

**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	<p>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>
<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>	<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Individual Response</p>	<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. 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.’”</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>



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 tanner, 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>



## 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	<p>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>
<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	<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 our Service.</p>

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>