determining an appropriate allowance.

### 7.3 Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members

7.3.1 In the case of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet, the Panel were satisfied that councillors undertaking these roles continue to take on very significant decision making and other responsibilities. These include holding senior officers to account, negotiating with Government representatives and other external agencies and, in the case of the Leader, setting priorities for other decision makers and representing Milton Keynes at an international level. It was clear to the Panel that these roles also require a substantial time commitment. The Panel is satisfied that the allowance for both the Leader and members of the Cabinet are appropriate and should not be changed.

7.3.2 The Panel were, however, greatly concerned that the role of Deputy Leader is not recognised within Milton Keynes Council's scheme of allowances. The Panel have no doubt that the role of Deputy Leader is an important one which, by definition, is more onerous than that of Cabinet Member. The Panel also noted that Milton Keynes Council is the only one of the nearest neighbour authorities not to recognise the role of Deputy Leader within its scheme of allowances.

7.3.3 The Panel therefore recommend the following allowances:

Leader of the Council	£30,000
Deputy Leader of the Council	£15,000
Cabinet Member	£11,000

7.3.4 Additionally, the Panel could see no practical value in the application of a cap on the total cost of cabinet positions, particularly given the limitation on the size of the Cabinet prescribed by statute and the fact that no similar cap is in place for other positions such as scrutiny committee chairs. The Panel therefore recommend that the cap be removed from the scheme of allowances.

### 7.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

7.4.1 Unlike the Cabinet, roles associated with overview and scrutiny (Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee and Chairs of Scrutiny Committees) are not associated with significant decision making responsibility. The Panel felt that this continues to be an important distinction which must be taken into account. Nevertheless, the Panel acknowledge that scrutiny plays an important part in the governance of the Council, particularly at a time of significant challenge. It is clear to the Panel that the councillors responsible for leading the scrutiny function take on significant

responsibility in terms of holding decision makers (i.e. the Cabinet) and senior officers to account. The Panel acknowledges that chairing a scrutiny committee can be a time consuming role.

7.4.2 The Panel recommends no changes to the existing allowances:

Chair of Scrutiny Management Committee	£7,500
Chair of Scrutiny Committee	£4,500
Chair of Task and Finish Groups (pro-rata)	£4,500

## 7.5 Other Committees

7.5.1 The Panel acknowledged that chairing other committees (Licensing and Regulatory, Development Control, Audit Committee, Standards Committee and RegenerationMK Committee) are notable roles. The Panel are clear that councillors undertaking these roles are expected to carry out their duties diligently, but also acknowledged that the time commitment and level of subject matter knowledge required varied between committees.

7.5.2 The Panel heard a range of views about the role of vice chairs of these committees. Some councillors felt that vice chairs undertake an important and onerous role, while others felt that vice chairmanship of a committee is a developmental role which may be undertaken in preparation for a more onerous role in the future. The Panel considered this issue carefully but ultimately decided that, given the number of councillors who are already eligible to receive a special responsibility allowance, these roles do not merit an allowance

7.5.3 The Panel agreed that the allowances provided within the current scheme, and the relative hierarchy of roles, is correct. The Panel therefore recommend the following allowances:

Licensing and Regulatory Committee Chair	£8,000
Development Control Committee Chair	£8,000
Audit Committee Chair	£5,500
Standards Committee Chair	£3,000
RegenerationMK Committee Chair	£3,000

## 7.6 Opposition Group Leaders

7.6.1 The Panel felt that councillors undertaking the role of group leader undertake a responsible and demanding job, particularly given the current and historical political makeup of the Council.

7.6.2 The Panel recommend the following allowances:

Main Opposition Group Leader	£620 per group member
Smaller Opposition Group Leader	£620 per group member

## 7.7 Civic Allowances

7.7.1 Although civic allowances do not strictly form part of the Panel's remit, as they are included within the scheme of allowances the Panel saw fit to include these roles within their recommendations. The Panel recommend no changes to these allowances:

Mayor	£11,000
Deputy Mayor	£5,500

## 7.8 Indexation

7.8.1 The Panel considered the need to put in place a form of indexation for special responsibility allowances in order to ensure that the level of compensation provided to councillors who undertake these important roles does not fall behind the cost of living. The Panel discussed this point in depth and resolved to recommend that special responsibility allowances should increase by 2% every year from 1 April 2018 for a period of four years. It should be noted that one member of the Panel felt it was more appropriate to defer the introduction of this indexation until April 2019, for reasons of affordability. The remaining two members of the Panel, however, felt that this issue needed to be addressed immediately. This indexation should also apply to civic allowances.

## Other allowances and expenses

8.1 The Panel considered and reviewed all of the other allowances and expenses under their terms of reference (set out in section 3). They have decided to make the following recommendations:

- The dependents' and carers' allowance should be retained at the present rate (living wage in respect of child care, £10 per hour or Milton Keynes Council Home Help rate in respect of care for adults);
- The amounts payable for travel expenses should continue to be paid at the same rates as those paid to officers;
- The amounts payable for subsistence expenses should continue to be paid at the current rates; and

- The amounts payable to co-opted members should continue to be paid at the current rates.
- The Panel have recommended small clarifications to the list of approved duties for which expenses can be claimed.

### **Other recommendations**

9.1 The Panel heard much about the difficulties of balancing the demands associated with the role of councillor with employment and family life. The Panel were concerned to hear about the impact that this has on councillors, particularly when deciding whether to take on additional roles or even whether to re-stand for election once election.

9.2 The Panel therefore recommends that the Council should investigate ways of helping councillors manage their work-life balance effectively. This should extend to providing information about employment rights for councillors who are employed, as well as providing employers with information about the benefits of employing councillors.

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**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON  
KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

***MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES  
2020/21***

# **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 2020.
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.

## **Expense Claims**

30. All information requested for the expense claim must be provided, including the number of miles, the locations travelled from and to and the reason for travel. (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 must be provided.
32. Claims for the same expenses (mileage, travel and subsistence etc) must not be made from more than one body.
33. 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 through the HR and Payroll Portal.
34. 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, except in exceptional circumstances and approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES FROM APRIL 2020**

#### **Special Responsibility Allowance per annum**

• Position	£
• Chairman	12,708
• Vice-Chairman	4,259
• Chairman – Executive Committee	5,243
• Chairman – Overview and Audit Committee	3,434
• Chairman – Human Resources Sub-Committee	1,719
• Group Leaders	3,813
• Lead Members	3,314

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## **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 2020 the following rates of allowances will apply

#### **Basic Allowance:**

£1,272 per annum

#### **Special Responsibility Allowances:**

See Schedule 1

#### **Co-optees Allowance**

£318 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 2021, 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).





# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Executive Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	5 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance & Assets.
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor David Hopkins
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>The Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This report is being presented as the Prudential Indicators (Appendices A and B) and Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement (Appendix C) are required to be approved by the Fire Authority and to support the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>A review of the Balance Sheet indicates that the Authority is currently in an over-borrowed position. Due to prohibitive penalties the early repayment of borrowing is not currently an option. The Authority has no plans for additional borrowing in the foreseeable future, according to the current MTFP.</p> <p>Due to the uncertain timing of third-party contributions relating to the Blue Light Hub it is also recommended to increase the Authorised Limit for the current year by £2m with immediate effect in-case short-term borrowing is required to effectively manage cashflow.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the Authorised Limit for 2020-21 is set at £2m higher than the Operational Limit to allow for the effective management of cashflow in relation to capital receipts from land sales.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>That the Executive Committee approve the recommendations below for submission to the Fire Authority.</p> <p>That the Authority be recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the Prudential Indicators for 2020-21;</li> <li>2. an increase in the Authorised Limit for 2019/20 of £2m to £8.797m; and</li> <li>3. the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement.</li> </ol>
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	The Prudential Code was established to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions

	<p>are taken in accordance with good professional practice. The indicators presented here demonstrate that the current plans for capital investment meet these criteria and present an acceptable level of risk to the Authority.</p> <p>Minimum revenue provision is a statutory charge to the General Fund, which ensures that an Authority has sufficient cash balances to repay borrowing upon maturity, reducing the refinancing risk.</p> <p>There are no direct staffing implications.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The decision on the prudential indicators sets out the financial limits within which the Authority will operate in future years.</p> <p>The minimum revenue provision is a statutory charge against the General Fund, estimated at £47k for 2020/21 (no change from 2019/20).</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/3146 make provision for capital finance and accounts under the Local Government Act 2003 requiring the authority to have regard to the 'Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities' when determining, under the Local Government 2003 Act, how much money it can afford to borrow; and require the Authority to determine for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent.</p>
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	<p>No direct impact.</p>
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<p>No direct impact.</p>
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	<p>No direct impact.</p>
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	<p>The impact of the Prudential Code will allow the Authority to make informed choices between revenue and capital financing of procured services, to encourage invest to save schemes and will only allow capital investment to proceed where the Authority can fund projects within prudential limits.</p> <p>Making sufficient minimum revenue provision ensures that when borrowing matures, cash is available to make the repayment. This ensures that the Authority does not need to borrow additional money to repay existing loans.</p>
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION</b>	<b>Background</b>

<p><b>&amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p>Realignment of Reserve Balances to Facilitate the Medium Term Financial Plan, Executive Committee, 18 November 2015:   <a href="http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7314/4612/0201/ITEM_6_Reserve_Balances_Update_Post_Pre-Brief.pdf">http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7314/4612/0201/ITEM_6 . Reserve Balances - Update Post Pre-Brief.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>APPENDICES</b></p>	<p>Appendix A – Prudential Indicators  Appendix B – Summary Table of Prudential Indicators  Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement</p>
<p><b>TIME REQUIRED</b></p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b></p>	<p>Marcus Hussey  <a href="mailto:mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk">mhussey@bucksfire.gov.uk</a>  01296 744680</p>

## Appendix A – Prudential Indicators

### 1.0 Indicators for Affordability

#### 1.1 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

This indicator measures the percentage of the net revenue funding used to finance external debt. As no future borrowing is planned and a decision was made to reallocate reserves to reduce the capital financing requirement in 2015/16, the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream will remain consistently low:

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%

### 2.0 Indicators for Prudence

#### 2.1 Gross borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement

The table below shows gross borrowing and the capital financing requirement (CFR). The Authority should ensure that gross borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the CFR. However, due to the reallocation of reserves to reduce the CFR (excluding finance lease) to zero (see Provenance Section & Background Papers) gross borrowing will exceed CFR for the medium to long-term. This situation will exist until borrowing is repaid. Due to early repayment premiums it is prohibitively expensive to make any early repayments at the current time.

Gross borrowing at the start of 2018/19 financial year was £7.382m. A repayment of £585k was made in May 2018 which will reduced the gross borrowing to £6.797m. The figures shown below indicate the maximum level of borrowing during the year (i.e. repayments will reduce the limit for the following year):

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Gross borrowing (£000)	7,382	6,797	6,797	6,797	6,797
Capital financing requirement (£000)	1,684	1,637	1,590	1,543	1,496

### 3.0 Indicators for Capital Expenditure

#### 3.1 Capital Expenditure

This indicator shows the expected level of capital expenditure for future years:

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Capital expenditure (£000)	7,658	9,243	1,484	1,466	1,966

### 3.2 Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The CFR reflects the Authority's underlying need to borrow. This figure was reduced down to the level of the finance lease by the reallocation of reserves (see Provenance Section & Background Papers). No additional borrowing is planned in the medium term. The CFR should be looked at in relation to gross borrowing, as detailed in Section 2.1:

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Capital financing requirement (underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose) (£000)	1,684	1,637	1,590	1,543	1,496

### 4.0 Indicators for External Debt

#### 4.1 Authorised Limit

This is the maximum limit on borrowing and other long-term liabilities (currently limited to the finance lease at Gerrards Cross). This amount cannot be exceeded without approval from the Fire Authority:

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Authorised limit for borrowing (£000)	7,382	8,797	8,797	8,797	8,797
Authorised limit for other long-term liabilities (£000)	1,684	1,637	1,590	1,543	1,496
Authorised limit for external debt (£000)	9,066	10,434	10,387	10,340	10,293

#### 4.2 Operational Boundary

This indicator shows the most likely estimate of debt for future years:

The actual external debt for the year ending 31 March 2019 was **£9.066m**.

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Operational boundary for borrowing (£000)	7,382	6,797	6,797	6,797	6,797
Operational boundary for other long-term liabilities (£000)	1,684	1,637	1,590	1,543	1,496
Operational boundary for external debt (£000)	9,066	8,434	8,387	8,340	8,293

## **5.0 Indicators for Treasury Management**

### **5.1 Adoption of CIPFA’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectorial Guidance Notes**

The aim is to ensure that treasury management is led by a clear and integrated forward treasury management strategy, and a recognition of the pre-existing structure of the Authority’s borrowing and investment portfolios.

### **5.2 Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures**

This indicator shows the Authority’s upper limit of the net exposure to fixed interest rates. Currently all borrowing is at a fixed rate of interest:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Actual 2018/19</b>	<b>Estimate 2019/20</b>	<b>Estimate 2020/21</b>	<b>Estimate 2021/22</b>	<b>Estimate 2022/23</b>
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

### **5.3 Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures**

This indicator shows the Authority’s upper limit of the net exposure to variable interest rates:

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Actual 2018/19</b>	<b>Estimate 2019/20</b>	<b>Estimate 2020/21</b>	<b>Estimate 2021/22</b>	<b>Estimate 2022/23</b>
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

## 5.4 Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing

This shows the repayment profile of fixed rate borrowing. All loans are repayable on maturity:

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20		Estimate 2020/21		Estimate 2021/22		Estimate 2022/23	
	Actual Maturity	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	15%
24 months and within five years	9%	0%	24%	0%	24%	0%	15%	0%	0%
five years and within 10 years	29%	0%	15%	0%	15%	0%	24%	0%	24%
10 years and within 20 years	20%	0%	20%	0%	20%	0%	11%	0%	11%
20 years and within 30 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
30 years and within 40 years	41%	0%	41%	0%	41%	0%	41%	0%	41%
40 years and above	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

## 5.5 Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is for the Authority to contain its exposure to the possibility of loss that might arise as a result of its having to seek early repayment or redemption of principal sums invested. The Authority currently has £2m invested with one local Authority, over a period longer than 364 days.

Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days (£000)	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000

## 5.6 Credit Risk

The duration of any investment with a counterparty will be restricted as advised by our treasury management advisors. The advisors will base their assessment of credit risk based on credit ratings provided by the major agencies, as well as reviewing credit default swaps (a proxy measure for the markets perceived risk of default).

**Appendix B – Summary Table of Prudential Indicators**

For reference, the following table summarises the key indicators detailed in Appendix A in a single table:

	Indicator	Actual 2018/19	Estimate 2019/20	Estimate 2020/21	Estimate 2021/22	Estimate 2022/23
<b>Indicators for Affordability</b>						
1.1	Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
1.2	The incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the council tax	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Indicators for Prudence</b>						
2.1	Gross borrowing (£000)	7,382	6,797	6,797	6,797	6,797
<b>Indicators for Capital Expenditure</b>						
3.1	Capital expenditure (£000)	7,658	9,243	1,484	1,466	1,966
3.2	Capital financing requirement (£000)	1,684	1,637	1,590	1,543	1,496
<b>Indicators for External Debt</b>						
4.1	Authorised limit for external debt (£000)	9,066	10,434	10,387	10,340	10,293
4.2	Operational boundary for external debt (£000)	9,066	8,434	8,387	8,340	8,293
<b>Indicators for Treasury Management</b>						
5.2	Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
5.3	Upper limit on variable interest rate exposures	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
5.5	Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days (£000)	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000

The actual external debt for the year ending 31 March 2019 was £8.489m. The projected external debt for the year ending 31 March 2020 is £8.442m (both figures include the finance lease liability).

The following indicators are not shown above:

- 5.1 – the Authority has adopted CIPFA’s Treasury Management Code for 2019/20
- 5.4 – details of the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing (see Appendix A)
- 5.6 – narrative regarding credit risk (see Appendix A)



## **Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement**

The two methods for calculating prudent provision are set out below and were approved by members in 2008/09. Regulation 28 of the 2003 Regulations (as amended by regulation 4 of the 2008 Regulations) requires a local authority to calculate for the current financial year an amount of MRP which it considers to be prudent. The Secretary of State recommends that, for the purposes of regulation 4 the prudent amount of provision should be determined in accordance with one of four options, two of which were agreed by members in 2008/09 and are outlined below.

The broad aim of prudent provision is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits (asset life).

### **(a) CFR Method**

MRP is equal to 4% of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) at the end of the preceding financial years. Since the CFR (excluding finance lease) is now at zero, this method is no longer applicable (for finance leases, the MRP requirement is regarded as met by a charge equal to the element of the rent that goes to write down the Balance Sheet liability).

### **(b) Asset Life Method**

Since 1 April 2008, where capital expenditure on an asset is financed wholly or partly by borrowing or credit arrangements, MRP is to be determined by reference to the life of the asset, based on an equal instalment method. This amount is projected to be nil for 2019/20.

Where assets have been purchased utilising Capital grants or Revenue Contributions no MRP calculation is required. Only assets purchased utilising borrowing require an MRP charge.

The asset life method calculation requires estimated useful lives of assets to be input in to the calculations. These life periods will be determined by the Director of Finance and Assets & Treasurer, with regard to the statutory guidance and advice from professional valuers.

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Executive Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	5 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor David Hopkins
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 to 2024/25</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The main report (Annex A) presents the proposed revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the financial years 2020/21 to 2024/25.</p> <p>The provisional settlement was announced on 20 December 2019 and is included in the funding assumptions. Final confirmation is expected in February 2019. Within the settlement it was announced that authorities without any specific council tax freedoms can increase Council Tax by up to 2% without the need for a referendum.</p> <p>Key assumptions are detailed in Section 4 of Annex A and are based on information received to date.</p> <p>Without sufficient time to undertake a full comprehensive spending review, the Government has effectively rolled-forward amounts within the settlement funding assessment for 2019/20 and increased these by the rate of inflation (i.e. zero real-terms increase). The exception to this is the pension grant funding, which is expected to be a flat-cash settlement (subject to official confirmation outside of the provisional settlement).</p> <p>Whilst it is welcome that the pension grant funding will continue for a further year (the previous MTFP forecast a one-off payment only) all funding will be subject to review next year as part of what is expected to be a three-year comprehensive spending review.</p> <p>This paper therefore shows two models, 1(a) and 1(b), which show the proposed budget and impact on the Authority should the pension grant be discontinued from 2021/22 respectively.</p> <p>Further uncertainty regarding pensions has been introduced by the ruling in December 2018 that the transitional arrangements introduced for the firefighters' schemes in 2015 were discriminatory. At the employment tribunal hearing on 18 December 2019 it was ruled that the claimants, members of the 1992 and 2006 firefighters' pension schemes, are now</p>

	<p>entitled to be treated as if they have remained members of their original pension scheme. However, it is too early at this stage to quantify the impact this may have on budgets in either the short or medium-term.</p> <p>This year officers adopted a zero-based budget approach when developing the budget proposal for 2020/21. As opposed to the incremental approach, which looks at last year's budgets and adjusts them up or down, the zero-based approach looked at all budgets to ensure the correct amount of money is being spent in the correct areas. This approach has been developed alongside the new Public Safety Plan and feedback from our recent inspection report from HMICFRS.</p> <p>Although our report noted that the inspectorate "would like to see improvements in the year ahead, but without increased funding, it is difficult to see where progress can be made" the zero-based budget approach has identified some key opportunities within the current budgetary constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the wholetime establishment by up to 20 firefighters in 2020/21, with the potential to increase by a further 10 in the following year (depending on the outcome of the comprehensive spending review)</li> <li>• Increasing the Protection Team by 4 FTEs and introducing a Team Leader role and two further FTEs into the Prevention Team.</li> <li>• Introducing a Head of Technology, Transformation and Programme Management Office (PMO) to manage the actions required following our inspection report.</li> </ul> <p>The revenue budget for 2020/21 and indicative figures for future years are show in Appendix 1, which as noted earlier contains two models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model 1(a) shows the forecast budgets and reserves positions if the pension grant is continued until 2024/25</li> <li>• Model 1(b) shows the impact on the Authority should the pension grant be discontinued in 2021/22</li> </ul> <p>It should also be noted that the figures for council tax and business rates are provisional. The statutory deadline for the billing authorities to provide this information to the Authority is 31 January. Any changes to the figures will be presented in a revised Appendix 1 at the meeting.</p> <p>Appendix 2 shows the latest summary of the capital programme for 2019/20 and approved schemes for the following years.</p> <p>Appendix 3 provides further detail on the level of council tax chargeable for each band if the Authority</p>
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	<p>accepts the recommendation to increase the band D equivalent amount by 1.98%.</p> <p>As well as the uncertainty regarding pensions noted above, there is also uncertainty regarding the upcoming Fair Funding Review, USAR funding and funding for Firelink/ESMCP.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>It is recommended that the Authority be recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1(a) Note and have due regard to the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 8 of Annex A).</li> <li>1(b) Approve a Council Tax precept of £65.85 for a band D equivalent property (a 1.98% increase from 2019/20 - equal to 2.5p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1(a).</li> <li>1(c) Approve the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2.</li> <li>2 Not hold a referendum to increase Council Tax above the 2% threshold for 2020/21</li> <li>3 Note that a referendum may need to be considered for 2021/22 depending on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.</li> </ul>
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>Management of our Financial resources is a key risk to the Authority. By projecting forward and monitoring our financial plans, we are in a better position to avoid and mitigate the risk of adverse financial consequences.</p> <p>Section 9 of last year's report (see Background Papers) detailed the risk of holding a referendum to increase Council Tax above the threshold.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	All financial implications are shown in the main body of the report.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The Local Government Act 2003 gives the responsible finance officer, namely the Chief Finance Officer of the Combined Fire Authority under s112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the responsibility to report to Members of the Authority on their assessment of the robustness of the estimates used within the budget and on the adequacy of reserves.</p> <p>Members must take account of the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of the above and the highlighted associated risks before considering the recommendations as set out in the report.</p> <p>The legal implications of holding a referendum to increase Council Tax above the threshold were</p>

	<p>detailed in last year’s report (see Background Papers).</p> <p>By operation of the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Finance) Regulations 2008 [2008/3022] the shadow authority for Buckinghamshire will be the billing authority for the purposes of Council Tax for 2020/21 (across Buckinghamshire) and will be the body to which the Authority’s precept should be notified.</p>
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	No direct impact.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	<p>The Medium Term Financial Plan, including capital and revenue budgets, identifies the financial resources required projected into the future based on the delivery of specific aims and objectives of the Authority as set out in the Public Safety Plan (PSP). Members, Senior Management Board and many staff have been involved in agreeing priorities and the budget setting process over the preceding months.</p>
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20 to 2021/22 and Revised Appendices, Fire Authority, 6 February 2019:</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9515/4841/6166/ITEM_8_Medium_Term_Financial_Plan_2019-20gb.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9515/4841/6166/ITEM_8_Medium_Term_Financial_Plan_2019-20gb.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7215/4946/7873/ITEM_8_Revised_Appendices.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7215/4946/7873/ITEM_8_Revised_Appendices.pdf</a></p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>Annex A – Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25</p> <p>Appendix 1(a) – MTFP Budget Model 1(a)</p> <p>Appendix 1(b) – MTFP Budget Model 1(b)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Capital Programme Summary</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Council Tax Funding</p>
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	20 minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	<p>Mark Hemming</p> <p><a href="mailto:mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk">mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01296 744687</p>

## **Annex A – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 to 2024/25**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the proposed revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2020/21 to 2024/25.
- 1.2. The MTFP is closely linked to the Public Safety Plan (PSP) and Corporate Plan. The PSP sets out our strategic approach to the management of risk in the communities we serve. The Corporate Plan sets out how we intend to equip and develop our organisation and its people to meet the challenges that we face. The MTFP details the resources available to facilitate these plans.
- 1.3. As part of the Fire Authority's Terms of Reference and MTFP, the Authority reviews and sets a balanced budget each year in line with corporate priorities. The MTFP is expressed as a detailed annual budget for the first year, with outline indicative budgets for the following four years.
- 1.4. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer (as S.112 Chief Finance Officer of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) is required to report to Members on:
  - The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget
  - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves
- 1.5. The Local Government Act 2003 requires that Members have regard to the report in making their decisions (see section 8).
- 1.6. Section 42A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires the Authority to have regard to the level of reserves for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the net budget requirement.

### **2. Local Government Finance Settlement 2020 to 2021**

- 2.1. Without sufficient time to undertake a full comprehensive spending review, the Government has effectively rolled-forward amounts within the settlement funding assessment for 2019/20 and increased these by the rate of inflation (i.e. zero real-terms increase). The exception to this is the pension grant funding, which is expected to be a flat-cash settlement (subject to official confirmation outside of the provisional settlement).
- 2.2. Whilst it is welcome that the pension grant funding will continue for a further year (the previous MTFP forecast a one-off payment only) all funding will be subject to review next year as part of what is expected to be a three-year comprehensive spending review.
- 2.3. As part of this year's announcement, the Government published headline changes in core spending power between 2019/20 and 2020/21 for every authority. The headline change for BMKFA for was an increase of 3.2%:
- 2.4. However, this headline increase is based on two fundamental assumptions:
  - That the growth in council tax base between 2018/19 and 2019/20 will be 1.58% (actual increase was 1.75%)
  - That the Authority will increase its Band D council tax in 2019/20 by 1.99%, which is the maximum increase permissible without triggering a referendum.

### **3. Council Tax and Business Rates**

- 3.1. In publicly declaring core spending power figures, the Government has clearly set an expectation that local authorities will continue to increase council tax every year by the maximum amount permissible.
- 3.2. The difference between a 1.98% increase in the precept and holding council tax at its current level for 2020/21 is just under £400k for the year. This is approximately equivalent to the cost of employing eight wholetime firefighters.
- 3.3. Council tax was increased by 2.99% in 2018/19 and by 2.98% in 2019/20.
- 3.4. Despite this Authority's response to the settlement consultation and the concerns noted by the inspectorate, no specific additional precept flexibility was afforded to fire and rescue authorities. Authorities with no specific additional flexibility may however increase their Band D equivalent by up to 2% without triggering a referendum (last year this figure was 3%).
- 3.5. The Authority currently sets a band D equivalent precept of £64.57 per annum (approx. £1.24 per week). This is significantly below the national average and is the lowest precept of any non-metropolitan combined fire authority.
- 3.6. Council tax chargeable for each band should the Authority resolve to increase the band D equivalent amount by 1.98% is shown in Appendix 3.
- 3.7. It is not recommended to hold a referendum to increase Council tax above the threshold for 2020/21. However, this option may need to be considered for 2021/22, depending on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

### **4. Risk Factors in Budget Assumptions**

- 4.1. The budget proposed for 2020/21 at Appendix 1 has been compiled by looking in detail at current spending and future plans.
- 4.2. This year officers adopted a zero-based budget approach when developing the budget proposal for 2020/21. As opposed to the incremental approach, which looks at last year's budgets and adjusts them up or down, the zero-based approach looks at all budgets to ensure the correct amount of money is being spent in the correct areas. This approach has been developed alongside the new Public Safety Plan and feedback from our recent inspection report from HMICFRS.
- 4.3. Although our report noted that the inspectorate "would like to see improvements in the year ahead, but without increased funding, it is difficult to see where progress can be made" the zero-based budget approach has identified some key opportunities within the current budgetary constraints:
  - Increasing the wholetime establishment by 20 firefighters in 2020/21, with the potential to increase by a further 10 in the following year (depending on the outcome of the comprehensive spending review)
  - Increasing the Protection Team by 2 FTEs and introducing a Team Leader role into the Prevention Team.
  - Introducing a Head of Technology, Transformation and Programme Management office to manage the actions required following our inspection report.



- 4.4. At the time of writing the Authority had not yet received formal written notification of the continuation of the USAR grant for 2020/21, but it is expected imminently. However, the potential discontinuation of USAR funding in future years is a significant financial risk facing the Authority at present. As noted earlier, there is also a risk that the pension grant may not continue beyond 2020/21.
- 4.5. Pay inflation is projected at 2% per annum, in line with the actual award for 2019/20. However, the Authority is aware that there is a risk that the national agreement may set a level higher than this. For every additional 1% increase the cost to this Authority is approximately £200k each and every year. This would clearly have a significant adverse impact on the forecast position within the model.
- 4.6. Further uncertainty regarding pensions has been introduced by the ruling in December 2018 that the transitional arrangements introduced for the firefighters' schemes in 2015 were discriminatory. At the employment tribunal hearing on 18 December 2019 it was ruled the claimants, members of the 1992 and 2006 firefighters' pension schemes, are now entitled to be treated as if they have remained members of their original pension scheme. However, it is too early at this stage to quantify the impact this may have on budgets.
- 4.7. Areas where budgets have changed significantly from previous years have been subject to a series of challenges by Officers and Members. Risks which have been identified are to be covered from the reserves.
- 4.8. The detailed costings are based on the updated budget requirement including the annual uplift assumptions below:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Pay inflation	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
CPI	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Council tax increase	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
Council tax base	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%
Business tax base	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%

## 5. Capital

- 5.1. The revenue impact of the capital programme has been factored into the base revenue budget requirement. This includes an annual revenue contribution to capital, details of which are shown in Appendix 1(a).
- 5.2. The table at Appendix 2 details the approved capital programme for 2019/20, the estimated provisional outturn position and any proposed slippage to the programme. Any slippage is then added to the new budget requests for 2020/21 to give a total capital budget requirement of £1.5m for 2020/21.
- 5.3. The Authority should also take cognisance of the prudential indicators when approving the capital programme (submitted as a separate paper at this meeting).

## **6. Scrutiny and Challenge Process**

- 6.1. All budget changes have been determined based on a series of challenge panels held by officers and then Members during the MTFP process.

## **7. Adequacy of Reserves**

- 7.1. A paper detailing our Reserves Strategy was approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2018 ([https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4215/2024/7103/ITEM\\_5\\_Reserves\\_Strategy\\_2\\_018-19.pdf](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4215/2024/7103/ITEM_5_Reserves_Strategy_2_018-19.pdf)). There have been no subsequent events that require the level of the General Fund determined at that time to be adjusted at present

- 7.2. The latest forecast balances and reserves at year-end are:

- General Fund Balance - £1.5m
- Earmarked Reserves - £1.4m\*
- Capital Reserves - £0.6m

\* The earmarked reserves balance excludes the amount held by Oxfordshire County Council relating to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

This represents a decrease of £3.4m from the balances held at the start of the year.

## **8. Statement of the Chief Finance Officer**

- 8.1. The purpose of this statement is to comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003 whereby the Chief Finance Officer, in the Fire Authority's case the Director of Finance and Assets and Chief Finance Officer, must report on:

- The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget and;
- The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves;
- In recommending the budget to the Authority, Members must take the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in respect of the above and the associated risks as highlighted within the report.

- 8.2. Given the level of the General Fund Balance and earmarked reserves available, the prudent approach to the budget setting process for the next financial year and the controls for budget management, it is my conclusion as Chief Finance Officer for the Authority that there is sufficient capacity in the reserves to cope with the financial risks the Authority faces for 2019/20 and future years and that the methodology applied provides the necessary assurance to the Authority about the robustness of the estimates used in constructing the budget.

### Appendix 1(a) – MTFP Model 1(a)

The model below is based on the assumptions detailed in Sections 3 and 4 and all significant budget movements have been subjected to officer and Member scrutiny as noted in Section 6.1. The statutory deadline for the billing authorities to provide Council Tax and business rates information to the Authority is 31 January. Any changes to these figures will be presented in a revised Appendix 1 at the meeting.

<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	<b>2019/20 £000</b>	<b>2020/21 £000</b>	<b>2021/22 £000</b>	<b>2022/23 £000</b>	<b>2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>
Base Budget			31,070	31,871	32,756	33,671
Pay Adjustment			418	433	439	448
Inflation Adjustment			78	78	78	78
Corporate Core	1,421	1,349		1	-28	-45
Statutory Accounting and Contingency	782	589				
Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning	19,891	21,513	403	156	-12	
People and Organisational Development	2,715	2,298	-96	10		
Finance and Assets	3,857	4,264	-100			
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,666	1,046	98	218	438	463
Transfers to Reserves		11		-11		
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>30,332</b>	<b>31,070</b>	<b>31,871</b>	<b>32,756</b>	<b>33,671</b>	<b>34,615</b>
Council Tax Receipts	-19,715	-20,460	-21,199	-21,964	-22,759	-23,583
Council Tax Receipts Surplus/Deficit	-278	-308	-250	-250	-250	-250
Revenue Support Grant/Business Rates	-7,841	-7,988	-8,108	-8,228	-8,348	-8,468
Fire Specific Grants (USAR/Firelink)	-1,097	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106
Pension Grant Funding	-1,035	-1,208	-1,208	-1,208	-1,208	-1,208
Transfers from Reserves	-366	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>-30,332</b>	<b>-31,070</b>	<b>-31,871</b>	<b>-32,756</b>	<b>-33,671</b>	<b>-34,615</b>
Shortfall/(Surplus) for Year	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Savings Requirement	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Fund Balance	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500
Other Earmarked Reserves (excluding Control Room Res.)	-1,428	-1,439	-1,439	-1,428	-1,428	-1,428
Earmarked Capital Reserves	-575	-2,137	-1,815	-1,211	-1,795	-2,592
<b>Total</b>	<b>-3,503</b>	<b>-5,076</b>	<b>-4,754</b>	<b>-4,139</b>	<b>-4,723</b>	<b>-5,520</b>

### Appendix 1(b) – MTFP Model 1(b)

The model below is as per Model 1(a) but shows the impact that losing the pension grant funding from 2021/22 would have on the Authority’s level of forecast reserves:

<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	<b>2019/20 £000</b>	<b>2020/21 £000</b>	<b>2021/22 £000</b>	<b>2022/23 £000</b>	<b>2023/24 £000</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>
Base Budget			31,070	30,727	32,689	33,087
Pay Adjustment			418	433	439	448
Inflation Adjustment			78	78	78	78
Corporate Core	1,421	1,349		1	-28	-45
Statutory Accounting and Contingency	782	589				
Delivery, Corporate Development and Planning	19,891	21,513	403	156	-12	
People and Organisational Development	2,715	2,298	-96	10		
Finance and Assets	3,857	4,264	-100			
Revenue Contribution to Capital	1,666	1,046	-1,046	1,295	-79	250
Transfers to Reserves	0	11		-11		
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>30,332</b>	<b>31,070</b>	<b>30,727</b>	<b>32,689</b>	<b>33,087</b>	<b>33,818</b>
Council Tax Receipts	-19,715	-20,460	-21,199	-21,964	-22,759	-23,583
Council Tax Receipts Surplus/Deficit	-278	-308	-250	-250	-250	-250
Revenue Support Grant/Business Rates	-7,841	-7,988	-8,108	-8,228	-8,348	-8,468
Fire Specific Grants (USAR/Firelink)	-1,097	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106	-1,106
Pension Grant Funding	-1,035	-1,208				
Transfers from Reserves	-366		-64	-1,141	-624	-411
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>-30,332</b>	<b>-31,070</b>	<b>-30,727</b>	<b>-32,689</b>	<b>-33,087</b>	<b>-33,818</b>
Shortfall/(Surplus) for Year	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Savings Requirement	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Fund Balance	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,500	-1,099	-688
Other Earmarked Reserves (excluding Control Room Res.)	-1,428	-1,439	-1,375	-223	0	0
Earmarked Capital Reserves	-575	-2,137	-671	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>-3,503</b>	<b>-5,076</b>	<b>-3,546</b>	<b>-1,723</b>	<b>-1,099</b>	<b>-688</b>

## Appendix 2 – Capital Programme

The table below summarises the capital programme from 2019/20 through to 2022/23 and is based on the revenue contribution to capital levels shown in Model 1(a):

<b>Capital Programme Summary</b>	<b>Approved Budget 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Provisional Outturn 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Slippage 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Budget Requests 2020/21 £000</b>	<b>Total Budget Requirement 2020/21 £000</b>	<b>Budget Requests 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Budget Requests 2022/23 * £000</b>
Property	500	500	0	500	500	500	500
Property Review	7,741	7,741	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Appliances & Equipment	1,181	889	268	641	909	891	1,391
Support	113	113	0	75	75	75	75
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,535</b>	<b>9,243</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,966</b>
<b>Funding b/fwd</b>		<b>-4,080</b>			<b>-575</b>	<b>-2,137</b>	<b>-1,815</b>
<b>In year funding</b>		<b>-5,738</b>			<b>-3,046</b>	<b>-1,144</b>	<b>-1,362</b>
<b>Funding (Available) / Deficit</b>		<b>-575</b>			<b>-2,137</b>	<b>-1,815</b>	<b>-1,211</b>

The table below shows indicative future year's budgets and anticipated funding through to 2024/25:

<b>Capital Programme Summary</b>	<b>Budget Requests 2023/24</b>	<b>Budget Requests 2024/25 £000</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,466</b>
<b>Funding b/fwd</b>	<b>-1,211</b>	<b>-1,795</b>
<b>In year funding</b>	<b>-1,800</b>	<b>-2,263</b>
<b>Funding (Available) / Deficit</b>	<b>-1,795</b>	<b>-2,592</b>

\* This contains an indicative amount of £500k for replacement of Breathing Apparatus – a future business case will require approval before commencement of that project.

### Appendix 3 – Council Tax Rates

If the band D equivalent council tax were increased by 1.98% for 2020/21, the following rates would apply to properties in each band:

<b>Bands</b>	<b>Proportion of Band D Charge</b>	<b>Per Week (£)</b>	<b>Per Month (£)</b>	<b>Per Year (£)</b>
A	6/9	0.84	3.66	43.90
B	7/9	0.98	4.27	51.22
C	8/9	1.12	4.88	58.53
D	9/9	1.26	5.49	65.85
E	11/9	1.54	6.71	80.48
F	13/9	1.82	7.93	95.12
G	15/9	2.10	9.15	109.75
H	18/9	2.53	10.98	131.70

This would represent an annual increase of £0.85 per annum on a band A, £1.28 per annum on a band D and £2.56 per annum on a band H property.

# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



<b>MEETING</b>	Executive Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	5 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Calum Bell, Head of Service Development
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>2020-2025 Public Safety Plan Consultation: Feedback &amp; Recommendations</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan (PSP) was approved for public consultation at the Authority's 18 September 2019 meeting. The consultation was open for an eight-week period from 23 September to 18 November 2019. The purpose of this report is to present to the Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the feedback received from the consultation;</li> <li>• management responses to the feedback; and,</li> <li>• recommendations following the outcomes of the consultation.</li> </ul> <p>At the 18 September Fire Authority meeting, officers indicated that they would also review the draft PSP in light of findings of the HMICFRS inspection that was reported to the Authority at the Extraordinary meeting on 23 January 2020. Officers have done so, and consider that the recommendations relating to the 'causes of concern' have, or can, be addressed within the broad scope of the Public Safety Plan and its associated consultation programme. Areas identified for improvement by the HMICFRS will be considered and addressed in the 2020-2025 Corporate Plan, which underpins and programmes projects and key tasks arising from the proposals contained in the Public Safety Plan. The new Corporate Plan will be presented to the 25 March Executive Committee for recommendation for approval at the June Fire Authority meeting.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>It is recommended:</p> <p>that the Authority be recommend to approve that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan be adopted;</li> <li>2. Officers be directed to proceed with the further development of the strategy proposals set out at Page 32 of the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan</li> </ol>

	<p>(Annex 3) having regard to the consultation feedback as they are progressed and to undertake further consultations with stakeholders potentially affected by any specific changes arising from their implementation; and,</p> <p>3. the Chief Fire Officer be granted discretion to determine the sequencing and timing of the work required to further progress the proposals.</p>
<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b></p>	<p>Continued re-engineering of our service provision to reflect the changing nature of risk and demand in the community may present opportunities to further mitigate a number of our key corporate risks. However, as the HMICFRS found in their first inspection the “...service is facing significant financial constraints” and “fundamentally ...does not have enough people and money” (<a href="#">HMICFRS report</a> at p.6).</p> <p>Staff availability is also another significant area of risk identified within our Corporate Risk Register. Modernising and continually improving the flexibility of our employment propositions, as envisaged in the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan, will also present opportunities to improve staff retention and recruitment thus enhancing staff availability and general resilience relative to this important area of risk.</p> <p>Regarding the public consultation process, a detailed risk assessment was carried out with Opinion Research Services at the project planning stage and a risk log established within the Project Initiation Document with appropriate measures identified to control the identified risks. The key 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 those of the public as a whole; and,</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 Public Safety Plan were they to crystallise. The first risk is controlled via the focus group recruitment process which is designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public is selected by using quotas for age, gender, ethnicity, disability and geographic factors. The second, via ORS’ training and research methods which are fully accredited to relevant British, ISO and Interviewer Quality Control Scheme standards. Opinion Research Services are also a Market Research Society (MRS) Company Partner and are fully compliant with the MRS Code of Conduct.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL</b></p>	<p>The cost of Phase One of the consultation was £13,550</p>



<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>	which was paid during the 2018/19 financial year. The cost of this phase of the consultation, was £17,315 (as well as a further five focus groups this included provision of an online consultation channel to facilitate a wider response from members of the public, Authority staff and other external stakeholders plus venue hire and ORS facilitator expenses). This cost has been met from existing revenue budget resources. Further consultation and other costs may arise depending on the nature of and outcomes of the various proposals contained in the plan. The costs and benefits arising from any recommended changes to service provision will be accounted for by our Medium-Term Financial Planning process.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The approach to the consultation complies with National Framework requirements by ensuring that consultation is undertaken at appropriate points in the Integrated Risk Management/Public Safety Plan 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 Public Safety Plan 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 Integrated Risk Management/Public Safety Plan. However, officers share thinking on approaches to plan development and consultation practices with other fire and rescue services, in particular our Thames Valley partners. The draft Public Safety Plan also identifies opportunities to continue and further collaboration where appropriate.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct implications arising from the draft Public Safety Plan. Any proposals for change arising from the Plan will include evaluation of the health and safety implications.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	<p>The selection process for the public focus groups was designed to ensure that a representative sample of the public was consulted. A socio-demographic profile of the public focus group participants is shown at page 15 of Annex 1. This indicates that they were a broad cross section of residents from local areas.</p> <p>Participation in the online survey was by open invitation so the views expressed via this channel cannot be certified as being necessarily representative of the views of the general public, staff or other stakeholders as a whole. However, all staff and a wide range of organisations were encouraged to take part in the feedback process which yielded a diverse range of views and opinions.</p>
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	The Plan sets out the Authority's strategic approach to

delivery of its vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.

**Communication with stakeholders;**

The development of the Plan was informed by an initial public consultation carried out in November / December 2018 to explore public expectations of the Service and awareness of the issues and challenges facing it together with some of the ways we might potentially respond to these. A summary of the outcomes of the consultation is contained in the Plan and was reported on in full to Members at the February 2019 Fire Authority meeting. Informal consultations have also taken place with Service Managers and the Representative Bodies during the development of the draft Public Safety Plan and formal 'gateway' reviews were undertaken by the Business Transformation Board on 1 August 2019 and Strategic Management Board on 13 August 2019.

**The system of internal control;**

The progress of the public consultation was overseen by the Business Transformation and Strategic Management Boards.

**The medium-term financial strategy;**

No direct implications arising from the consultation process. However, the medium-term financial strategy will be informed by the interdependencies between the Public Safety Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan. The balance between spending and resources. The immediate costs arising from the public consultation will be met from current financial year budgeted resources. Costs associated with the pursuit of the proposals contained in the draft Public Safety Plan will be factored in to future budget planning.

**The management of the asset base;**

The 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan may have implications for current property and fleet related assets. These will be considered in our Property and Fleet Management strategies. The arrangements to promote and ensure probity and propriety These are assured by compliance with National Framework requirements relating to the development of, and consultation for, Integrated Risk Management Plans.

**Environmental;**

The 2020–2025 Public Safety Plan commits the Authority to identifying and acting on opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint.

Also, where appropriate, any changes arising from the outcomes of the reviews of service provision contained in the Plan will be subject to environmental impact

	assessments.												
<p><b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p>The consultation sought to obtain the views of a representative cross section of the public and engage a wide range of other stakeholders including staff, representative bodies, community and partner organisations in the consideration of the issues and proposals contained in the Public Safety Plan.</p> <p><b>Consultation programme</b></p> <p>This comprised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A series of five focus groups with members of the public facilitated by Opinion Research Services (ORS), independent research specialists; and</li> <li>• An online questionnaire, hosted by ORS and accessible via the Authority’s website, which was open to all staff, members of the public and representatives of partner and community organisations. Awareness of the consultation was raised by targeting a range of community and partner organisations by letter and email. The consultation was also publicised on the Authority’s website and via social media channels with the following effects:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Media</th> <th>Articles / Posts</th> <th>Views</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Website</td> <td>2</td> <td>1,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FaceBook</td> <td>7</td> <td>11,600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Twitter</td> <td>13</td> <td>37,100</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Response</b></p> <p>A total of 55 diverse members of the public participated in the focus groups. There was a total of 58 responses to the online questionnaire. Seven of these were from respondents identifying as Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service staff, although the actual level of response may have been higher with some preferring to identify as residents or not to say. Eight organisations also responded to the consultation via the questionnaire. A full profile of online respondents is shown at Tables 1 – 5 on pages 11–12 of Annex 1. A further nine responses were received by email or letter (seven from individual respondents and two from organisations). Summary feedback from these is included at Annex 2.</p> <p><b>Background Papers</b></p> <p>Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018):</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-</a></p>	Media	Articles / Posts	Views	Website	2	1,200	FaceBook	7	11,600	Twitter	13	37,100
Media	Articles / Posts	Views											
Website	2	1,200											
FaceBook	7	11,600											
Twitter	13	37,100											

	<p><a href="#">and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2</a></p> <p>2015-2020 Public Safety Plan:  <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8114/2116/4524/2015-20-PUBLIC-SAFETY-PLAN-Updated-after-17-Dec-CFA.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8114/2116/4524/2015-20 PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN Updated after 17 Dec CFA.pdf</a></p> <p>2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan – “Listening &amp; Engagement” Research Report:  <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4915/4894/2682/ITEM_12_Outcomes_of_2020-2025_PUBLIC_SAFETY_PLAN_Focus_Groups_Report_Appendix.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/4915/4894/2682/ITEM_12 Outcomes of 2020-2025 PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN Focus Groups Report Appendix.pdf</a></p> <p>Draft 2020-2025 PSP &amp; Consultation Plan as approved at the 18 September 2019 Fire Authority meeting:  <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8915/6797/6225/ITEM_10_Draft_2020-25_PSP_18_September_CFA_Cover_Paper_Annexes-min.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8915/6797/6225/ITEM_10 Draft 2020-25 PSP 18 September CFA Cover Paper Annexes-min.pdf</a></p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p><b>Annexures:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ORS Report of Consultation Findings</li> <li>2. Service management responses to consultation feedback.</li> <li>3. Finalised 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan for decision.</li> </ol>
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	30 Minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	<p>Stuart Gowanlock, Corporate Planning Manager  <a href="mailto:sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk">sgowanlock@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p>



**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*

# Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan

## Report of Consultation Findings





# Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service: 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan Report of Consultation Findings



**Buckinghamshire**  
**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*

## Report by Opinion Research Services

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As with all our studies, findings from this report are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

Any press release or publication of the findings of this report requires the advance approval of ORS. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation

This study was conducted in accordance with ISO 20252:2012 and ISO 9001:2015.

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# Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) on the consultation reported here.

We are grateful to the members of the public who took part in the focus groups. They were patient in listening to background information before entering positively into the spirit of open discussions. They engaged with the service, with the issues under consideration and with each other in discussing their ideas readily. We would also like to thank the 58 people who took part in the survey, without whose valuable input the research would not have been possible.

We thank BFRS for commissioning the project as part of its programme of consultation. We particularly thank the senior staff and officers who attended the sessions to listen to the public's views and answer questions. Such meetings benefit considerably from the readiness of fire officers to answer participants' questions fully and frankly.

At all stages of the project, ORS' status as an independent organisation engaging with the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about BFRS's future service planning at a time of serious financial constraints. We hope also that ORS has been instrumental in strengthening BFRS's public engagement and consultation through the focus group participants.



# The ORS Project Team

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

- 1.1 In 2019, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) launched its Public Safety Plan 2020-2025 (PSP), which sets out how it will provide a fire and rescue service in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for the five-year period from 2020-2025. Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by BFRS to offer independent advice on the design and conduct of the consultation programme, undertake a programme of key consultation activities, and provide an interpretative report of the findings.

## Summary of main findings

- 1.2 The following paragraphs summarise the main findings from 58 responses to BFRS' online consultation questionnaire and five focus groups with members of the public across Buckinghamshire. However, readers are referred to the detailed chapters that follow for the full report. The suite of ORS reports also includes full cross-tabulations.

## Infrastructure

- 1.3 Focus group participants were satisfied with BFRS' strategic proposals for responding to infrastructure challenges: they were described as '*sensible*', '*flexible*' and '*responsive*'. It is not to say, though, that there were no concerns and reassurances sought - and just under half (46%) of questionnaire respondents reported that there are specific aspects and risks associated with infrastructure projects that they think BFRS should consider in its planning.
- 1.4 Feedback across both research strands around these specific concerns mainly related to **new housing developments**, which are reportedly causing **access issues** for emergency and other large vehicles due to narrow roads and many parked cars. It was also argued that **new buildings are not being constructed as safely as they could be**, and that developers and commissioning authorities should be held more accountable. Furthermore, focus group participants suggested that more **collaboration between BFRS, housing developers and local authorities** is needed so the Service has ample opportunity to ensure safety regulations are being met.
- 1.5 More generally, there were concerns about **high housing density, population growth** and the resulting increases in safety risks caused by **congestion** throughout the area.
- 1.6 Additional worries were around the alleged **number of collisions within roadwork stretches** (on the M1 for example), as well as whether there is sufficient resourcing to respond to challenges relating to **large-scale projects such as HS2**.

## Population

### Helping the most vulnerable

1.7 BFRS was **praised for the work undertaken** to date in the community and specifically with vulnerable people. Moreover, there was widespread **agreement** with the proposal for BFRS **to continue to collaborate** with partner organisations in order to engage with those at higher risk from fire and other emergencies.

1.8 Suggestions as to how BFRS could further improve its engagement were as follows:

- Doing more to **bring health and social care together** in offering a joined-up approach – for example via more collaboration with charities and healthcare trusts
- Using **best practice to share information** about vulnerable populations within partnerships and with other services
- **Increasing its presence in the community** by ‘patrolling’ local areas and regularly visiting care homes, sheltered housing schemes and schools
- Increasing its presence and awareness more generally through **media campaigning** such as radio broadcasting
- Investing in the roll out of **fire safety ‘advocates’ or ‘champions’**
- Running community workshops and seminars to **educate people** with vulnerable relatives, carers and volunteers on **how to undertake ‘basic safety checks’**
- Undertaking **early intervention and prevention activities**, such as: actively identifying and offering vulnerable people a home safety visit; and educating the next generation in schools and social clubs
- Encouraging the use of **assistive technology devices** like ‘Alexa’ to help maintain safety and wellbeing without putting added pressure on the FRS or adult social care
- Ensuring those with **learning or physical disabilities** are also a focus, as well as the elderly

### The automatic fire alarms (AFAs) attendance policy

1.9 Changes to AFA attendance are not included as part of the 2020-25 Public Safety Plan, and therefore did not feature in the questionnaire. However, as this is a policy BFRS may consult on in future, views on it were explored in the focus groups.

1.10 Overall **reviewing the policy was considered sensible**, although the majority of participants would not necessarily agree with BFRS ceasing to attend AFAs altogether. Instead, there was reasonable support for BFRS **only attending an AFA if evidence is provided to indicate a real fire**; for example, via a phone call from an employee/member of the public or via technology such as drones and ‘smart smoke alarms.’

1.11 In addition, consensus among the groups was that **businesses should take more responsibility** in improving equipment and training for staff to reduce the number of false AFA alarms. It was also suggested that **businesses should be fined** if the FRS attends three or more false alarm call outs.

- 1.12 A few questionnaire respondents also raised concerns about the impact of responses to false alarms in the free-text comments, and felt that **BFRS should take action** to decrease the number of these call-outs.

## Technology, information and systems

- 1.13 Focus group participants were **very positive about the proposals** for responding to technological advancements: they were especially keen to discuss the **use of drones** and whether **autonomous vehicles** could respond to specific incidents such as pumping flood water or minor RTCs.
- 1.14 Just under two fifths (38%) of questionnaire respondents and a reasonable proportion of focus group participants felt there were additional specific aspects, opportunities or risks associated with technological change that need to be considered. Specific safety concerns were raised in relation to: fire risks associated with the **rechargeable batteries used in electric vehicles**; the number of **accidents on ‘smart’ motorways**; **cyber-attacks** and **terrorism**; and whether firefighters will be adequately **trained to respond to advancing technological risks**. More generally, whether or not BFRS should be **investing more money into frontline services rather than technology** was discussed among focus group participants.
- 1.15 It was suggested that BFRS could mitigate these risks through being **more involved at the implementation stage** of new technology development to fully understand any impacts on the Service and society.

## Civil emergencies

- 1.16 BFRS’s plans for mitigating risks associated with civil emergencies were also **well received** among the focus groups. However, around four fifths (41%) of questionnaire respondents reportedly had additional concerns - mainly around tackling carbon emissions and climate change and **whether BFRS has the resources in place** to deliver the proposals. Specifically, there were doubts about how well **the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF)** is being utilised in practice, along with worries around the Service’s overall **lack of funding**.
- 1.17 Suggestions as to how BFRS could do more to mitigate risk were around better **educating the public** on how to prepare for and what to do during a civil emergency; partnership work with **companies specialising in security**; and ensuring that the service has the **correct appliances** to respond to incidents that are more likely to affect Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, such as emergencies within **heavily forested areas**.
- 1.18 In terms of reducing its **carbon footprint**, it was acknowledged that this may be difficult for BFRS to do, especially with appliances travelling greater distances to cover areas that are struggling with resourcing. However, it was recommended that BFRS follows an official recycling regime.

## Workforce

- 1.19 Focus group participants felt that **BFRS is taking the correct approach** to responding to challenges around workforce: they particularly supported **flexible working hours, apprenticeships** and **targeted recruitment** for a more diverse workforce.

- 1.20 Moreover, questionnaire respondents were presented with a list of factors and asked what they thought were most important when considering BFRS as an employer. The top three were as: **engaging with and listening to staff** (53%); **offering opportunities to develop skills** (40%); and offering **enhanced employee benefits** (such as local weighting allowances) (38%).

## Funding

- 1.21 In response to being asked whether they would support an increase in the part of council tax that funds BFRS during 2020-21, the largest proportion of both focus group participants and questionnaire respondents (47%) said they would be **willing to pay a one-off £10 increase** to the current annual charge for a Band D property. Indeed, BFRS was considered a 'worthy cause' to pay more towards. Moreover, it was deemed sensible to increase funding so that rates are closer in line with the national average. Only 15% of questionnaire respondents indicated a preference for no increase at all.
- 1.22 However, there were concerns that this would be the **'thin edge of the wedge'** insofar as other services may also increase their portion of council tax rates. **Alternative suggestions** put forward across both research strands were **charging for false alarm call outs** as well as the provision of **safety advice and training**. Moreover, some queried whether BFRS would be able to generate more future funding as a result of the **large number of housing developments** being built across the county.

## 2. Project Overview

### The commission

- 2.1 In 2019, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) launched its Public Safety Plan 2020-2025 (PSP), which sets out how it will provide a fire and rescue service in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for the five-year period from 2020-2025. The plan builds on BFRS' Public Safety Plan 2015-20 and considers changes to risks and how it plans to change its services to keep residents, communities and businesses safe from fire and other emergencies.
- 2.2 In this context, on the basis of our experience of the fire and rescue service and many statutory consultations, Opinion Research Services (ORS) was commissioned by BFRS to offer independent advice on the design and conduct of the consultation programme, undertake a programme of key consultation activities, and provide an interpretative report of the findings.

### Extensive consultation

- 2.3 BFRS' consultation period ran from 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019, and included elements conducted by ORS as an independent organisation - for example, providing feedback on the consultation document; designing presentation material for focus groups; recruiting, facilitating and reporting five deliberative focus groups; designing and analysing responses to an online and paper version of an Open Consultation Questionnaire; and writing interim and final reports.

### Consultation proportionate and fair

- 2.4 The key legal and good practice requirements for proper consultation are based on the so-called Gunning Principles, which state that consultation should: be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken; allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond; provide the public and stakeholders with sufficient background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken.
- 2.5 In this case, the formal consultation for BFRS' PSP followed an earlier engagement programme - also undertaken by ORS - which was carried out in 2018. It involved five focus groups across its service area (in Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chesham, High Wycombe and Milton Keynes), with BFRS's key priority being to understand public opinions and to 'test' some very general ideas and principles at a very early stage.
- 2.6 The eight-week formal consultation period gave the public and stakeholders sufficient time to participate, and through its consultation documents and website information the Fire Authority sought to provide sufficient information for staff, stakeholders and residents to understand the proposals and to make informed judgements about them and the supporting evidence.

- 2.7 The final Gunning principle listed above is that consultation outcomes should be properly taken into consideration before authorities take their decisions. In this case, regular formal and informal briefings allowed the progressive reporting of people’s opinions.
- 2.8 Properly understood, accountability means that public authorities should give an account of their plans and consider public and stakeholder views: they should conduct fair and accessible consultation while reporting the outcomes openly and considering them fully. Consultations are not referenda, and the popularity or unpopularity of draft proposals should not displace professional and political judgement about what are the right or best decisions in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are important, but as considerations to be taken into account, not as decisive factors that necessarily determine authorities’ decisions.

## Summary of consultation strands

### Open Questionnaire

- 2.9 The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying Consultation Document) was available online and as a hard copy between 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The survey was available to residents, representatives from business, public and voluntary organisations and BFRS employees.
- 2.10 In total, 58 questionnaires were completed, all of which were submitted online.
- 2.11 It should be noted that while open questionnaires are important consultation routes that are accessible to almost everyone, they are not ‘surveys’ of the public. Whereas surveys require proper sampling of a given population, open questionnaires are distributed unsystematically or adventitiously, and are more likely to be completed by motivated people while also being subject to influence by local campaigns. As such, because the respondent profile (as outlined in the full report) is an imperfect reflection of the Buckinghamshire population, its results must be interpreted carefully. This does not mean that the open questionnaire findings should be discounted: they are analysed in detail in this report and must be taken into account as a demonstration of the strength of feeling of residents who were motivated to put forward their views about the proposals.

### Respondent Profiles

- 2.12 The tables below show the profile characteristics of respondents to the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Gender – All Respondents**

Gender	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)
Male	27	69
Female	12	31
Not Known	19	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2: Age – All Respondents

Age	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)
16 to 34	6	15
35 to 54	12	31
55 to 64	13	33
65 or over	8	21
Not Known	19	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3: Disability – All Respondents

Disability	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)
Yes	4	10
No	38	90
Not Known	16	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4: Ethnicity – All Respondents

Ethnicity	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)
White British	38	100
Not Known	20	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Respondent Type – All Respondents

Respondent Type	Number of respondents (unweighted count)	% of respondents (unweighted valid)
Own personal response	48	86
On behalf of an organisation	8	14
Not Known	2	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>



## Responses from organisations

- 2.13 Most responses to the consultation questionnaire were personal responses (86%; 48 respondents), which included just under a fifth (18%; 7 respondents) who work for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service. More than one eighth (14%; 8 respondents) were from local organisations or business respondents.
- 2.14 Of the eight respondents who stated that they were responding on behalf of an organisation, seven gave the name of the organisation they were representing. These were:
- Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council
  - Central Milton Keynes Town Council
  - Camphill Milton Keynes Communities
  - Hambledon Parish Council
  - Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust Community – Learning Disability Team
  - Padbury Parish Council
  - Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

## Duplicate and co-ordinated responses

- 2.15 Online questionnaires must be open and accessible to all while minimising the possibility of multiple completions (by the same people) that distort the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the survey online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which surveys are completed. On this occasion, the monitoring showed that there were no duplicates generated.

## Interpretation of the Data

- 2.16 Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers.
- 2.17 The example comments shown throughout the report have been selected as being typical of those received in relation to each proposal.
- 2.18 Graphics are used extensively in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The pie charts and other graphics show the proportions (percentages) of respondents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with:
- Purple/blue shades to represent neutral responses (neither positive nor negative)
  - Grey shades to represent ‘other’ responses

## Focus groups with members of the public

- 2.19 BFRS commissioned a programme of five deliberative focus groups with members of the public across Buckinghamshire (in Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chesham, High Wycombe and Milton Keynes) in order to involve a diverse and broadly representative cross-section of residents. ORS worked in collaboration with BFRS to prepare informative stimulus material for the groups before facilitating the discussions and preparing an independent report of findings.

### Attendance and representativeness

- 2.20 The focus groups were designed to inform and ‘engage’ the participants both with the issues and with BFRS - by using a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage members of the public to reflect in depth about the fire and rescue service, while both receiving and questioning background information and discussing important issues and proposals in detail. The meetings lasted for two hours.
- 2.21 In total, there were 55 diverse participants at the focus groups. The dates of the meetings and attendance levels by members of the public can be found in Table 6.

**Table 6: Focus groups (Area, Time and Date and Number of attendees)**

Area	Time and Date	Number of Attendees
Aylesbury	6:30pm – 8:30pm Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	11
Milton Keynes	6:30pm – 8:30pm Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	10
Buckingham	6:30pm – 8:30pm Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	11
High Wycombe	6:30pm – 8:30pm Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	13
Chesham	6:30pm – 8:30pm Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	10

- 2.22 The attendance target for the focus groups was between eight to 10 people, so the recruitment programme was successful. Participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS’ Social Research Call Centre. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community. Participants who took part in focus groups as part of BFRS’ engagement process were also invited to take part. As standard good practice, people were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part.

- 2.23 Overall (as shown in the table below), participants were a broad cross-section of residents from the local areas:

**Table 7: Focus groups criteria**

Criteria	Focus Group Count
Gender	
Male	26
Female	29
Age	
16-34	21
35-54	21
55+	22
Ethnicity	
BME	11
Disability	
Limiting Long-term Illness	2

- 2.24 In the recruitment process, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors, and the venues at which the focus groups met were readily accessible. People's needs were taken into account in the recruitment and venue selection.
- 2.25 Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse groups of people from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the opportunity to participate. Because the recruitment was inclusive and participants were diverse, we are satisfied that the outcomes of the meeting (as reported below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline based on similar discussions. In summary, the outcomes reported here are reliable as examples of the needs and wants of diverse informed people reacting to the possible challenges facing BFRS.

### Discussion Agenda

- 2.26 The focus group agenda covered all of the following topics:

Background information in relation to:

- Incident profile and numbers
- BFRS' Public Safety Plan 2015-20 achievements and performance

Future challenges in relation to six key areas:

- Technological changes and advancements
- Civil emergencies

- Infrastructure projects
- Population changes
- Workforce and funding pressures

What BFRS is already doing and will continue to do to mitigate risks associated with these challenges

BFRS' Public Safety Plan proposals around how to mitigate these risks and challenges, which include:

- Temporarily relocating appliances & other resources to reduce impact of infrastructure projects
- Reviewing current capacity, capabilities and approaches to meet emerging civil emergency risks
- Improving preventative engagement with vulnerable groups
- Possibly reviewing automated fire alarm (AFA) attendance policy
- Improving recruitment and retention via flexible employment opportunities and developing the roll on the on-call firefighter
- Increasing Council Tax by more than 3% in order to avoid reductions to service provision.

<sup>2.27</sup> The questions were accompanied by a presentation devised by ORS and BFRS to inform and stimulate discussion of the issues - and participants were encouraged to ask any questions they wished throughout the discussions.

## Reporting

<sup>2.28</sup> The qualitative research chapter concisely reviews the sentiments and judgements of focus group participants about BFRS and what they expect and desire of it. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them – but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse the opinions in question, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants.

# 3. Open Consultation Questionnaire

## Introduction

- 3.1 The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying Consultation Document) was available online and as a hard copy between 23<sup>rd</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019. 58 questionnaires were completed, all of which were submitted online.

## Infrastructure projects

The Public Safety Plan identifies a range of major infrastructure projects, along with plans for new housing development - particularly in the Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes - that have implications for future fire and rescue service provision.

Some of these projects have the potential to cause, or have already, caused disruption to local transport networks. Consequently, they may have an impact on BFRS service provision, particularly emergency response times.

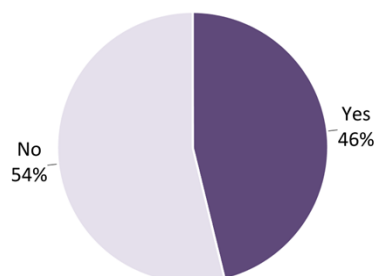
Its nearest-appliance mobilisation system will help BFRS mitigate this risk. It will also consider temporarily relocating appliances and other resources to avoid excessive impacts on its ability to respond to emergencies or deliver other services during construction. In addition, BFRS will continually review risk, and identify any additional training, equipment and vehicle requirements needed.

**Are there any other specific aspects or risks associated with these projects that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**

**If yes, what are these risks and how should BFRS mitigate them?**

- 3.2 Figure 1 shows that 46% of respondents think there are other specific aspects or risks associated with the infrastructure projects in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes that BFRS should consider in its planning, whilst more than half (54%) do not.

**Figure 1: Are there any other specific aspects or risks associated with these projects that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**



Base: All Respondents (52)

- 3.3 Some of these concerns were related to construction and the impact of new housing developments.

*“New buildings are not being constructed as well as the architects who design them... compartmentation design means fires that should be contained can spread. BFRS need to try and talk to local authorities, to ensure inspections, to make sure the buildings have been constructed as specified, and corners haven't been cut by builders, who don't understand why they need to build in the specified way, and not the way they've always done it.”*

*“Pursuant to the Grenfell fire, the Parish Council felt that the fire service should lobby for developers and commissioning authorities to continue to be held accountable for their deployment of materials and building designs which are found to be intrinsically unsafe for both occupiers and emergency services.” (Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council)*

*“Ensure that the right plans are considered, especially [relating to] cladding” (HPFT Community Learning Disability Team)*

- 3.4 Other areas of risk that respondents expressed concern about were related to insufficient and inconsiderate parking and the obstructions this can cause.

*“Planning authorities are allowing what feels like quite dense concentrations of housing with a woefully insufficient number of parking spaces, causing residents and their visitors to park all over the place and obstruct larger vehicles such as fire engines, delivery lorries, and refuse, and recycling lorries. Can more pressure be brought to bear on these planning authorities to ensure that they provide sufficient parking?”*

## Population: helping the most vulnerable

BFRS continually seeks to improve its ability to engage with people who are at higher risk from fire and other emergencies, such as the 80+ age group.

It uses a number of data sources and works very closely with partner organisations to achieve this, for example carrying out visits to homes and participating in education programmes.

Through its Fire and Wellness programme BFRS has broadened its home visits to look at other issues which are often linked to fire safety, while also assisting key partners in helping people to be safer and healthier in their homes.

**BFRS welcomes feedback on how it can improve its engagement with those at higher risk from fire and other emergencies. In what ways, if any, do you think it could do this better?**

- 3.5 In terms of how BFRS can improve its engagement with those who are at higher risk from fire, suggestions included: engagement through local radio broadcasts; working closely with charities and care agencies; and running seminars for those who care for vulnerable people.

*“Perhaps using the local community radio stations to talk about fire risks, and work with parish councils to run events for the same reasons.”*

*“Work closer with charities, to try to reach those people that are maybe not on any service radar. Also, work closer with businesses that supply equipment to vulnerable persons; [...] not every older or vulnerable person who needs assistance is registered with the authorities.”*

*“Work with agencies that provide daily care to vulnerable people. Train their staff to recognise hazards and the risks they present, and how to assess and mitigate those risks.”*

*“[...] run seminars for carers, volunteers, and people with older relatives, so that they could carry out some of the basic safety checks for vulnerable people. For example, checking their smoke alarms every month, checking they are warm during cold weather, and encouraging them to eat healthily. It's about time more people stepped up to the plate and took more responsibility for older members of their families.”*

## Technology, information and systems

The growth in both the number and complexity of cyber-attacks means that BFRS must be constantly vigilant and work with partners and suppliers to mitigate these threats. BFRS is also aware of the way that new information technologies are being increasingly embedded into infrastructure, industrial plant, public buildings, homes, transportation networks and urban environments.

BFRS currently uses a range of capabilities to mitigate the risk of cyber-attacks, it is diligent in its selection of partners and suppliers, and has disaster recovery systems in place.

During the period of this Public Safety Plan, BFRS expects that progress will be made with the Government’s Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). This will provide more secure and resilient communication capabilities to deliver more real-time information to improve incident management and other services.

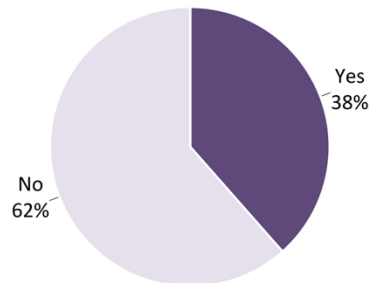
BFRS will also monitor the evolution and implementation of a range of new technologies and systems such as 5G cellular network technology, autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, robotics, the development of ‘Smart Cities’ and ‘Smart’ transportation networks.

**Are there any other specific aspects, opportunities or risks associated with technological change that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**

**If yes, what are these and how should BFRS mitigate them?**

- 3.6 Figure 2 shows that more than one third (38%) of respondents felt that there are other specific aspects or risks associated with technological change that BFRS should consider in its planning, whilst more than three fifths (62%) did not.

**Figure 2: Are there any other specific aspects, opportunities or risks associated with technological change that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**



**Base: All Respondents (39)**

- 3.7 Of the respondents who thought there were specific aspects, opportunities or risks to consider, common themes were related to cyber-attacks and terrorism:

*“The risks of cyber-attacks can be mitigated by setting up a closed intranet for operations and communications.”*

*“In response to a cyber-attack, we might well find cellular networks out of action. We might well anticipate our power supply grid disabled. We might find our landline phone system out of action. There could even be widespread disruption of water supplies including hydrants. A cyber-attack might well be timed to coincide with a spell of extreme weather, such as a prolonged period of snow, which could disrupt road traffic. You are already well equipped with radio comms. Those systems may be more than just a way of enabling you to respond to calls from the public. You may well be an essential link in communications in the event of civil unrest in such a concerted attack.”*

- 3.8 Others had reservations about new technological systems and the potential issues they may cause:

*“Need to consider whether the use of 'smart' technology, including the motorways, increases the risk to some individuals, for example, the number of deaths on smart motorways in what was the hard shoulder. Was this risk identified in the planning? Does 'smart' technology enable the service to reach some of the older population, will they be able to understand the technology, will it help support and reassure? If smart technology is used, backup systems need to be available and immediate to counter loss in network, for example, if smart technology is to be used to manage incidents. There is a risk - relying on technology.”*



## Civil emergencies

As well as evaluating current and emerging local risks, BFRS contributes to national preparedness for a range of civil emergencies. These include risks such as flooding, wildfires, terrorist related incidents and other emergencies that might have local, regional or national dimensions.

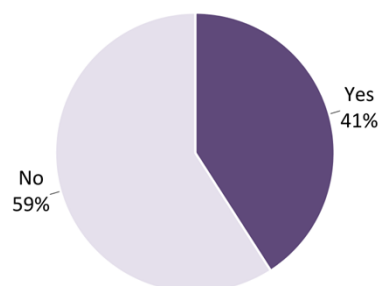
There is a statutory requirement for BFRS to be prepared for civil emergencies and, as Category One responder, it is an active member of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF). This is where the police, fire, ambulance, local authorities and other key agencies come together to plan, exercise and work together to prepare and respond. BFRS will continue to review its current capacity and capabilities to meet emerging risks in collaboration with TVLRF.

BFRS will also continue to identify and act to reduce its own ‘carbon footprint’, for example, utilising solar panels and introducing electric vehicles.

**Are there any other specific aspects or risks associated with this area of work that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**

**If yes, what are these and how should BFRS mitigate them?**

**Figure 3: Are there any other specific aspects or risks associated with this area of work that you think BFRS should consider in its planning?**



**Base: All Respondents (44)**

- <sup>3.9</sup> In Figure 3 shows that more than two fifths (41%) of respondents felt that there are other specific aspects or risks associated with civil emergencies that BFRS should consider in its planning, whilst almost three fifths (59%) did not.
- <sup>3.10</sup> Of the respondents who thought that BFRS should consider additional risks in relation to civil emergencies, most of the concerns were related to tackling carbon emissions and climate change.

*“Carbon footprint - stations have to adopt their own recycling regime, as there are no facilities, or guidance documents provided to carry out this task.”*

*“The carbon footprint will always be a problem when appliances have to travel greater distances due to the lack of resources – i.e. wholtime pumps covering, unmanned station grounds and incidents. Moving personnel from their designated station to cover gaps in the manning levels will also be difficult for your ‘footprint.’”*

*“Climate change would appear to be having a big impact upon emergency services not just in the UK, but across the globe. BFRS must consider all eventualities when planning for the future.”*

- 3.11 It was also said that there should be collaboration with other organisations (both private and public) to help tackle security threats.

*“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, as a neighbouring service, welcomes the ongoing collaborative activity in this area to combat security threats.”* (Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service)

*“[BFRS should] work with the security of companies like BT Security who are excellent at identifying security threats to its assets.”*

- 3.12 Further concerns were around BFRS’ ability to deal with local wildfires, with one respondent suggesting the Service should review its fleet to ensure it has appropriate vehicles (4x4s for example). A few respondents also raised doubts as to whether BFRS has the funds or resources to respond to civil emergencies, for example to be able to fully support the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF).

*“With the increase in wildfires both nationally and globally, and the fact that, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sits within an area of outstanding natural beauty, with a heavily forested area, should you not consider whether you really have the correct type of fire appliances to deal with this type of incident. Looking at the current range of fire engines on your website, it would appear that you don't - only three 4x4 fire engines!”*

*“Do you have the resources to support TVLRF in practice, i.e., in an event of an emergency, will there be sufficient staff to manage national issues, as well as remaining available for local response? Will this work include spread of viruses? Do you have the capability, knowledge, and resources, to manage the risks?”*

## Workforce pressures

There are a range of issues that affect the ability of BFRS to retain, recruit and develop its workforce - especially frontline operational firefighters. Particular challenges include:

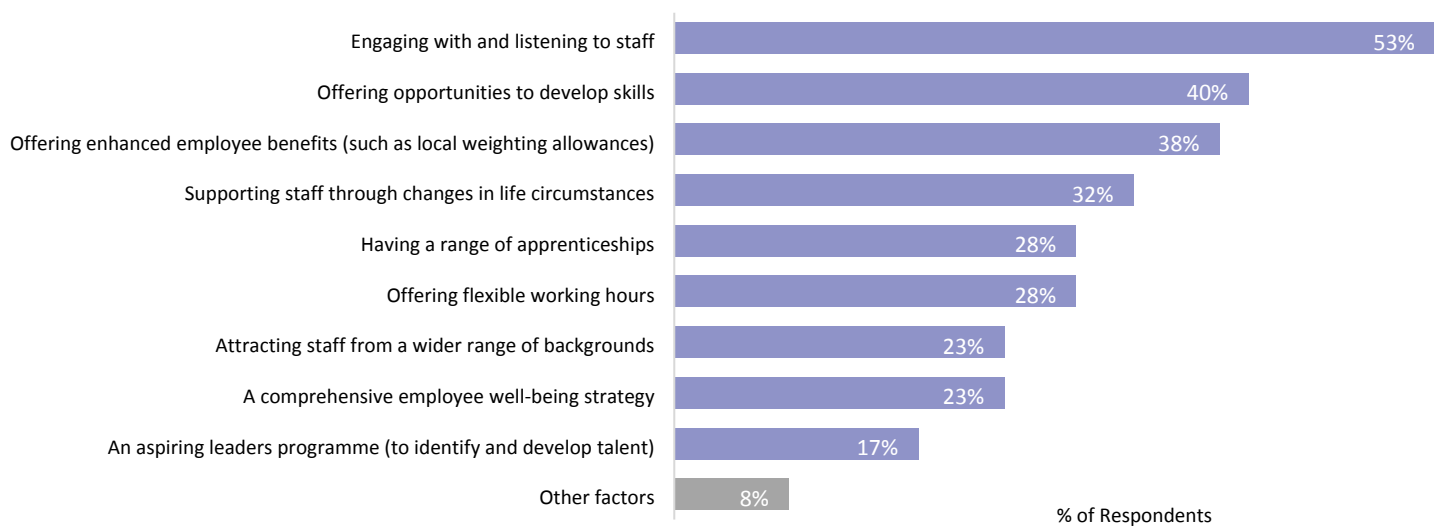
- » An ageing workforce and retirement ‘bulge’ due to legacy recruitment patterns from the 1980s and 1990s.
- » Loss of staff to neighbouring fire and rescue services (for example London Fire Brigade which pays weighting allowances).
- » Changes in society and the way people live and work which have affected the ability of BFRS to recruit On-Call firefighters.

BFRS regularly engages with and listens to its staff in a variety of ways. It also actively reviews and develops employment opportunities to include flexible contracts, employee benefits and opportunities for staff to develop and earn more. BFRS also aims to explore new and additional ways to reduce workforce pressures over the course of this Public Safety Plan.

BFRS will continue to develop and roll out more flexible employment opportunities; use innovative marketing to attract staff from a wider range of diverse backgrounds; further develop the roll of the On-Call firefighter; and align training strategies and priorities to meet future needs.

### Which three factors do you think are most important when considering BFRS as an employer?

Figure 4: Which three factors do you think are most important when considering BFRS as an employer?



Base: All respondents (53)

3.13 shows that, when considering BFRS as an employer, more than half (53%) of respondents thought that engaging with and listening to staff is the most important factor. This was followed by offering opportunities to develop skills (40%) and enhanced employee benefits (e.g. local weighting allowances) (38%).

3.14 8% of respondents mentioned 'other' factors, which included: recruitment from local communities; evidence that BFRS is open, honest and consistent; and for BFRS to open negotiations around new pay scales for experienced staff.

## Funding pressures

Despite the success of efficiency measures already taken during the period 2015-2020, BFRS faces a range of financial pressures.

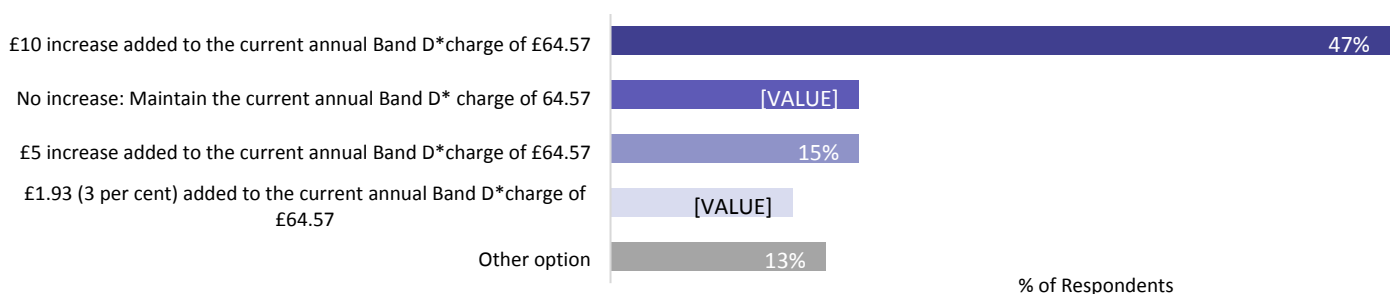
For example:

- » Significant Government funding reductions for fire services since 2010.
- » The lowest council tax rates of any Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in the country (fire authorities that currently charge a higher rate of council tax than BFRS, get a correspondingly larger increase in their funding).
- » Any proposal to increase fire and rescue service council tax rates by more than three per cent currently requires approval from local residents by means of a referendum. A referendum on this in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes could cost BFRS up to £600,000 - potentially leaving it in a worse financial position if a proposed increase were rejected.

These may affect its ability to maintain current levels of service provision to the public in the future. Given the financial challenges, BFRS believes that a council tax increase by more than the current limit of three per cent will be necessary to help it deliver fire and rescue services in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

- » **An increase of £10 per household** (for a Band D property\*) would provide **£3 million** which would provide more money to invest in the Service.
- » **An increase of £5 per household** (for a Band D property\*) would provide **£1.5 million** which would cover the projected funding shortfall for 2020/21.
- » **An increase of three per cent per household** in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes (the most currently allowed by Government without a referendum) would provide **£600,000** and would cost an extra **£1.93 per year** for Band D property\*. This would require BFRS to use its reserves to help cover the funding shortfall for 2020/21 and, depending on longer term funding settlements, could mean future reductions to frontline services.
- » **No increase** in council tax would present a greater risk of BFRS having to make reductions to front-line services in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

**Figure 5: Based on the information above, which of the following options would you prefer for the part of your council tax that funds BFRS during 2020-21?**



Base: All Respondents (55)

- 3.15 Figure 5 (on the previous page) shows that nearly half (47%) of respondents would prefer a £10 increase for part of their council tax to fund BFRS during 2020-21. More than one eighth (15%) of respondents would prefer no increase, with the same (15%) proportion preferring a £5 increase. Less than one eighth (11%) of respondents would prefer a £1.93 increase, with 13% of respondents preferring another option.
- 3.16 Other options put forward were around raising funds through charging for false alarms and safety advice and training.

*“Charge for special service calls and false alarms. If not in good intent, people have insurance claims of their insurance.”*

*“Have you considered potential income generation activities, diversifying the fire service – e.g. charging companies for fire safety advice, or training when the fire officers are not dealing with incidents, charging for the use of fire attendance at events, charging for continuing fault alarms? All public sector bodies are now having to find ways to plug the gaps and maximise resources, how is BFRS responding to this?”*

- 3.17 Some respondents did not give specific suggestions for how BFRS could raise funds, but simply wanted to see a general increase in funding from central government for the Fire and Rescue Service. Others raised concerns about other services also deciding to increase their council tax rates, which they argued some would not be able to afford.

*“As much as I would like to pay the additional £10 per year for a great service to become even better, it's a question of ‘will the police and council also be asking for a significant increase?’ Which, if yes and it's granted, will mean some households falling below the poverty line and becoming vulnerable, therefore putting additional strains on all services and it becomes false economy.”*

## Other areas of interest

**Figure 6: Have you identified any positive or negative impacts on human rights or any of the protected characteristics within the Public Safety Plan, that you believe should be taken into consideration?**

- 3.18 In the four responses identifying impacts on human rights or protected characteristics within the Public Safety Plan, a concern was raised about the aging workforce of BFRS:

*“Ageing workforce and the very demanding physical role that active firefighting plays. When determining budgets, the impact of such a job on the individual should be taken into account to ensure active fire fighters are not forced to continue working past the time that they feel is right for them.”*

- 3.19 One respondent felt that there should be more focus on Buckinghamshire’s disabled residents.

*“I think BFRS could potentially pre-visit some properties, such as [the] block of flats at Buckingham View, which has a higher proportion of disabled residents.”*

- 3.20 There was also some concern about the lack of representation and diversity within BFRS:

*“Yes, you have/are working with older people, but what about everyone else? What are you doing to break barriers and squash negative perceptions about the fire service being white male dominant?”*

*“The service should be inclusive to all regardless of protected characteristics, inclusivity and valuing diversity are key.”*

# 4. Focus Group Findings

## Introduction

- 4.1 Overall, the five focus group sessions considered a wide range of important issues that are reported fully below. The report has been structured to address each of the areas of discussion in some detail. The views of the five meetings have been merged to give an overall report of findings, rather than five separate and potentially repetitive mini-reports – but significant differences in views have been drawn out where appropriate.

## Infrastructure

### Overview of proposals

**BFRS WILL...**

- Consider temporarily relocating appliances/other resources during construction**
- Continue to work with local authorities to understand the potential impact of development plans**
- Ensure resources are in the right place**
- Keep the current number of immediately/rapidly available appliances to maintain attendance times and capacity to deal with simultaneous larger incidents**

There was strong support for and confidence in BFRS' proposals

- 4.2 The proposals for mitigating against the risks associated with the infrastructure projects affecting Buckinghamshire were well received by participants, who described them as '*sensible*', '*flexible*' and '*responsive*'. Indeed, participants were confident that these strategies will effectively help in responding to BFRS' challenges.

*"The four bullet points under infrastructure are a sensible approach to mitigating the risks."* (Chesham)

*"Within financial constraints, the FRS appears to be working smart."* (Aylesbury)

*"The plan appears flexible and responsive."* (Buckingham)

*"The proposals seem sensible."* (High Wycombe)

*"We agree with the infrastructure proposals."* (Chesham)

*"[The proposals] seem to be mitigating the challenges well by using flexible locations and flexible resourcing for firefighters."* (Chesham)

- 4.3 The High Wycombe group considered the temporary relocation of appliances and other resources to be particularly important, and sought reassurance that all areas of the town will be considered when BFRS implements its plans so that '*no one is disadvantaged*'.

*“Having appliances in strategic locations and reviewing appropriateness would mitigate risks/challenges.” (High Wycombe)*

*“Relocating appliances in peak times will provide a quicker response and be very useful, especially in places like Handy Cross, so we agree with that.” (High Wycombe)*

There were concerns around safety due to narrow roads, housing increases and roadworks

- 4.4 When asked if they had any specific concerns in relation to current and planned infrastructure changes, a reasonable proportion of participants identified narrow roads and often inconsiderate parking as issues that can result in difficult access for emergency vehicles.

*“The roads are very narrow on the new developments - they’re like a single track by the time people have parked their cars along the roads.” (Chesham)*

*“Narrow roads are a concern.” (Aylesbury)*

*“Single track roads caused by parking.” (Chesham)*

- 4.5 There were also discussions around the increase in new housing across the county and how this may impact on road congestion and access, as well as concern about a growing number of HMOs. Moreover, a few participants were concerned that recent roadworks, for example on the M1, have caused collisions: they asked whether BFRS is involved with road change planning or offered opportunities to raise potential safety concerns.

*“Increased population, road congestion, access issues, the lack of ring roads.” (Aylesbury)*

*“HMOs are increasing.” (Aylesbury)*

*“I go on the M1 every day and about a year ago it was closed about once a week because they were putting in the smart motorways. To me it seemed that the way they were doing the work was badly designed because accidents were happening frequently and in the same place - around J13 - which I’m sure you would have been called out to. Are you guys involved when they do road changes? Do you check what’s going to make sure what they are doing is not more dangerous?” (Milton Keynes)*

There were concerns around population growth

- 4.6 There was also worry around whether current infrastructure can keep pace with population increases across the county.

*“We are concerned that infrastructure is not going to keep up with the growth of population in the area. Therefore, response times will inevitably increase.” (High Wycombe)*

There were concerns around cost and resourcing

- 4.7 Some participants questioned BFRS’ ability to afford and resource its planned response to infrastructure risks and challenges. Indeed, it was deemed ‘unfair’ that the Service is required to fund mitigations when it has little say in development decisions, especially against the backdrop of austerity.



*“Within the financial constraints they appear to be working quite smartly. But going forward, things like access issues, more HMOs, roadworks, congestion – then you can only see it getting harder for people to manage. I’m worried they don’t have the resources to deal with it going forward.” (Aylesbury)*

*“A lot of our discussions kept coming back to finance and the unfairness of BFRS being expected to fund their projects. Funding cuts would be a significant risk!” (Buckingham)*

*“Concern that infrastructure is not going to keep up with the growth of population in the area. Therefore, response times will inevitably increase.” (High Wycombe)*

The importance of collaboration between BFRS, housing developers and local authorities was stressed

- 4.8 The High Wycombe group was particularly keen to suggest additional ways in which risk associated with infrastructure developments could be reduced. Many comments involved the need for BFRS to collaborate with housing developers and local authorities from an early stage so the Service is able to: raise any general safety concerns; ensure the usage of inflammable building materials and install fire safety devices; keep up-to-date with building legislation; help improve road access; and advise the public of changes and risks. Indeed, it was felt that BFRS should be continually ‘part of the process’ and able to have a say around planned infrastructure changes.

*“Engage with new housing developments about making streets more accessible in the early stages.” (Milton Keynes)*

*“Building regulations are changing all the time; it’s about making sure you [BFRS] are part of that process.” (High Wycombe)*

*“Working with the local authority...early communication with the fire brigade is essential to get our resources in the right place. Must all work together.” (High Wycombe)*

*“More consultation with housing developers about building materials etc.” (High Wycombe)*

- 4.9 Other suggestions included more cross-border collaboration and working with other fire and rescue services to ensure response times are not affected by access issues, and BFRS having access to CCTV footage of motorways.

*“More cross-border collaboration on procurement, technology etc. and with firefighters e.g. people across the border of Bucks may be closer to another fire/station.” (Chesham)*

## Population

### Overview of proposals

#### BFRS WILL...

**Review station duty systems in high growth areas**  
**Continue to improve its ability to target/engage with vulnerable groups**  
**Possibly review its current response to automatic fire alarms (AFAs)**

Greater BFRS presence in the community, ‘fire safety champions’, advice lines and technology could further engagement with vulnerable groups

- 4.10 The consensus was that BFRS’ engagement with people who are at higher risk from fire and other emergencies is positive, and the Service was praised for the work it puts into prevention. In response to being asked how the Service can further improve the way it targets and engages with vulnerable people, several suggestions were made. Interestingly, as the table below shows, the ideas ranged from BFRS having a greater community presence through regular visits and workshops, and encouraging others in the community to take more responsibility for the safety of vulnerable people or using technology such as smart speakers and advice helplines.

Doing more to **bring health and social care together** by offering a joined-up approach - for example via more collaboration with charities and healthcare trusts

Using best practice to **share information about vulnerable populations** within partnerships and with other services

**Increasing its presence in the community** by ‘patrolling’ local areas and regularly visiting care homes, sheltered housing schemes and schools

**Increasing its presence and awareness** more generally through media campaigning such as radio broadcasting

Investing in the roll out of fire safety **‘advocates’ or ‘champions’**

Running community workshops and seminars to **educate people with vulnerable relatives, carers and volunteers** on how to undertake ‘basic safety checks’

Undertaking **early intervention and prevention activities**, such as: actively identifying and offering vulnerable people a home safety visit; and educating the next generation in schools and social clubs

**Encouraging the use of assistive technology** devices like ‘Alexa’ to help maintain safety and wellbeing without putting added pressure on the FRS or adult social care

**Ensuring those with learning or physical disabilities are also a focus**, as well as the elderly

- 4.11 However, there was some concern that the combination of an ageing population and BFRS’s lack of funding will place increasing pressure on the Service in continuing with its prevention work.

*“We kept coming back to the issue of funding, and funding cuts would be a big risk.”*  
 (Buckingham)

*“It’s probably increasingly harder to engage and access all these people when even more care homes and extra care housing are being built.” (Chesham)*

### The attendance policy for automatic fire alarms (AFAs) should be reviewed

- 4.12 Although possible changes to AFA attendance are not included in the current Public Safety Plan, it may be a policy that BFRS consults on in future, so views around it were explored in the focus groups.
- 4.13 Participants recognised and understood the benefits of BFRS attending all AFAs, but agreed that the Service should at least review its current policy in order to fully assess its advantages and disadvantages.

*“BFRS should review its policy and look at other counties who don’t attend AFAs. Have their response rates been any worse? Is it a luxury Bucks can afford?” (Chesham)*

*“Review the AFA response strategy.” (Milton Keynes)*

*“BFRS should definitely review.” (Aylesbury)*

*“We think it’s great that you are reviewing the AFA strategy. Hopefully you will consider the size of the building and how that determines what your response should be. I do think the point about the benefits of going to the calls is also very important, but you would need to look at the cost-benefit ratio.” (Milton Keynes)*

*“There are social benefits of attending - advice, information etc. The cost/benefit impact needs to be thought about.” (Milton Keynes)*

There was no overall commitment to ceasing attendance to AFAs, but support for only attending AFAs that have been confirmed as a real incident

- 4.14 Views on whether the policy should change, and in what way, varied. A few participants felt that BFRS should not attend AFAs at all, while others argued that three or more call-outs due to false alarms should result in a warning that the Service will no longer attend.

*“There was general agreement in our group that we don’t think they should be attending an automatic alarm.” (Buckingham)*

*“I don’t think they should be attending an unconfirmed automatic alarm.” (Buckingham)*

*“After three times of being called out by a business, don’t attend anymore. Give them a warning.” (High Wycombe)*

*“BFRS must attend AFAs - there could be serious damage or loss of life. After multiple call outs they should be given a warning.” (High Wycombe)*

- 4.15 However, the majority reasoned that attendance should continue, but only if evidence is provided to indicate a real fire - for example via a confirmation phone call from a dedicated member of staff or a member of the public. The Buckingham group also discussed using technology to confirm whether or not there is a real incident via ‘smart smoke alarms’ and drones.

*“Propose calling the sites where automatic alarms are raised to get positive feedback of whether fire service is required.” (High Wycombe)*

*“Agree with AFAs requiring a property owner becoming responsible to have a dedicated call-out personnel to verify alarm to assist.” (Buckingham)*

*“I think there should be a call for it to be backed up, otherwise I’m happy for the FRS to not attend.” (Aylesbury)*

Businesses need to take more responsibility and improve their equipment and training

- 4.16 It was suggested that businesses should take more responsibly - and that those who repeatedly call out BFRS to AFA false alarms should be fined or disciplined. Moreover, some felt that non-domestic properties should be compelled to ensure they have the most up-to-date smoke alarms and other safety devices, while others felt that staff should be trained to prevent and deal with AFAs caused by false alarms to avoid BFRS being alerted.

*“Charge for the service (if false alarm).” (Aylesbury)*

*“Fine repeat offenders.” (Aylesbury)*

*“Discipline users by removing the service.” (Aylesbury)*

*“If they keep calling out you out and using your resources, fine them. It their (businesses) responsibility.” (High Wycombe)*

*“It just sounds like there needs to be better alarm systems.” (High Wycombe)*

*“Could you have better equipment in places like hospitals so that you don’t have to be called out for things like a toaster? And also train staff to deal with it.” (Milton Keynes)*

## Technology and civil emergencies

### Overview of proposals

#### Technology

##### **BFRS WILL...**

**Continue to improve security and resilience of information/communication systems**

**Identify and resolve gaps to keep pace with new/emerging risks**

**Monitor new technologies/systems for opportunities e.g. 5G cellular network, artificial intelligence, robotics etc.**

#### Civil emergencies

##### **BFRS WILL...**

**Review its current capacity/capability to meet emerging risks (with partners, including other FRs)**

**Review its approach to responding to terrorist attacks involving improvised weapons and/or firearms**

**Continue to reduce its carbon footprint**

**Utilise solar panels at HQ**

**Ensure the new Blue Light Hub will be ‘environmentally-efficient’**

**Potentially introduce electric support vehicles**

There was widespread agreement with the proposals and discussions around opportunities

- 4.17 There was widespread agreement across all five groups that the proposals for technology and civil emergencies are sensible and that it is important for the service to ‘*move with the times*’ in terms of monitoring and responding to risks.

*“You’ve got to embrace to new technologies like social media – use the more day-to-day type of things.”* (High Wycombe)

*“I think the prevention stuff with tech is great, particularly as there’s so much social media.”* (High Wycombe)

*“It’s essential to invest in mitigating against the risks. Hybrid cars are using 48 volts, which are extremely dangerous – especially when you put water in them.”* (Milton Keynes)

- 4.18 Participants were particularly interested to hear about how specific technologies such as drones and autonomous vehicles are being developed and utilised within Buckinghamshire and by BFRS. For example, it was reasoned that the increased use of autonomous vehicles could potentially safeguard BFRS resources by being used for, say, pumping flood water (rather than a crewed appliance). It was also questioned whether BFRS would be required to attend incidents involving driverless vehicles.

*“I’ve only had experience with the FRS once and that was during a flood. I thought that might be where autonomous vehicles come in useful. People could book like they do with those little robots we have in Milton Keynes, where you can order your own pumping. It might mean you can get the water pumped out quicker, but it would also be less expensive because it doesn’t have to be manned.”* (Milton Keynes)

*“I’d be interested to know that, in the future, whether the FRS would go to a traffic accident if it were a driverless vehicle?”* (Aylesbury)

- 4.19 Others discussed drone technology and whether it could be used to capture aerial view images of incidents such as large-scale fires or to deliver defibrillators. In addition, a participant from Milton Keynes was keen to know how technology could be used to improve and develop the communication network among emergency services during civil emergencies.

*“Could use some sort of aerial platform to an [observation] of a fire incident, like a drone?”* (High Wycombe)

*“Drones dropping defibrillators is popular in the Netherlands – is this something [BFRS] would consider?”* (High Wycombe)

*“What about things like fire service drones with cameras? Do you have those?”* (Milton Keynes)

*“I have a question around technology and communication network in a civil emergency. From an army and an air force perspective, soldiers on the ground are now able to talk to planes in the sky. Something like that would be useful – having some way of talking to each other.”* (Milton Keynes)

- 4.20 It was also suggested that information and advice could be better communicated to the public around ways in which they can help prevent civil emergencies, as well as what to do if one happens.

## There were concerns around the complexities of implementing the proposals and the safety of smart motorways

- 4.21 It was acknowledged - especially by the Milton Keynes group - that responding to these challenges and opportunities may not be straightforward for BFRS. Indeed, there was some concern around cost, and a few comments were made around whether money spent on things such as electric vehicles and solar panels should instead be invested in frontline services. It was also questioned whether the increasing need to respond to new technological risks would change the traditional skill sets required of firefighters, with more complex specifications.

*“Investing in all these new technologies must be a challenge for BFRS because the introduction of new technology means you’ve got change transformation which is difficult to handle...”*  
(Milton Keynes)

*“Sounds expensive replacing vehicles and equipment with electric stuff.”* (Chesham)

*“To me, solar panels feel like a ‘nice to have’ versus ...do you need more fire engines? I’m just thinking of the balance between being green and saving lives.”* (Chesham)

*“I was also thinking in terms of your workforce and the impacts on that. Will all this new technology mean the skill sets required will need to be different? A generic fireman might not be able to be a generic fireman anymore? It’s becoming more complicated.”* (Milton Keynes)

- 4.22 The Chesham group expressed particular safety concerns around the use of the hard shoulder as an extra lane during busy periods on smart motorways, and the lack of access for both emergency vehicles and for members of the public needing to pull over in the event of issues.

*“I’ve heard that as part of the smart motorways, the hard shoulder is being got rid of... It seems terribly unsafe... I’ve heard about people being killed on the ‘smart’ bit. Where are cars going to go if they have a problem?! And there is no room for emergency services.”* (Chesham)

*“Do the smart motorways understand when there is an emergency vehicle needing the hard shoulder?”* (Chesham)

## Workforce and funding

### Overview of proposals

#### Workforce

##### **BFRS WILL CONTINUE TO...**

**Develop/roll-out more flexible and innovative employment and apprenticeship opportunities**

**Use more innovative marketing to attract staff from wider range of backgrounds**

**Continue to explore ways of supporting/enhancing health and wellbeing of staff as life circumstances change**

**Further develop the role of the on-call firefighter**

#### Funding

**BFRS will continue to lobby for greater council tax setting flexibility**

## There was agreement with the workforce proposals and the importance of using social media for recruitment

- 4.23 Participants felt that BFRS is taking the correct approach in responding to workforce. They particularly supported flexible working hours, apprenticeships and targeted recruitment for a more diverse workforce. Additional suggestions as to how the service could improve retention and recruitment included: allowing career breaks; networking with universities and schools; and attending employment fairs. Using social media to garner interest in the fire and rescue service in order to reach a wider demographic of people was also a popular recommendation.

## There was agreement with increasing council tax rates by more than 3% and particular support for a one-off increase of £10 per household (for a Band D property)

- 4.24 Participants were given information about BFRS' current and future financial challenges, which mainly focused on (but was not limited to): the significant reductions in government funding; the fact BFRS has the lowest council tax rates of any Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in the country; and the government's current council tax rate cap of 3%. A summary of how BFRS has responded to these challenges thus far was also provided.
- 4.25 The groups were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed that BFRS should be able to increase council tax by more than 3% to maintain or improve its services. In response, the largest proportion said they would not only support this, but also that they would be willing to pay a one-off £10 increase to raise the council tax base. Moreover, a few said they agreed with paying enough to ensure BFRS' council tax rates are in line with the national average.

## Current council tax levels were considered too low compared to other combined fire authorities

- 4.26 In general, current council tax rates were considered too low. Indeed, many participants were shocked to see how much money BFRS yields from council tax compared to other combined fire authorities and rationalised that it makes sense to bring the charge closer in line with the national average. BFRS was also considered a 'worthy' cause to be spending money on, and many participants said they would 'gladly' pay more towards the Service. Some of the many typical comments were:

*"Council Tax is too low in Bucks in general for such a wealthy county." (Chesham)*

*"Because you've done so well to keep costs down, you're almost being penalised for it?! Really the one-time increase is just to get you to more of an even level/in line with others." (Chesham)*

*"Yes, I agree! It is surprising and shocking how low it is." (Buckingham)*

*"Happy to give £10 as a one-off." (Chesham)*

*"We agree to a one off £10 increase." (Aylesbury)*

*"Agree with increase to national average." (Buckingham)*

*"General consensus is a yes to paying £5 or £10 one-off payment to keep current services/improve funding." (Milton Keynes)*

*"£10 one off payment – would gladly pay." (Milton Keynes)*

*“We would pay £10 as a one off because we think it’s worth supporting.” (Aylesbury)*  
*“We thought an increase to national average – pretty unanimously.” (Buckingham)*  
*“It doesn’t seem right that there’s such a discrepancy between our fire service and another.” (Buckingham)*

- 4.27 There was also concern about the possible reduction or removal of non-statutory services, with one participant asking: *‘if you (BFRS) don’t provide these services, who will?’*

There were caveats and questions around the additional money generated from housing growth and possible increases to council tax for other services

- 4.28 Some of the support for a council tax increase was accompanied by caveats, questions and concerns. A main query was around the amount of housing development across the county, and whether the increase in households paying council tax would significantly help in providing more funding for BFRS, thus resulting in less need to increase rates.

*“Isn’t some of the concern around council tax offset by all the building work going on?” (Chesham)*  
*“What about the increase in population/households?” (Aylesbury)*  
*“Agree with increasing council tax by more than 3%, but it must be related/limited by the increase in house building.” (Chesham)*

- 4.29 There was also concern that an increase to the BFRS portion of council tax may be the ‘thin edge of the wedge’ insofar as it may encourage other services to increase their precept too. Moreover, a few participants from Milton Keynes acknowledged that although they could afford to pay an extra £10, others may not.

*“Personally, I’d be happy to give you a tenner, but I do accept the fact I can afford to do that. Not everyone is fortunate to be able to do that.” (Milton Keynes)*  
*“I worry that the 3% uplift...every other service will want to do the same. As councils are strapped for cash at the moment, you can see that it wouldn’t play well. But I think if you could sell it that in fact we are paying the least for our fire service in the whole country and it is under threat because we are paying so little for it...” (Chesham)*

- 4.30 In light of these concerns, the Chesham group considered it important that BFRS thinks carefully about how it ‘sells’ the proposal to increase council tax to the public, particularly in terms of explaining its disproportionately low rates compared to other combined authorities.

*“I agree, as long as you sold it as it is disproportionately disadvantaging you because of it (paying less than other combined authorities).” (Chesham)*

Introducing a one-off council tax increase payment is a short-term fix. It is also too complex an issue to deliver a view on in a short space of time

- 4.31 Some participants at Aylesbury and High Wycombe said they probably would not support a council tax increase of more than 3% because of the points noted above: more money will be collected



through the rise in housing developments; and salaries are not keeping pace with council tax rates (a particular issue if multiple services all decide to increase their precepts). BFRS was also urged to ‘live within its means’ - and there was a feeling that a one-off council tax payment increase would not solve funding issues in the long-term.

*“We all have to live within our allocated budget – if we have to do it, BFRS should too.”*  
(Aylesbury)

*“I don’t agree on more than 3% - with rising population you have more people to contribute anyway. We think it should increase to the cap – no more.”* (Aylesbury)

*“This year you could be that service asking for an extra £10, but next year it could be the ambulance service, then the police ...when does it stop. I think this is a bigger issue that needs to be taken higher up.”* (High Wycombe)

*“A one-off payment may help for a couple of years but it won’t solve the problems.”* (High Wycombe)

- 4.32 A few at Aylesbury felt that the question around council tax was too complex to decide upon in such a short space of time and without more information.

*“I think you’re asking hugely important questions without enough info. It’s all very rushed. I also think you’re asking leading questions. Maybe focus on this issue in greater depth and more briefings.”* (Aylesbury)

- 4.33 Moreover, a few participants argued that it is not as simple as agreeing or disagreeing to a council tax increase, and that their decision would be largely based on how the additional funding would be invested.

*“I will only pay if I see some clear accountability of where the money is going.”* (High Wycombe)

*“I would pay £10 but only if it went towards supporting vulnerable people, but not businesses (i.e. response to businesses in terms of false alarms).”* (Milton Keynes)

*“This is the cart before the horse. We don’t know what you’d spend this money on? Would it be staff or other things? It just feels meaningless when we don’t know the facts.”* (Aylesbury)

#### Additional and alternative suggestions were offered

- 4.34 Some alternative or additional ways in which BFRS could increase its funding were suggested by a minority of participants, which included:

Seeking funding from HS2 contractors (Chesham)

Cutting back on non-statutory services (Aylesbury)

Attending fewer false alarm calls (Milton Keynes)

Introducing increased charges for businesses (Milton Keynes)

Charging for services that are over and above statutory provision (Buckingham)

## Restructuring BFRS and merging with others to create a ‘Thames Valley Fire Service’ (Chesham)

### Other comments

- 4.35 In terms of the information provided to the groups around funding challenges, a participant in Buckingham praised the material as *‘intelligent and informative’*, although another in Milton Keynes felt that the information demonstrating that BFRS receives less funding from council tax than other combined fire authorities is *‘misleading’* as the chart did not include demographic populations or the relative number of properties other than ‘D’.

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**Service management responses to feedback received during the  
2020-2025 Public Safety Plan Consultation (23<sup>rd</sup> September – 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019)**

The following report includes responses and recommendations relating to issues raised and suggestions made during the consultation, together with a note of the organisation and / or consultation channel in which they were raised.

“Individual Response” includes responses received via the online questionnaire facility and other channels such as email.

Feedback from BFRS staff and members of the public is presented anonymously.

In many cases verbatim quotes are included where these illustrate the issue or question vividly or succinctly. These are shown in italics.

## 1. General feedback on the PSP document and focus group stimulus materials

Comment / Issue / Suggestion	Source	Management Response
<p>1.1 <i>"It is a well-written document, clearly expressed and composed, succinct yet with sufficient detail, including the supplementary information, to be useful and credible... I recognise the financial position for the Fire Authority, not of its own making, and applaud the care with which reductions have been managed... I found the risk profiles, challenges and opportunities in general to be well-identified and described whether national or our area and reassuringly addressed. Thank you."</i></p>	<p>Individual response</p>	<p>We thank the respondent for their feedback. The HMICFRS, in their first inspection of our Service, also confirmed that we have an "...effective rolling five-year public safety plan" which is informed by a "...well- developed and wide-ranging local and community risk profile." The full HMICFRS report can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>1.2 <i>"I have read in full the document, and I am very impressed by its depth and practical reasoning."</i></p>	<p>Individual response</p>	<p>We thank the respondent for their feedback.</p>
<p>1.3 <i>"Our Planning, Infrastructure and Transport Committee considered the Buckinghamshire Fire &amp; Rescue Service new Public Safety Plan on behalf of the Parish Council, at their meeting last week. The Committee resolved to support the draft strategy for the provision of fire and rescue services in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes from April 2020 to March 2025."</i></p>	<p>Campbell Park Parish Council</p>	<p>We thank the Council for its support for our new Public Safety Plan (PSP).</p>
<p>1.4 <i>"As a town which includes a fire station, we agree with the general public's consensus view that closing or consolidating stations is the worst of alternate options for future strategies and welcome the authority following strategies that keep Newport Pagnell station open. The local watch(es) are a valued part of our community and lead the way for the local blue light community in public engagement."</i></p>	<p>Newport Pagnell Town Mayor</p>	<p>We thank Mayor for his support for the station and the work undertaken by local station personnel.</p>

Comment / Issue / Suggestion	Source	Management Response
1.5 In terms of the information provided to the groups around funding challenges, a participant in Buckingham praised the material as <i>'intelligent and informative'</i> .	Buckingham Focus Group	We thank the participant for their feedback.
1.6 A focus group participant in Milton Keynes felt that the information demonstrating that BFRS receives less funding from council tax than other combined fire authorities is <i>'misleading'</i> as the chart did not include demographic populations or the relative number of properties other than 'D'.	Milton Keynes Focus Group	<p>The chart shows the relative Band D equivalent charges to illustrate how Buckinghamshire Fire &amp; Rescue Service (BFRS) is disadvantaged by the imposition of a single percentage limit on potential increases.</p> <p>The chart is not intended to show the total funding that authorities receive from council tax.</p>
<p>1.7 <i>"I think you're asking hugely important questions without enough info. It's all very rushed. I also think you're asking leading questions. Maybe focus on this issue in greater depth and more briefings"</i></p> <p><i>"This is the cart before the horse. We don't know what you'd spend this money on? Would it be staff or other things? It just feels meaningless when we don't know the facts."</i></p>	<p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p> <p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p>	<p>We are grateful to the participants for raising this. Aylesbury was the first in the sequence of focus groups and we therefore improved the depth and range of financial information provided to the subsequent focus groups to address this issue.</p> <p>The funding is required to meet the challenges set out throughout the PSP. The PSP is strategic in nature and provides the framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan and budget, which (in conjunction with our Corporate Plan) will set out in more detail where the money will be spent to achieve our strategic objectives.</p>

2. Infrastructure projects		
Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>2.1 <i>“New buildings are not being constructed as well as the architects who design them... compartmentation design means fires that should be contained can spread. BFRS need to try and talk to local authorities, to ensure inspections, to make sure the buildings have been constructed as specified, and corners haven't been cut by builders, who don't understand why they need to build in the specified way, and not the way they've always done it.”</i></p>	Individual Response	Thank you for your response. We continue to work with Local Authority regulators to ensure that all those involved in the design, planning and build processes carry out their duties as required. We also continue to support the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in lobbying for better regulation and accountability of all those involved.
<p><i>“Pursuant to the Grenfell fire, the Parish Council felt that the fire service should lobby for developers and commissioning authorities to continue to be held accountable for their deployment of materials and building designs which are found to be intrinsically unsafe for both occupiers and emergency services.”</i></p>	Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council	We continue to support the NFCC in lobbying for better regulation and accountability of all those involved. A number of National consultations have taken place over recent months, involving ‘Approved Document B’, The Fire Safety Order and the Competency Framework. We have responded to these consultations and support the NFCC’s responses and position.
<p><i>“Ensure that the right plans are considered, especially [relating to] cladding”.</i></p>	HPFT Community Learning Disability Team	
<p><i>“Engage with new housing developments about making streets more accessible in the early stages.”</i></p>	Milton Keynes Focus Group	The Fire and Rescue Service has limited powers in relation to building developers. We are consulted and make comment in relation to ‘Approved Document B (ADB) B5’, which stipulates access and facilities for the fire and rescue service.
<p><i>“Building regulations are changing all the time; it’s about making sure you [BFRS] are part of that process.”</i></p>	Wycombe Focus Group	We thank the participants for their feedback and will continue to engage at every opportunity.



Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>2.2 <i>“Planning authorities are allowing what feels like quite dense concentrations of housing with a woefully insufficient number of parking spaces, causing residents and their visitors to park all over the place and obstruct larger vehicles such as fire engines, delivery lorries, and refuse, and recycling lorries. Can more pressure be brought to bear on these planning authorities to ensure that they provide sufficient parking?”</i></p> <p><i>“The roads are very narrow on the new developments - they’re like a single track by the time people have parked their cars along the roads.”</i></p> <p><i>“Narrow roads are a concern.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p> <p>Chesham Focus Group</p> <p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p>	<p>BFRS receives a large number of building and licencing consultations every month, and responds to each one as a statutory duty. We are consulted and make comment in relation to ‘Approved Document B (ADB) B5’, which stipulates access and facilities for the fire service.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the fire and rescue service has limited powers to influence particular areas of planning, such as parking spaces.</p> <p>Fire crews regularly visit known areas of concern to ensure that access is being maintained. When concerns are raised by members of the public, or partner agencies, crews will also carry out targeted community activities, to raise awareness and promote compliance.</p>
<p>2.3 <i>“HMOs are increasing”</i></p>	<p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p>	<p>Prevention advice can be given to those living in HMOs with regard to their individual, private rooms. However, regulation and licensing of HMOs lies with housing depts at local councils who operate under a number of different pieces of legislation.</p>
<p>2.4 <i>“We are concerned that infrastructure is not going to keep up with the growth of population in the area. Therefore, response times will inevitably increase.”</i></p>	<p>Wycombe Focus Group</p>	<p>Our operational resourcing model is linked to risk modelling and incident data which allows for us to be smarter with our resources and provide more effective service delivery.</p>
<p>2.5 <i>“More cross-border collaboration on procurement, technology etc. and with firefighters e.g. people across the border of Bucks may be closer to another fire/station.”</i></p>	<p>Chesham Focus Group</p>	<p>In accordance with the National Framework document and the requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, we have well established collaboration arrangements with neighbouring services.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>2.6 <i>“Within the financial constraints they appear to be working quite smartly. But going forward, things like access issues, more HMOs, roadworks, congestion – then you can only see it getting harder for people to manage. I’m worried they don’t have the resources to deal with it going forward.”</i></p>	<p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p>	<p>The PSP acknowledges funding constraints as one of our key challenges. This has also been noted by HMICFRS as a cause for concern.</p>
<p>2.7 <i>“A lot of our discussions kept coming back to finance and the unfairness of BFRS being expected to fund their projects. Funding cuts would be a significant risk!”</i></p>	<p>Buckingham Focus Group</p>	<p>We will continue to lobby Government for them to relax the council tax referendum limit for fire authorities and to ensure that service is adequately funded during the next comprehensive spending review.</p>
<h3>3. Population</h3>		
<p>3.1 Do more to bring health and social care together.</p>	<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>Close collaboration with Public Health occurs through participation in the Healthy Communities Board and associated task and finish groups in Buckinghamshire and the Workforce Affiliate Boards in Milton Keynes. Related workstreams focus on addressing social isolation, reducing the demand of high intensity users, as well as smoking cessation and alcohol reduction.</p>
<p>3.2 Use best practice to share information about vulnerable populations within partnerships and with other Services.</p> <p><i>“Work closer with charities, to try to reach those people that are maybe not on any service radar. Also, work closer with businesses that supply equipment to vulnerable persons; [...] not every older or vulnerable person who needs assistance is registered with the authorities.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>The Service participates in a number of multi-agency boards established to address vulnerable adults at risk and high intensity users.</p> <p>Within the bounds set by data protection regulations, the Service works with a wide range of charities and support groups to engage with members of the community with additional vulnerabilities, providing client information sessions and raising the awareness of support workers in how to identify and address the risk of fire.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>3.3 Increase presence in the community by ‘patrolling’ local areas and regularly visiting care homes, sheltered housing schemes and schools.</p>	<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>The Service has an education engagement program offering fire prevention lessons to all Year 5 children in primary schools, home educated groups and all children in ‘SEND’ settings. This is supported by the Safety Centre Milton Keynes which provides immersive safety education experiences.</p> <p>Where the Fire Safety Order applies, Protection Officers carry out a programme of pre-planned fire safety audits at premises such as Care homes and others deemed as high risk, such as a significant sleeping risk.</p>
<p>3.4 Increasing presence and awareness more generally through media campaigning such as radio broadcasting.</p> <p><i>“Perhaps using the local community radio stations to talk about fire risks, and work with parish councils to run events for the same reasons.”</i></p> <p><i>“Work with agencies that provide daily care to vulnerable people. Train their staff to recognise hazards and the risks they present, and how to assess and mitigate those risks.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p> <p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We welcome and encourage publicity and interview opportunities with all media outlets, but appreciate that we are competing for space and airtime with many other organisations and news topics.</p> <p>Our key messages about exercising common sense and preventing emergency incidents from happening are not always followed up on by the media unless issued after a serious incident has occurred.</p> <p>Fire crews from our stations often attend parish events in their local area, and we encourage event organisers to invite us to take part by contacting <a href="mailto:CentralAdmin@bucksfire.gov.uk">CentralAdmin@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Service provides awareness sessions to raise carer’s awareness of the risk of fire in premises attended by care agencies. This also raises their awareness of how the Service can access further support for their clients by referring them for Fire and Wellness Visits.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>3.5 Investing in the roll out of fire safety ‘advocates’ or ‘champions’.</p>	<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>We continue to explore alternative ways of delivering key functions, such as sessional workers and staff with additional roles. We work with, and deliver training to, a number of partners who can then identify fire safety issues as part of their work and champion safety on our behalf. A volunteer scheme is being explored, however there are a number of issues to overcome, due to the nature of the work involved and the vulnerabilities of some of those with whom we engage.</p>
<p>3.6 Running community workshops and seminars to educate people with vulnerable relatives, carers and volunteers on how to undertake ‘basic safety checks’.</p> <p><i>“[...] run seminars for carers, volunteers, and people with older relatives, so that they could carry out some of the basic safety checks for vulnerable people. For example, checking their smoke alarms every month, checking they are warm during cold weather, and encouraging them to eat healthily. It’s about time more people stepped up to the plate and took more responsibility for older members of their families.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>See 3.2</p>
<p>3.7 Undertake early intervention and prevention activities, such as: actively identifying and offering vulnerable people a home safety visit; and educating the next generation in schools and social clubs.</p>	<p>Focus Groups</p>	<p>See 3.2 and 3.3</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>3.8 Encourage use of assistive technology devices like 'Alexa' to help maintain safety and wellbeing without putting added pressure on the FRS or adult social care.</p> <p><i>You can say to Alexa "Turn all the Lights Blue" which turns on every Smartbulb in the property blue (other colours available!). "Turn all the lights 100%". You can also create your own routines in Alexa so you could very easily setup one so if you say "Alexa Emergency - Emergency" it turns all the lightbulbs blue. Alexa can also send a message to all householders signed into the Alexa account *even if they are elsewhere as long as they are connected to internet*. You can also have Alexa announce on maximum volume, which is very loud any other useful information... Number to key safe... Details of neighbour with a key to house... Phone numbers for relatives.</i></p>	Individual Response	The Service is aware of a number of assistive technologies which can support people to continue to be independent in their homes and refers people to these, with the caveat that the equipment supplied is quite often means tested. This can include the use of GPS wristbands for those with dementia, basin flood protection devices etc.
<p>3.9 Ensure those with learning or physical disabilities are also a focus, as well as the elderly.</p> <p><i>"I think BFRS could potentially pre-visit some properties, such as [the] block of flats at Buckingham View, which has a higher proportion of disabled residents."</i></p>	Focus Groups  Individual Response	<p>Through engaging with support services and care agencies we continue to prioritise Fire and Wellness Visits to those with disabilities.</p> <p>Bespoke education sessions are also offered to children and young people with learning or physical disabilities, both within school or lifelong learning settings and through engagement with home educated groups.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>3.10 Review attendance policy for automatic fire alarms.  <i>“BFRS should review its policy and look at other counties who don’t attend AFAs. Have their response rates been any worse? Is it a luxury Bucks can afford?” (Chesham)</i></p> <p><i>“After three times of being called out by a business, don’t attend anymore. Give them a warning.” (High Wycombe)</i></p> <p><i>“I think there should be a call for it to be backed up, otherwise I’m happy for the FRS to not attend.”</i>  <i>“Charge for the service (if false alarm).”</i>  <i>“Fine repeat offenders.”</i></p> <p><i>“Could you have better equipment in places like hospitals so that you don’t have to be called out for things like a toaster? And also train staff to deal with it.”</i></p> <p><i>“These alarms should properly be regarded as a ‘local alert to those at the premises involved, rather than a real emergency requiring the attendance of fire and rescue services”.</i></p> <p><i>“I applaud the brigade’s caution... on AFAs. Where the statistics show significant resource going on False Alarm attendance the question is of course how many of the actual fires/threats discovered would have escalated to a significant and demanding extent before discovery, were AFA attendance withdrawn? The Stony fire of three years ago showed in older property in a densely packed High Street how escalation can occur even when the fire is promptly spotted”</i></p>	<p>Chesham Focus Group</p> <p>Wycombe Focus Group</p> <p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p> <p>Milton Keynes Focus Group</p> <p>Individual Response</p> <p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We welcome this feedback and the various suggestions for different ways of approaching our response to this type of incident. We will take these into consideration as part of our planned review of our policy.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>3.11 Do the call centres carry out checks before making the 999 call – for example, to establish whether the [alarm] activation requires a response from the emergency services? If not, I can't help wondering why. It would seem sensible to filter out the false alarms at this point, thus freeing up time in the control room and preventing an unnecessary emergency response of one or sometimes two fire engines, which could then be temporarily unable to attend a real emergency in the same area."</p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>Call challenge already exists within Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) which allows for incidents to be categorised and the appropriate resources mobilised according to the risk. The pre-determined attendance (PDA) is based on the number of firefighters and equipment required to deal with the category of incident and risk, this may still require more than one appliance for a small incident at high-risk premises (e.g. a high-rise building).</p>

#### 4. Technology, information and systems security

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>4.1 Use of social media and associated technologies.  <i>"You've got to embrace to new technologies like social media – use the more day-to-day type of things."</i> (High Wycombe)</p>	<p>Wycombe Focus Group</p>	<p>Our main Twitter and Facebook pages have been running since 2012 and 2017 respectively, and more than 30 other pages are run by our fire stations and road safety officer. They generate millions of impressions a year and help promote safety messages and job opportunities, and connect people and communities with our website. We are conscious that some of our key safety messages, such as the importance of testing smoke alarms regularly, can lose their impact if used to often. Although our resources are limited we are committed to devoting more time to creating helpful and interesting social media content and widening our base of followers.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>4.2 Consider potential of autonomous vehicles.  <i>"I've only had experience with the FRS once and that was during a flood. I thought that might be where autonomous vehicles come in useful. People could book like they do with those little robots we have in Milton Keynes, where you can order your own pumping. It might mean you can get the water pumped out quicker, but it would also be less expensive because it doesn't have to be manned."</i></p>	<p>Milton Keynes Focus Group</p>	<p>Whilst we have, and, will continue to explore the use of new technologies to improve the range of and quality services we provide, this specific area is not something we anticipate as becoming autonomous. Every flooding incident has its unique elements, requires onsite risk assessment, professional judgment and engagement with the occupiers, be that through an officer attending on their own or a crew on an appliance.</p>
<p>4.3 Consider wider potential of drone technology.  <i>"Could use some sort of aerial platform to an [observation] of a fire incident, like a drone?"</i></p> <p><i>"Drones dropping defibrillators is popular in the Netherlands – is this something [BFRS] would consider?"</i></p>	<p>Wycombe Focus Group</p>	<p>We already have this capability on our current high reach aerial appliances.</p> <p>We currently have drone capability which fulfils a range of functions including assisting other agencies searching for missing persons. Whilst we will continue to work with other partners in expanding the capability of what we use our drones for, with the development of medical response and increasing placement of automated external defibrillators in community and populated areas, using drones to deliver them is not something we envisage at this time.</p>



Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>4.4 Enhance incident and inter-agency communications via new technologies.</p> <p><i>"I have a question around technology and communication network in a civil emergency. From an army and an air force perspective, soldiers on the ground are now able to talk to planes in the sky. Something like that would be useful – having some way of talking to each other."</i></p>	Milton Keynes Focus Group	<p>We remain fully engaged with the national Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) which will provide an Emergency Services Network (ESN). This network will be available to all emergency services and other first responders and will deliver improved voice and data services. It aims to transform mobile ways of working, particularly in remote areas and will provide a platform which will improve front line operations and enable services to work more closely together. ESN will also provide an extended service reaching 12 miles out to sea and 500 feet above ground, therefore allowing communications with vessels and aircraft.</p>
<p>4.5 Embrace collaborative approaches to mitigating information systems security risks.</p> <p><i>"[BFRS should] work with the security of companies like BT Security who are excellent at identifying security threats to its assets."</i></p> <p><i>"Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, as a neighbouring service, welcomes the ongoing collaborative activity in this area to combat security threats."</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p> <p>RBFRS</p>	<p>We have an established security group forum and continue to explore opportunities with partner agencies seeking to share best practice in dealing with all foreseeable security threats, be that cyber-attack, loss of assets, resources or other. Furthermore, we just invested in new Business Continuity Planning processes and cyber security training.</p>
<p>4.6 Recognise risks posed by new technologies such as electric vehicles.</p> <p><i>"It's essential to invest in mitigating against the risks. Hybrid cars are using 48 volts, which are extremely dangerous – especially when you put water in them."</i></p>	Milton Keynes Focus Group	<p>All our appliances have mobile data terminals (MDTs) which enable our crews to access a wide range of risk information which includes a system called "Crash Recovery Data" that details all known hazards associated with each vehicle, including high voltage.</p>
<p>4.7 <i>"I'd be interested to know that, in the future, whether the FRS would go to a traffic accident if it were a driverless vehicle?"</i></p>	Aylesbury Focus Group	<p>Yes, if the incident involved persons trapped or any spillage of hazardous substances.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>4.8 <i>"I was also thinking in terms of your workforce and the impacts on that. Will all this new technology mean the skill sets required will need to be different? A generic fireman might not be able to be a generic fireman anymore? It's becoming more complicated."</i></p>	<p>Milton Keynes Focus Group</p>	<p>Our operational front-line staff work in ever changing critical environments and can be called upon at any time to respond to a wide range of emergency situations. The continuing development and maintenance of both practical and technical skills are vital in meeting the vast array of operational demands placed upon firefighters, both at operational incidents and in realistic simulation.</p> <p>To underpin this, elements of operational safety critical training are delivered in partnership with the Fire Service College, a well-established and respected trade name within the fire sector. This partnership ensures all operational firefighters and commanders within BFRS, have the right skills to effectively apply recognised operational procedures and comply with appropriate health and safety legislation.</p> <p>Furthermore, all available operational information, performance criteria and training materials, are aligned to accepted guidance and standards relating to operational competence across the UKFRS, namely National Operational Guidance (NOG) and accompanying training specifications.</p>
<p>4.9 Risks associated with 'Smart' motorways. <i>"I've heard that as part of the smart motorways, the hard shoulder is being got rid of... It seems terribly unsafe... I've heard about people being killed on the 'smart' bit. Where are cars going to go if they have a problem?! And there is no room for emergency services... Do the smart motorways understand when there is an emergency vehicle needing the hard shoulder?"</i></p>	<p>Chesham Focus Group</p>	<p>The Fire and Rescue Service was involved in the early planning stages in relation to these particular motorway improvement works. Regular planning meetings were attended by local fire and rescue service managers to ensure adequate access for emergency services, this included communication and emergency procedures for road crews in the event of an emergency.</p>

5. Civil emergencies		
Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
5.1 <i>“With the increase in wildfires both nationally and globally, and the fact that, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes sits within an area of outstanding natural beauty, with a heavily forested area, should you not consider whether you really have the correct type of fire appliances to deal with this type of incident. Looking at the current range of fire engines on your website, it would appear that you don't - only three 4x4 fire engines!”</i>	Individual Respondent	The Service routinely reviews the type, nature and frequency of the incidents it responds to (via the application of its ‘Risk and Demand’ resourcing model) and uses this information to inform the type and capability of all the equipment it sources, which includes vehicles. Based on that evidence, we believe the current 4 x 4 capability within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, working in partnership across the Thames Valley, meets the needs for all foreseeable risks.
5.2 <i>“Do you have the resources to support TVLRF in practice, i.e., in an event of an emergency, will there be sufficient staff to manage national issues, as well as remaining available for local response? Will this work include spread of viruses? Do you have the capability, knowledge, and resources, to manage the risks?”</i>	Individual Respondent	We carry out a range of activities to review regularly the risk profile of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and the capability we have to meet that risk. We work with all partners in the Local Resilience Forum to prepare for and test arrangements for major emergencies. This includes our ability to sustain an emergency response capability and, as with other emergency services, we have established mutual assistance arrangements with neighbouring Services.
5.3 <i>“Sounds expensive replacing vehicles and equipment with electric stuff”</i>	Chesham Focus Group	We will only replace vehicles and equipment with new electric technology where it is efficient to do so. Currently the cost of electric fire appliances is prohibitive, but we will keep this under review.
5.4 <i>“To me, solar panels feel like a ‘nice to have’ versus ...do you need more fire engines? I’m just thinking of the balance between being green and saving lives.”</i>	Chesham Focus Group	We have installed solar panels only on the stations where there has been a clear cost benefit. Again, this is something that we will keep under review as installation costs and energy costs may change in the future.
5.5 <i>“Carbon footprint - stations have to adopt their own recycling regime, as there are no facilities, or guidance documents provided to carry out this task.”</i>	Individual Response	We will review what arrangements can be implemented and what guidance documentation is required.

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>5.6 <i>“The carbon footprint will always be a problem when appliances have to travel greater distances due to the lack of resources – i.e. wholetime pumps covering, unmanned station grounds and incidents. Moving personnel from their designated station to cover gaps in the manning levels will also be difficult for your ‘footprint.’”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We constantly monitor the amount of vehicle and personnel movements and are assessing alternative ways to reduce the overall carbon footprint. This could be through innovation such as ultra-low or, zero carbon emission vehicles, or by carbon offsetting initiatives.</p> <p>By being smarter with our resourcing model we can also reduce the number of journeys staff make when attending their place of work by directing them to another station prior to their shift. We also encourage our staff to be aware of their carbon footprint when going to and from work and provide information on alternative travel schemes to reduce carbon emissions.</p>

6. Workforce Pressures		
Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>6.1 Participants felt that BFRS is taking the correct approach in responding to workforce challenges. They particularly supported flexible working hours, apprenticeships and targeted recruitment for a more diverse workforce. Additional suggestions as to how the service could improve retention and recruitment included: allowing career breaks; networking with universities and schools; and attending employment fairs. Using social media to garner interest in the fire and rescue service in order to reach a wider demographic of people was also a popular recommendation.</p> <p>When considering BFRS as an employer, more than half (53%) of respondents thought that engaging with and listening to staff is the most important factor. This was followed by offering opportunities to develop skills (40%) and enhanced employee benefits (e.g. local weighting allowances) (38%).</p>	Focus Groups	<p>We welcome this feedback and will have regard to it as we continue to develop our employment policies and workforce plans. We have a range of retention and recruitment strategies in place, such as career breaks, enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption leave and flexible working arrangements. Our employees’ wellbeing is of utmost importance, we have a range of measures to ensure employees are supported, such as Mental Health First Aiders, an employee assistance programme, occupational health, trauma support and through our Welfare Officer</p> <p>We interact with the local community at skills fairs, schools, through ‘have a go’ days, open days at Fire Stations and at regional events such as the World Skills show. Collaboration with Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services mean that we are able to work with them to ensure value for money.</p> <p>We are currently working on our corporate website, to ensure that it reaches our communities to inform and educate them as well as celebrate our successes. As part of our recent Wholetime recruitment we worked with Global to ensure that we attract diverse talent.</p>
	Online responses	<p>Engaging and listening to our employees is very important to us, we do this in a number of ways, for example regular 1:1’s, appraisals, bi-annual culture survey, station visits and weekly blogs by senior management.</p> <p>All employees are offered the opportunity to develop their skills, as well as ensuring that they undertake mandatory training. Learning and training is carried out in a number of ways: e-learning, face to face, shadowing, coaching and mentoring, secondments, formal internal and external training, and recognised qualifications such as Institute of Fire Engineers and Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Our employee benefits are reviewed regularly, we have enhanced Firefighter and Support Staff pensions, flexible working, employee assistance programme, childcare vouchers, cycle to work scheme, gyms / fitness equipment in all of our fire stations, opportunities for all staff to develop and learn in their role.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>6.2 Viability of on-call employment model.</p> <p><i>“Critical’ is a much-used word nowadays, but I believe that we have reached that stage now with our On-Call staff. We clearly can, indeed have for some time, largely managed without most of them. I attach no blame to them; there are now so many pressures on people’s time, and other opportunities to help your community, that committing to being available night and day is no longer an attractive option. This plan commits us to developing the role of the On-Call firefighter over the next 5 years, Our current On-Call recruitment strategy seems to be, at best, uncoordinated and half-hearted, as if we didn’t really want to recruit more people but were just going through the motions. A more flexible On Call contract MAY attract more people but will cause significant issues around training and the maintenance of competence if new staff are only providing a few hours cover per week. What seems to me be ‘critical’ is the need to make a major decision - ASAP - about all our On Call and whether we need them at all...”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We regularly review our workforce plans to ensure that we have the right people with the right skills at the right time. We review planned and unplanned leavers and retirements.</p> <p>We have introduced innovative solutions for our staff to enable and maintain the requisite level of cover. We continue to explore opportunities for on-call staff, and now offer a range of flexible options to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified staff. We continue to welcome new staff into this Service.</p> <p>Our response model relies on Wholetime, Flexi- Firefighters, On-Call staff and bank shifts to ensure it can operate. We believe it is vital that we look at range of different contracts to ensure the diversity of the Service and our On-Call employees are part of this.</p> <p>We constantly review the recruitment and retention of our On-Call employees to make sure that it is as efficient and effective as possible.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>6.3 Ageing workforce implications:  <i>“Ageing workforce and the very demanding physical role that active firefighting plays. When determining budgets, the impact of such a job on the individual should be taken into account to ensure active fire fighters are not forced to continue working past the time that they feel is right for them.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We are acutely aware of the issues that an ageing workforce presents, and work hard with our employees at all stages of their career to ensure they are supported with their physical and mental health.</p> <p>Our Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group meets regularly to review issues of concern, performance statistics and plans for the future. We have a wellbeing strategy in place.</p> <p>All of our Fire stations have fitness equipment. Regular medicals and training take place for employees and if an employee becomes ill there are a range of mechanisms in place to support them for example Mental Health First Aiders, Occupational Health, Physiotherapy, Welfare Officer, Employee Assistance Programme and the Firefighters Charity.</p> <p>Our managers and human resources team work closely with the individual and the agencies above to support them in their work, alternative duties are sometimes suitable and, as a last resort, ill health retirements if the individual is not able to return to operational duties.</p>
<p>6.4 Workforce Diversity.  <i>“Yes, you have/are working with older people, but what about everyone else? What are you doing to break barriers and squash negative perceptions about the fire service being white male dominant?”</i></p> <p><i>“The service should be inclusive to all regardless of protected characteristics, inclusivity and valuing diversity are key.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p> <p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We are working hard to ensure that our Service is diverse, inclusive and reflective of the communities we serve, and to break down negative perceptions of our workforce. Our policy statement states our intention <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/about-us/our-policies/employment-related-policies/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/about-us/our-policies/employment-related-policies/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/</a></p> <p>Examples of ways we are trying to increase our diversity across all of the protected characteristics are through our targeted recruitment, ‘have a go days’, flexible working opportunities, daily interaction with the public, redesign of our website, and, attendance at national equality conferences to learn from other organisations.</p> <p>The views of our workforce are very important to us. We do this in a number of ways, for example regular 1:1’s, appraisals, bi-annual staff survey, exit interviews, station visits and weekly blogs by senior management.</p> <p>We report regularly to our Fire Authority on progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives, performance indicators and also on gender pay statistics and plans.</p>

7. Funding Pressures		
Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>7.1 Support for increasing Council Tax above the level that would require a referendum.</p> <p><i>“Council Tax is too low in Bucks in general for such a wealthy county.... Because you’ve done so well to keep costs down, you’re almost being penalised for it?! Really the one-time increase is just to get you to more of an even level/in line with others.”</i></p> <p><i>“We agree to a one off £10 increase.”</i></p> <p><i>“Agree with increase to national average.”</i></p> <p><i>“General consensus is a yes to paying £5 or £10 one-off payment to keep current services/improve funding.”</i></p> <p>Nearly half (47%) of respondents would prefer a £10 increase for part of their council tax to fund BFRS during 2020-21. More than one eighth (15%) of respondents would prefer no increase, with the same (15%) proportion preferring a £5 increase. Less than one eighth (11%) of respondents would prefer a £1.93 increase, with 13% of respondents preferring another option.</p>	<p>Chesham Focus Group</p> <p>Aylesbury Focus Group</p> <p>Buckingham Focus Group</p> <p>Milton Keynes Focus Group</p> <p>Online Responses</p>	<p>We recognise the support for potentially increasing council tax if the referendum limit were to be relaxed, whilst also noting the concerns raised in section 7.2 overleaf.</p>



Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>7.2 Reservations relating to increasing Council Tax above the referendum limit.</p> <p><i>“As much as I would like to pay the additional £10 per year for a great service to become even better, it's a question of ‘will the police and council also be asking for a significant increase?’ Which, if yes and it's granted, will mean some households falling below the poverty line and becoming vulnerable, therefore putting additional strains on all services and it becomes false economy.”</i></p> <p><i>“Personally, I’d be happy to give you a tenner, but I do accept the fact I can afford to do that. Not everyone is fortunate to be able to do that.”</i></p> <p><i>“I worry that the 3% uplift...every other service will want to do the same. As councils are strapped for cash at the moment, you can see that it wouldn’t play well. But I think if you could sell it that in fact we are paying the least for our fire service in the whole country and it is under threat because we are paying so little for it... Isn’t some of the concern around council tax offset by all the building work going on?”</i></p> <p><i>“Agree with increasing council tax by more than 3%, but it must be related/limited by the increase in house building.”</i></p>	<p>Individual Response</p> <p>Milton Keynes Focus Group</p> <p>Chesham Focus Group</p> <p>Chesham Focus Group</p>	<p>Any decisions made regarding Council Tax increases will be made by the Fire Authority, which will take into the account both the needs of the Service as well as the issue of affordability for residents.</p> <p>The illustrative £10 increase would be based on a band D property. Those in bands A-C would pay less than this, and indicative amounts for each band for both a £5 and £10 increase in the band D amount are shown on page 48 of the Public Safety Plan.</p> <p>The Service does receive additional council tax as additional homes are built. Projections for future growth are already built in to our funding forecasts. However, as well as having areas of high growth, there are some areas in the county that have relatively little building. The overall rate of increase in the number of properties paying council tax has slowed in recent years.</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>7.3 Other revenue raising suggestions –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeking funding from HS2 contractors</li> <li>Cutting back on non-statutory services</li> <li>Attending fewer false alarm calls</li> <li>Introducing increased charges for businesses</li> <li>Charging for services that are over and above statutory provision</li> <li>Restructuring BFRS and merging with others to create a ‘Thames Valley Fire Service’</li> </ul> <p><i>“Charge for special service calls and false alarms. If not in good intent, people have insurance claims of their insurance.”</i></p> <p><i>“Have you considered potential income generation activities, diversifying the fire service – e.g. charging companies for fire safety advice, or training when the fire officers are not dealing with incidents, charging for the use of fire attendance at events, charging for continuing fault alarms? All public sector bodies are now having to find ways to plug the gaps and maximise resources, how is BFRS responding to this?”</i></p>	<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Individual Response</p> <p>Individual Response</p>	<p>The Service continues to explore many different options for raising revenue. We are currently exploring what funding may be available from the HS2 project.</p> <p>Cutting back on non-statutory services and attending fewer automatic fire alarms doesn’t generate significant savings, as unless these incidents are attended by on-call staff the marginal cost of doing so is very low.</p> <p>We will review what services we charge for, the level of charge and whether we want to increase the level of charges and/or charge for a broader range of services. However, what we are legally able to charge for and the level of charges is restricted.</p> <p>We continue to work closely with the other Thames Valley fire and rescue services to reduce cost and improve services where practicable to do so. Also, as part of the Thames Valley Collaboration Framework, we continue to explore a range of opportunities to work in partnership with all Blue Light services.</p>

8. Other Issues / Proposals		
Issue / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>8.1 Effect of station consolidation within Milton Keynes.  <i>"The demand patterns with West Ashland in operation... whether for incidents, residential or non-residential, show a geographical layout of fire stations south to north aligned towards the east of the city. This at a time when the Western Expansion area is being rapidly built out with an eventual population equivalent to Buckingham. It also exposes Stony Stratford, being an old town with a very high density of vulnerable structures, as graphically shown three years ago when two buildings were destroyed and two more affected before the brigade gained control...the Authority's confidence that the choice of West Ashland as a location will not increase response times has not, to my knowledge, been publicly supported with the kind of detail that would re-assure [routes and timing from Great Holm versus West Ashland, for example]. It would be appalling to find out the hard way. I do wonder if the Authority appreciate the extent to which public opinion has been disturbed by this, given three years ago and 1991 (I think it was) when the Peking Restaurant was severely damaged?... It would seem that, in its apparently undisclosed calculations, the Authority has placed reliance on the A5 dual-carriageway being fully open to the north, not slowed or blocked by now normal rush-hour demand or by accident or incident... Or the old A5, Watling Street V4, being freely negotiable."</i></p>	Individual Response	The proposal to consolidate the existing Bletchley and Great Holm fire stations onto a new site at West Ashland was subject to a full public consultation in 2015. Very similar issues to these were raised during the consultation. The outcomes of this, together with our responses and recommendations in relation to the issues, are available from our website <a href="#">here</a> . We keep our operational performance under regular review. This will include consideration of the potential to use standby points strategically located across Milton Keynes where these can enhance the overall effectiveness of our emergency response to incidents.
<p>8.2 <i>"...the map showing locations of fire stations and incidents, on page 43 of the draft plan, clearly shows that there will be inadequate coverage of North-West Milton Keynes, including Stony Stratford and its environs. Seconds are vital when it comes to a response to real emergencies, especially fire. Has the establishment of a "voluntary" (not "retained") unit based in Stony Stratford been considered? This is the way things work in isolated towns in the USA, for example."</i></p>	Individual Response	We have introduced innovative solutions for our staff to enable and maintain the requisite level of cover. We continue to explore opportunities for on-call staff, and now offer a range of flexible options to recruit and retain highly motivated and qualified staff. We continue to welcome new staff into our Service.

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>8.3 Responding to 'non-emergency' incidents.</p> <p><i>"I have noticed a trend (which I expect your own statistics would confirm) for increasing calls to the fire and rescue service to incidents such as internal domestic flooding or various objects in 'precarious positions'. Such incidents are, of course, unfortunate but they are not emergencies. Front-line fully-manned appliances should not be tied up in attending such incidents. I suggest that the fire and rescue service re-examines its attitude to such calls. There is a similar situation with regard to the fire and rescue service receiving calls to road traffic accidents. Unless persons require extrication or there is a significant fuel spill, the fire and rescue service has little role to play. Unfortunately there is a public perception (seemingly coming from the media) that there is a danger of 'explosion' following vehicle collisions! Again, I suggest that the fire and rescue service, in conjunction with the other emergency services, should re-examine its attitude to such calls. The service gives good publicity on the topic "What to do in the event of a fire", -perhaps it should also do a topic "What to do in the event of a road traffic accident"?"</i></p>	Individual Response	We carry out a range of activities to review regularly the risk profile of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and the capability we have to meet that risk.
<p>8.4 Proposal to respond to pressures on maintaining on-call workforce by re-focusing on specific roles / areas:</p> <p><i>"1) Early back-up when Aylesbury's two Wholetime pumps are committed. Aylesbury is somewhat isolated by geography and the relative poor road network so, even if we were to despatch a Milton Keynes or Wycombe pump to cover Aylesbury it would be a good 20 minutes away... Relying on over the border pumps from Thame and Tring - themselves On-Call - is not sufficient and our own pumps at Waddesdon, Haddenham and Risborough just do not provide the regular availability that we need. A recent 7-pump fire in Aylesbury was attended by 3 Aylesbury pumps, but the other 4 came from over the border – Thame, Tring, Wheatley and Berkhamstead. I'm actually ashamed that we had to use this many over the border pumps and I can't believe that an On-Call crew from Wheatley can get to Aylesbury quicker than a Wholetime pump from Wycombe or Amersham? I'm sure those On Call crews appreciated the turnout fee but what must they think of us as a service when we have to rely on crews from so far away?"</i></p>	Individual Response	<p>We thank the respondent for their comments. The specific incident mentioned needs to be looked into further to ascertain reasons why those mobilisations occurred.</p> <p>The on-call resourcing model has yet to be fully implemented which will reduce the number of over the border mobilisations and there will also be a review of its impact once data has been collated.</p> <p>There is also a process in place for staff to challenge mobilisations to specific incidents so that these can be checked and cross referenced against the BFRS mobilisation policy. We encourage staff to do this as part of their role</p>

Issues / Suggestions	Source	Management Response
<p>2) Early cover for Milton Keynes. Two two-pump jobs at the same time in MK and we are left very vulnerable. Buckingham and Aylesbury are too far away to provide back up quickly enough and our own, and surrounding over the border pumps, are all On-Call and therefore unreliable.</p> <p>3) Early cover for the southern 'corridor' - Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross. Once again, two two-pump jobs in this corridor leaves us vulnerable, particularly if pumps are committed to the M40."</p>		<p>within Service Delivery. This will be emphasised at the next round of management forums.</p>
<p>8.5 Proposal for strategic re-configuration of fire-cover and associated fire station footprint.</p> <p>"A) Close all On Call stations that we don't need 'to ensure we can reach all parts of the geographical area that we serve in a timely manner'. A hugely political decision... but one that we must be prepared to make...</p> <p>B) Keep any On Call staff that want to remain employed but concentrate them on 3 On Call 'hubs' where they go for weekly training and their pumps are based. I would suggest the new MK Hub, Aylesbury, and Wycombe. Allow them to work on the bank, as many do now, which helps us keep pumps on the run and helps them to maintain their competency.</p> <p>C) Find a new location for a new Wycombe fire station (or blue light hub) as a matter of urgency. This would probably be to the west of the town along the West Wycombe Road corridor, or just north of the town. This station would only have one W/T pump plus special (see point D below).</p> <p>D) Move one W/T pump from Wycombe to Marlow permanently. This would cover the Marlow area, as well as being second pump into Wycombe and cover Beaconsfield. It would also be the first pump onto the M40 in either direction as it can reach Handy Cross the quickest. It will also reduce our reliance on the pump from Maidenhead.</p> <p>E) Pursue, with Oxon FRS, the option of a new, shared W/T station at junction 6 of the M40. This could cover Stokenchurch and the M40, as well as Watlington (allowing Oxon to close that On Call station), plus the expanding areas around Chinnor and Thame (which could be reduced one pump).</p> <p>F) Consider moving Amersham fire station and making it W/T, so it better covers not only Amersham itself but Chesham and Great Missenden, as well as continuing to provide back up to Gerrards Cross, Beaconsfield and Wycombe, and even Aylesbury. Putting a new station on the A413 near Great Missenden, maybe at the currently - derelict petrol garage at Deep Mill, would provide that cover, as well as being near the northern portal of the HS2 tunnel under the Chilterns."</p>	<p>Individual Response</p>	<p>We carry out a range of activities to regularly review the risk profile of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, and the capability we have to meet that risk. This includes our ability to sustain an emergency response capability and, as with other emergency services, we have established mutual assistance arrangements with neighbouring services.</p>

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**Buckinghamshire  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
*we save lives*



# Public Safety Plan

2020-2025



# IT ONLY TAKES ONE ACCIDENT TO START A FIRE.

ARE YOU SURE YOUR SMOKE  
ALARMS ARE WORKING?

TEST YOURS NOW.





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# Your new Public Safety Plan

As Chairman and Chief Fire Officer, together we would like to introduce you to your new Public Safety Plan. We have achieved many things in the last five years, and these are summarised in this document. It also outlines the future risks and challenges we think need to be addressed, and reflects what you have told us is important to you and what you expect from us.

Over the last five years (2015/2016 - 2019/2020) we have continued to see a change in the profile of the types of incidents we attend. Over the same period we have had to absorb a cut in revenue support grant provided by the Government of 57 per cent. We have risen to all the financial challenges we have faced and continue to deliver a service our staff and those we serve can be incredibly proud of.

We have fewer firefighters, but they have never been so busy, broadening the scope of what we do while maintaining our levels of service. This could not have been achieved without the dedication of our staff, who have increased their flexibility through new ways of working.

The next five years will be about consolidating our unique operating model and making sure we are ready for the challenges up ahead by remaining on a sound financial footing. We will look to improve our resilience so that we are able to meet future challenges and changes to our operating environment.

However, with continued financial pressure, we will have to make some difficult decisions. We will ensure that these are based on sound evidence and consult with the public accordingly. We will strive to make sure we provide equality of service throughout Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and also equality of opportunity as an employer.

## We look to the future as that is where we will spend the rest of our lives



**Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE**  
Chairman, Buckinghamshire &  
Milton Keynes Fire Authority



**Jason Thelwell QFSM**  
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive  
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

# What is a Public Safety Plan?

## And why you should read it

**Part of the council tax you pay directly funds your fire and rescue service** and it is important to us that we hear your views on the service we provide and how this may develop. This plan sets out how we will provide a fire and rescue service in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes for the five-year period from 2020-2025. The plan builds on our achievements over the last five years, considers changes to the risks you face and how we plan to change our services to keep residents, communities and businesses safe from fire and other emergencies.

We work in a fast-changing environment. We work closely with colleagues nationally across Government supporting the national resilience infrastructure, and we work with individual residents to make them safer in their homes, and there is a range of work in between. Government guidance requires that fire and rescue authorities consider national and regional as well as local risks.

This Public Safety Plan has been developed using integrated risk management planning methods and is designed to conform to the Government's guidance in relation to the preparation of integrated risk management plans.

This year we will open our new joint emergency response facility for Police, Fire and Ambulance in West Ashland, Milton Keynes. This site provides a fantastic facility for the public. We will continue to work with police and ambulance colleagues to improve the service we provide, and we will extend our collaboration work more widely.

We are very proud of the work that we do, and we care passionately about your safety from fire and other emergencies.

Please refer to the supplementary information section of this plan for more information on the Government's guidance and the legal requirements for fire and rescue service plans.

# Who we are



We serve a population of more than 800,000 in the South East of England. The area stretches from the outskirts of London to the South Midlands. It comprises Buckinghamshire, which will have a unitary council from 1 April 2020, and Milton Keynes, which has had a unitary council since 1997.

The area we serve includes stretches of the M1, M4, M25 and M40 motorways, a section of the West Coast Main Line, several miles of the River Thames, part of the Silverstone motor racing circuit and Chequers, the Prime Minister's country residence.

Around 400 firefighters operate from 20 fire stations (19 when Bletchley Fire Station and Great Holm Fire Station are amalgamated on to one site at West Ashland in Milton Keynes in 2020), sometimes responding to 999 calls when they are out and about doing community safety work. There are fire safety offices in Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Marlow.

Fighting fires is only part of the work of the present-day fire and rescue service. Releasing people trapped in vehicles after road traffic collisions, dealing with chemical spills and fitting smoke alarms in people's homes make up an increasing proportion of our work. Our operational crews have therefore changed the focus of their work to help prevent emergency incidents from happening in the first place.

Our community safety team includes officers who work in partnership with local statutory and voluntary organisations at a range of locations throughout the county.

Around 100 people work in a variety of support services, including teams in risk assessment, vehicle workshops, finance and human resources.



## Our vision

To make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.

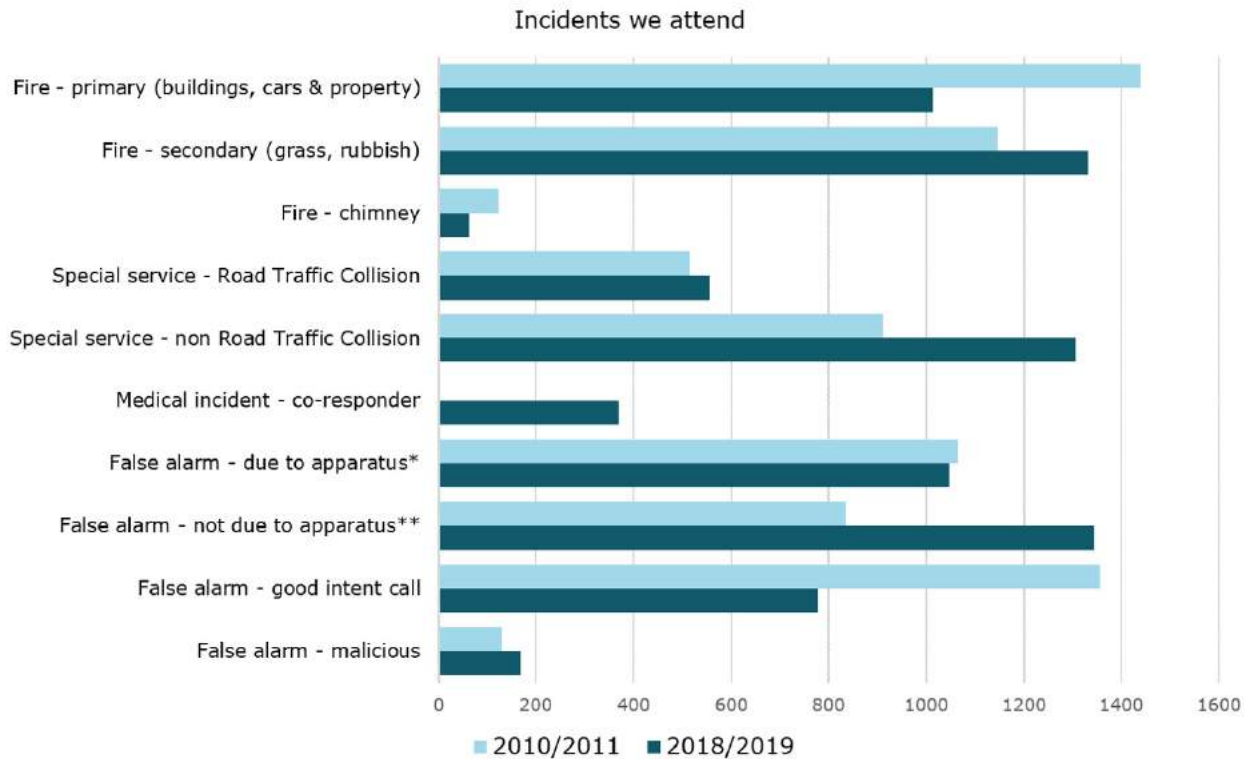
## Our strategic objectives

- Prevent incidents that cause harm from happening
- Protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire
- Provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets and resources in relation to risk and demand
- Offer best value for money to our residents and businesses and ensure that the Service is compliant with regulatory requirements and recognised 'good practice' standards and can readily evidence this at all times



# What we do

We now go to a broader range of incidents than we did in 2010. We go to fewer fires, but other types of incidents have taken their place. This is partly as a result of societal changes and busier roads. It is also through our collaboration with other emergency services. We provide assistance to other fire and rescue service areas and more medical incidents as first responders.



\* False alarm - due to apparatus is where a detector/alarm has sounded, but no cause for the alarm sounding could be identified.

\*\* False alarm - not due to apparatus covers incidents where the service has been called to an address due to an alarm/detector activating, and the cause of the alarm was due to external factors such as dust from builders, cooking fumes and unintentional activations such as break glass.

We have also been developing our services in response to changing patterns of risk and need in the communities we serve. Examples of this include:

- Expanding our home safety visits to look at wellness and health.
- Promoting awareness of dementia-related risks in our community.
- Locating publicly accessible defibrillators at most fire stations, and providing training to the public.

Our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capabilities form a fully integrated part of our local service provision. However, they are also available to respond to regional and national incidents as in the case of the Didcot power station collapse in 2016. In 2017 we completed a project to enhance our water rescue capabilities and successfully applied to be on the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) register for deployment to assist in response to flooding.

# What we've done - the numbers

April 2015 - March 2019

Below we show the range and scale of the work we have done over the first four years of the 2015-20 Public Safety Plan across the scope of our prevention, protection and emergency response services



**31,408**

Emergencies attended



**16,687**

Detectors fitted



**13,237**

Home safety visits



**1,955**

Businesses inspected



**386**

Schools we work with



**2,192**

Road Traffic Collisions attended



**85**

Apprenticeships



**3,662**

Co-responder incidents attended



**815**

People rescued from lifts



**13,582,800**

Impressions on Twitter



**14,500**

Water hydrants maintained every year



**1,760**

Messages in a bottle supplied\*



**15**

Enforcement notices served



**4,794**

Post-visit feedback letters sent

\*Message in a Bottle is where you keep essential personal and medication details in a small bottle in the fridge.

Paramedics, police, fire-fighters and social services know to look in the fridge when they see the Message in a Bottle stickers.



**IT ONLY TAKES  
ONE ACCIDENT  
TO START A FIRE.**

ARE YOU SURE YOUR SMOKE  
ALARMS ARE WORKING?

**TEST YOURS NOW.**





# The 2015-2020 Public Safety Plan

## What did we achieve?



In this next section you can read about what we achieved against the last Public Safety Plan. We think it is important to demonstrate that we use public consultation and planning to change and improve our services. In our 2015-2020 PSP we identified seven key areas where we would work to improve. We have delivered effective changes against each one of these areas. On the next two pages we have provided some of the key headline performance figures for our prevention, protection and response activities over the lifetime of the plan.

# What we delivered

## Against our 2015-2020 Public Safety Plan



### 1. Modernising our approach to resourcing for emergencies

- New resourcing model
- Flexi firefighter contracts
- Mixed crewing - eg. wholetime & on-call riding the same appliance together

### 2. Implement the right balance between prevention, protection and response across the service

- Reductions in the number of accidental dwelling fires, fire related injuries and primary fires
- Average attendance times broadly unchanged



### 3. Establish the right number of staff, fire engines and specialist appliances to respond to our risk and demand levels

- Apprenticeship scheme
- Flexi firefighter contracts
- 4x4 appliances
- Small fire unit trial

### 4. Identify the right number and location of fire stations, which may involve moving, merging, closing or co-locating with other blue light services

- Blue Light Hub - New combined police/fire/ambulance station for Milton Keynes, including community facilities



### 5. Consider alternative service delivery models

- New Resourcing Model
- Medical Co-responding
- A single Thames Valley Fire Control Service for all three Thames Valley fire and rescue services
- Joint procurement of fire engines, firefighting equipment and uniform

### 6. Using our capacity, resources & assets to meet a wider range of community needs in partnership with others

- Co-responding
- Falls clinics
- Dementia friendly service
- Blood transfusion clinics
- Milton Keynes Safety Centre



### 7. Consider new effective ways of generating extra capacity to quickly upscale for risk

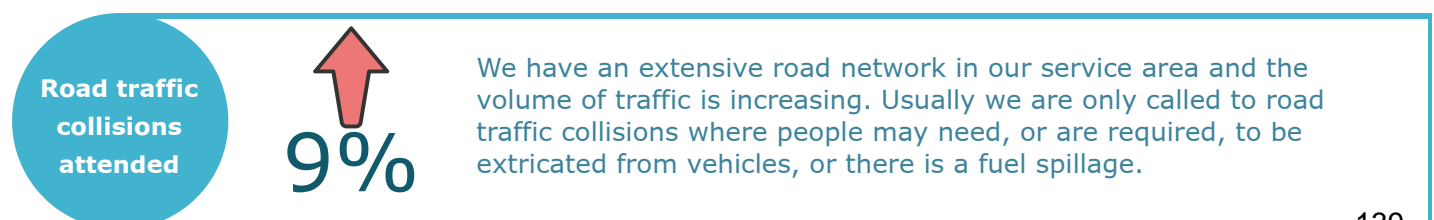
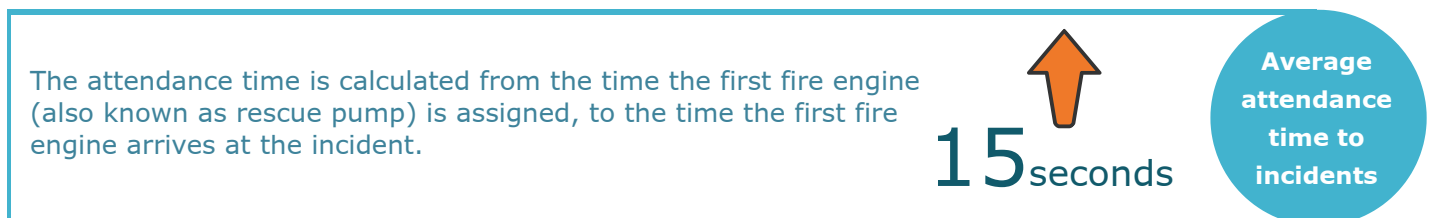
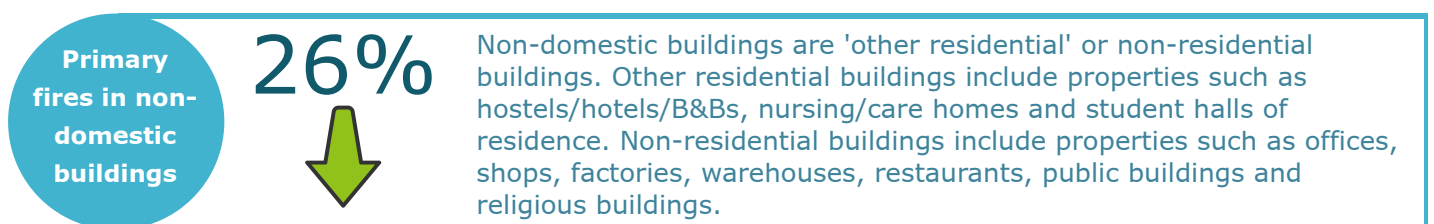
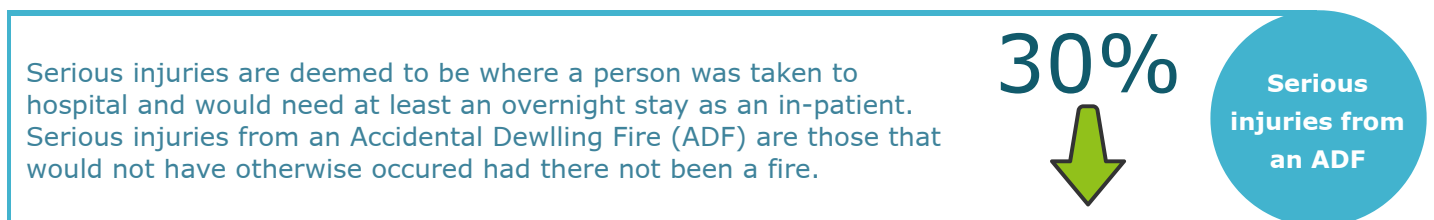
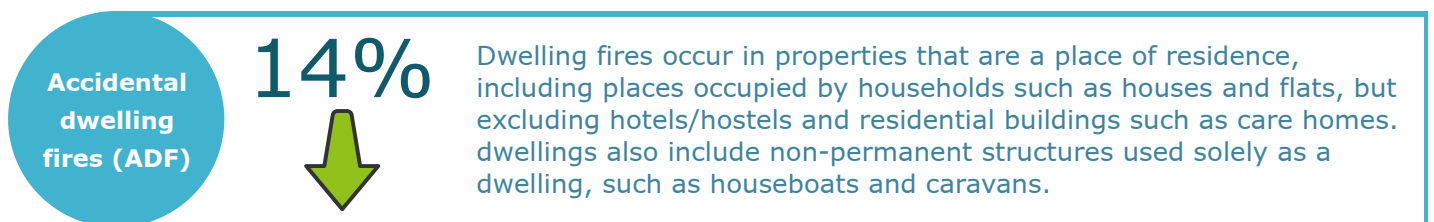
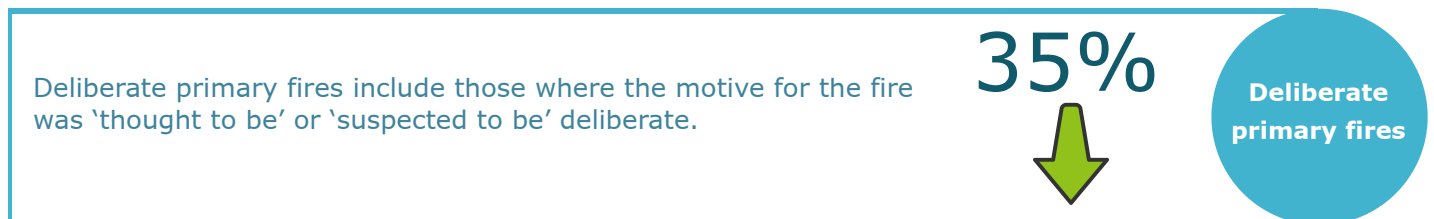
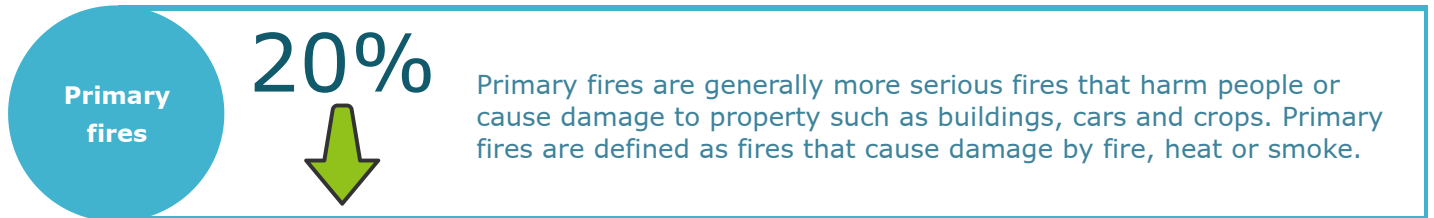
- Tiered approach to appliance availability
- New on-call model
- Resource management team

# The 2015-2020 Public Safety Plan

## How did we perform?

Headline performance figures - prevention, protection and response

The following figures reflect the difference between 2010-15 and 2015-19 (average per year) as at April 2019

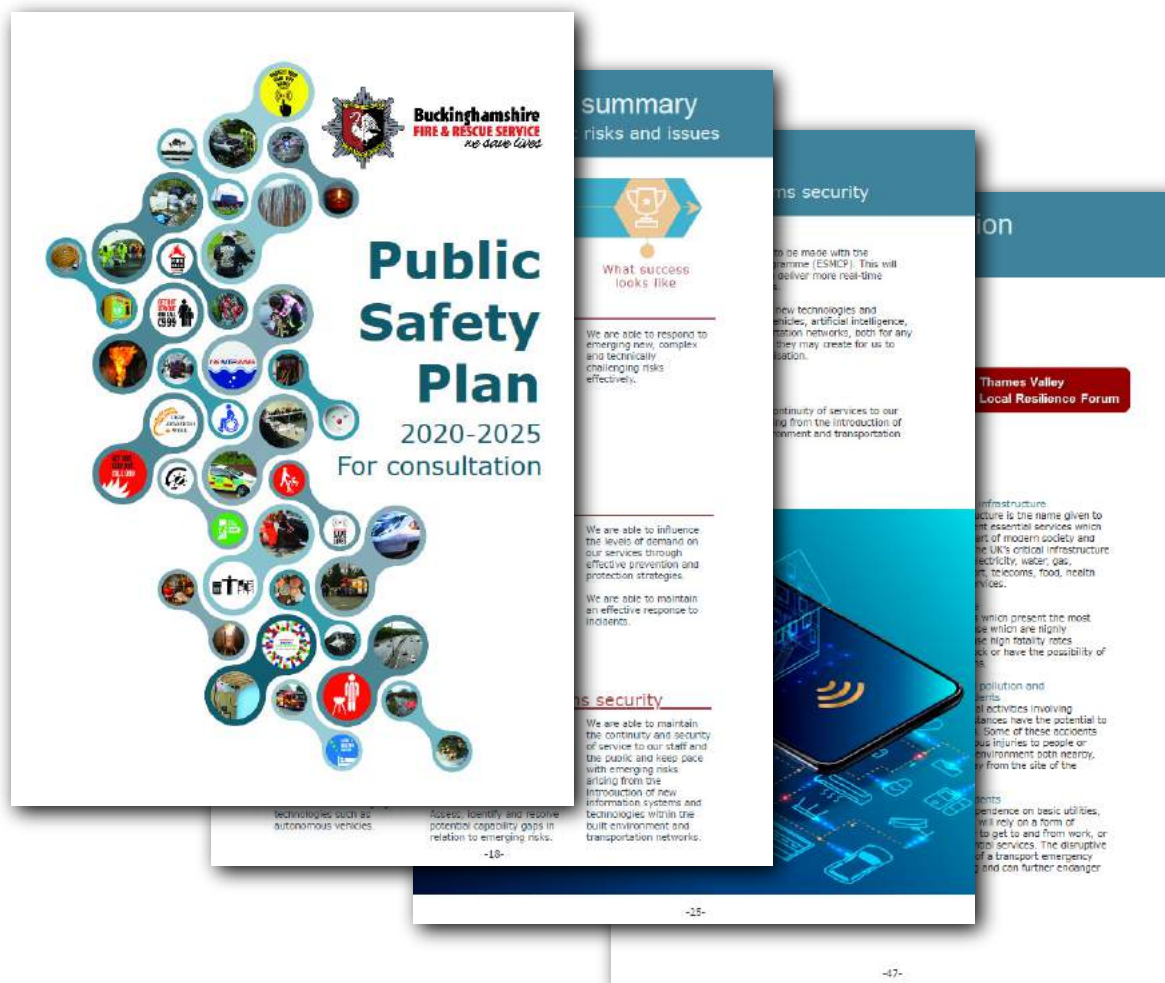




**You can't concentrate on the road and  
your mobile phone**

**THINK**  
PUT YOUR PHONE  
**AWAY**

# The challenges ahead



In this section we explore a number of future challenges that will have implications for the type, range or scale of services that we provide and/or our ability to deliver them. In relation to these, we set out the nature of the challenges, what we do now to address them and what more we will need to do in the future to control and reduce the emerging risks and potential demand arising from these challenges. Our approach to this has also been informed by consultation work undertaken with a cross-section of the public to explore their perceptions of the issues that we face and their preferences in relation to how we might deal with them in the future.

# Views from the public

To help inform the development of this plan we carried out a consultation exercise with the public. The purpose of this was to explore the public's:

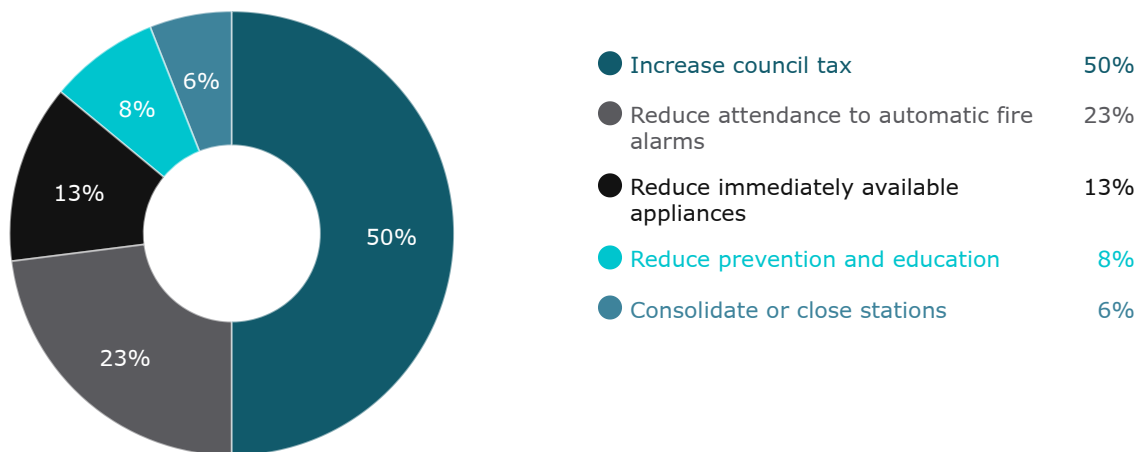
- Awareness of and attitudes towards risks.
- Perceptions of the fire and rescue service, our services and any expectations in relation to these.
- Awareness of the issues and challenges facing our service and general feelings about potential ways that we could respond to these.

A flavour of the range of views expressed by the participants about some of the issues explored in the consultation is shown on the next page. The full findings of the consultation which were held in November and December 2018 can be seen [here](#).

## Future options

Some possible strategies to meet future challenges were outlined to participants. These were based on the assumption that we will have done everything possible to make savings from 'back office' functions and that our service would receive no additional Government money with which to provide services. Participants were asked to allocate 100 points between the options, and the overall preference across the five groups was that we should pursue an increase in council tax (a one-off payment of £5 to increase the base charge was favoured) and reduce our attendance at, or cease to attend, automatic fire alarms:

**Possible future strategies  
(no extra money)**



Participants were also asked to rank some other possible strategies in the event of us receiving more Government money or raising additional funds ourselves through increased council tax levels. The overall ranking across all five groups was as follows:

- 1. Make on-call firefighting more attractive**
- 2. Keep existing stations and assets**
- 3. Recruit more firefighters**
- 4. Enhance protection (to be fit for the post-Grenfell environment)**
- 5. Upgrade crewing levels at stations**
- 6. Deliver additional services such as co-responding**
- 7. Ensure fairer urban versus rural service provision**

# Views from the public

## Fire

“ I think one of the risks from a fire perspective is the cheap imports, like phone chargers. Really understanding that they can be a real risk.

“ I think health and safety generally has improved incredibly because if you go out to a function in the community, it's a public place and you get your five minutes of 'these are the exits and fire safety'. Twenty years ago you didn't get that . . . and nobody was actually aware of this. The facilities of public places are now much better and regulated better as well, which means people are safer.

## Road traffic collisions

“ There must be more risks with car accidents and things like that rather than fire . . . as the population is growing is it a big element of resources? For me personally because I travel quite a lot that's quite a big thing.

“ Roads are getting busier so there isn't the space for traffic to go. Accidents happen every day of the week somewhere. So the rescue aspect is as much of a consideration now as individual fire problems.

## Finances and value for money

“ Central government is a challenge facing the fire and rescue service . . . it seems bonkers that they can keep cutting and cutting and stick their heads in the sand and think it will be fine and do more with less; that doesn't work forever.

“ There are so many other organisations that want this extra £10-£15 so where does it stop? £5 itself isn't a lot, but if you add everything else up . . .

“ As an insurance policy [it] isn't bad at all.

## Response times

“ Given how rural and spread out Bucks is, I think the attendance time figures are very impressive; I think it's really good.

“ It would be impractical to expect the same level of response in a rural as an urban area and it wouldn't be an appropriate use of funding to have a fire engine in a rural area all the time when it's not going to be used very much.

## Tolerance of risk

“ No death is acceptable is it, whether it's a fire or an accident. Obviously, we would all want them to be zero wouldn't we. But we don't live in a society where everyone drives around wearing a seat belt or doesn't use a phone while driving.

## A changing world

“ I think population growth is a key issue . . . How long do you continue to run a single pump before you hit a threshold? At some point that service will really be squeezed as the population expands. And that seems to be a theme across all emergency services. I think particularly with the fire and rescue service there will be a big threshold moment where they need new kit and stations.

## Perception of BFRS

“ I filled in a survey at an event I went to and they came and fitted a smoke alarm and they looked at access points . . . It was very useful and they're very approachable.

“ I live near a dangerous road and there have been a couple of high-profile accidents. They are on site very rapidly; so a good impression.

# The challenges ahead - summary

Draft proposals aligned to strategic risks and issues



## Infrastructure projects

Road closures during construction leading to slower emergency response times.

On-site risks during construction such as working at heights or depths.

New technical risks following project completion such as tunnel rescues.

Consider temporary re-location of fire appliances to reduce impact.

Review range of potential risks and identify any additional training, equipment and vehicle requirements.

We are able to respond to emerging new, complex and technically challenging risks effectively.

## Population

Potential for increases in all types of emergency response.

Potential increase in accidental dwelling fire injuries and fatalities particularly in vulnerable groups such as the 80+ age group.

Consider changing current response to automatic fire alarms policy potentially freeing up capacity to deal with an increase in higher risk incident types.

Review station duty systems in high growth areas.

Continue to improve our ability to target and engage with vulnerable groups.

We are able to influence the levels of demand on our services through effective prevention and protection strategies.

We are able to maintain an effective response to incidents.

## Technology information and systems security

Disruption to our ability to deliver emergency response and other services due to cyber-attack.

New risks arising from the introduction of emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles.

Continue to improve resilience of information and communication systems via opportunities such as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

Assess, identify and resolve potential capability gaps in relation to emerging risks.

We are able to maintain the continuity and security of service to our staff and the public and keep pace with emerging risks arising from the introduction of new information systems and technologies within the built environment and transportation networks.



# The challenges ahead - summary

Draft proposals aligned to strategic risks and issues



## Civil emergencies

Increase in frequency and/or severity of incidents.

Review current capacity and capabilities to meet emerging risks in collaboration with Local Resilience Forum partners.

Continue to identify and act to reduce our own carbon footprint by using electric vehicles, for example.

The Local Resilience Forum partnership approach provides a coordinated capability which responds to, and resolves, civil emergencies and returns affected communities to normal.

## Workforce pressures

Maintenance of range or level of service to the public due to staff retention and recruitment challenges.

Continue to develop our approach to workforce planning to inform recruitment and staff development strategies.

Continue development and roll-out of more flexible and innovative employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

Align training strategy and priorities to meet future needs.

Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and well-being of our staff as their life circumstances change.

A proud and happy workforce.

We are able to resource our appliances and all the functions that go to support our organisation with the right people.

Recruit and retain a more diverse workforce.

## Funding pressures

Insufficient funding to maintain current range or level of service to the public.

Introduce zero base approach to budgeting to ensure that the right amount of money is being spent in the right areas.

Continue to pursue the case for relaxation of the Government's Council Tax referendum limits.

Consider withdrawing from some non-statutory services to reduce costs.

We are able to maintain a balanced budget, and sufficient level of reserves. We do not have to implement cuts to our services that would adversely affect the safety of the public we serve.

# The challenges ahead

## Infrastructure and population

### The challenge

This document sets out our plans for the next five years. In formulating it, we have had regard to potential developments that are likely to affect the future provision of fire and rescue services over the 30-year period to 2050.

A number of major regional and national infrastructure projects are already underway, or have the potential to begin during the lifetime of this plan. These projects already, or have the potential to, cause disruption to local transport networks and consequently have an impact on our service provision, particularly emergency response times. Our nearest-appliance mobilisation system will help us mitigate this risk. We will also consider temporarily relocating appliances and other resources to avoid excessive impacts on our ability to respond to emergencies or deliver other services during construction.

These projects also have the potential to create new risks, both during the construction phase and following completion. For example, some involve mobile workforces sited in temporary residential accommodation during construction or involve the creation of tunnels and viaducts involving working at heights and depths with associated risks that will require specialist technical rescue capabilities in the event of an incident.

Looking further afield, the National Infrastructure Commission's plans for the region between Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford, up to 2050, envisage significant amounts of new housing and businesses that will also potentially affect areas that we serve - particularly Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Vale. We will monitor the development of these plans closely to determine the likely implications for long-term future service provision.

We have learnt in recent years that an increase in the number of homes does not necessarily correspond with a linear increase in fires. This is in part due to modern building materials and the safety features built into modern homes. With more people and busier roads, we expect to see further changes to the type of incidents we attend.



# The challenges ahead

## Infrastructure and population

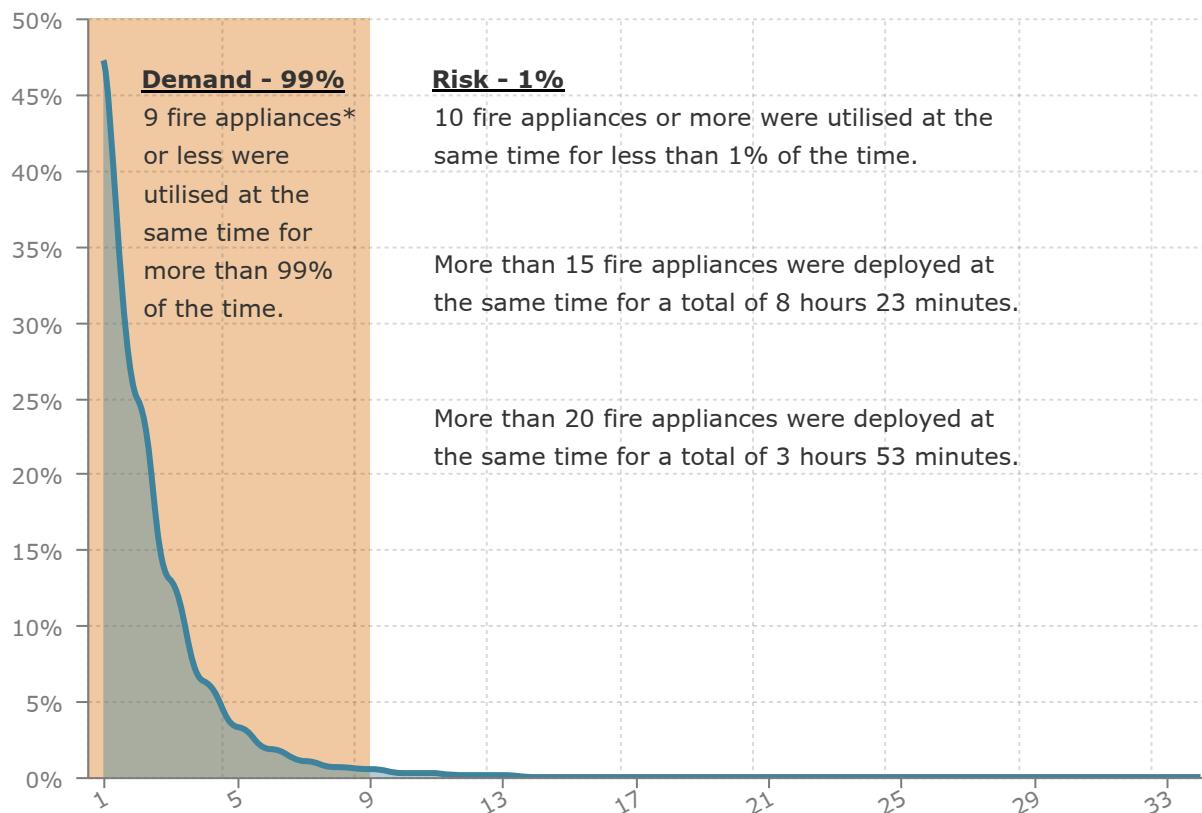
### How we manage this risk now

Under our previous Public Safety Plan, we undertook a review of our approach to resourcing for emergency incidents to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency with which this is done. In particular, analysis of our appliance deployment patterns indicated that, for 99% of the time, demand on our emergency response capacity could be met by 12 or fewer fire appliances located in the right areas. This led us to move from an approach that sought to maintain our entire fleet in a high state of readiness, to one which ensured that sufficient appliances are immediately available to meet normal levels of day-to-day demand with the remainder held at graduated levels of availability to ensure that we can rapidly respond to occasional events which stretch us past our normal demand profile. To enable this approach to work, we developed a new resourcing model that introduced more flexible working arrangements for our staff, including:

- The introduction of a range of innovative employment contracts that are unique in UK fire and rescue services; and
- New communication systems that enable us to contact and roster On-Call and off-duty Wholetime staff rapidly if we need to crew extra appliances during very busy periods or respond to exceptional events.

As part of the preparation of this plan, we refreshed the analysis of our demand patterns (as shown in the graph). The updated analysis indicates that between April 2018 and March 2019 only nine appliances were needed at high states of readiness to meet our day-to-day demand. However, we propose to keep our current number of immediately and rapidly available appliances in order to maintain:

- Our emergency incident attendance times, as although our analysis indicates that nine appliances are sufficient to meet our typical level of day-to-day demand, a larger number, suitably located, is needed to ensure we can reach all parts of the geographical area that we serve in a timely manner.
- The standing capacity to deal with two medium sized incidents simultaneously as required by our operational planning assumptions.

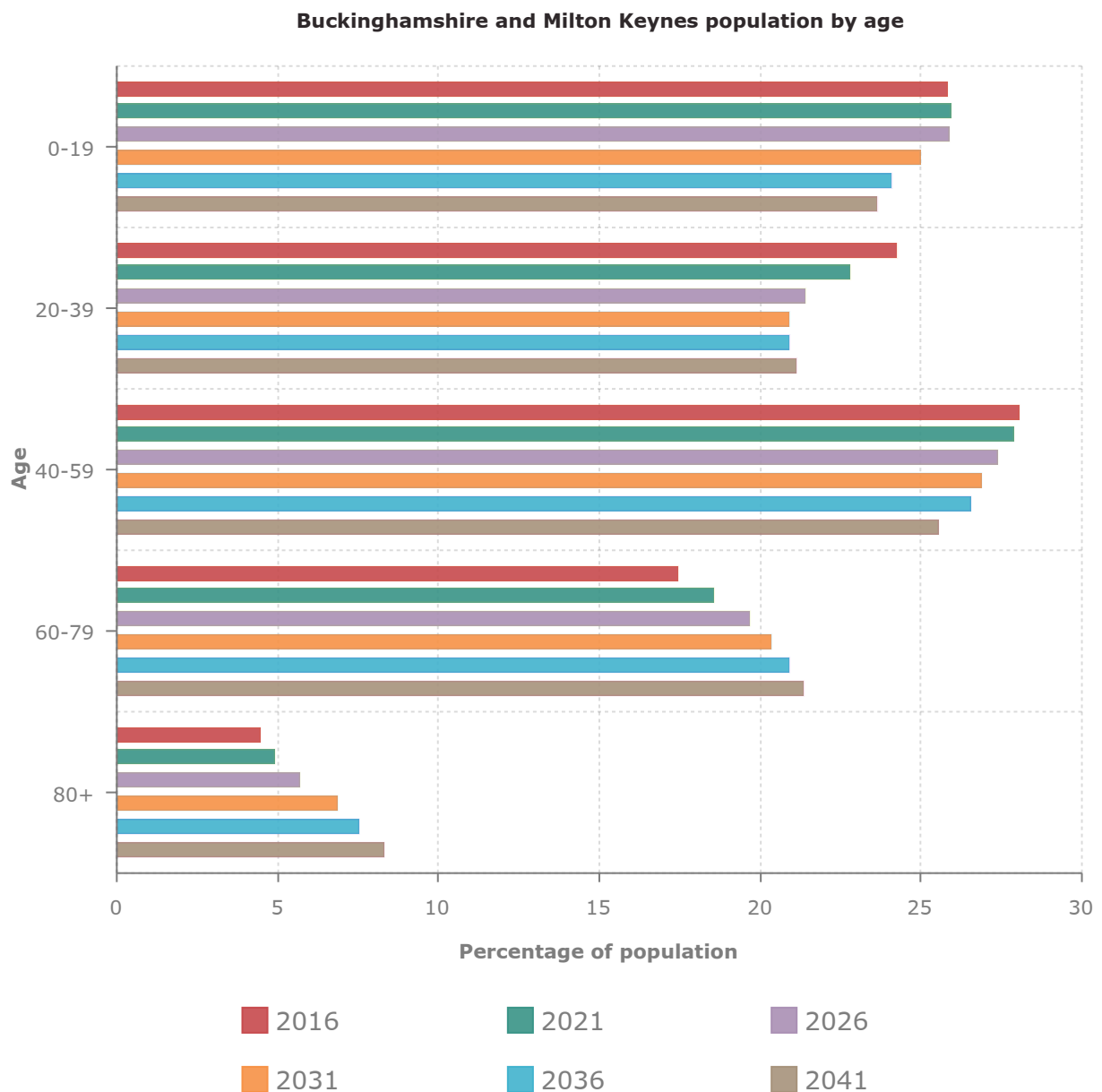


\*Fire appliances include: fire engines (also known as pumps), turntable ladders, boats, command units, support vehicles and Urban Search and Rescue units.

# The challenges ahead

## Infrastructure and population

We also use data to make sure we are targeting those most vulnerable to fires. We use a number of data sources and work very closely with our partners. Through this we carry out visits to homes and also participate in education programmes. We still fit free smoke detectors for those who need them. Through our Fire and Wellness programme, we have also broadened our home visits to look at other issues which are often linked to fire safety, but also assist our key partners in helping people to be safer and healthier in their homes. We also have a wide range of initiatives for helping people to be safer on the roads.



Our protection teams actively engage businesses to help them be safer and more resilient. We have legal powers to inspect and enforce fire safety regulations. We continue to focus our activities on those who are most at risk when at work, leisure or in provided care to ensure that they are kept safe by those who are responsible for such types of buildings.

# The challenges ahead

## Infrastructure and population

### What more do we need to do?

The changing demographics such as the ageing and diversification of the population, coupled with the expansion of our towns and new infrastructure projects, means we constantly need to review the scale and balance of our resourcing between prevention, protection and response.

We will continue to work with our local authority partners to understand the potential impact of their development plans. Currently, the plans that have been shared with us by our partners indicate that generally our stations are well located with the right resources. However, we will continue to review our resource and demand data. If we decide that we need to make fundamental changes to our emergency response provision we will consult publicly on any proposals.

Across our prevention, protection and response functions we will continue to improve and be more effective at how we identify and manage risk information and risk modelling. We may change how we mobilise to incidents, the capabilities we use, and where we mobilise from. Specifically we will review our approach to attending reports of automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems operating. We are one of only two fire and rescue services that routinely attend such reports as they are predominantly false alarms. However, we do occasionally attend and discover that there is a fire. This happened on 53 occasions in 2018/2019. We use them as an opportunity to engage businesses and help them improve their business continuity. However, this does cost us resources and time in doing so, so we will review our current policy. If the outcome of the review recommends significant changes to our current policy, we will consult with affected stakeholders before making any decisions.

We will continue to evolve how we resource and staff our fire appliances. We are developing new resourcing and staffing models across a range of areas so that we get the right resources to the incident.

Should our financial position improve, we will look to enhance resourcing in other areas to improve our service. Such development would be based on the latest risk information and also planned developments such as town expansions and the effects of new transport infrastructure.

Depending on the nature of the construction programmes in our area, significant investment in specialist firefighting, rescue and training capabilities will be required.

### What does success look like?

We will know if we have been successful if we are able to influence the levels of demand on our services through effective prevention and protection strategies while maintaining an effective response to incidents. We will also have been successful if we are able to respond effectively to the emerging new, complex and technically challenging risks. If the outcome of the review recommends significant changes to our current policy, we will consult with affected stakeholders before making any decisions.

# The challenges ahead

## Technology, information and systems security

### The challenge

The growth in both the number and complexity of direct and indirect cyber-attacks means that we must be constantly vigilant and work with partners and suppliers to mitigate these threats.

We are also aware of the way that new information technologies are being increasingly embedded into infrastructure, industrial plant, public buildings, homes, transportation networks and urban environments, a process that will only gather pace in future years. We are already beginning to see the effects of these changes in some of the areas that we serve, particularly in Milton Keynes where autonomous vehicles are already in use and with the introduction of 'Smart' technology across the local motorway network.

### How are we managing this risk now

- We use a range of capabilities to mitigate the risk of cyber-attacks on our communication and information systems and continue to invest in technological solutions, security processes and employee education and training.
- We are diligent in our selection of partners and suppliers to ensure that systems are configured effectively and use expert testers to verify this.
- We have disaster recovery systems in place that enable us to restore our critical service operations rapidly.



# The challenges ahead

## Technology, information and systems security

### What more do we need to do

During the period of this Public Safety Plan we expect progress to be made with the Government's Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). This will provide more secure and resilient communication capabilities to deliver more real-time information to improve incident management and other services.

We will monitor the evolution and implementation of a range of new technologies and systems such as 5G cellular network technology, autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, robotics, the development of 'Smart Cities' and 'Smart' transportation networks, both for any new risks that they may present and also for opportunities that they may create for us to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and resilience of our organisation.

### What does success look like?

We will know that we have been successful if we maintain the continuity of services to our staff and the public and keep pace with any emerging risks arising from the introduction of new information systems and technologies within the built environment and transportation networks.



# The challenges ahead

## Civil emergencies

### The challenge

As well as our current and emerging local risks, we contribute to national preparedness for a range of civil emergencies. These include risks such as flooding, wildfires, terrorist related incidents and other emergencies that might have local, regional or national dimensions.

The Met Office predicts more summertime heatwaves, colder winters and more frequent heavy rainfall events. This suggests that we can expect to see more summertime outdoor fires and increased flooding events. Historically, the combination of school holidays and outdoor leisure spots (parks and woodland) sees increased incident demand with hot, dry conditions. We have some forested areas and can still be affected by numerous rural fires as we were in the summer of 2018 which culminated in a significant fire in Little Marlow which required us to invoke our resilience arrangements.

More stormy weather is likely to affect travel across the county as a result of debris from fallen and damaged trees. We can expect greater disruption to travel owing to extremely cold winter conditions (ice and snow).

### How we manage this risk now

A key aspect of our preparedness for civil emergencies is our work with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). This is where the police, fire, ambulance, local authorities and other key agencies come together to plan, exercise and work to manage significant local emergencies.

We form part of an effective multi-agency response in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Also we are aligned with National Occupational Guidance (NOG) to ensure we demonstrate best practice and work effectively within interoperable environments. We use and contribute to Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) and have reported on areas where we feel learning from local incidents can support national learning.

Some of our fire appliances have an off-highway capability, which enables us to provide an effective response to wildfires and also harsher winters, with potential greater snowfall as experienced in the winter of 2017/18.

Our water rescue capabilities are based at Beaconsfield and Newport Pagnell to respond to flooding in and around Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. We have also made these assets available for national deployment in cases of serious flooding elsewhere in the country.

We maintain a range of specialist capabilities to deal with other risks. Our Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team based in Aylesbury is available to be deployed to major regional or national emergencies as well as being integrated into local services.

Our National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers (NILOs) and Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) Officers operate within the organisation as well as at regional and national level and are routinely mobilised to local incidents across the Thames Valley.



# The challenges ahead

## Civil emergencies

### What more do we need to do?

We will continue to keep pace with the impact on demand and risk of climate change on our resources. We will review our off-highway capability and also the provision of local specialist capabilities.

We are fully committed to working with our Local Resilience Forum partners in developing our understanding, intelligence and response to local, regional and national emergencies. During this Public Safety Plan we will review our approach to responding to terrorist attacks involving improvised weapons and/or firearms and what equipment and training our staff may need. We will explore whether any required capabilities can be achieved collaboratively with other fire and rescue services.

In addition to ensuring that we are properly prepared to deal the effects of climate change on our risk and demand profile, we are also committed to reducing the impact on the environment from our own operations and infrastructure. We already utilise solar panels to offset our power usage at our headquarters site. The new Blue-Light-Hub in Milton Keynes will be an environmentally efficient building. During the course of this Public Safety Plan we will review the opportunity to introduce electric vehicles and equipment into our fleet of support vehicles. While the early indications are that electric powered fire engines may not be practical for us now, we will monitor the technological developments and affordability as electric large goods vehicles start to be manufactured.

### What does success look like?

We will be successful if the LRF partnership approach provides a coordinated capability which responds to, and resolves, civil emergencies and returns affected communities to normal.



# The challenges ahead

## Workforce pressures

### The challenge

The size and composition of our workforce, especially the frontline operational firefighting component, has changed significantly. Societal changes have also impacted on our ability to attract and retain on-call firefighters. This is a national problem and does not just affect us. Our operational staff are now expected to work longer, and austerity has led to pay restraint, which is acutely felt in our area where the cost of living and housing is particularly high. Particular challenges include:

- An uneven retirement profile as a legacy of recruitment patterns during the 1980s and 1990s, resulting in highly experienced wholetime operational personnel retiring simultaneously.
- Loss of staff to neighbouring fire and rescue services, including London Fire Brigade who pay weighting allowances.
- Changes in society and the way people live and work have affected our ability to recruit our on-call firefighters (this issue is particularly acute for some of our more remote rural locations).
- Recruitment and retention of specialist support staff, particularly where we are in competition with private sector companies.
- As with the population as a whole our workforce is ageing which, in addition to the staff retention issues mentioned above, could, in future, potentially reduce the numbers of staff remaining fit enough to perform some key operational functions such as deploying to incidents requiring use of breathing apparatus.



# The challenges ahead

## Workforce pressures

### How we manage this risk now

- We regularly engage with and listen to our staff in a variety of ways.
- We review and develop our employment propositions to include flexible contracts, employee benefits and opportunities to develop and earn more.
- We have a range of apprenticeships. For new entrants to the Service these include firefighter apprenticeships and apprenticeships in supporting roles. For existing staff we also offer a range of management apprenticeships.
- We have developed a comprehensive employee well-being strategy designed to meet the needs of staff at every stage in their career with us from when they join to the point they leave. It recognises the different stressors and pressures that people may face at different stages of their working lives. It embraces psychological and physical well-being, work life balance and flexible working opportunities for staff with caring responsibilities such as for children or elderly relatives. It also caters for the needs of an ageing workforce by supporting staff to remain fit and well in their roles throughout the entire length of their career and into retirement.
- We have developed an Aspiring Leaders Programme to help us identify and develop talent in our organisation.
- We have developed a sophisticated workforce planning model that enables us to predict numbers of staff likely to leave our Service due to retirement or to pursue other employment opportunities. This informs our recruitment strategy, training plans, staff development programmes and the design of our employment propositions.

### What more do we need to do?

- We will continue to develop opportunities for our staff and also how we attract the best people for all the roles in our service.
- As part of our recruitment we will look to use more innovative marketing to attract staff from a wider range of backgrounds so we can improve our diversity and better represent the community we serve.
- We will continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and well-being of our staff as their life circumstances change throughout their career.
- In the next five years we will further develop the role of the on-call firefighter and how this will improve our resilience to deal with local, regional and national emergencies.
- We will monitor how the range of incidents we are attending is evolving. We will look to provide our firefighters with more skills, training and equipment to deal with this changing picture. We are developing our use of technology such as drones, telemetry, advances in firefighter clothing and breathing apparatus to enhance our effectiveness and safety in the future.

### What does success look like?

We will know we have been successful if we:

- Appropriately resource our front-line services and the functions that support them with the right people – people who can work flexibly, are adaptable and have been provided with the right skills to perform their roles effectively and efficiently.
- Recruit and retain a more diverse workforce that better represents the make-up of the working population as a whole.
- Achieve low levels of sickness and ill-health retirements.
- Achieve high levels of satisfaction in feedback from staff surveys and other forms of engagement where we ask them what it is like to be part of this organisation.

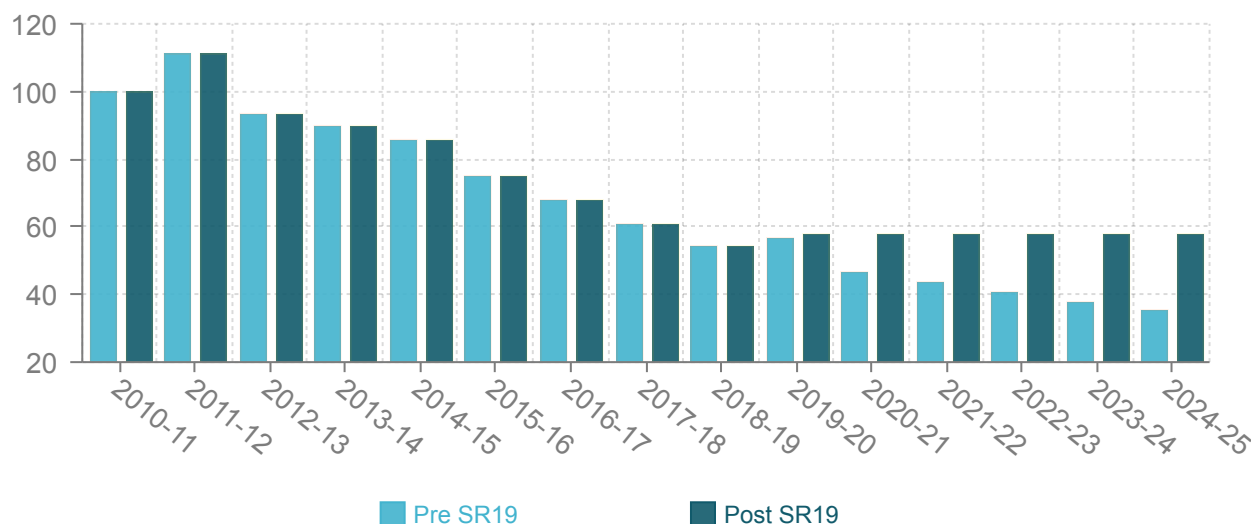
# The challenges ahead

## Funding outlook

### The challenge

Since 2010, as part of its efforts to reduce the size of the national budget deficit, the Government has made significant reductions to its funding for fire and rescue services. However our ability to offset reductions to Government funding has also been constrained by the imposition of council tax referendum limits. The effects of these pressures since 2010 amount to a real-terms reduction in overall funding of 25 per cent, including a real-terms reduction of 42 per cent in funding from central government. Prior to Spending Round 2019 (SR19) we were forecasting that real-terms central government funding would continue to fall over the period of this PSP. Since SR19 was announced we have updated our forecasts to show this now being flat in real-terms (as detailed below)

**Forecast change in Government funding 2010-11 to 2024-25**  
(real terms, indexed 2010-11=100)



However, SR19 only covers a one-year time period, and future Comprehensive Spending Reviews may require these forecasts to be revisited. Also, despite the effect of efficiency measures already taken during the period 2015-2020, we continue to face other financial uncertainties that potentially require us to find additional funding and/or make further savings. These uncertainties arise from: increases in the amount that employers are required to contribute to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme due to changes made by the Government; uncertainty over long-term funding that we receive from Government to provide Urban Search and Rescue as part of national resilience arrangements to deal with major civil emergencies such as terrorist attacks; and changes to the allocation of business rate receipts to local authorities.

### How we manage this risk now

We manage our financial risks through strong governance and budgetary control frameworks. We have received substantial assurance from independent auditors as to the robustness of these over the last six years.

We continue to meet our statutory requirement to deliver balanced budgets and are forecast to do so by our medium term financial planning. However, in order to continue to balance our budget over future years, we may need to reduce the contribution we make from our revenue budget to fund our capital programme. Were we to continue to do this for a prolonged period, our capital reserves would be close to exhausted before the end of the 2024-25 financial year. This means that, in that case, we would only be able to fund essential property work and replacement of vehicles and equipment, with no funding available for future investment (unless we chose to borrow in order to finance it, although further savings would need to be found to fund the revenue cost of any additional borrowing).

# The challenges ahead

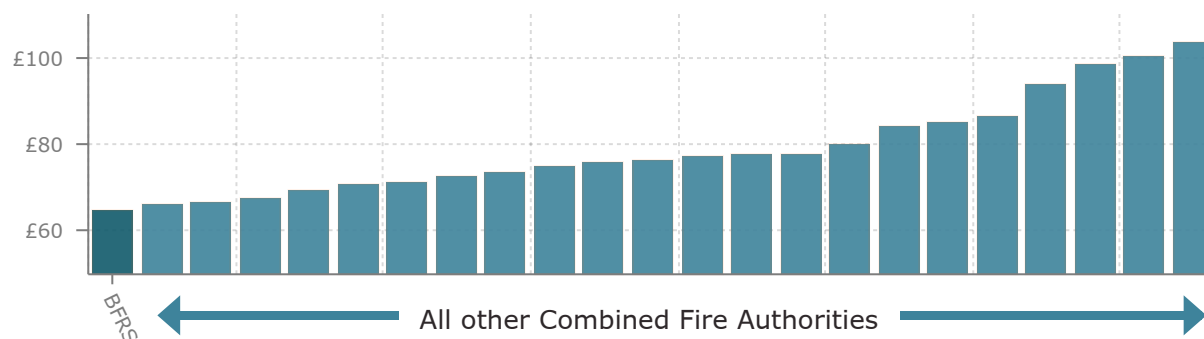
## Funding outlook

In view of this, and in addition to an ongoing search for further efficiencies, we have been actively lobbying Government, with support from all our Members of Parliament, to review its policy on fire funding. In particular we are keen to see a relaxation of the council tax referendum limits which would enable us to mitigate the risk of our reserves being reduced below the level considered prudent for us to maintain, and avoid cuts to services that would have an adverse effect on the safety of the public should central government funding reduce again.

We already have the lowest council tax rates of any Combined Fire Authority\* (CFA) in the country. As such, we are disadvantaged by the imposition of a single percentage limit (i.e. fire authorities that currently levy a higher rate of council tax than us than us get a correspondingly larger increase in their funding). The chart below shows our council tax charge relative to that of all other CFAs.

To view an illustration of what a potential rise in council tax could mean to you, please see page 48 'Future funding - your council tax'.

**CFA band D council tax 2019-2020**



\*A CFA (Combined Fire Authority) is one which covers more than one local authority area – in our case the areas served by both Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes Council.

### What more do we need to do?

Alongside our efforts to find further savings from efficiencies and gain more flexibility to raise additional revenue from council taxes, we plan to move to a 'zero based budgeting' approach. In contrast to the incremental approach used in previous years, which looks at taking the prior year budget and adjusting up or down, this looks to review all costs to ensure that the right amount of money is being spent in the right areas. This will help to ensure that our spend is as closely aligned as possible to delivering our strategic objectives.

### What does success look like?

We will know that we have succeeded if we are able to maintain a balanced budget and a sufficient level of reserves without having to implement cuts to our services that would adversely affect the safety of the public.

# Risk management

## Strategy proposals

### What we plan to do to mitigate the risks

Below is a summary of what we plan to do to mitigate the emerging risks within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

#### Infrastructure projects

Consider temporary re-location of fire appliances to reduce impact.

Review range of potential risks and identify any additional training, equipment and vehicle requirements.

#### Population

Consider changing current response to automatic fire alarms policy, potentially freeing up capacity to deal with an increase in higher risk incident types.

Review station duty systems in high growth areas.

Continue to improve our ability to target and engage with vulnerable groups.

#### Technology information and systems security

Continue to improve resilience of information and communication systems via opportunities such as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

Assess, identify and resolve potential capability gaps in relation to emerging risks.

#### Civil emergencies

Review current capacity and capabilities to meet emerging risks in collaboration with Local Resilience Forum partners.

Continue to identify and act on opportunities to reduce our own carbon footprint by using electric vehicles, for example.

#### Workforce pressures

Continue to develop our approach to workforce planning to inform recruitment and staff development strategies.

Continue development and roll-out of more flexible and innovative employment and apprenticeship opportunities.

Align training strategy and priorities to meet future needs.

Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and well-being of our staff as their life circumstances change.

#### Funding pressures

Introduce zero base approach to budgeting to ensure that the right amount of money is being spent in the right areas.

Continue to pursue the case for relaxation of the Government's Council Tax referendum limits

Consider withdrawing from some non-statutory services to reduce costs.

# Consultation

This plan was approved by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority on 12 February 2020 following the outcomes of a public consultation which took place between 23 September and 18 November 2019.

The consultation exercise included focus groups comprised of members of the general public resident in Buckinghamshire or Milton Keynes, meetings with union representatives and, an online feedback facility which was open to the public as well our own staff.

Hundreds of partner and community organisations were also invited to participate in the consultation.

A full report of the outcomes of the public consultation can be viewed [here](#).

## Contact us

Although formal consultations on this stage of our public safety planning process have now ended, we always welcome feedback on our plans and ideas about how to improve our service. You can do this using the following methods:

### Email:

[irmp@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:irmp@bucksfire.gov.uk)

### Post:

Public Safety Plan  
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Brigade Headquarters  
Stocklake  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1BD

## Supplementary information





# Supplementary information

## What is a Public Safety Plan?

All fire and rescue services in England have to publish their plans for delivering fire and rescue services in their area. Plans have to be consulted on with the public they serve. In creating our Public Safety Plan we have used Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) principles.

IRMP is a statutory requirement placed on fire authorities by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. However, in formulating their plans and policies, local fire and rescue authorities are also required to have regard to guidance issued by central government in its National Framework document. This sets out the government's expectations and requirements for all fire and rescue authorities in England.

The current National Framework, which was published in May 2018, requires that fire and rescue authority integrated risk management plans must:-

- reflect up to date risk analyses including an assessment of all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the area of the authority;
- demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to prevent fires and other incidents and mitigate the impact of identified risks on its communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a way that makes best use of available resources;
- outline required service delivery outcomes including the allocation of resources for the mitigation of risks;
- set out its management strategy and risk-based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat;
- cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that the authority is able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework;
- reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies and partners; and
- be easily accessible and publicly available.

The National Framework document also requires fire and rescue authorities to:

- collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide;
- develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

# Supplementary information

## Sources of risk information

Here are a range of sources that we have used to inform the development of this plan and where you can find out more about some of the risks and issues that we have considered in formulating it:

### Infrastructure and population

HS2:

[www.hs2.org.uk/](http://www.hs2.org.uk/)

East-West Rail:

[www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/east-west-rail/](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/east-west-rail/)

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/oxford-to-cambridge-expressway/>

National Infrastructure Commission Growth Arc:

[www.nic.org.uk/our-work/growth-arc/](http://www.nic.org.uk/our-work/growth-arc/)

Crossrail:

<http://www.crossrail.co.uk/>

Heathrow Expansion:

[www.heathrowexpansion.com/the-expansion-plan/](http://www.heathrowexpansion.com/the-expansion-plan/)

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan:

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/valp-proposed-submission>

Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan:

<https://www.chiltern.gov.uk/planning/localplan>

Wycombe Local Plan:

<https://www.wycombe.gov.uk/browse/Planning-and-building-control/New-local-plan/New-local-plan.aspx>

Milton Keynes Development and Infrastructure Plans:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/growing-mk>

### Technology, information and systems security

Cyber Security Breaches Survey 2018:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/702074/Cyber\\_Security\\_Breaches\\_Survey\\_2018\\_-\\_Main\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702074/Cyber_Security_Breaches_Survey_2018_-_Main_Report.pdf)

Emergency Services Network / ESMCP Overview:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-emergency-services-mobile-communications-programme/emergency-services-network>

# Supplementary information

## Sources of risk information

### Civil emergencies

Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register:

<http://thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/assets/risk%20register/tvlrf%20risk%20register%20oct%202016.pdf>

National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies 2017:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-of-civil-emergencies-2017-edition](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-of-civil-emergencies-2017-edition)

World Economic Forum Global Risk Report 2019:

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-risks-report-2019>

Met Office Climate Change Guide:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate-guide>

### Workforce pressures

Our People Strategy:

<https://people.bucksfire.gov.uk/>

### Funding outlook

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Medium Term Financial Plan:

[https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9515/4841/6166/ITEM\\_8\\_Medium\\_Term\\_Financial\\_Plan\\_2019-20gb.pdf](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/9515/4841/6166/ITEM_8_Medium_Term_Financial_Plan_2019-20gb.pdf)

[https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7415/1756/5779/Revised\\_Appendix\\_1.pdf](https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7415/1756/5779/Revised_Appendix_1.pdf)

### Legislative and regulatory context

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents)

Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents)

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1541/contents/made>

Policing and Crime Act 2017:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/contents/enacted>

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england--2)

# Supplementary information

## incident trends

### Incident trends

The data below is presented in a form of trends. Viewed in this way it allows us to better understand our changing demand profile in more detail. It also allows us to understand how effective our prevention and protection activities are. This data is also benchmarked against similar fire and rescue services as well as nationally. This allows us to spot any trends that are unique to us which may require our own tailored interventions.

### Primary fires

Primary fires are generally more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property. Primary fires are defined as fires that cause damage by fire/heat/smoke and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- any fire that occurred in a (non-derelect) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures
- any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues
- any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Building	783	810	728	748	677	643	594	587	576
Road Vehicle	469	354	315	319	289	285	316	253	310
Outdoor	186	174	125	115	100	90	79	106	127
Other transport vehicle	2	3	2	1	1	5	3	1	1

### Chimney fires

Chimney fires are fires in buildings where the fire was contained within the chimney structure and did not involve casualties, rescues or attendance by five or more pumping appliances. Chimneys in industrial buildings are not included.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Chimney Fires	123	109	108	123	82	75	89	70	64

### Secondary fires

Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended, in which case they become primary other outdoor fires.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Deliberate - others property	308	298	152	160	133	147	154	193	230
Deliberate - unknown owner	196	181	122	136	114	174	164	201	188
Accidental	261	244	190	250	150	170	164	184	318
Not known	112	129	102	107	99	78	61	44	68
Grand Total	877	852	566	653	496	569	543	622	804

### RTCs (Road Traffic Collisions)

RTCs represent the number of incidents that a fire and rescue service attended. These incidents can include duties ranging from making the road safe to extrication of casualties. Please note, some RTCs may be included in other incident figures should the incident have included other aspects i.e. a fire as a result of the RTC.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
RTCs	535	494	486	515	458	489	530	595	569

# Supplementary information

## incident trends

### Special Service - Non RTC

The below data shows the breakdown of incidents attended that were not a fire or RTC.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Advice Only	23	17	23	50	43	29	17	16	10
Animal assistance incidents	69	64	59	74	58	46	55	75	42
Assist other agencies	38	44	44	50	56	65	60	74	108
Effecting entry/exit	165	152	170	202	164	214	216	330	381
Evacuation (no fire)	3	6	3	7	7	3	12	8	8
Flooding	186	172	144	241	136	138	230	251	222
Hazardous materials incident	21	25	21	17	32	51	51	67	61
Lift release	77	77	81	70	70	68	102	136	123
Making safe (not RTC)	29	28	32	62	37	34	37	32	37
Medical Incident	4	7	14	9	6	1492	1152	689	384
No action (not false alarm)	39	41	36	38	32	80	86	80	71
Other rescue/release of persons	73	86	64	76	57	26	29	41	37
Other Transport incident	10	16	13	12	8	22	15	28	7
Removal of objects from people	52	61	53	68	62	62	57	56	50
Removal of people from objects						29	28	20	35
Rescue or evacuation from water	7	10	24	10	10	8	6	19	13
Spills and leaks (not RTC)	75	73	57	68	55	27	30	35	28
Suicide/attempts	15	13	22	14	19	8	19	29	28
Other	28	20	20	16	8	17	19	22	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>1084</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>2419</b>	<b>2221</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>1668</b>

### False alarms

The table below shows the causes of false alarms attended.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Apparatus - Animal				2	1	1	4	1	
Apparatus - Contaminants	306	308	276	245	293	234	293	277	278
Apparatus - External factors	17	19	28	23	24	16	24	32	39
Apparatus - Human	512	435	426	505	474	697	834	857	1027
Apparatus - System	699	539	650	632	642	631	635	582	546
Apparatus - Unknown	366	370	318	308	318	382	430	440	502
Good Intent - Fire	1100	1121	1146	942	1023	709	719	743	667
Good Intent - Special Service	257	156	67	108	50	65	71	102	111
Malicious	129	105	122	126	104	93	114	110	170
<b>Total</b>	<b>3386</b>	<b>3053</b>	<b>3033</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>2929</b>	<b>2828</b>	<b>3124</b>	<b>3144</b>	<b>3340</b>

### Fatalities and serious injuries

The information below shows the number of fatalities and injuries recorded at incidents attended. These figures are broken down between RTCs and fire related casualties.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Fatalities - fire related	6	5	5	2	5	3	2	6	2
Serious Injuries - fire related	9	5	1	4	10	8	3	4	6
Slight injuries - fire related	36	31	25	40	32	45	30	35	37
Fatalities - RTC	19	16	11	16	14	13	13	25	14
Serious Injuries - RTC	101	88	82	111	85	85	89	83	82
Slight injuries - RTC	255	238	231	284	245	245	234	324	280

# Supplementary information

## Incident trends

### Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

Dwelling fires are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/hostels and residential facilities. Dwellings also include non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Accidental Dwelling Fires	349	399	402	385	381	362	305	340	313

### Fire related fatalities in ADFs

Fire-related fatalities are, in general, those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire. i.e. 'no fire = no death'. This includes any fatal casualty that is the direct or indirect result of injuries caused by a fire incident. Even if the fatal casualty dies subsequently, any fatality whose cause is attributed to a fire is included.

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Fire related fatalities - ADFs	0	2	1	2	3	2	0	3	2

Key facts about fire related fatalities in ADFs within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes:

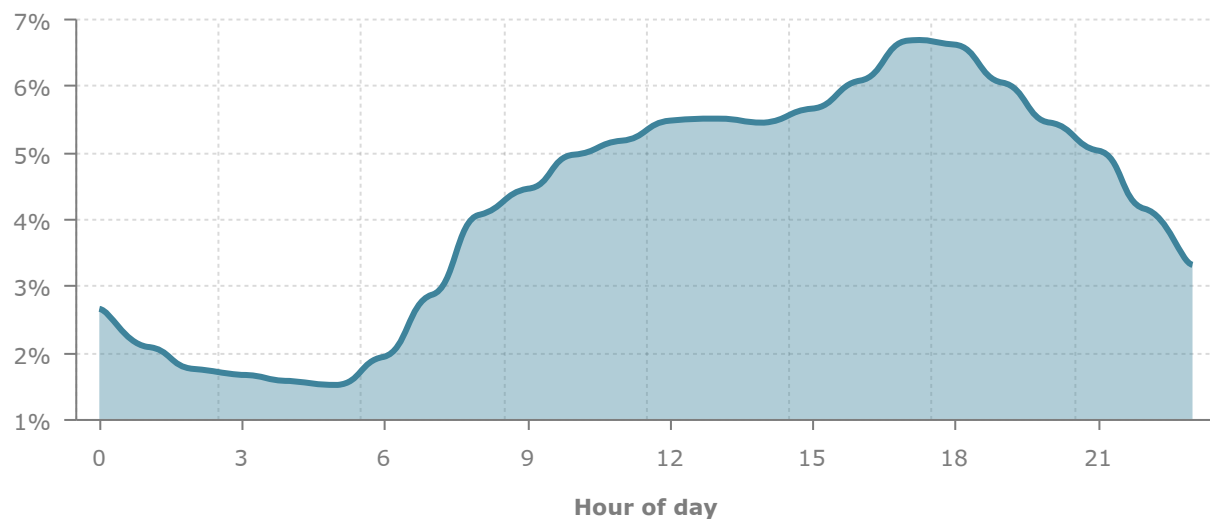
- 14 of the 15 fatalities were older than 55
- Over half of the incidents were smoking related
- The average attendance time to the ADFs where a fire related fatality was recorded was eight minutes and five seconds (8:05)
- There were no obvious trends in relation to the time of day the incidents occurred

# Supplementary information

## Demand patterns

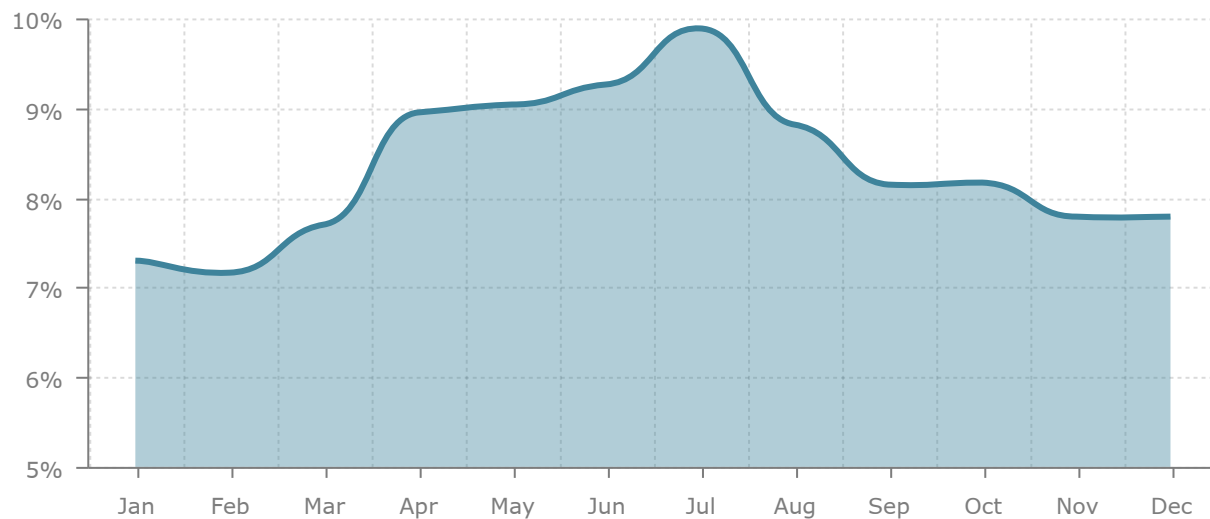
### Demand - hour of day

The graph below shows the time of day we are called to incidents. This data is made up all incidents within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes over the last five years.



### Demand - broken down by month

The graph below shows percentage of incidents we attend broken down by month. This data is made up all incidents within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes over the last five years.



# Supplementary information

## Demand patterns - attendance times

### Attendance times to incidents

Our strategic aim is to provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets and resource in relation to demand and risk.

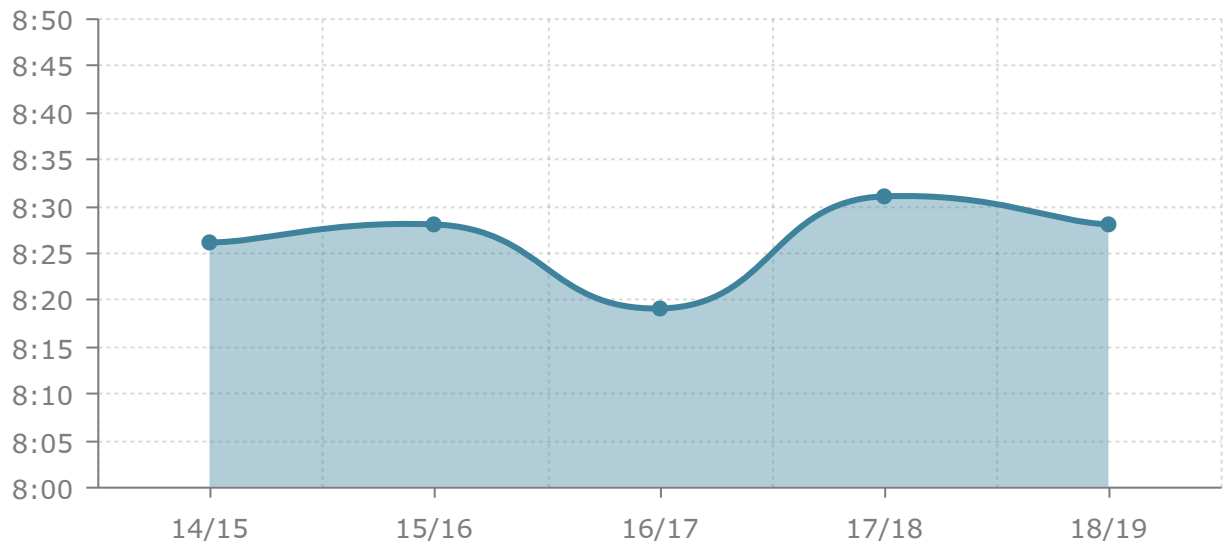
Why attendance times are important to us:

- Faster attendance times may result in a better outcome for persons and property
- Attendance times provide us with benchmarking data for resource and risk modelling
- Attendance times allow us to identify areas for improvement as well as change in the make up of the county
- Allow the public to have an informed expectation

Why attendance times aren't the full picture:

- Attendance times do not include any delay prior to the call being made
- Attendance times do not identify if the resources sent were appropriate or proportionate
- Attendance times do not identify how performance of crews at an incident impacted the outcome

The chart below shows the average attendance time to incidents in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes over a five year period.





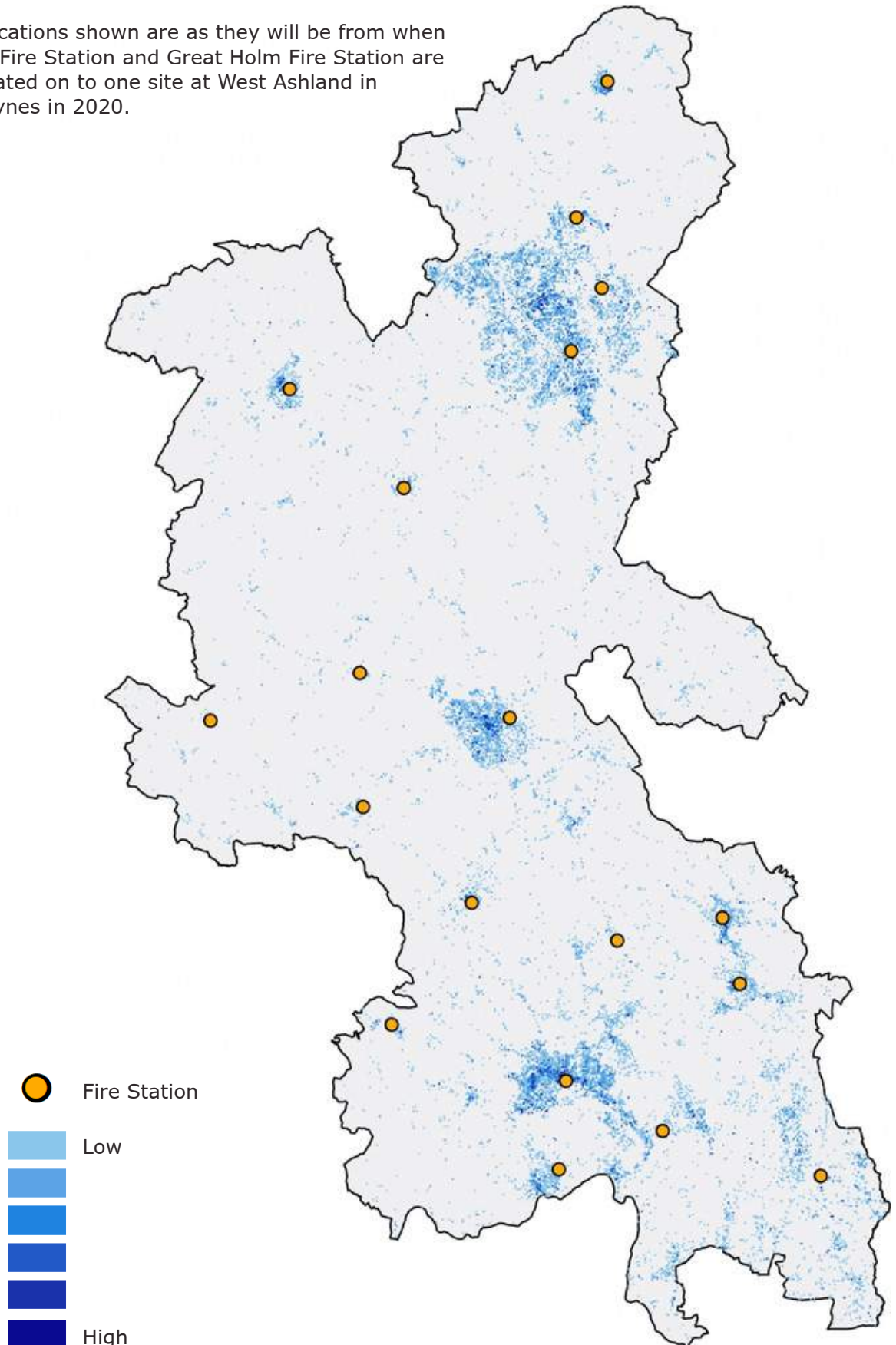
# Supplementary information

## Demand patterns - Incidents

### Incidents attended Apr 2014 - Mar 2019

The map below shows the the location and density of demand based on incident locations.

Station locations shown are as they will be from when Bletchley Fire Station and Great Holm Fire Station are amalgamated on to one site at West Ashland in Milton Keynes in 2020.



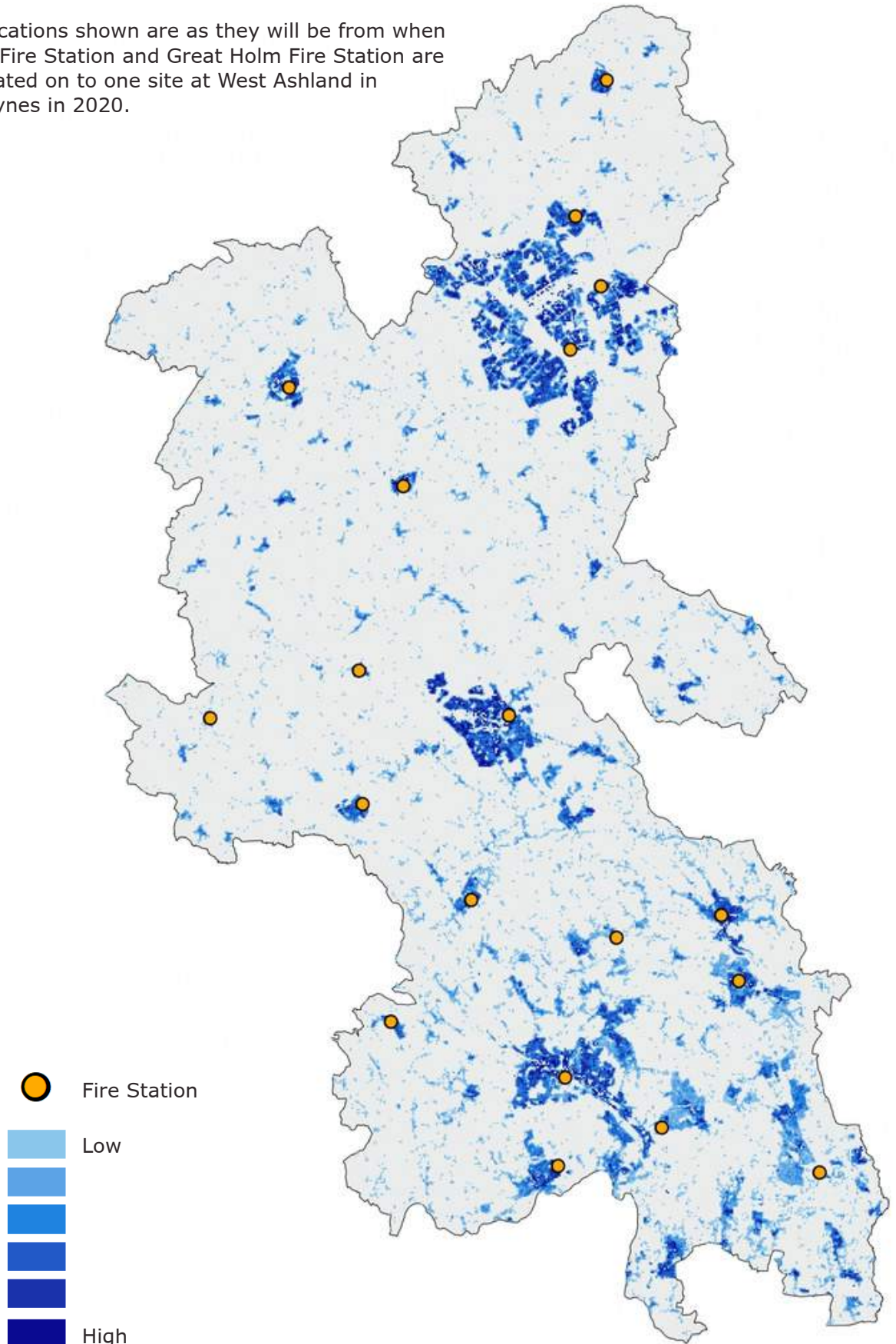
# Supplementary information

## Demand patterns - Residential properties

### Residential property density 2019

The map below shows the location and density of residential properties within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Station locations shown are as they will be from when Bletchley Fire Station and Great Holm Fire Station are amalgamated on to one site at West Ashland in Milton Keynes in 2020.



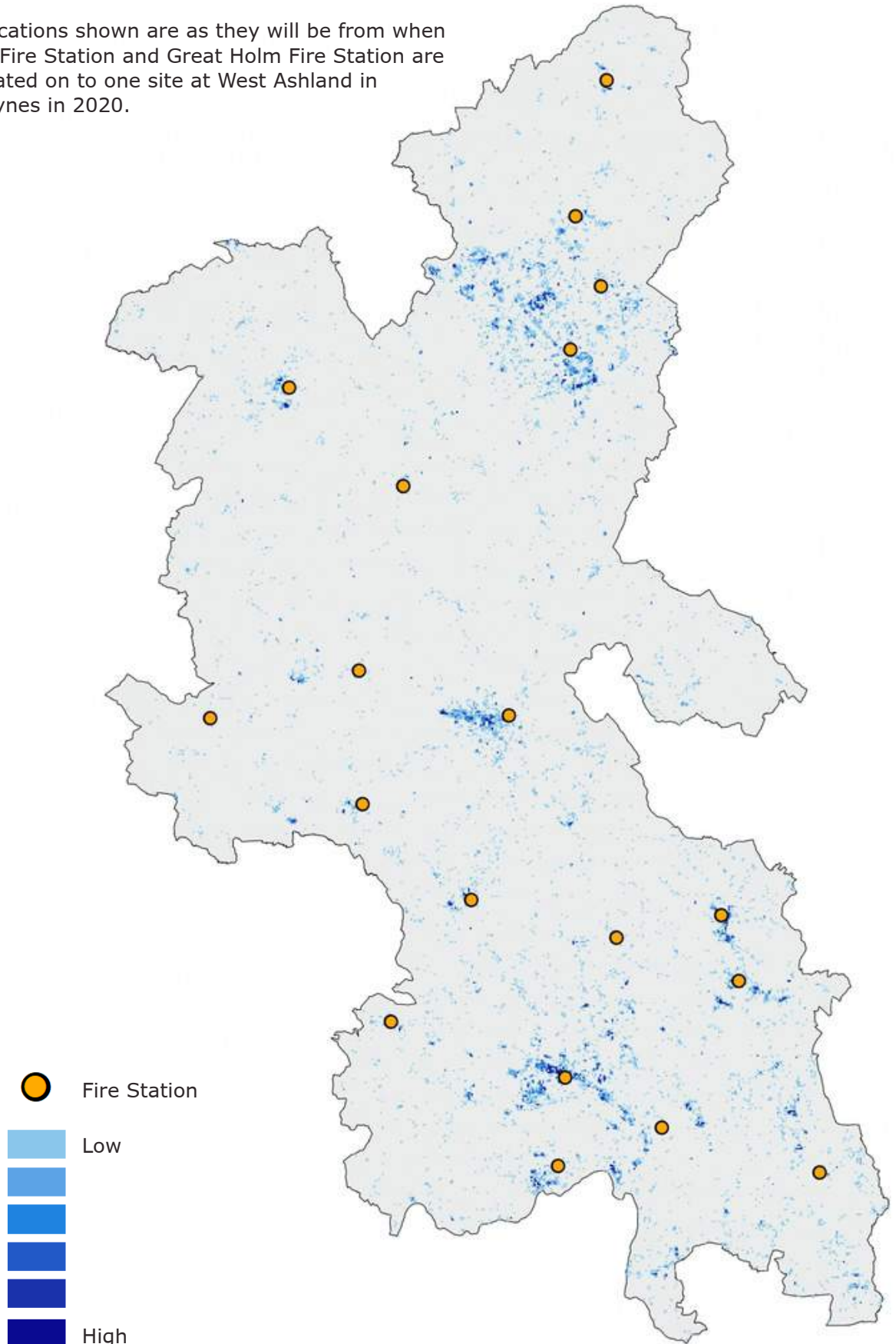
# Supplementary information

## Demand patterns - Non-residential properties

### Non-residential property density 2019

The map below shows the location and density of non-residential properties within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Station locations shown are as they will be from when Bletchley Fire Station and Great Holm Fire Station are amalgamated on to one site at West Ashland in Milton Keynes in 2020.



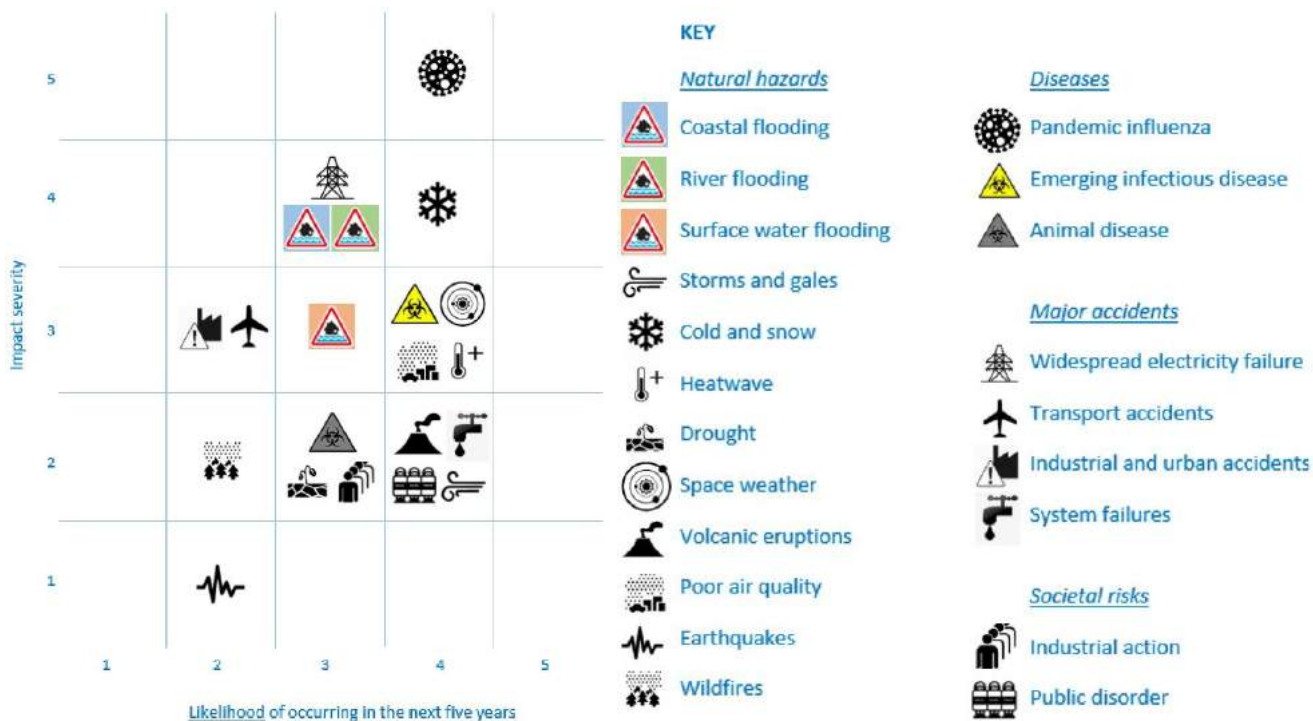
# Supplementary information

## Risk analysis

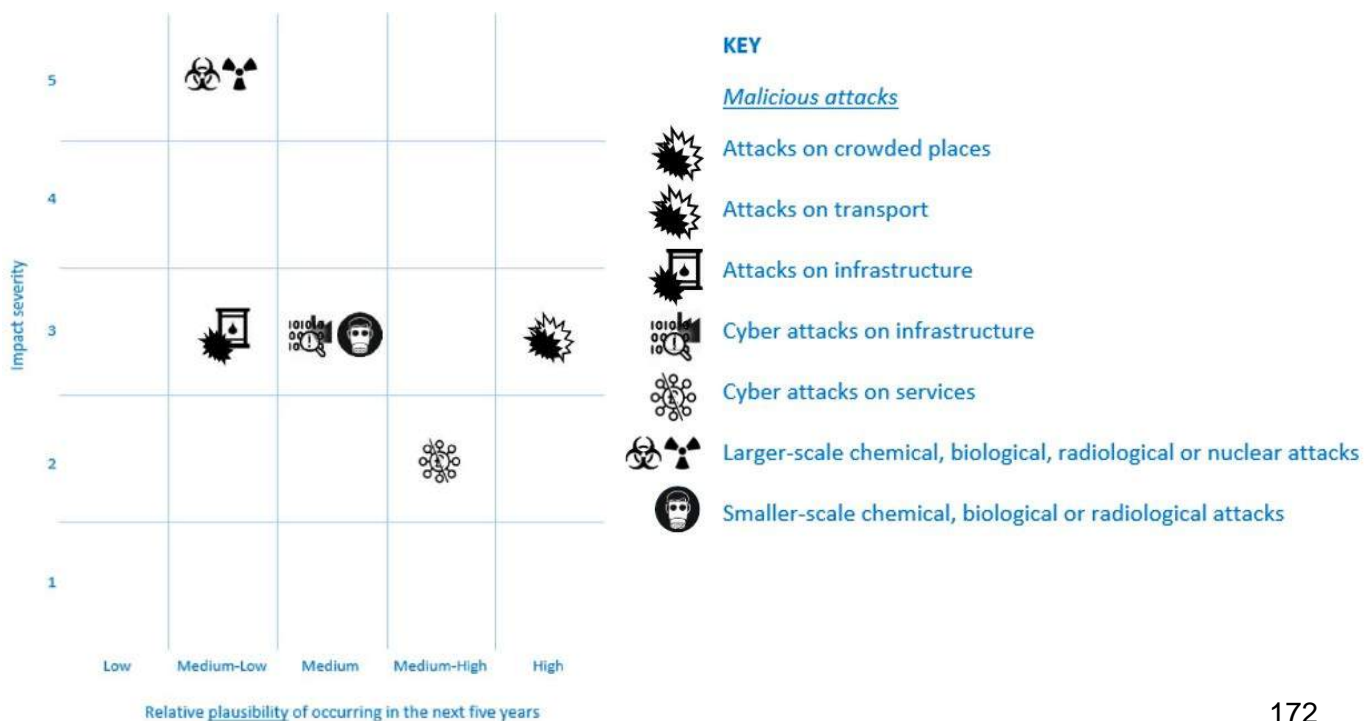
### National risk register

Government guidance indicates that fire and rescue authorities should consider national risks when preparing their plans. The charts below provide a summary of the Government's current national risk assessment published by the Cabinet Office. The full assessment can be seen in the National Risk Register

### Hazards, diseases, accidents, and societal risks



### Malicious attack risks



# Supplementary information

## Risk analysis

### Community risk register for the Thames Valley

The Thames Valley Community Risk Register (CRR) provides information on major emergencies that could happen in the Thames Valley, together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen and the impacts if they do. This includes the impacts to people, their homes, the environment and local businesses. These risks are regularly reviewed and have led to this [updated CRR](#).



### Top Risks

#### Influenza type diseases

An influenza (flu) pandemic is a worldwide event in which many people are infected with a flu virus in a short time.

#### Fluvial/River flooding

The events of the winters of 2012/13 and 2013/14, and the summer of 2007, showed that flooding can affect many different aspects of our daily lives.

#### Severe weather

The United Kingdom does experience severe weather due to its maritime temperate climate with occasional continental and Arctic influences. These can bring with them heavy rain or snow, strong winds and extreme temperatures. As experience has shown, severe weather can take a variety of forms and at times can cause significant problems and disruption to normal life.

#### Fuel shortages

All organisations rely to some extent on fuel, whether it is for getting staff to work, distributing products or providing services. The availability of fuel within the UK is generally very good, however there have been examples within recent years of brief disruptions to supply on both a regional and national basis.

#### Loss of critical infrastructure

Critical Infrastructure is the name given to all of the different essential services which we rely on as part of modern society and the economy. The UK's critical infrastructure is made up of electricity, water, gas, oil/fuel, transport, telecoms, food, health and financial services.

#### Animal disease

Animal diseases which present the most concern are those which are highly contagious, cause high fatality rates amongst livestock or have the possibility of infecting humans.

#### Environmental pollution and industrial accidents

Certain industrial activities involving dangerous substances have the potential to cause accidents. Some of these accidents may cause serious injuries to people or damage to the environment both nearby, and further away from the site of the accident.

#### Transport accidents

Just like our dependence on basic utilities, almost all of us will rely on a form of transport either to get to and from work, or to receive essential services. The disruptive consequences of a transport emergency are far-reaching and can further endanger life.

# Supplementary information

## Future funding - your Council Tax

### What's the cost to you if we raise our Council Tax rate?

The table below indicates the 2019/2020 Council Tax charge for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. The subsequent columns indicate a direct comparison of the cost per household, per year, in pounds and pence, if the rates were increased by the amount shown.

Please note, these amounts are purely for illustrative purposes. Anything above three per cent would be subject to us receiving approval from central government or the outcome of a referendum.

Council Tax Band	2019/2020	3% increase	£5 Increase (Band D)	£10 Increase (Band D)	Increase to National Average
A	43.05	44.33	46.38	49.71	51.36
B	50.22	51.72	54.11	58.00	59.92
C	57.40	59.11	61.84	66.28	68.48
D	64.57	66.50	69.57	74.57	77.04
E	78.92	81.28	85.03	91.14	94.16
F	93.27	96.06	100.49	107.71	111.28
G	107.62	110.83	115.95	124.28	128.40
H	129.14	133.00	139.14	149.14	154.08



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	12 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Calum Bell, Head of Service Development
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Jean Teesdale
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Annual Health, Safety and Well-being Report 2018/19</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Health, Safety and Well-being performance report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BFRS Health and Safety achievements</li> <li>• Statistical overview</li> <li>• Health and Safety Strategy</li> <li>• Employee Well-being</li> <li>• Working with others</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION</b>	Noting.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	Members are requested to note the performance of the Service in terms of Health, Safety and Well-being.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>Risk management involves understanding, analysing and addressing risk to make sure the Service can achieve its objectives. Understanding the outcomes of safety events and the underlying causes allows the Service to implement control measures to prevent a reoccurrence of a similar event. The monitoring of health and safety performance, the culture and the implementation of means to improve both, is key.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<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 &amp; Safety incidents also has a direct impact on insurance premium expenditure. At present the Authority has a good record in this regard.</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The safety management system is well embedded throughout the Service and its performance is subject to regular monitoring and review in order to ensure

	the health, safety and well-being of the Authority's employees, contractors, visitors and the communities it serves, as well as ensuring compliance with legislation. If this scrutiny does not take place, there is the potential for a breach of health and safety legislation.
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	Collaboration work continues with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services and this report highlights the on-going collaboration work. We have started to explore what potential there is to share some managerial Health & Safety functions within the Thames Valley.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	The new Health and Safety Strategy 2019-2022 focuses on driving continuous improvement in health, safety and well-being through the effective, proportionate management of risk. Proactive monitoring and analysis of safety events (reactive monitoring) forms part of this and is an integral part of the safety management system.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	Ensuring the safety of staff has been shown to have a positive impact on retaining staff. The data collected as part of personal injury safety events is name, date of birth and gender.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	The Authority remains committed to having a dedicated Health, Safety and Well-being team and to their on-going development. If the collaboration opportunity with Oxfordshire comes to fruition there may resource implications.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	This is the annual health, safety and well-being report detailing performance and progress against objectives set for the year 2018-19. A link to the previous year's report is provided below. Some of the statistical information contained in the report is detailed in the six monthly reports presented to the Performance Management Board.  <a href="#">Health, Safety and Well-being Annual Report 2017/18</a>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A: Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report 2018-19
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	15 minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Alison Chart <a href="mailto:achart@bucksfire.gov.uk">achart@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744490



Health, Safety and Well-being



# Annual Report

2018-19



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N.B. The image on the front cover is from a field fire involving standing crop on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 in Marlow which spread to the local garden centre, industrial units and was in danger of spreading to the town itself. At its height there were 25 appliances in attendance making it the largest incident we responded to in 10 years.

# Forewords

*"Being new to the role of lead Fire Authority Member for Health, Safety and Well-being, I have yet to personally experience the dedication and professionalism of the Health and Safety department and all Authority staff. However, my predecessor was very impressed with the commitment and passion displayed by all staff to health, safety and well-being across the Service".*

Councillor Jean Teesdale  
Lead Member for Health, Safety and Well-being  
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

*"The Authority is committed to achieving the very highest standards of health, safety and wellbeing for our employees, visitors, contractors and our communities and as such are constantly striving for continual improvement. The implementation of the Wellbeing and Health and Safety strategies provide the bedrock to achieve this objective. This annual report is an opportunity to review performance and progress over the past year".*

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

# Executive Summary

**Health and Safety Strategy:** The purpose of this strategy is to set out the strategic objectives for the next three years that seek to improve health and safety. It sits alongside the Well-being Strategy, dovetails into the People Strategy, and aligns with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's Public Safety Plan.

**Our performance:** For the year 2018/19 the statistics highlight that there has been an increase in the number of safety events in five of the six performance areas and a decrease in the number of RIDDOR reports. It is extremely pleasing to note that there has been a significant increase in the number of proactive "near miss" reports of 126%.

## **Working with others:**

Collaboration work continues with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services. We have started to formally explore what potential there is to share some managerial Health & Safety functions and processes within the Thames Valley.

**Employee Well-being:** 2018/19 saw the training of 19 Mental Health First Aiders and 14 Champions. These individuals are volunteers from all sectors of the Service. The Mental Health Champions are the "eyes and ears on the ground" trained to spot the signs of mental ill health in their colleagues and sign post them to the Mental Health First Aiders who will, with the affected individual's agreement, meet with them and ultimately sign post them to the support networks available both internally and externally.

# Health and Safety Strategy

The Health and Safety Strategy has been refreshed by the Health and Safety Manager, came into effect in April 2019, and has a three-year life cycle. The Fire Authority approved it in December 2018.

The purpose of this document is to set out the strategic objectives for the next three years that seek to improve health and safety. It sits alongside the Well-being Strategy, dovetails into the People Strategy, and aligns with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority's Public Safety Plan.

The strategy's mission statement is "To promote proportionate, appropriate and effective risk management". Alongside this mission statement are five strategic themes:

- **Working together:** Promoting broader ownership and cohesion of health and safety across the board.
- **Drive continuous improvement in health, safety and well-being:** Anticipate and solve new health and safety challenges.
- **Build an even better health and safety culture:** Raise awareness of and promote the benefits of an improved culture.
- **Effectively manage risk:** Simplify, wherever possible, risk management to ensure safe people and processes.
- **Engaging together:** Seek to continuously improve communications on health, safety and well-being matters.

Case studies of projects and initiatives implemented are included to highlight to staff, Members and the public the successes achieved.

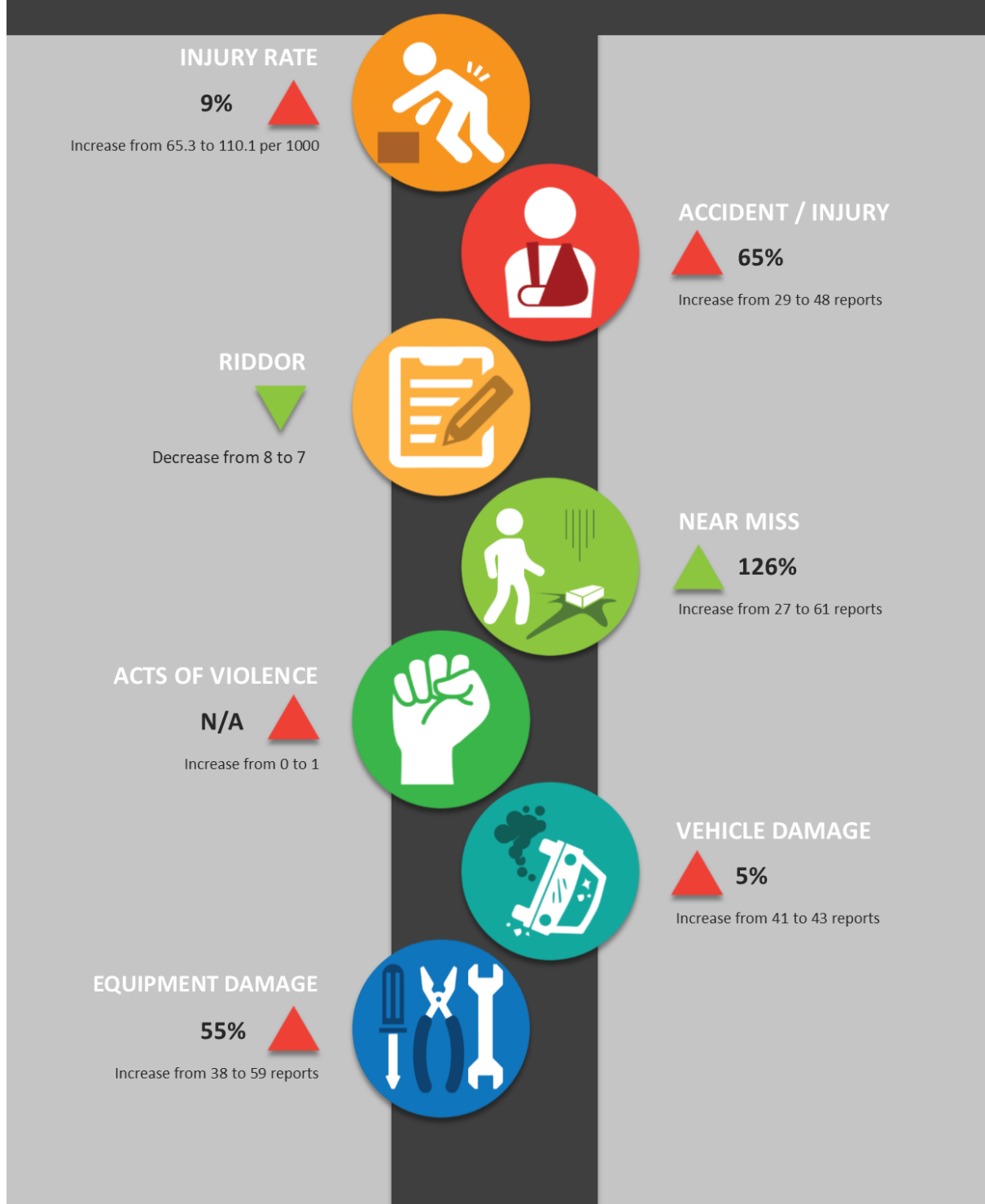
The implementation of this strategy will result in a greater and wider ownership and resolution of health and safety issues; improved productivity through a strong health and safety culture whilst employees and the communities we serve will be healthier and safer.

It has been placed on the intranet and the external website and the Health and Safety department have, as part of their recent training programme, raised awareness of the strategy to staff which will assist in the embedding process and aid delivery.

The strategy can be viewed [here](#) .

# Our Performance at a Glance

## HEALTH AND SAFETY 2018/2019



# Performance Overview

Compared to the previous year, 2018/19 saw an increase in the number of incidents attended of 537, a percentage increase of 7.6%, and an increase in the number of mobilisations by 406 a percentage increase of 3.5%. These figures do not include Co-responding incidents or Officer mobilisations. The hot summer is a contributory factor in these increases and would account for the increase in the number of safety events in five of the six performance areas highlighted in the graph 'Our performance at a glance' on page five. Conversely, RIDDOR reports have decreased which is good news. It is also pleasing to note that there has been a significant increase in the number of proactive "near miss" reports. An overview of the figures is provided below.

**Personal injury:** To establish the injury rate, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) provides a calculation for organisations to use. This calculation is the number of events reported; divided by the number of employees; multiplied by 100,000. The injury rate has increased from 65.3 per 1000 employees in 2017/18 to 110.1 per 1000 employees in 2018/19. In terms of the actual numbers of personal injury safety events, there has been an increase from 29 in 2017/18 to 48 in 2018/19.

To determine the severity of the safety event, a multiplication calculation is carried out. This sum is determined by the 'likelihood' of the safety event occurring multiplied by the 'severity' of the injury sustained. The resulting figure is known as the risk factor score:

- 1 to 5 is deemed a minor event
- 6-15 is moderate
- 16-25 major

Of the 48 personal injury safety events, 34 have been recorded as minor in nature and 14 as moderate.

The details of the moderate personal injury safety events are detailed below:

- High heart rate - 1
- Musculoskeletal - 6
- Fracture of the wrist - 1
- Fracture of the humerus - 1
- Insect bite - 1
- Head injury - 2
- Partial temporary loss of hearing - 1
- Unwell during BA drill - 1

Serious workplace injuries, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences are reportable to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

The number of RIDDOR reportable events for 2018/19 has decreased from eight in 2017/18 to seven, which is pleasing. Analysis of these events resulted in:

- One specified injury
- Six 'over 7 day' sickness absence.

The specified injury was a fractured humerus, which occurred when an individual was ascending a flight of stairs and tripped.

Equipment damage safety events has seen a significant increase of 55% with 59 safety events compared to 38 in 2017/18. 47 of these were of a minor nature and 12 were moderate. The details of the moderate events are as follows:

- Security gate closed onto a ladder and gantry - 1
- Burnt hose reels - 2
- Burnt beaters - 1
- Gloves heat damaged at an incident - 1
- High pressure hose reel adjuster stuck in one position - 1
- Hack saw damaged and - 1
- BA equipment damaged - 2
- Equipment falling from defective pump lockers - 2
- Bay door did not open due to defective hinge - 1

Such an increase demands analysis for trends and causation. The results of this analysis identified the significant increase in the number of field fires crews attended due to the hot summer. These incidents were often intense and protracted resulting in hose reels becoming burnt. As yellow hose reels have replaced the black, it is easier for crews to identify the scorching and report it as equipment damage. On request of the Research and Development Officer, the supplier conducted stringent tests on the hose to ensure the hose met the relevant standards and was fit for purpose. This was confirmed.

2018/19 has seen a slight increase in the number of vehicle safety events of 5% with 43 safety events compared to 41 in 2017/18. 33 were of a minor nature and nine were moderate. Details of the moderate safety events are detailed below:

- Collision with stationary vehicles - 4
- Collision - third party at fault - 1
- Nearside rear wheels detached from Scania appliance - 1
- Low speed manoeuvre into inanimate objects - 2
- Low speed reversing into parked appliance - 1

In the category "Acts of violence against firefighters" there has been a 100% increase from no safety events to one. It is important to bear in mind that these figures are very small, 0 - 1, so the rise in percentage is high.



“Near misses” (where there has been no injury or financial loss) form part of the proactive safety management system. Proactive reporting is key to reducing the number of safety events (reactive safety management system) as an investigation can be carried out and recommendations actioned to ensure a safety event does not occur.

Following the introduction of the simplified “near miss” reporting process, the health, and safety training that the department delivered to staff to encourage reporting, there has been a significant increase in the number of “near miss” reports of 61 compared to 27 in 2017/18. This is an increase of 126%, which is excellent news.

The performance statistical data received from the Home Office for 2018/19 is displayed as league tables of Services with similar numbers of employees in order to provide a more accurate comparison of performance between BFRS and its peers. This performance relates solely to operational personnel.

There has been an increase in the **total number of persons injured** from 24 in 2017/18 to 36 in 2018/19. Of these **19** occurred at training events, **10** during routine activities and **seven** at operational incidents. Wholetime firefighters have been most affected with **19** injuries. The remaining injuries affect **six** Apprentice Firefighters, **four** On-call firefighters, **four** Flexible firefighters and **three** during bank shift activities.

The total number of **injuries at fires** has increased by fifty percent from three in 2017/18 to six in 2018/19 resulting in BFRS remaining in the top three of the National Peer Group Performance Comparison table detailed in Appendix 1 below.

The total number of **injuries at special service calls** has reduced significantly from five to one resulting in BFRS moving from third position to first place. This highlights a significant improvement which is excellent news!

In terms of **injuries during routine activities** there has been a significant increase from one in 2017/18 to 10 in 2018/19. This has resulted in BFRS moving from top position to fifth which is disappointing. Initial analysis has identified that complacency when conducting routine tasks is a contributory factor as is a lack of focus. The Health and Safety department are working to identify ways to improve performance in this area.

**Injuries over 7day absence** figures has increased by one to six in 2018/19 compared to five in 2017/18. Despite this BFRS has moved from fifth position to fourth.

There has been an increase in the total number of **injuries during training events** from 15 in 2017/18 to 19 in 2018/19, which again has resulted in BFRS retaining fifth position.

BFRS continues to maintain the top position for the least **number of major injuries** for the fifth year running, with zero major injuries. A fantastic achievement!

The **Annual Incidence Rate** is calculated by taking the number of reportable injuries that occurred in the financial year and dividing it by the average number employed during that same year X 100,000. This gives the number of injuries per 100,000 workers and provides a more accurate picture of the overall health and safety performance of operational personnel. The incidence rate for 2018/19 has increased from 4908 in 2017/18 to 7709 which places BFRS mid table – see Appendix 1 below.

Governance of health and safety performance is via the Performance and Strategic Management Boards on a six monthly basis. The reports include statistical data on the number and type of safety events occurring at operational incidents, training and routine activities and the number and types of safety events involving Support staff.

The last quarter of this year saw the Health and Safety department deliver a training package to staff, which covered the following subjects:

- Health and Safety Strategy;
- Health and Safety performance;
- Risk Assessments;
- Analytical Risk Assessments;
- Contaminates and personal protective equipment;
- Wellbeing Strategy;
- Mental Health First Aiders and Champions;
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

The purpose of this package was to raise staff awareness and to promote both the Wellbeing and Health and Safety strategies.

## Employee Well-being

### **Total working days lost to sickness absence**

Overall the total number of days lost to sickness absence was 9.8% higher in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 for Wholetime and Support staff combined, despite a 1.8% reduction in the average headcount in 2018/19. Wholetime sickness increased by 25% in 2018/19 when compared to the previous year, although the headcount had declined by 3.4%.

On the other hand, the total number of days lost to sickness absence for Support staff decreased by 30% in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18, despite a 1.8% increase in the average headcount.

Due to declining staff numbers of operational employees, all sickness absence is now measured on a 'days per person' basis. However, long term sickness can often skew the average number of days lost per person, and so two perspectives are provided – the average number of days lost per person based on the total number of days lost, and the average number of days lost per person based on short term sickness only, as shown below.

### Wholetime staff

	<b>Total days lost</b>	<b>Days lost pp (based on total days lost)</b>	<b>Short term sickness days lost</b>	<b>Days lost pp (based on short term days lost)</b>
2017	2033	8.21	525	2.10
2018	2541.5	10.63	635.5	2.66

### Support staff

	<b>Total days lost</b>	<b>Days lost pp (based on total days lost)</b>	<b>Short term sickness days lost</b>	<b>Days lost pp (based on short term days lost)</b>
2017	768.21	7.05	341.21	3.13
2018	535.08	4.82	317.13	2.86

Across the operational staff group musculoskeletal remained the top reason for absence in 2018/19 with hospital/post-operative related absence as the second top sickness reason and anxiety/stress/depression as the third.

Musculoskeletal was also the top sickness reason for Support Staff again in 2018/19. Anxiety/Depression/Stress moved up to second and minor illnesses (colds/flu/viral infections) was third highest.

CIPD's 2019 Health and Well-being at Work Survey reports that overall average absence levels decreased to 5.9 days per person which is the lowest ever recorded by their survey. Public sector employees had 8.4 days of absence over the previous year, showing no change from the findings in the 2018 survey (8.5 days). Absence rates remain considerably higher in the public sector than in private sector services (4.4 days per employee), manufacturing and production (5.6 days per employee) or the non-profit sector (6.3 days per employee).

The survey reports increased absence due to mental ill health, particularly stress-related. However, in BFRS, despite taking second highest position for Support staff, Anxiety/Depression/Stress is lower for both Wholetime and Support staff in 2018/19 when compared to 2017/18.

Minor illnesses and chest/respiratory related illnesses resulting in mainly short-term sickness absence decreased in 2018/19 when compared to 2017/18.

The Wellbeing Group, chaired by the Health and Safety Manager, has focussed its efforts on the creation and implementation of a Wellbeing Strategy, which dovetails into the People Strategy and sits alongside the Health and Safety Strategy. The ethos behind the strategy is “start well, work well, age well”. It provides a holistic overview of the wellbeing needs of an employee from the moment their career commences with the Authority until it ends. It encompasses a number of stages an employee may encounter during their career.

The strategy acknowledges the different stressors and pressures that people may face at various stages of their working lives and gives an indication of the support arrangements the Service aims to have in place to support them through these phases. The Fire Authority approved it in June 2018.

The Wellbeing Group has and continues to, progress work on the action plan from the self-assessment of the College of Policing Blue Light Well-being Framework. 2018/19 saw the training of 19 Mental Health First Aiders and 14 Champions. These individuals are volunteers from all sectors of the Service. The Mental Health Champions are the “eyes and ears on the ground” trained to spot the signs of mental ill health in their colleagues and sign post them to the Mental Health First Aiders who will, with the affected individual’s agreement, meet with them and ultimately sign post them to the support networks available both internally and externally. First Aiders and Champions have been issued with Mental Health ribbon pins (see image below) so that all personnel are able to identify them and seek their support if necessary.



This implementation of this initiative has been well received by staff who welcome the opportunity for improved wellbeing and the breaking down of the stigma historically associated with mental health illness.

The Employee Relations team are in the process of delivering a Well-being Roadshow to all staff to raise awareness of the support networks that are available to them and how to access them. Again, feedback from staff to the Employee Relations team has been very positive and highlights that this input has been welcomed.

# Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company

The Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company offers membership to fire and rescue services for insurance provision via Regis Mutual Management. Membership is subject to meeting the robust risk management criteria across a range of activities such as Fleet, Health and Safety and Operations etc.

The business case for becoming a member was led by the Director of Finance and Assets, supported by the Insurance Officer and the Health and Safety Manager who was tasked with providing evidence to satisfy the risk management criteria and to create a risk profile. The Authority was accepted as members in April 2019 which has realised savings based on the renewal quote for insurance of £100,000.

Additional benefits are the sharing of experiences in fire service activities, including best practice, amongst members and standardising processes to reflect best practice. Examples of this are installation of CCTV on appliances and Authority owned vehicles and the use of "bump cards" which are completed by staff if involved in an accident. The details of both parties are exchanged and the bump card is sent to the Insurance Officer who notifies Regis immediately who will commence action in terms of refuting/settling claims.

## Health and Safety Training

The Training Strategy Group approved funding of £30,000 for Health and Safety training requirements for this financial year. Of those requirements, the following training courses took place:

### **External Providers**

In order to meet the organisational requirements for this financial year two **Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) Managing Safely** courses took place in January and February 2019. The delegates consisted of both operational and support staff who had recently been successful at the Supervisory Manager assessment centre or had recently been promoted to Crew Commander or support staff equivalent.

With an increase in the number of newly promoted Station Commanders it was necessary to procure two **NEBOSH General Certificate** courses in order to provide them with the necessary skills to conduct Health and Safety Audits/Inspections and to manage stations/sites and people from a health and safety perspective. The courses were run in-house in October and December 2018 by a training provider at a cost of £720 per delegate as opposed to £1600 per delegate for an external course. This realised savings of £16,000.

Station Commanders are required to investigate Level Two Safety Events (those classified as *moderate* in terms of severity). Due to the increase in new Station Commanders, it was necessary to procure a four-day **Accident Investigation** course to provide them with the skills and knowledge to conduct robust and thorough investigations at this level.

This year it was necessary to run a **First Aid at Work** course for Support staff to renew qualifications that had expired and to provide resilience.

A **Fire Warden** course was provided for those personnel who expressed an interest in becoming a Fire Warden to provide resilience in the team.



N.B. This image is also from the Marlow field fire on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 and highlights cross border and multi-agency working.

## Management of Risk

**Pool and lease vehicles CCTV** – This new project was mentioned in last year's Health and Safety report and has moved on significantly over the past 12 months. CCTV, both front and rear facing, has been installed in all Authority owned vehicles i.e. pool cars, vans and station transport and it is being installed in Officer's lease vehicles. Work will continue on raising the benefits of CCTV in

terms of providing factual evidence should drivers be involved in an accident, to encourage more Officers to come forward.

**Operational personal risk assessments – Stop, Think, Act and Review (STAR) model** – It is recognised that the nature of the work that firefighters undertake in the operational arena is often high risk. As an employer, despite taking every precaution in terms of firefighter health, safety and wellbeing, it is not always possible to guarantee a safe place of work. Therefore, it is incumbent on operational personnel, when at incidents, to adopt safe systems of work and to conduct their own personal risk assessment in order to keep them safe.

To assist operational personnel with this task, the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services have adopted the STAR model. The definition of this model is detailed below:

**S** - Stop any intended actions & focus on new situation.

**T** - Think about the new situation and assess your surroundings – can you do something to prevent the hazard or reduce the risk? Do you have a solution?

**A** - Act, if you do not know what to do or what is safest, communicate; get help and warn others. If you know what to do, understand and accept the risks.

**R** – Review to assess the outcome.

This process is now well embedded throughout the operational arena.

**Scania Wheel Near Miss** – On 29 September 2018, whilst returning to station from an incident, the near side rear wheels disengaged from Beaconsfield’s Scania fire appliance whilst in transit. Fortunately no one was injured and no damage occurred to any third party i.e. property, vehicle etc. This event was determined to be a major “near miss” event and a decision was taken to invite Bureau Veritas (Scientific Specialist Advisors) to conduct an independent investigation to determine the cause of the event.

Following examination of the fire appliance and laboratory examination of the wheel studs and nuts at their laboratory, the cause of the wheels detaching from the vehicle was, loss of clamping force due to corrosion and wear between the bolt splines and the body of the wheel hub. In combination with this the conical surface of the studs were also severely corroded.

To ensure the recommendations are completed an action plan was created with progress reports made via the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee. To date 95% of the recommendations have been completed and it is planned that the remaining 5% will be completed by the end of the financial year following a trial of new wheel trims and the recruitment of additional Workshops Technicians.

**BA Cylinder moisture and oil ingress Near Miss** – In November 2018, during routine spot-checking at Bletchley Fire Station, elevated moisture and oil particulate was identified in two BA cylinders. Further investigation revealed the cylinders had been charged at Bletchley Fire Station, and was found to be the result of a defective on-site air compressor.

Investigation of the compressor room logbook revealed that at least 20 cylinders could have been contaminated since the compressor's last air purity test in September 2018, based upon the precaution that the defect had occurred soon after the test. Furthermore, eight BA sets then failed a leakage and function test and were found to have sintered filters contaminated with oil.

Moisture content within the cylinder compressor should be filtered to below the Standard threshold of 35mg/M<sup>3</sup>. Lubricating oil should also be filtered to below a Standard threshold of 0.5mg/M<sup>3</sup>. These are the maximum levels set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

This is because high moisture levels can lead to freezing within the BA pneumatics, particularly around the pressure regulator and breathing valve assembly, increasing a risk of equipment failure.

Elevated oil content also carries a risk of either, over-lubrication of moving parts, potential creation of an explosive mixture within the tertiary chamber of the pressure reducer, which is open to atmosphere, or degradation of the internal lining of pneumatic hoses over time. Additionally, oil contaminate above the Standard threshold would deliver an undesirable odour to the wearer.

BFRS did not identify a health risk from breathing in the contaminated air, as normal air contains approximately 16,500mg/M<sup>3</sup> at 75% humidity, and the lubricating oil (Anderol 555 used within this particular compressor) does not present an aspiration toxicity classification to the wearer. However, as a precautionary measure, monitoring of occupational health referrals and sickness absence was intensified, and will continue.

The Health and Safety Laboratory, a subsidiary of the HSE, were commissioned to conduct an independent investigation. The rationale for this decision was twofold:

- The HSE are the exemplar in terms of health and safety practice and are also the enforcement agency;
- This event had the potential to be replicated in other UK fire and rescue services and therefore of national interest.

The draft report has been received and once finalised will be published and shared nationally.



# Working with Others

## Internally

In the summer of 2018, the Health and Safety department assisted the Property department with the health, safety and wellbeing aspects of the Service Headquarters air handling replacement and refurbishment project.

This was a major project, which was to run for over two months on a phased basis. Planning for the following was necessary and was carried out by both the Property and Health and Safety departments:

- management of contractors
- fire safety measures necessary to protect staff and contractors
- a review of the fire risk assessment
- the control measures required for the use of a crane on site
- placement of staff and their subsequent repatriation

The project was completed with no safety events or health and safety issues and was a complete success.

## Externally

**Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services** – The Health and Safety departments in each of the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services continue to meet regularly and where possible work together to align policies and procedures and other processes. A joint programme of noise assessments for equipment and vehicles has been created and work is still ongoing in implementing methods to mitigate the risks to crews from contaminants at operational incidents.

As both Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire share resources, including the Driving Centre Manager, for driver training vehicle safety events are analysed jointly in order to identify trends and control measures in an attempt to reduce the number of these types of events.

We have started to formally explore what potential there is to share some managerial Health & Safety functions and processes within the Thames Valley.

Whilst discussions are in the very early stages an update will be provided in next year's annual report.

# Performance Indicators

## **Budgets**

The health and safety budget for the year 2018/19 ended in an overspend of £4655. This was the cost of the investigation by Bureau Veritas into the Scania Wheel near miss event.

## **Health and Safety objectives – 2019/20**

Please see below the health and safety objectives set in line with the Authority's Public Safety Plan for this year:

1. Provide health and safety advice and support, including fire safety arrangements, to ensure compliance with legislation throughout the Blue Light Hub build and fitting out;
2. Support the development of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing in the new blue light hub upon habitation and ongoing.
3. Explore the opportunity for shared Health, Safety and Wellbeing function with Oxfordshire FRS.
4. Ensure Working Time Regulations requirements are set up in Fire Service Rota\* and implemented throughout the Service; communicate this to all staff; educate managers on how to monitor the system for potential breaches of the regulations and conduct spot check audits on the system.
5. Conduct a review of all health and safety policies, procedures and guidance notes to ensure currency and validity.

Objectives 1 and 2 are ongoing.

Objective 3 is in the very early stages of discussion.

Objective 4 is in the "build" stage within the system. A programme of communication and education is to be conducted prior to "go live".

Objective 5 will be completed by the end of this financial year.

\*Fire Service Rota (FSR) is the electronic resource management system we use to track, manage and allocate our staff resourcing.

# Appendix 1

## National peer group performance comparison tables 2017/18 and 2018/19

The H&S department are required to report on BFRS end of year accident statistical returns to the Home Office on 31 May 2019 for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

### **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.

### **Findings:**

**HS1** – there has been an increase in the number of personnel injured at operational incidents from twenty-four to thirty-six, which is as a result of the increase in both the number of incidents and an increase in the number of resources required at larger incidents in 2018/19 as described on page six. Of the twelve members of the peer group there have been significant increases in the number of injuries in seven.

**Outcome:** In the national peer group league tables, BFRS has moved from second position in 2017/18 to third in 2018/19.

**HS2-** Injuries at training events have seen an increase from fifteen in 2017/18 to nineteen and injuries during routine activities has seen a significant increase from one in 2017/18 to ten. Routine activities are an area that the Health and Safety department are focussing on to identify ways to reduce the number of events.

**Outcome:** BFRS's position in the peer group table for injuries at training events remains the same this year as last at 5<sup>th</sup> place. For injuries during routine activities, BFRS has moved from top of the table to fifth which is disappointing.

Below are the national league tables which provide a visual view of the overall safety performance of BFRS in the operational arena compared to their peer group. A detailed explanation of performance can be found in the Performance Overview section of the report on page six.

<b>Total Number of Persons Injured</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Warwickshire	28	25
Suffolk	54	28
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>
West Sussex	39	38
Oxfordshire	52	39
Northamptonshire	18	50
Bedfordshire	39	53
Berkshire	52	56
Norfolk	58	60
East Sussex	71	66
Hereford and Worcester	71	71
Cambridgeshire	74	122

<b>Total Number of Injuries at fires</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
Oxfordshire	6	7
Suffolk	11	7
Warwickshire	13	7
Bedfordshire	11	9
Hereford and Worcester	10	10
Northamptonshire	6	13
<b>Total Number of Injuries during Routine Activities</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
West Sussex	9	2
Suffolk	12	3

Oxfordshire	13	3
Warwickshire	5	4
Norfolk	10	4
Hereford and Worcester	13	8
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
Bedfordshire	8	10
Berkshire	14	12
East Sussex	12	12
Northamptonshire	8	13
Cambridgeshire	22	15

<b>Total Number of Over 7 Days Injuries</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Warwickshire	4	2
Oxfordshire	7	3
Suffolk	2	3
Bedfordshire	1	5
Cambridgeshire	3	5
East Sussex	6	5
Northamptonshire	6	5
Berkshire	7	6
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
West Sussex	2	7
Hereford and Worcestershire	8	9
Norfolk	7	10

<b>Total Number of Major Injuries</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
East Sussex	3	0
Norfolk	0	0
Suffolk	0	0
Warwickshire	0	0
Bedfordshire	1	1
Berkshire	0	1
Hereford and Worcester	0	1
Northamptonshire	0	1
West Sussex	0	1
Cambridgeshire	0	2
Oxfordshire	4	2

<b>Total Number of Injuries during Training</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Warwickshire	7	10
Suffolk	26	13
West Sussex	14	15
Berkshire	22	18
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>
Cambridgeshire	21	19
East Sussex	19	19
Northamptonshire	4	20
Oxfordshire	22	22
Norfolk	29	26
Bedfordshire	11	27
Hereford and Worcester	41	51

<b>Total Number of injuries at Special Services</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
Hereford and Worcester	7	2
Berkshire	9	2
Northamptonshire	3	4
Warwickshire	3	4
Suffolk	5	5
West Sussex	10	6
Bedfordshire	9	7
Oxfordshire	11	7
Norfolk	10	13
Cambridgeshire	11	15
East Sussex	14	19

<b>Annual Incidence Rates</b>			
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue Service</b>	<b>Total number of employees</b>	<b>Total number of safety events</b>	<b>Incident rate</b>
Suffolk	687	28	4076
Warwickshire	482	25	5187
West Sussex	697	38	5452
Oxfordshire	657	39	5936
Norfolk	841	60	7134
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7709</b>
East Sussex	799	66	8260
Berkshire	644	56	8696
Bedfordshire	602	53	8804
Northants	525	10	9524
Hereford and Worcester	719	71	9875
Cambridgeshire	608	122	20066







# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	12 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance & Assets
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor David Hopkins
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This report is being presented as the Fire Authority is required to approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy. These documents (Appendix A) all support the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>The current strategy is operating effectively and outperforming the benchmark targets. There is no significant change from the previous strategy. The rationale for this is due to the current cashflow position with a considerable amount being spent on our capital programme which has resulted in a reduction of funds being available to invest in comparison to previous years.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	It is recommended that the Authority approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>Making investments in the Authority's own name means that the Authority bears the risk of any counterparty failure. This risk will be managed in accordance with the strategy and with advice from external treasury management advisors.</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Assets will act in accordance with the Authority's policy statement; treasury management practices and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management. There are no direct staffing implications.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The proposed budget for 2020-21 is £150k. It is anticipated that the budget will be met. Detailed information is shown within Appendix.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The Authority is required by section 15(1) of the Local

	<p>Government Act 2003 to have regard to the Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments; and by regulation 24 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 [SI 3146] to have regard to any prevailing CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.</p> <p>Under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Authority has the power to invest for “any purpose relevant to its functions” and “for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs”.</p> <p>However it must exercise its investment power in accordance with its fiduciary duty, analogous to that of a trustee, owed to those who contribute to the funds of the Authority.</p>
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	No direct impact.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	The projected income has been factored into the Medium Term Financial Plan.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p>CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services (CIPFA Code)</p> <p>Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments (DCLG Guidance)</p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>Appendix A – Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy</p> <p>Appendix B – Provisional Counterparty List</p> <p>Appendix C – Prospects for Interest Rates</p>
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	15 minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	<p>Asif Hussain</p> <p><a href="mailto:ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk">ahussain@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>(01296) 744421</p>

## **Appendix A – Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy**

### **Treasury Management Policy Statement**

This Authority defines its treasury management activities as:

The management of the Authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

This Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

This Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

The investment policy objective for this Authority is the prudent investment of its treasury balances. The Authority's investment priorities are the security of capital and liquidity of its investments so that funds are available for expenditure when needed. Both the CIPFA Code and DCLG guidance require the Authority to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The generation of investment income to support the provision of local authority services is an important, but secondary, objective.

The Authority's borrowing objectives are to minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio. The Authority will set an affordable borrowing limit each year in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003, and will have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when setting that limit.

### **Treasury Management Strategy Statement**

#### **Current Portfolio Position**

The Authority's treasury portfolio position as at 30 September 2019 comprised:

##### Borrowing

Fixed Rate Funding: £6.797m Average Rate: 4.62%

The last repayment of £585k was made in May 2018 with the next loan maturity not due until 2022.

##### Investments

£17,445m Average Rate 1 April 2019 to 30 September 2019: 1.00%

It is anticipated that a number of large payments will be made before the end of the year to fund our capital programme. Therefore, projected interest receivable has been modelled on an average fund balance of £15.0m against an average rate return of 1.00%.

### **Prospects for Interest Rates**

For 2020/21, the Authority will continue with Link as its external treasury management advisor. Link's view of the prospects for interest rates can be seen in Appendix C.

Link advise that the current benchmark rate of return on investments should be Base Rate (currently 0.75%), although the rate may be higher if the Authority is able and willing to commit funds for longer durations (up to one year). The Authority will therefore set a benchmark rate of return based on the current average rate achieved, which would give a target rate of 1.00%. Based on this rate the Authority would achieve an annual return of circa £150k on a balance of £15.0m (the total current projected return for 2019/20 is in the region of £180k).

This overachievement can be partly attributed to the change in the TMS for the 2018/19. The Authority increased the maximum lending duration for UK based counterparties, increased the number of building societies and removed the restrictions for them to be rated. This has resulted in the Authority achieving returns in the excess of 0.75% anticipated by our treasury advisors.

For any type of investment there is a downside risk to the level of return we would obtain due to the uncertainty in the markets and the negative impact they have on the interest rates and therefore historical rates of return may not always provide a realistic indication of returns for the future. This will be closely monitored and reported to Members if the position changes from what we are currently projecting.

### **Borrowing Strategy**

The Authority's borrowing objectives are:

- To minimise the revenue costs of debt whilst maintaining a balanced loan portfolio
- To manage the Authority's debt maturity profile, leaving no one future year with a disproportionate level of repayments

No additional borrowing is forecast to take place during the duration of the medium term financial plan.

### **Investment Strategy**

This Authority maintains investments that are placed with reference to cash flow requirements. Investment of the Authority's funds is in accordance with the Annual Investment Strategy.

### **Debt Rescheduling**

The potential for debt rescheduling is monitored in light of interest rate movements.

Any rescheduling will be in accordance with the borrowing strategy. The reasons for rescheduling include:

- The generation of cash savings at minimum risk

- Fulfilment of the borrowing strategy
- Enhancement of the maturity profile of the borrowing portfolio

The level of penalties on the early repayment of borrowing make it difficult to restructure debt effectively at current interest rates. It is recommended that further work be undertaken during the year to investigate debt restructuring, including the potential renegotiation of the early repayment charges.

### **Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)**

A prudent investment policy has two objectives (as defined by the DCLG guidance):

- achieving first of all security (protecting the capital sum from loss);
- and then liquidity (keeping the money readily available for expenditure when needed);
- only once proper levels of security and liquidity are determined, it will then be reasonable to consider what yield can be obtained consistent with those priorities.

### **Investment Policy**

In accordance with guidance from the DCLG and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Authority has below clearly stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of what these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using the Link ratings service potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.

Continuing regulatory changes in the banking sector are designed to see greater stability, lower risk and the removal of expectations of Government financial support should an institution fail. This withdrawal of implied sovereign support has had an effect on ratings applied to institutions. This will result in the key ratings used to monitor counterparties being the Short Term and Long Term ratings only. Viability, Financial Strength and Support Ratings previously applied have effectively become redundant. This change does not reflect deterioration in the credit environment but rather a change of method in response to regulatory changes.

As with previous practice, ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the Authority will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as credit default swaps (CDS) and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings. This is fully integrated into the credit methodology provided by the advisors, Link in producing its colour coding which show the varying degrees of suggested creditworthiness.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most

robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.

The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimisation of risk.

### **Creditworthiness Policy**

This Authority applies the creditworthiness service provided by Link. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

This modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads for which the end product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes have been used by the Authority to determine the suggested duration for investments. It is recommended that the Authority continues to use Link's colour codes plus an additional six months for UK counterparties only. It would be beneficial if the Authority could lend to existing counterparties for a longer duration. This will increase the risk slightly but will offer increased returns. The Authority will therefore use counterparties within the following durational bands:

<b>Colour Rating (UK Counterparties)</b>	<b>Colour Rating (Non UK Counterparties)</b>
Yellow - 5 Years and 6 Months	Yellow - 5 Years
Purple – 2 Years and 6 Months	Purple – 2 Years
Blue – 1 Year and 6 Months (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)	Blue – 1 Year
Orange – 1 Year and 6 Months	Orange – 1 Year
Red – 1 Year	Red – 6 Months

<b>Colour Rating (UK Counterparties)</b>	<b>Colour Rating (Non UK Counterparties)</b>
--	--

Green – 9 Months	Green – 3 Months
No colour not to be used (except for building societies on our counterparty list which the Authority can invest with for a maximum duration of 365 days limited to a maximum investment of £2 million per counterparty)	No colour not to be used

The Link creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings and by using a risk weighted scoring system, does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

Typically the minimum credit ratings criteria the Authority use will be a short term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of short term rating F1, long term rating A-, viability rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. In these instances consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use.

All credit ratings will be monitored weekly. The Authority is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Link creditworthiness service.

- if a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.
- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Authority will be advised of information in movements in credit default swap spreads against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a weekly basis. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Authority's lending list.

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition this Authority will also use market data and market information, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that supporting government.

### **Country Limits**

In 2017/18, the Authority determined that it would not only use approved counterparties based within the United Kingdom but allowed any counterparty (UK or non UK based) rated at least 'Green' by Link. Although no counterparty outside UK was used during 2019/20, these will remain on the lending list for 2020/21. The primary purpose of this is not to increase yield, but to provide additional diversity to the portfolio to effectively manage risk. A number of non-UK banks are ranked higher than some of the UK banks on the Authority's current counterparty list. Therefore the Authority proposes to limit the duration of all non UK investment in line with Link's recommended limits. A list of the proposed counterparties is shown in Appendix B.

### **Counterparty Limits**

As per the AIS, the Authority has determined that the maximum balance that can be invested with a single counterparty at any point in time will be no more than 30% of the portfolio, up to a limit of £5 million.

There are two exceptions to this limit in the AIS will continue to be Lloyds, where the maximum balance that can be invested will be a limit of £7.5 million. Of this £7.5 million, no more than £5 million will be invested in non-instant access (call) accounts.

The rationale for this is that Lloyds are the Authority's main banking provider, and as part of the contract will pay credit interest on all balances at a rate of Base Rate minus 0.10% (currently giving an effective rate of 0.65%). This means that:

- A higher rate can be achieved than on most other instant-access accounts
- The staff time taken to move money between our main bank account and other instant access account is reduced
- The banking charges associated with the movement of the money between accounts is reduced
- The additional risk exposure to the Authority is minimal as all amounts over the current £5 million limit would be available for withdrawal immediately should circumstances require

The other exception relates to non-rated building societies on our counterparty listing whereby the maximum balance that can be invested will be limited to £2 million for a maximum duration of 365 days.

### **Investment Security**

Investments are defined as being in one of two categories:

- Specified investments – these are investments with high security and high liquidity. All specified investments are in sterling and have a maturity of no more than one year. They will be with the UK government, a local authority, a parish council or with an investment scheme or body of "high credit quality" (as judged against the Creditworthiness Policy detailed earlier in this paper)
- Non-specified investments – any type of investment that does not meet the specified investment criteria. A maximum of £5 million will be held in aggregate in non-specified investments for longer than 364 days – up to a maximum of five years and 6 months as denoted by the yellow banding on the Link creditworthiness policy detailed earlier in this paper. In addition, property funds are also classified as non-specified investments and a maximum of £3 million will be held in aggregate.

### **Investment Training**

Relevant training and updates will be provided to relevant staff by the external treasury management advisors. This will be supplemented by additional training from CIPFA where necessary.

### **Investment of Money Borrowed in Advance of Need**

The Authority does not currently have any money that has been borrowed in advance of need. No further borrowing is planned over the medium term.

### **Investment Liquidity**



In consultation with external treasury advisors, the Authority will review its balance sheet position, level of reserves and cash requirements in order to determine the length of time for which investments can be prudently committed. Investments will be placed at a range of maturities, including having money on-call in order to maintain adequate liquidity.

## Appendix B – Provisional Counterparty List

This list is based on information provided by Link as at 27 December 2019. Please note that all colours indicated refer to Link's creditworthiness policy (see Appendix A):

### UK Based Counterparties

<u>UK Based Counterparties</u>	<u>Counterparty</u>	<u>(as rated by Link)</u>
UK	Abbey National Treasury Services	Red - 6 mths
UK	Bank of Scotland	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Barclays Bank plc (NRFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Barclays Bank plc (RFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Close Brothers	Red - 6 mths
UK	Clydesdale Bank	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Co-operative Bank Plc	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Goldman Sachs International	Red - 6 mths
UK	Handelsbanken Plc	Orange - 12 mths
UK	HSBC Bank plc (NRFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	HSBC Bank plc (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets Plc (NRFB)	Red - 6 mths
UK	Lloyds Banking Group (RFB)	Orange - 12 mths
UK	Nat West Markets Plc (NRFB)	Green – 100 Days
UK	Santander UK PLC	Red - 6 mths
UK	Standard Chartered Bank	Red - 6 mths
UK	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Europe Ltd	Red - 6 mths
UK	Debt Management Office	Yellow - 60 mths
UK	Other Local Authorities	Yellow - 60 mths
UK	Royal Bank of Scotland Group	Blue - 12 mths
UK	National Westminster Bank	Blue - 12 mths

**\* This is the duration suggested by Link. As per the updated Creditworthiness Policy (see page 6) these will all be extended by six months, except for building societies rated 'Green', which will have a maximum duration of 12 months for up to £2m.**

The Authority will also have the ability to invest in AAA rated money market funds (MMFs) and enhanced money market funds.

Non-UK Based Counterparties

As noted in Appendix A, the duration of all non-UK investments will be in line with Links' duration limits.

<u>Non-UK Based Counterparties</u>	<u>Country Counterparty</u>	<u>(as rated by Link)</u>
Australia	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Commonwealth Bank of Australia	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Macquarie Bank Ltd.	Red - 6 mths
Australia	National Australia Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Australia	Westpac Banking Corp.	Orange - 12 mths
Belgium	BNP Paribas Fortis	Red - 6 mths
Belgium	KBC Bank N.V.	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Bank of Montreal	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Bank of Nova Scotia	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	National Bank of Canada	Red - 6 mths
Canada	Royal Bank of Canada	Orange - 12 mths
Canada	Toronto-Dominion Bank	Orange - 12 mths
Denmark	Danske A/S	Red - 6 mths
Finland	Nordea Bank Abp	Orange - 12 mths
Finland	OP Corporate Bank plc	Orange - 12 mths
France	BNP Paribas	Orange - 12 mths
France	Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank	Orange - 12 mths
France	Credit Agricole S.A.	Orange - 12 mths
France	Credit Industriel et Commercial	Red - 6 mths
France	Societe Generale	Red - 6 mths
Germany	BayernLB	Red - 6 mths
Germany	Commerzbank AG	Green – 100 Days
Germany	Deutsche Bank AG	No colour - 0 mths
Germany	DZ BANK AG Deutsche Zentral-Genossenschaftsbank	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg	Red - 6 mths
Germany	Landesbank Berlin AG	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen Girozentrale	Orange - 12 mths
Germany	Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank	Purple - 24 mths
Germany	NRW.BANK	Purple - 24 mths
Netherlands	ABN AMRO Bank N.V.	Red - 6 mths
Netherlands	Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten N.V.	Purple - 24 mths
Netherlands	Cooperatieve Rabobank U.A.	Orange - 12 mths
Netherlands	ING Bank N.V.	Orange - 12 mths
Netherlands	Nederlandse Waterschapsbank N.V.	Purple - 24 mths
Qatar	Qatar National Bank	Red - 6 mths
Singapore	DBS Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Singapore	Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Singapore	United Overseas Bank Ltd.	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Svenska Handelsbanken AB	Orange - 12 mths
Sweden	Swedbank AB	Orange - 12 mths

Switzerland	Credit Suisse AG	Red - 6 mths
Switzerland	UBS AG	Orange - 12 mths
United Arab Emirates	First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	Orange - 12 mths
United States	Bank of America N.A.	Orange - 12 mths
United States	Bank of New York Mellon, The	Purple - 24 mths
United States	Citibank N.A.	Orange - 12 mths
United States	JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.	Orange - 12 mths
United States	Wells Fargo Bank, NA	Orange - 12 mths

#### Counterparties Rated 'No Colour' by Link

As noted in Appendix A, sole reliance will not be placed on the use of Link ratings. The Authority will also use market data and market information, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that supporting government. The Authority added four building societies to its counterparty list in 2014/15, at which time they were all rated 'No Colour'. These are all now rated by Link and appear on our Provisional Counterparty Listing above. In 2018/19 the Authority increased the number of building societies in our counterparty list to ten. The top-ten building societies (by net assets) were added to the counterparty list. The duration of investment will continue to be limited to 365 days and the maximum amount invested with any non-rated building society at any point in time will not exceed £2 million.

<u>UK Based Counterparties</u>	<u>Country Counterparty</u>	<u>(as rated by Link)</u>
UK	Coventry Building Society	Red - 6 mths
UK	Cumberland	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Leeds Building Society	Green - 100 days
UK	Nationwide BS	Red - 6 mths
UK	Newcastle	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Nottingham	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Principality	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Skipton Building Society	Green - 100 days
UK	West Bromwich	No colour - 0 mths
UK	Yorkshire Building Society	Green - 100 days

## Appendix C – Prospects for Interest Rates

The following table gives the Link central view:

Annual Average %	Bank Rate %	PWLB Borrowing Rates % (including certainty rate adjustment)		
		5 year	25 year	50 year
Dec 2019	0.75	2.30	3.20	3.10
Mar 2020	0.75	2.40	3.30	3.20
Jun 2020	0.75	2.40	3.40	3.30
Sep 2020	0.75	2.50	3.40	3.30
Dec 2020	0.75	2.50	3.50	3.40
Mar 2021	1.00	2.60	3.60	3.50
Jun 2021	1.00	2.70	3.70	3.60
Sep 2021	1.00	2.80	3.70	3.60

The following paragraphs provide Link's commentary on the current economic situation:

### Economic Background

#### UK

General election December 2019 returned a large conservative majority on a platform of getting Brexit done. UK to leave the EU by 31 January 2020. There is still considerable uncertainty about whether the UK and EU will be able to agree the details of a **trade deal** by the deadline set by the prime minister of December 2020. This leaves open the potential risks of a no deal or a hard Brexit.

**GDP growth** has been weak in 2019 and is likely to be around only 1% in 2020. **November and December MPC meetings** were concerned about weak UK growth caused by the dampening effect of Brexit uncertainties and by weak global economic growth. There has been no change in Bank Rate in 2019.

**CPI inflation** has been hovering around the Bank of England's target of 2% during 2019, but fell again in both October and November to a three-year low of 1.5%. It is likely to remain close to, or under 2% over the next two years and so it does not pose any immediate concern to the MPC.

**Labour market.** Employment growth has been quite resilient through 2019 until the three months to September where it fell by 58,000. However, there was an encouraging pick up again in the three months to October to growth of 24,000, which showed that the labour market was not about to head into a major downturn. The unemployment rate held steady at a 44-year low of 3.8%.

**Wage inflation** has been steadily falling from a high point of 3.9% in July 2019 to 3.5% in October 2019 (3-month average regular pay, excluding bonuses). This meant that in real terms, (i.e. wage rates higher than CPI inflation), earnings grew by about 2.0%. As the UK economy is very much services sector driven, an increase in household spending power is likely to feed through into providing some support to the overall rate of economic growth in the coming months.

## USA

**Growth** in 2019 has been falling after a strong start in quarter 1 at 3.1%, (annualised rate), to 2.0% in quarter 2 and then 2.1% in quarter 3; fears of a recession in 2020 have largely dissipated but growth is likely to be relatively weak. The strong growth in **employment numbers** during 2018 has weakened during 2019, indicating that the economy had been cooling, while inflationary pressures were also weakening.

**The Fed** finished its series of increases in rates to 2.25 – 2.50% in December 2018. It has cut rates by 0.25% in July, September and October to end at 1.50 – 1.75%. In August it also ended its programme of **quantitative tightening**, (selling its holdings of treasuries etc. @ \$50bn per month during 2019). At its September meeting it also said it was going to **start buying Treasuries again**, although this was not to be seen as a resumption of quantitative easing but rather an exercise to relieve liquidity pressures in the repo market. In the first month, it will buy \$60bn.

**Trade war with China.** The trade war is depressing US, Chinese and world growth. In the EU, it is also particularly impacting Germany as exports of goods and services are equivalent to 46% of total GDP. However, progress has been made in December on agreeing a phase one deal between the US and China to roll back some of the tariffs; this gives some hope of resolving this dispute.

## EUROZONE

**Growth** has been slowing from +1.8 % in 2018 to around half of that at the end of 2019; there appears to be little upside potential in the near future. **The European Central Bank (ECB)** ended its programme of quantitative easing purchases of debt in December 2018, which then meant that the central banks in the US, UK and EU had all ended the phase of post financial crisis expansion of liquidity supporting world financial markets by quantitative easing purchases of debt. However, the downturn in EZ growth in the second half of 2018 and during 2019, together with inflation falling well under the upper limit of its target range of 0 to 2%, (but it aims to keep it near to 2%), has prompted the ECB to take various new measures to stimulate growth starting in March.

However, since then, the downturn in EZ and world growth has gathered momentum; at its meeting on 12 September it **cut its deposit rate** further into negative territory, from -0.4% to -0.5%, and announced a **resumption of quantitative easing purchases of debt for an unlimited period**. These purchases would start in November at €20bn per month - a relatively small amount compared to the previous buying programme. It is doubtful whether the various monetary policy easing measures in 2019 will have much impact on growth and, unsurprisingly, the ECB has stated that governments would need to help stimulate growth by '**growth friendly**' **fiscal policy**.

Several EU countries have **coalition governments**. More recently, Austria, Spain and Italy have been in the throes of trying to form coalition governments with some unlikely combinations of parties i.e. this raises questions around their likely endurance. The latest results of German state elections has put further pressure on the frail German CDU/SDP coalition government and on the current leadership of the CDU.

## CHINA

Economic growth has been weakening over successive years, despite repeated rounds of central bank stimulus; medium term risks are increasing. Major progress still needs to be made to eliminate excess industrial capacity and the stock of unsold property, and to address the level of non-performing loans in the banking and shadow banking systems. In addition, there still needs to be a greater switch from investment in industrial capacity, property construction and infrastructure to consumer goods production.

## JAPAN

It has been struggling to stimulate consistent significant GDP growth and to get inflation up to its target of 2%, despite huge monetary and fiscal stimulus. It is also making little progress on fundamental reform of the economy.

## WORLD GROWTH – reversal of globalisation

Until recent years, world growth has been boosted by **increasing globalisation** i.e. countries specialising in producing goods and commodities in which they have an economic advantage and which they then trade with the rest of the world. This has boosted worldwide productivity and growth, and, by lowering costs, has depressed inflation. However, the rise of China as an economic superpower over the last thirty years, which now accounts for nearly 20% of total world GDP, has unbalanced the world economy. The Chinese government has targeted achieving major world positions in specific key sectors and products, especially high tech areas and production of rare earth minerals used in high tech products. It is achieving this by massive financial support, (i.e. subsidies), to state owned firms, government directions to other firms, technology theft, restrictions on market access by foreign firms and informal targets for the domestic market share of Chinese producers in the selected sectors. This is regarded as being unfair competition that is putting western firms at an unfair disadvantage or even putting some out of business. It is also regarded with suspicion on the political front as China is an authoritarian country that is not averse to using economic and military power for political advantage. The current trade war between the US and China therefore needs to be seen against that backdrop. It is, therefore, likely that we are heading into a period where there will be a **reversal of world globalisation and a decoupling of western countries** from dependence on China to supply products. This is likely to produce a backdrop in the coming years of weak global growth and so weak inflation.

**This weak global growth outlook for 2020 and beyond therefore means that central banks are likely to come under more pressure to support growth by looser monetary policy measures; this will militate against central banks increasing interest rates and reversing the distortions in financial markets caused by a decade of ultra-low interest rates.**

The trade war between the US and China has been a major concern to **financial markets** due to the synchronised general weakening of growth in the major economies of the world, compounded by fears that there could even be a recession looming up in the US, (though such fears have largely dissipated towards the end of 2019).

These concerns resulted in **government bond yields falling sharply in 2019** in the developed world. If there were a major worldwide downturn in growth, central banks in most of the major economies will have limited ammunition available, in terms of

monetary policy measures, when rates are already very low in most countries, (apart from the US). There are also concerns about how much distortion of financial markets has already occurred with the current levels of quantitative easing purchases of debt by central banks and the use of negative central bank rates in some countries. The latest PMI survey statistics of economic health for the US, UK, EU and China have all been predicting a downturn in growth; this confirms investor sentiment that the outlook for growth during the year ahead is weak.



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	12 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor David Hopkins
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>FIRE AID</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>FIRE AID is a UK-registered charity which brings together members to provide ethical and sustainable donations of fire and rescue equipment and training to over 50 countries worldwide.</p> <p>It achieves this by providing a unique database for sharing donated fire and rescue equipment and by encouraging and facilitating members to share expertise, best practice, funding and equipment to form joint projects and partnerships.</p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to recommend that the Authority supports the objectives of FIRE AID; and amends its Contract Standing Orders to enable the Authority to provide donations of end-of-life appliances and equipment with a net book value of £10k or less to FIRE AID to help with the furtherance of their charitable objectives.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FIREAID be approved as a potential donee of end-of-life appliances and equipment.</li> <li>2. the following amendments to Standing Orders Relating to Contracts, paragraph 21, be approved: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The deletion of the text at subparagraph 21.3: <p>“21.3 Disposal must be either by public auction or by obtaining three quotes from suitable contractors”</p> <p>And the substitution of the following text:</p> <p>“21.3 Except in circumstances in which the Chief Finance Officer is authorising disposal in accordance with 21.2 in which case donation to a charity approved by the Authority may be considered, disposal must be either by public auction or by obtaining three quotes from suitable contractors”</p> </li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>b) The deletion of the text at subparagraph 21.4:</p> <p>“The Officer responsible for the disposal must ensure that the Authority is receiving value for money; that the contractor used is reputable; and that the necessary anti-money laundering checks are in place by reference to the Chief Finance Officer.”</p> <p>And the substitution of the following text:</p> <p>“21.4 The Officer responsible for the disposal must ensure that the Authority is receiving value for money, <u>except in circumstances in which the Chief Finance Officer is authorising disposal in accordance with 21.2</u> ; that the contractor used is reputable; and that the necessary anti-money laundering checks are in place by reference to the Chief Finance Officer”</p>
<p><b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b></p>	<p>Whenever FIRE AID takes delivery of redundant equipment, it will re-deploy it in accordance with the FIRE AID Ethical Donation and Anti-Bribery &amp; Corruption Policies, and to use it, or if necessary, dispose of it in accordance with FIRE AID’s Environmental Policy</p> <p>Copies of the Ethical Donation Policy and Anti Bribery Policy and included in Appendices A and B respectively.</p> <p>In all cases, it will be the responsibility of FIRE AID’s nominated member/organisation who will be receiving any vehicles to ensure that they are roadworthy, properly licensed, insured and where required, tested before any use on the road, either in UK or overseas. It is also the responsibility of the nominated receiving FIRE AID member/organisation to ensure that any volunteer who drives such a vehicle is fully and properly licensed to do so.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>	<p>If end-of-life appliances were to be sold, any capital receipt generated would be re-invested in the future capital programme. However, the market for second-hand fire appliances appears to be becoming increasingly limited, and appliances are taking longer to sell and generating lower capital receipts.</p> <p>If appliances were instead donated, this would be an opportunity cost. The capital receipt forgone needs to be weighed against the cost of storage.</p> <p>Appliances with a net book value of more than £10,000 will not be considered for donation.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>	<p>The power to amend the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts is reserved to a meeting of the Authority.</p> <p>Under well-established principles the Authority owes a ‘fiduciary duty’ to council taxpayers to take their interests into account when disposing of its assets.</p>

FIRE AID

<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	No direct impact.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	No direct impact.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	See Financial Implications.
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Standing Orders Relating to Contracts: <a href="https://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/files/6015/0894/3533/Contract_Standing_Orders_-_October_2017.pdf">https://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/files/6015/0894/3533/Contract_Standing_Orders_-_October_2017.pdf</a>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Annex A – FIRE AID Ethical Donation Policy Statement Annex B – Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport (EASST) Anti Bribery and Corruption Policy
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	10 minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Mark Hemming <a href="mailto:mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk">mhemming@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744687

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**FIRE AID**  
AID AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Ethical Donation Policy Statement**

This policy statement sets out guidelines that should assist FIRE AID member organisations in developing and implementing their own ethical donation policies.

It should also provide reassurance to donor organisations, and their governing bodies, that aid donated to, or via, FIRE AID member organisations will be used strictly in accordance with, and fully support, their responsible disposal policies and procedures.

This statement should be read in conjunction with FIRE AID's Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy statement.

1. All donations should be planned to ensure that they benefit the recipient to the maximum extent possible.
2. Aid will always be donated with absolute impartiality, with no consideration or favour given to one recipient over another. All decisions about allocation of donated resources will be made strictly according to a thorough needs assessment.
3. Consideration will always be given to the sustainability of donated aid, particularly the recipient's ability to operate and maintain equipment and procedures safely and effectively for the intended lifespan of the aid.
4. Donations will be made with due respect for the wishes and authority of the recipient, and in conformity with government policies and administrative arrangements of the receiving country.
5. There should be no double standards in quality. If the quality of a donation is unacceptable in the donor country, it is unacceptable as a donation.
6. Equipment that has reached the end of its life according to regulation is unacceptable as a donation.

FIRE AID  
Fire Station, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1AF  
[www.fire-aid.org](http://www.fire-aid.org) | [info@fire-aid.org](mailto:info@fire-aid.org)



## **FIRE AID**

AID AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

7. Equipment available for donation because it has reached the end of its policy life within a donor organisation may, however, be perfectly serviceable and acceptable to the recipient, subject to compliance with the recipient country's standards and regulations.
8. There will always be effective communication between aid delivery organisations and recipients, and all donations will be made in accordance with a documented plan formulated by both parties.
9. No equipment will be donated unless it is supported by suitable and sufficient training to ensure its safe and effective use.
10. Delivery organisations will provide such information and instruction as is necessary to ensure the safe and effective maintenance of donated equipment.
11. Delivery organisations will assure donor organisations that the aid donated will be used for the purpose for which it was donated. If, after repeated attempts, it is not possible to allocate equipment to a recipient, the donor will be consulted about how the equipment is to be disposed of.
12. Delivery organisations will carry out a thorough follow-up evaluation of the use of any aid donated and where appropriate will report back to the donor organisations on the effective deployment of their donation. A critical evaluation of the success or failure of the donation of equipment and training will be conducted.
13. Delivery organisations will clarify with donor whether removal of any logos or branding is required. If required it is the responsibility of the delivery organisation to remove logos and branding to donors required standards.

FIRE AID

Fire Station, Beacon Road, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1AF

[www.fire-aid.org](http://www.fire-aid.org) | [info@fire-aid.org](mailto:info@fire-aid.org)

## **EASTERN ALLIANCE FOR SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ANTI BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION POLICY**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 We take a zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and will uphold all laws relevant to countering bribery and corruption in all the jurisdictions in which we operate. We welcome the international community's efforts to stamp out bribery and corruption and support the implementation of the United Nations Anti-Corruption Convention and the Group of Twenty Anti-Corruption Action Plan. As a UK registered charity (charity no. 1133552) we remain bound by the laws of the UK, including the Bribery Act 2010 (the "**Act**"), in respect of our activities both at home and abroad. We undertake due diligence on our partners, grant recipients, and associates and take reasonable steps to ensure that they apply all applicable anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to:
- (a) set out our responsibilities in observing and upholding our policy on bribery and corruption; and
  - (b) provide information and guidance to our employees and partners, grant recipients and their associates on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.
- 1.3 Under the Act, bribery and corruption are punishable for individuals by up to ten years' imprisonment and if we are found to have taken part in corruption EASST could face an unlimited fine, be excluded from tendering for public contracts, and face damage to our reputation. We therefore take our legal responsibilities very seriously.

### **2. WHO IS COVERED BY THE POLICY?**

- 2.1 This policy applies directly to our trustees and to all individuals working within EASST as employees or agents. The policy is provided to our other partners, grant recipients and associates, who will be required to take reasonable steps to ensure that in carrying out activities supported by EASST they and their employees, directors and associates comply, with all applicable anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws.
- 2.2 In this policy, "third party" means any individual or organisation you come into contact with during the course of your role.

### **3. WHAT IS BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION?**

- 3.1 A bribe is an inducement or reward offered, promised or provided in order to gain any commercial, contractual, regulatory or personal advantage.
- 3.2 Corruption is the misuse of public office or power for private gain or the misuse of private power in relation to business outside the realm of government.
- 3.3 Acts of bribery or corruption are intended to influence an individual in the performance of their work to act dishonestly and/or improperly. The person being bribed is usually someone who can obtain, retain or direct business for example during a tender or contracting process or it may be through the handling of administrative tasks or customs matters.

3.4 A bribe can take many forms, for example, a direct or indirect promise or offer of something of value, the offer or receipt of a kickback, fee, reward or other advantage, the giving of aid, donations or voting designed to exert improper influence.

3.5 Those engaged in bribery and corruption can include an employee, officer, trustee or director, any person acting on behalf of EASST i.e. our agents, individuals or organisations who authorise someone else to carry out these acts, Government or public officials whether foreign or domestic.

#### 4. **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

4.1 This policy does not prohibit gifts, entertainment, hospitality or other promotional expenditures (given and received) to or from third parties which are proportionate, transparent, reasonable and for bona fide purposes related to the aims and objectives of EASST.

4.2 The giving or receipt of gifts is not prohibited if all of the following requirements are met:

- (a) it is not made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage, or in explicit or implicit exchange for favours or benefits;
- (b) it complies with local law;
- (c) it is given in our name, not in your name;
- (d) it does not include cash or a cash equivalent (such as gift certificates or vouchers);
- (e) it is appropriate in the circumstances. For example, it is given as a ceremonial gift on a festival or at another special time (e.g. Christmas);
- (f) taking into account the reason for the gift, it is of an appropriate type and value and given at an appropriate time;
- (g) it is given openly, not secretly; and
- (h) gifts should not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials or representatives, or politicians or political parties, without the prior approval of the Director or Chairman.

4.3 We appreciate that the practice of giving business gifts varies between countries and regions and what may be normal and acceptable in one region may not be in another. The test to be applied is whether in all the circumstances the gift or hospitality is reasonable and justifiable. The intention behind the gift should always be considered.

4.4 Gifts to a value of more than £100 (or of comparable value in a different country)<sup>1</sup> should not be given or offered (to or from a single source on a single occasion) unless they have

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<sup>1</sup> In deciding whether a gift is of comparable value, the relevant employee or trustee should consider all surrounding circumstances including, but not limited to, the average income in the location where the recipient of the gift is based.



the written approval of the Director or the Chairman.

- 4.5 All gifts and hospitality to a value of more than £100 (or of comparable value in a different country) accepted or offered by any employee or trustee should be entered on the register of gifts. Any gift received exceeding this amount should be recorded and auctioned or paid for/given away.
- 4.6 Gifts to a value of more than £50 (or of comparable value in a different country) received or offered by EASST's grant recipients in connection to their EASST grant project must be recorded on the register of gifts.
- 4.7 A record of all hospitality received or offered e.g. travel and dinners, will be kept by the Compliance Officer.
- 4.8 Any approval required by the above policies relating to the Director must be provided by the Chairman and vice versa.

## 5. **WHAT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE?**

- 5.1 It is not acceptable for you (or someone on your behalf) to:
  - (a) give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope or that this will influence the decision-making of EASST or that a business advantage will be received, or to reward a business advantage already given; or
  - (b) give, promise to give, or offer, a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to "facilitate" or expedite a routine procedure; or
  - (c) accept payment from a third party that you know or suspect is offered with the expectation that EASST's decision making will be influenced in any way and that it will obtain a business advantage for them; or
  - (d) accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that EASST's decision making will be influenced in any way and that a business advantage will be provided by us in return; or
  - (e) threaten or retaliate against another worker who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy; or
  - (f) engage in any activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.

## 6. **FACILITATION PAYMENTS**

- 6.1 We do not make, and will not accept, facilitation payments or "kickbacks" of any kind. Facilitation payments are typically small, unofficial payments made to secure or expedite a routine government action by a government official (e.g. processing a visa, customs invoice or other governmental paper). They are not commonly paid in the UK, but are common in some other jurisdictions.
- 6.2 If you are asked to make a payment on our behalf, you should always be mindful of what the payment is for and whether the amount requested is proportionate to the goods or services provided. You should always ask for a receipt which details the reason for the

payment. If you have any suspicions, concerns or queries regarding a payment, you should raise these with your line manager.

6.3 If such a payment is extorted or forced under duress or because of a threat to personal safety then the payment may be made provided that either the Director or Chairman is promptly informed, a written report submitted, and the payment recorded in EASST's financial records.

6.4 Kickbacks are typically payments made in return for a business favour or advantage. All our partners, grant recipients and associates must avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, that a facilitation payment or kickback will be made or accepted by us.

## 7. **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

7.1 You must ensure that you read, understand and comply with this policy.

7.2 The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for EASST or under our control. You are required to avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy.

7.3 You must notify the Director as soon as possible if you believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future. For example, if a partner, grant recipient, associate or potential partner offers you something to gain an advantage with us, or indicates to you that a gift or payment is required to secure their co-operation with EASST supported activities.

7.4 Any employee who breaches this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. We reserve our right to terminate our contractual relationship with our partners, grant recipients, and associates if they breach this policy.

## 8. **RECORD-KEEPING**

8.1 We must keep financial records and have appropriate internal controls in place which will evidence the business reason for making payments to third parties.

8.2 You must declare and keep a written record of all hospitality or gifts to a value of more than £100 (or of comparable value in a different country) accepted or offered on the gifts register, which will be subject to managerial review.

8.3 You must ensure all expenses claims relating to hospitality, gifts or expenses incurred to third parties are submitted in accordance with our expenses policy and specifically record the reason for the expenditure.

8.4 All accounts, invoices, memoranda and other documents and records relating to dealings with third parties, such as clients, suppliers and business contacts, should be prepared and maintained with strict accuracy and completeness. No accounts must be kept "off-book" to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

## 9. **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**

You are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of malpractice at the earliest possible stage. If you are unsure whether a particular act constitutes bribery or corruption, or if you have any other queries, these should be raised with the Director or the Chairman. Statutory protection of whistle blowers is afforded under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

## 10. **PROTECTION**

- 10.1 Employees who refuse to accept or offer a bribe, or those who raise concerns or report another's wrongdoing, are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 10.2 We are committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment as a result of refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting in good faith their suspicion that an actual or potential bribery or other corruption offence has taken place, or may take place in the future. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Compliance Officer immediately.

## 11. **TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION**

- 11.1 All employees will receive relevant training on how to implement and adhere to this policy.
- 11.2 Our zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption will be communicated to all partners, grant recipients, associates, suppliers, and contractors at the outset of our relationship with them and as appropriate thereafter.

## 12. **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICY?**

- 12.1 The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it.
- 12.2 The Compliance Officer has primary and day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation. Management at all levels are responsible for ensuring those reporting to them are made aware of and understand this policy and are given adequate and regular training on it.

## 13. **RISK ASSESSMENT, MONITORING, AND REVIEW**

- 13.1 As part of its annual risk assessment process the Director will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. The Compliance Officer will carry out regular audits of our control systems and procedures to provide assurance that they are effective in countering bribery and corruption.
- 13.2 All employees are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing.
- 13.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Fire Authority
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	12 February 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy Chief Fire Officer
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Steven Lambert
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2020/21</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The Authority is required to approve the Pay Policy Principles and Statement before the end of March immediately preceding the financial year to which it relates.</p> <p>It is proposed that the attached draft (Annex A) be the Authority's revised Pay Policy Principles and Statement for 2020/21. It is based on the Authority's current approved Pay Policy Principles and Statement for 2019/20, save as amended by additional text underlined (<u>underlined</u>) and deleted text shown struck through (<del>struck through</del>).</p> <p>The Pay Policy Principles and Statement has been revised and minor amendments made where appropriate.</p> <p>It is pleasing to report that the Pay Multiples ratio of highest paid to lowest paid employee (as at December 2019) continues to fall for the eighth year running. This eight-year period sees the ratio improved by 26 per cent since 2012.</p> <p>The Pay Policy Principles and Statement will continue to support and enhance a range of employment opportunities. This will continue to be utilised on a voluntary basis across some roles and functions to offer a more resilient, enhanced and flexible resource, focused on meeting demand and offering the very best service to the public.</p> <p>Within the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Pay Policy Principles and Statement cover reports, a note was made to the introduction of a public sector exit payment cap and 'claw back' termination payments for high earners (The Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations and Repayment of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations). One provides for the capping of payments made to public sector employees on termination of employment and the other for repayment of those payments should certain public</p>

	<p>sector employee's return to a role within the public sector within a short period of time after termination of an earlier role. Firm implementation dates for these provisions have not yet been announced. The Authority will continue to await the final details of any Regulation changes and implementation dates.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>The Authority approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Pay Policy Principles and Statement as set out in Annex A as the statutory Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.</li> </ol> <p>The Authority note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Pay Multiple ratio continues to fall for the eighth year running, with the eight-year period seeing the ratio improved by 26 per cent since 2012.</li> </ol>
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>The Fire Authority is required to adopt and publish an annual Pay Policy Principles and Statement.</p> <p>Developing and maintaining good employee morale is key to instilling loyalty and maintaining a productive workplace. By being fair, transparent and accountable in what employees are paid for and why, and being consistent, systematic and clear in applying reward practices for all employees, the Authority is living its values and showing best practices with its reward and recognition needs.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>There will be minimal direct financial implications arising from the Pay Policy Principles and Statement. Any financial impact of subsequent decisions will be factored into the Medium-Term Financial Planning process and scrutinised and challenged by Members. Any in-year impacts will be considered and reported through the budget monitoring process and any resource re-allocation will be subject to the usual virement approvals and limits as set out in the Financial Regulations.</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 places a requirement on the Authority to prepare annually, a statement setting out the Authority's policies on the remuneration of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers. Chief officers are the most senior officers of the Authority. Authorities are required to state the definition of lowest paid employees they have adopted in the statement and explain the reasons for adopting that particular definition. The statement may also set out the Authority's policies relating to other terms and</p>

	<p>conditions applying to it senior officers. In preparing its Statement, the Authority must have regard to any guidance issued or approved by the Secretary of State.</p> <p>The 2020/21 Pay Policy Principles and Statement must be approved by the full Fire Authority before 31 March 2020. Approval cannot be delegated to any committee, sub-committee, or officers.</p> <p>The Pay Policy Principles and Statement may be amended by the full Fire Authority during the financial year to which it applies.</p> <p>Section 41 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Authority to comply with its Pay Policy Principles and Statement for the relevant financial year when making a determination that relates to the remuneration, or other terms and conditions of a senior officer of the Authority.</p> <p>The Pay Policy Principles and Statement must include the Authority's policies in relation to senior pay on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the level and elements of remuneration</li> <li>(b) remuneration on recruitment</li> <li>(c) increases and additions to remuneration</li> <li>(d) the use of performance related pay</li> <li>(e) the use of bonuses</li> <li>(f) the approach to payment on their ceasing to be employed by the Authority, and</li> <li>(g) the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration.</li> </ul> <p>The statutory guidance gives discretion as to whether the Authority wishes to mirror these headings in its Pay Policy Principles and Statement in respect of its other employees.</p>
<p><b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b></p>	<p>All Authorities are required to have a Pay Policy Principles and Statement. At this time our Thames Valley partners have separate Statements, however an aligned approach may be appropriate in the future, particularly to support collaborative working, sharing of resources and working across boundaries.</p>
<p><b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b></p>	<p>There are no health and safety implications</p>
<p><b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b></p>	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the update. There are no identified adverse impacts on any protected characteristics.</p> <p>Any pay decisions will be subject to the demands of equal pay processes.</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 was approved by</p>

	<p>Parliament in 2016 and came into force in 2017. The obligations under the Regulation requires prescribed gender pay gap information to be published within 'the period of 12 months beginning with the data snapshot date' (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot data for public sector employers is 31 March each year.</p> <p>The intention of the Regulation is to highlight differences in pay between male and female employees, therefore showing greater transparency within the workplace, and will encourage employers to consider what more can be done to close any pay gaps. The Authority will continue to work on closing the Gender Pay Gap and a separate report will be presented to the Executive Committee in March 2020.</p>
<p><b>USE OF RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>Adoption of the annual Pay Policy Principles and Statement ensures statutory compliance. However, as the legislation permits in-year changes there is scope for the Authority to revisit certain elements to reflect the needs of the Service and any relevant reform outcomes from a national perspective.</p> <p><b>Communication with stakeholders:</b> Following approval of the Pay Policy Principles and Statement, communication will be via the normal policy publication and amendment process. This will include engagement with members of the Joint Consultation Forum.</p> <p><b>Internal Controls:</b> Adherence to the Pay Policy Principles and Statement is controlled via strict establishment and pay change approval process controls and annual reporting. In addition, reports are submitted on key reward areas as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Report to Fire Authority held 13 February 2019; BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2019/20:  <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5415/4894/5594/FIRE_AUTHORITY_AGENDA_AND_REPORTS_130219-min.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5415/4894/5594/FIRE_AUTHORITY_AGENDA_AND_REPORTS_130219-min.pdf</a></p> <p>The Localism Act 2011:  <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/content/s/enacted">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/content/s/enacted</a></p> <p>Openness and accountability in local pay: guidance. Published 2012:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-guidance</a></p> <p>Openness and accountability in local pay: supplementary guidance. Published 2013:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-supplementary-guidance">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/openness-and-accountability-in-local-pay-supplementary-guidance</a></p>



<p><b>APPENDICES</b></p>	<p><b>Annex A:</b> Draft Pay Policy Principles and Statement 2020/21</p> <p><b>Appendix 1:</b> Firefighting roles pay rates effective 1 July 2019</p> <p><b>Appendix 2:</b> Support Services staff pay scales effective 1 July 2019</p> <p><b>Appendix 3:</b> Employee Bonus Payment Setting Scheme and Process</p> <p><b>Appendix 4:</b> Impact Assessments</p>
<p><b>TIME REQUIRED</b></p>	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p><b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b></p>	<p>Faye Mansfield; HR Advisory and Development Manager</p> <p><a href="mailto:fmansfield@bucksfire.gov.uk">fmansfield@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01296 744623</p>

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## **BMKFA Pay Policy Principles and Statement** **2020/2021 2019/20**

This document applies to all employees of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (The Authority).

### **Principles**

#### **1. Accountability**

Decisions on pay policies will be taken by elected members - those who are directly accountable to local communities. We will ensure that all democratically accountable members have a significant input into how decisions on pay are made and that we are open about the policies that determine those decisions.

The annual Pay Policy Statements and any amendments to them will be considered by a meeting of the Fire Authority and will not be delegated to any sub-committee. In scheduling such meetings, we will act in accordance with our responsibilities under part 5A of the Local Government Act 1972. However, we note that the Secretary of State does not consider that any of the grounds for exclusion of the public would be met for discussions of Pay Policy Statements. Such meetings should therefore be open to the public and should not exclude observers. All decisions on pay and reward for chief officers must comply with the current Pay Policy Statement.

The Fire Authority will be offered the opportunity to vote before salary packages (£100,000 plus) are offered in respect of a new appointment. For this purpose, salary packages should include salary, any bonuses, fees or allowances routinely payable to the appointee and any benefits in kind to which the officer is entitled as a result of their employment.

#### **2. Transparency**

The Pay Policy Statement along with our approach to the publication of and access to information relating to remuneration will be published on our website.

Although we are not required to use our Pay Policy Statement to publish specific numerical data on pay and reward, we will consider how the information within the Pay Policy Statement fits with that data on pay and reward that we publish separately.

This includes that data required to be published under the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.



### **3. Fairness**

We ensure that decisions about senior pay are taken in the context of similar decisions on lower paid staff salaries and that the relationship between those decisions are considered. We will consider our proposals for the pay relationship between the remuneration of chief officers and employees who are not chief officers.

We will publish our pay multiple – the ratio between the highest paid employee and the mean average earnings and the lowest paid across the Fire and Rescue Service.

We will set out our approach to the award of other elements of remuneration including bonuses, performance related pay as well as severance payments.

### **4. Monitoring and assurance**

On an annual basis, a review will be undertaken on the previous year's decisions and impacts in relation to this policy and a report will be presented to the appropriate Board.

## **Part One - Pay Policy (all staff excluding SMB)**

1. All pay decisions will be fair, based on policy and reflecting the requirements of legislation.
2. Our systems will be transparent and well known amongst staff groups and we will discuss planned changes to our systems with the appropriate representative bodies.
3. We will, where possible, avoid complex pay systems and in determining pay will make reference to market rates in order to secure best value for the taxpayer.

### **Level and elements of remuneration**

4. The majority of staff are employed under contracts with either; the terms and conditions of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services Scheme of Conditions of Service, 2004 "the Grey Book" incorporated; or with the provisions of the local terms and conditions of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Scheme of Conditions of Service for Support Services staff.
5. For Grey Book staff rates of pay are set out in circulars issued by the NJC and entitlements are governed by Part B of the Grey Book. However, the Authority recognises that new employees may be employed on terms and conditions outside of the Grey Book. This includes the operation of the 'Bank System'.



The Authority also recognises that employees in existing firefighter roles may want to agree rates of pay outside of the Grey Book for the protection of services and provision of enhanced resilience, including agreement to not participate in industrial action.

In addition, and in line with our retention and succession planning, the Authority does agree enhanced remuneration outside of the Grey Book for specific roles, such as Area Commanders, Group Commanders and Station Commanders.

6. For other Support Services staff the pay structure takes the form of pay scales with ~~spinal column points~~ two pay points; development and competent, with the exception of employees in post prior to September 2014 who retain three-point scales (until they move posts or are subject to regrading) and those employed within Fleet Management. Progression is based on evidenced performance and would normally occur on 1st April if required criteria are met; at least six months in post, subject to performance and the maximum grade for the post not being exceeded. ~~Incremental~~ Progression may be withheld if performance is not to the required standard.
7. The Government introduced a UK wide apprenticeship levy from April 2017. This levy was to help fund the increase in the quantity and quality of apprenticeship training and to give employers greater control of apprenticeships. The levy rate is set at 0.5 per cent of an employer's pay bill over £3 million and is collected via PAYE. ~~At the Executive Committee meeting on 29 July 2015, Members opted to use the apprenticeship training agency (ATA) model for the recruitment of apprentices.~~ The Authority will utilise apprenticeship opportunities wherever practicable as part of a blended approach to improving diversity and refreshing the workforce. We will reward apprentices appropriately, recognising competence and performance during the various development stages of their apprenticeship.
8. Pay scales are inserted in the annexes:  
  
**Appendix 1:** Grey Book Pay rates from 1 July 2019  
**Appendix 2:** Support Services Staff Pay scales from 1 July 2019
9. Some members of staff participate in lease car arrangements.
10. The Authority reimburses mileage, travel expenses, subsistence and other expenses (e.g. overnight stays, meals and professional fees) when appropriate and in accordance with the Authority's procedures relating to expenses.

## **Remuneration on Recruitment**

11. Remuneration will be based on the evaluated rate for the role, either nationally or locally set.

## **Increases and additions to remuneration**



12. Additional Responsibility Allowance (ARA) payments are used to reward increased responsibilities and duties beyond the normal remit of the role for specific periods, for example to cover managed vacancies for short to medium term periods, enabling successful change management with minimal risk. These payments apply to staff on Grey Book terms and conditions.
13. At the discretion of the Authority, honorarium payments can be given to Support Services staff when they are asked to undertake part of the duties at a higher graded post or duties outside the scope of their post, which is particularly onerous. Where the payment relates to an employee undertaking a proportion of the duties of a higher graded post, the calculation of the payment will normally link to the pay scale of the duties of the higher graded post being undertaken. For duties outside the scope of the employee's role, the amount of the payment will be determined by estimating the relative worth of the task in comparison to the employee's substantive grade. These payments are for Support Services staff.
14. Any such payments require the signature of two Directors in accordance with current procedures.

### **Use of Performance related pay**

15. Performance related pay is not in operation although certain posts attract performance increments based on skill development.

### **Use of bonuses and merit awards**

16. One-off bonus payments will be considered linked to evidenced and scrutinised delivery of performance management objectives and is outlined in Appendix 3.

17. Re-employment/re-engagement

Re-employment/re-engagement will not normally occur following retirement. In exceptional circumstances, where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for a defined period of time re-employment/re-engagement may be considered. In the exceptional circumstance that re-engagement/re-employment were to be necessary in the interest of public safety, any decision will be subject to prior approval at Director level.

### **Approach on ceasing to hold office or be employed by the Authority**

18. The Authority's current policies in respect of discretionary payments are in line with recommendations to be found in the minutes of the Fire Authority on 24 June 2014 titled Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 – Employer Discretions, the minutes of the Executive Committee held on 17 July 2013, and a report to the Executive Committee on 18 October 2017 - Scheme Manager Discretions for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015.



## Publication of and access to information relating to remuneration

19. We publish information in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

### Pay Multiple

20. The pay multiple is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the Authority's workforce. The average salary level is defined as the total of all regular payments made to an individual.

For the financial year ~~2020/2021~~ 2019/20, the definition of lowest paid staff are those staff we employ who are paid at rates that are maintained in line with the National Living Wage and the lowest rate will be that applicable for workers aged 25 and over.

### The current BMKFA pay multiples:

The Authority's pay multiple; the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median average salary figure for all employees in the Authority is:

Highest pay: lowest pay: ~~9.64:1~~ **9.37:1**

Highest pay: median pay: ~~4.77:1~~ **4.77.1**

Year	Highest pay : Lowest pay	Highest pay : Median pay
<b><u>2020/2021</u></b>	<b><u>9.37:1</u></b>	<b><u>4.77:1</u></b>
2019/20	9.64:1	4.77:1
2018/19	9.86:1	4.77:1
2017/18	10.17:1	4.77:1
2016/17	10.71:1	4.72:1
2015/16	11.04:1	4.77:1
2014/15	11.5:1	4.87:1
2013/14	11.72:1	4.9:1
2012/13	12.7:1	5.0:1

21. It is our intention that salary multiples do not reach the 1:20 ratio referred to in the Hutton Report.



## **Part Two - Pay Policy – Strategic Management Board (SMB)**

SMB members pay arrangements are locally determined. Pay progression is performance based, with scope to increase the salary after completion of the annual external SMB remuneration and performance review process. The provisions of the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services (referred to as the Gold Book) also apply for remuneration purposes for annual pay awards.

### **Level and elements of remuneration**

- 22 Senior management remuneration comprises salary, car provision or car allowance.
- 23. Gold Book Pay is based on a twin track approach of an annual nationally agreed pay deal and a local pay agreement. SMB Pay Policy includes proposals to consider the implementation of Earn Back Arrangements and addresses the requirements of the Localism Act in relation to the SMB.

### **Remuneration on Recruitment**

- 24. Remuneration will be based on the evaluated rate for the role.

### **Increases and additions to remuneration**

- 25. Increases and additions for senior management posts will require approval of the appropriate committee of the Authority.

### **Use of Performance related pay**

- 26. Performance related pay will be used in the context of the relevant policy, based on "Earn back" principles and will need approval by elected members of the Fire Authority.

### **Use of Bonuses**

- 27. One off bonus payments may be considered linked to evidenced and scrutinised delivery of performance management objectives.

### **Approach on ceasing to hold office or be employed by the Authority**

- 28. **Summary dismissal:** Dismissal without notice payments

**Dismissal with notice:** Salary payment in line with contract

**Redundancy:** In accordance with Authority procedures

**Resignation or leave date:** Normal salary payment until end of notice period





**Redeployment:** In accordance with prevailing Authority procedures

29. This Authority does not make payments to senior staff members who leave other than to those who are leaving for the purposes of improved efficiency.

30. Re-employment/re-engagement will not normally occur following retirement, however there may be exceptional circumstances where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for a defined period of time in the event of which re-employment/re-engagement may be considered. In the exceptional circumstance that re-employment/re-engagement is necessary in the interest of public safety, this decision will be subject to prior approval at a meeting of the Fire Authority in open session.

31. The Fire Authority will be given the opportunity to vote as to 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.

### **Publication of and access to information relating to remuneration**

32. We publish information in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.



## Appendix 1:

<b>FIREFIGHTING ROLES (Wholetime) PAY RATES effective 1 July 2019</b>			
	<b>Basic annual salary</b>	<b>Basic hourly rate</b>	<b>Overtime rate</b>
<b>Firefighter</b>			
Trainee	£23,366	£10.67	£16.01
Development	£24,339	£11.11	£16.67
Competent	£31,144	£14.22	£21.33
<b>Firefighter (with 5 years experience)</b>			
Development	£33,101	£15.11	£22.67
Competent	£34,528	£15.77	£23.66
<b>Firefighter (with 10 years experience)</b>			
Development	£35,275	£16.11	£24.17
Competent A	£36,255	£16.55	£24.83
Competent B	£38,611	£17.63	£26.45
<b>Firefighter (with 15 years experience)</b>			
Development	£40,161	£18.34	£27.51
Competent A	£41,367	£18.89	£28.34
Competent B	£44,297	£20.23	£30.35
<b>Group Commander</b>			
Development	£46,254	£21.12	Not applicable
Competent A	£47,641	£21.75	"
Competent B	£51,275	£23.41	"
<b>Area Manager</b>			
Development	£54,303	£24.79	Not applicable
Competent A	£55,930	£25.54	"
Competent B	£59,565	£27.20	"



<b>FIREFIGHTING ROLES (On-call) PAY RATES effective 1 July 2019</b>				
	<b>£ per annum</b>	<b>£ per annum</b>	<b>£ per hour</b>	<b>£ per occasion</b>
<b>Firefighter</b>				
Trainee	£2,337	£1,168	£10.67	£4.10
Development	£2,434	£1,217	£11.11	£4.10
Competent	£3,114	£1,557	£14.22	£4.10
<b>Crew Commander</b>				
Development	£3,310	£1,655	£15.11	£4.10
Competent	£3,453	£1,726	£15.77	£4.10
<b>Watch Commander</b>				
Development	£3,528	£1,764	£16.11	£4.10
Competent A	£3,626	£1,813	£16.55	£4.10
Competent B	£3,861	£1,931	£17.63	£4.10
<b>Station Commander</b>				
Development	£4,016	£2,008	£18.34	£4.10
Competent A	£4,137	£2,068	£18.89	£4.10
Competent B	£4,430	£2,215	£20.23	£4.10
<b>Group Commander</b>				
Development	£4,625	£2,313	£21.12	£4.10
Competent A	£4,764	£2,382	£21.75	£4.10
Competent B	£5,128	£2,564	£23.41	£4.10
<b>Area Manager</b>				
Development	£5,430	£2,715	£24.79	£4.10
Competent A	£5,593	£2,797	£25.54	£4.10
Competent B	£5,957	£2,978	£27.20	£4.10

Column 1 shows the full annual retainer  
 Column 2 shows the retainer for employees on the day crewing duty system  
 Column 3 shows the hourly rate for work undertaken  
 Column 4 shows the disturbance payment per call-out



## Appendix 2:

SUPPORT SERVICES PAY SCALES effective 1 July 2019		
Pay Scales	Money Value	Pay Point Descriptor
A (NLW)	£15,840	National Living Wage ( <i>Statutory rate reviewed April 2019</i> )
B	£17,213	Development
	£17,642	Competent
C	£18,524	Development
	£19,327	Competent
	£20,164	Exempt
D	£20,486	Development
	£20,999	Competent
E	£21,880	Development
	£22,282	Competent
	£22,687	Exempt
F	£23,900	Development
	£24,437	Competent
	£24,974	Exempt
G	£26,211	Development
	£26,589	Competent
	£27,117	Exempt
H	£28,632	Development
	£29,149	Competent
	£29,932	Competent ( <i>Driving Instructors</i> )
	£29,838	Exempt
I	£32,621	Development
	£33,512	Competent
	£34,414	Exempt
J	£35,522	Development
	£36,410	Competent
K	£40,359	Development
	£41,380	Competent
	£42,563	Exempt
L	£43,863	Development
	£44,959	Competent
M	£47,578	Development
	£48,888	Competent
	£50,189	Exempt
N	£58,349	Development
	£59,804	Competent
	£61,418	Exempt
O	£63,392	Development
	£64,976	Competent



<b>SUPPORT SERVICES PAY SCALES effective 1 July 2019</b>		
<b>Fleet Management</b>	<b>Money Value</b>	<b>Pay Point Descriptor</b>
Vehicle Technicians (VT)	£28,511	VT Point 1
	£29,116	VT Point 2
	£29,654	VT Point 3
	£30,178	VT Point 4
	£30,682	VT Point 5
	£31,183	VT Point 6
Supervisors (SU)	£31,691	SU Point 7
	£32,213	SU Point 8
	£32,903	SU Point 9
Fleet Management (FT)	£33,602	FM Point 10
	£34,302	FM Point 11
	£34,995	FM Point 12
	£35,682	FM Point 13
	£36,572	FM Point 14
	£37,474	FM Point 15



## Appendix 3:

### **EMPLOYEE BONUS AND MERIT AWARD PAYMENT SETTING SCHEME AND PROCESS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to outline the principles and process for determining whether or not employees will receive bonus payments and if so, sets out the process to determine the allocation of such payments. Bonus payments will be one-off and paid only to reflect excellent performance; that is performance, which exceeds the standards and targets agreed with the employee during their annual appraisal process and prior to the start of the financial year, for which any performance Scheme is introduced.

#### **Eligibility**

Eligibility would be specified as part of any Scheme rules on an annual basis.

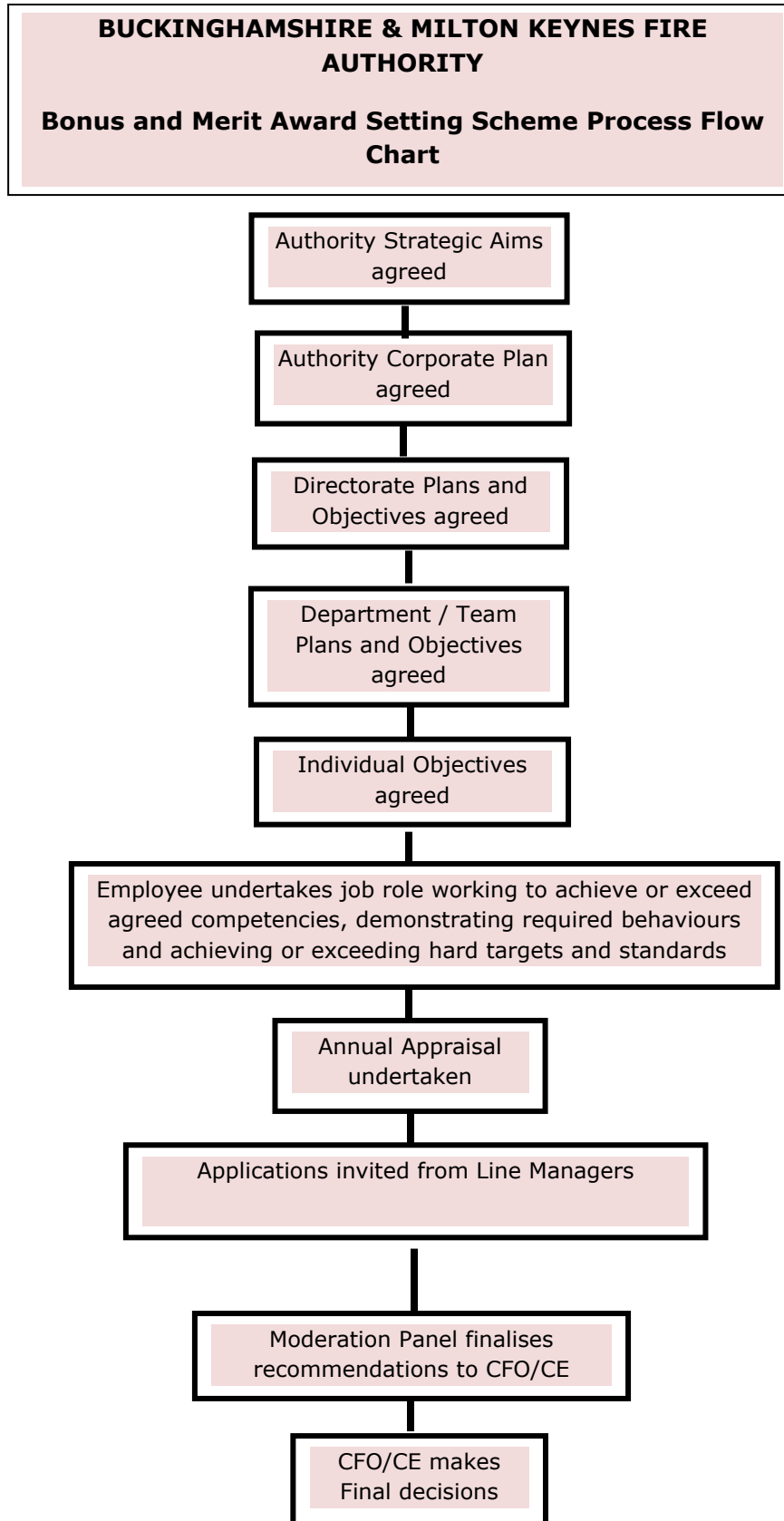
#### **Key Principles**

The following key principles underpin any bonus and/or performance related reward Schemes:

- The Scheme is entirely discretionary and forms no part of the contract of employment.
- The Scheme sits in the context of the Authority's overall strategic and performance management processes, therefore targets and objectives included in any Scheme will align with the Corporate and Public Safety Plan objectives, via the "golden thread" process.
- Payments will only be made where the employee's contribution not only reflects excellence but also clearly assists with achieving the Authority's strategic objectives.
- It is intended to reward those who can demonstrate sustained, outstanding achievement or excellence in their role.
- It is intended to recognise and reward, not only the exceeding of targets and standards, but also the acquisition of the necessary competencies and deployment of behaviours that reinforce the Authority's values and norms.
- The amount of money available to be paid in bonus payments to employees under the Scheme will be determined as part of the annual budgeting process and any Scheme will be self-funding.



- All eligible candidates invited to participate in any Scheme must have an agreed appraisal, including core and stretching objectives in advance of the bonus Scheme year.
- Recommendations for payments under the Scheme will be made by the employee's line manager following the annual appraisal process to the appropriate Director.
- Recommendations will be reviewed by a Moderation Panel consisting of:
  - The Chief Operating Officer/DCFO
  - ~~The Director of People and Organisational Development~~
  - The Director of Finance and Assets
  - The Director of Legal and Governance
- The Moderation Panel may choose to appoint an independent advisor to assist with the process of ensuring that proposed awards are based on the exercise of consistent judgement in both the setting of targets and standards and the assessment of achievement against these.
- Payments under the Scheme will be authorised by the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive on recommendation of the Moderation Panel.
- Employees will only be informed of approved awards and not as to whether or not a recommendation was made.
- There will be no appeal against recommendations or final decisions.
- The Executive Committee will receive an annual report summarising the awards, if any, that have been made.
- Eligibility criteria will be approved by members of the Strategic Management Board (SMB) on an annual basis. This may include decisions not to run a bonus Scheme.
- Decisions will comply with the requirements of the Authority's Pay Policy, which is reviewed and approved annually.
- If and when an annual bonus Scheme is agreed, specific detailed rules will be developed in advance of the Scheme year; for example, new staff who become eligible in year, long term absence etc.
- Any payments will be subject to statutory deductions.







## Appendix 4

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment should be included to identify any issues which may result in a group being disadvantaged by the process.

To complete the table, tick ✓ the likely impact. If you have a tick in any negative box you need to consider why and include this in your assessment. If an EIA action plan is necessary, this can be downloaded from the intranet.

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement. Assessment of impacts on groups in *italics* is not a legal requirement, however it will help to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

Protected characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	If negative, why and how could this be lessened (use action plan if necessary)
<b>Individuals of different ages</b>			✓	
<b>Disabled individuals</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals transitioning from one gender to another</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals who are married or in civil partnerships</b>			✓	
<b>Pregnant individuals and new parents</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals of different race</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals of different religions or beliefs</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals gender identity</b>			✓	
<b>Individuals sexual orientation</b>			✓	
<i>Individuals living in different family circumstances</i>			✓	
<i>Individuals in different social circumstances</i>			✓	
<i>Different employee groups</i>			✓	



Other				
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## Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) screening questions

If the document includes any personally identifiable information (PII) a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be required. This should be discussed with the Data Protection Officer (the Information Governance & Compliance Manager) and the DPIA file location referenced at this point in your document.

Where no PII is involved it should be stated at this point in your document.

The Data Protection Officer holds the master copies of all completed DPIA in N:Common/Information Assets/DPIAs.

The DPIA needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure that any PII is adequately considered.

The DPIA template and guidance can be found [here](#).