

**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  
Tel: 01296 744441



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**Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive**  
Jason Thelwell

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To: Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

6 June 2022

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS**  
**AND PUBLIC**

Please note the content of  
Page 2 of this Agenda Pack

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at the Annual Meeting of the **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY** to be held in Meeting Room 1, Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Stocklake, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP20 1BD on **WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022 at 10.00 AM** when the business set out overleaf will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

Graham Britten  
Director of Legal and Governance

**Health and Safety:**

There will be limited facilities for members of the public to observe the meeting in person. A recording of the meeting will be available after the meeting.

Councillors: Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Darlington, Exon, Irwin, Hall, Hopkins, Hussain, Lambert, Marland, McLean, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite, Walsh



**MAKING YOU SAFER**



## **To observe the meeting as a member of the Press and Public**

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting this meeting will be recorded. Please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxl3vIiv7bh1Q>

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 adjourn a Meeting to hear a member 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.

A request to speak on a specified agenda item should be submitted by email to [gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:gbritten@bucksfire.gov.uk) by 4pm on the Monday prior to the meeting. Please state if you would like the Director of Legal and Governance to read out the statement on your behalf, or if you would like to be sent a 'teams' meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

If the meeting is then adjourned, prior to inviting a member of the public to speak, the Chairman should advise that they:

- (a) speak for no more than four minutes,
- (b) 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.

## **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. Such attendance will be facilitated if requests are made to [enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk) at least two clear working days before the meeting. Statements can be read out on behalf of the Member by the Director of Legal and Governance, or the Member may request a 'team's meeting invitation to join the meeting at the specified agenda item.

## **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 (as above). 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.
  - (i) the Capital Strategy
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. Election of Chairman**

To elect a Chairman for 2022/23

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for 2022/23

**3. Apologies**

**4. Minutes**

To approve, and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 16 February 2022 (item 4) **(Pages 13 - 28)**

**5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

The Chairman to invite officers to provide verbal updates on any actions noted in the Minutes from the previous meeting.

**6. 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.

**7. Chairman's Announcements**

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

**8. Petitions**

To receive petitions under Standing Order SOA6.

**9. Questions**

To receive questions in accordance with Standing Order SOA7.

**10. Membership of the Authority**

Under the Buckinghamshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996 Part III paragraph 12 – Each constituent authority shall, so far as is practicable, appoint such

number of representatives to be members of the Authority as is proportionate to the number of local government electors in its area in relation to the number of such electors in the other constituent authority's area.

The electorate for Buckinghamshire Council is 411,005 as at 1 December 2021 (An email received from the Buckinghamshire Council Senior Electoral Services Officer, 12 January 2022, confirmed 'The Local Government electorate for Buckinghamshire Council at 1 December 2021 is 411005.') 67.73%.

The electorate for Milton Keynes Council is 195,827 as at 1 December 2021 (An email received from the Milton Keynes Council Electoral Services Manager, 25 January 2022, confirmed 'Milton Keynes Local Government Electorate as per the revised register on the 1 December 2021 is 195,827') 32.27%.

Total Number of Members :			17	
Buckinghamshire	411,005	(67.73%)	12	Members
Milton Keynes	195,827	(32.27%)	5	Members

This equates to Authority Membership for Buckinghamshire Council 12 Members and Milton Keynes Council 5 Members.

To note that the Constituent Authorities have appointed the following Members to serve on the Fire Authority for 2022/23:

#### Buckinghamshire Council (12)

Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Hall, Hussain, Irwin, Lambert, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

#### Milton Keynes Council (5)

Councillors Darlington, Exon, Hopkins, Marland and McLean

## **11. Committee Matters**

- (a) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

The Authority is required by the above Regulations to review the basis of allocation of seats amongst the Political Groups either at its Annual Meeting, or as soon as practicable thereafter, or following a change in its Membership. In making its review, the Authority is required, so far as reasonably practicable, to comply with the following principles:

- (i) The majority of seats is to be allocated to a particular Group if the number of persons belonging to that Group is a majority on the Authority.

- (ii) Subject to the above paragraphs, the number of seats on the Committees allocated to each Group should bear the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the Committees as that borne by the number of Members of that Group to the Membership of the Authority.
- (iii) Subject to paragraphs (i) to (iii) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to different political groups bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.

Subject to formal notification of the Membership of each Political Group, the allocation of seats on the Authority is as follows:

Conservative Group:	11 seats	(64.70%)
Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)
Labour Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)

The above Regulations, with the Authority's Scheme of Delegation, require a notice in writing to be delivered to the Authority's Monitoring Officer signed by two or more Members of the Authority to establish a Political Group.

The Authority is asked to note the report.

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – 01296 744633

Background papers: None.

(b) Committee Appointments

To consider making appointments to the Authority's committees. The membership of the Executive and the Overview and Audit committees is required to be mutually exclusive.

**Executive Committee**

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Executive Committee in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups (8 Members).

It is recommended that the seats should be allocated as follows:

Conservative – 5

Liberal Democrat – 2

Labour – 1

## **Overview and Audit Committee**

The Authority is asked to make appointments to the Overview and Audit Committee in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups (9 Members).

It is recommended that the seats should be allocated as follows:

Conservative – 6

Liberal Democrat – 1

Labour – 2

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – 01296 744633

Background papers: None.

## **12. Calendar of Meetings**

### Fire Authority

Wednesday 12 October 2022 at 11.00am

Wednesday 7 December 2022 at 11.00am

Wednesday 15 February 2023 at 11.00am

Wednesday 14 June 2023 at 11.00am

### Executive Committee

Wednesday 13 July 2022 at 10.00am

Wednesday 14 September 2022 at 10.00am

Wednesday 16 November 2022 at 10.00am

Wednesday 8 February 2023 at 10.00am

Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 10.00am

### Overview & Audit Committee

Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 10.00am

Wednesday 9 November 2022 at 10.00am

### 13. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

- (a) Local Government Association Annual Conference

To appoint 2 Members to attend as the Authority's representatives at the Local Government Association's Annual Conference.

- (b) Local Government Association Fire Commission

To appoint 1 Member and Standing Deputy to represent the Authority at the Local Government Association's Fire Commission.

- (c) Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference

To appoint 2 Members to attend as the Authority's representatives at the Local Government Association's Annual Fire Conference.

- (d) Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Joint Committee

(i) To appoint 2 Representatives to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Joint Committee.

(ii) To nominate 2 substitute members to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Joint Committee (in the event the 2 representatives are unable to attend).

Appointments to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee are exempt from the political balance rules under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It is a joint committee constituted by two or more authorities under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 but to which the Authority appoints fewer than three members.

### 14. Lead Member Responsibilities

To consider the allocation of Lead Member Responsibilities; and to appoint Members to those roles.

<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration</b>
To lead on issues relating to the protection of our communities, the enforcement of fire safety legislation, and collaboration across the blue light services.
<b>People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance</b>
To ensure that the right staffing solutions are in place to provide the best possible service to our communities; and to ensure that our operations are fully assured and we continue to improve the quality of our service to our communities and the safety of our staff.



<b>Finance and Assets, Information Security, IT and Climate Change</b>
To lead on treasury management, MTFP and the longer term aspects of our finances including the capital programme; optimising the use of assets (including fleet and property); and on information and data security and IT to ensure that we can develop and protect our infrastructure and service to our community.
<b>Health and Safety and Corporate Risk</b>
To ensure that measures and policies are in place to mitigate risks to the organisation and our staff.

It is recommended that:

1. Appointments to each of the Lead Member roles be made.

Contact Officer: Katie Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) – 01296 744633.

Background Papers: None

**15. 2020-25 Corporate Plan: Year 2 Progress Review and Year 3 Update**

To consider item 15 (Pages 29 - 62)

**16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 - Year two update**

To consider item 16 (Pages 63 - 90)

**17. Home Office Consultation 'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service'**

To consider item 17 (Pages 91 - 144)

**18. Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Project Progress Update (March 2022)**

To consider item 18 (Pages 145 - 162)

**19. Exclusion of Public and Press**

To consider excluding the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contain information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**20. Future Senior Management Team Succession Plan Report**

To consider item 20 (to follow)

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 AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY**

### **ROLE DESCRIPTION**

#### **LEAD MEMBERS**

1. To take a lead role in providing support and constructive challenge to senior officers in the development of strategies and plans and contributing towards the strategic direction of the Authority, within the Authority's overall policy objectives.
2. To act as a 'sounding board' for senior officers on issues within the portfolio, and be supportive in dealing with any problems at a strategic level.
3. To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the service within the portfolio.
4. To keep abreast of related developments and policies at national, regional and local level.
5. To take the lead in reporting to the Authority, one of its committees, or panels on issues within the portfolio.
6. To attend the Overview and Audit Committee, at its request, in connection with any issues associated with the portfolio which is the subject of scrutiny.
7. To act as a spokesperson for the Authority on issues within the portfolio.
8. To represent the Authority on bodies, at events and at conferences related to the portfolio, as appointed by the Executive Committee and to feedback to the Authority any issues of relevance / importance.

(Approved 8 June 2007)

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD AT THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, ON WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 11 AM.

**Present:** Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Clarke OBE, Darlington (part), Exon, Hall, Hopkins, Lambert (part), Marland, McLean (part), Rankine, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

**Officers:** M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), S Wells (Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience), S Tuffley (Head of Covid 19 Preparedness and Response), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), F Mansfield (HR and Advisory Manager), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

M Parr (Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services) and K Richardson (HMICFRS, Service Liaison Lead)

Remotely: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Hussey (Principal Accountant), Sean Cunningham (Group Commander Head of Operational Training & Assurance) C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development) and S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager) and D Henderson (HMICFS)

**Apologies:** Councillors Christensen and Hussain

Recorded Broadcast:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q>

The Chairman welcomed Matt Parr, Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services and Kathryn Richardson HMICFRS, Service Liaison Lead, who were joining the meeting for Item 10, together with Damian Henderson who was joining the meeting remotely.

The Chairman mentioned Area Commander Steve Wells who was retiring, and this would be his last full Authority meeting. The Chairman thanked him for his service on behalf of all Members.

To comply with social distancing guidelines, some officers would be contributing to the meeting remotely. Chief Fire Officer Jason Thelwell was also joining the meeting remotely.

The Chairman advised that although members of the public were now allowed to attend and observe in limited numbers, following the meeting a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

**FA34 MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 8 December 2021, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**FA35 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

**FA36 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that after 30 years of public service, Area Commander Steve Wells will be retiring at the end of March. Steve Joined Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service in 1994 after starting his career with Surrey Fire & Rescue Service. Steve has led the response function of the Service through some of the most challenging periods we have faced in recent times and has been at the heart of our response to the global pandemic. I would like to wish Steve a very long, health and happy retirement and thank him for his outstanding service to our communities over the years.

To mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal will be awarded to serving frontline members of the police, fire, emergency services, prison services and Armed Forces with five years' service as part of the commemorations taking place in 2022. The medal, which is made of nickel silver, features an image of The Queen with the Latin inscription 'Elizabeth II Dei Gratia Regina Fid Def' which stands for 'Elizabeth II, By the Grace of God, Queen, Defender of the Faith'. I am pleased to announce that 251 serving members of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service have been awarded this medal and these can be worn from 6 February 2022.

Human Resources together with the help of Training School, Communications Team, and the Organisational Development Team launched a Wholetime Recruitment campaign in September 2021. The campaign attracted more than 250 applicants including existing on-call firefighters from five fire services, as well as Royal Air Force firefighters. Over a period of four months applicants underwent tests to verify their technical and practical competence. Those who were successful progressed to a final interview and medical, which resulted in 18 candidates. The candidates will be joining on 1 March 2022. The lessons

learnt from this campaign will help us attract a wider range of diverse applicants for future recruitment campaigns. For example, we held a 'have a go' day during the application stage which proved successful in drawing in more candidates to apply, as it helped them see the processes involved, and gave them a chance to work on their developmental areas. They also had the opportunity to talk to existing firefighters on how best they could be successful.

Members joined the Chairman and Vice Chairman in applauding Steve Wells for his 30 years of service.

### **FA37**

#### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Vice Chairman asked for an update in respect of Minute FA27 of the Authority Meeting on 8 December 2021.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that the three Group Leaders were co-signatories to a letter sent on 14 December 2021 to Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Fire, and to the Chairman of the National Fire Chiefs Council endorsing the current practice of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service in obtaining Enhanced DBS checking for all of its firefighters on recruitment and on a regular basis during their employment.

The letter sought the Ministers and the NFCC's endorsement of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Services' position and their support for making the necessary amendments to the legislation in order that a 'firefighter' becomes a 'excepted occupation' so that this type of enhanced vetting should become the norm across all fire and rescue services nationally.

Letters of support had been received from the NFCC Chairman and the Minister of State. These have been circulated to all Members.

As mentioned in the minutes, the Chief Fire Officer had been instrumental in the submission of a business case to the Ministry of Justice making the case for law reform; and on 28 January this year, the Ministry of Justice had sent out questionnaires to all Chief Fire Officers canvassing their opinions. This Service's return had been completed in readiness for submission before the deadline of 18 February 2022.

### **FA38**

#### **COMMITTEE MATTERS**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that this was a further amendment to the Authority's procedural Standing Orders to that agreed at the June Annual Meeting. The alterations were set out on Page 5 of the agenda.

RESOLVED –

That the suggested amendments be made to the Standing Orders for the Authority and its Committees.

(Councillor Darlington joined the meeting)

FA39

**HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) – BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (BFRS) INSPECTION REPORT 2021**

The Head of Covid 19 Preparedness and Response advised Members that this paper introduced the latest HMICFRS report to the Authority. The inspectorate published the Authority's latest report on 15 December 2021, as part of the first tranche of reports, following its inspection during the spring/summer of 2021. The report judged the Service to require improvement across the three pillars and identified 22 areas for improvement, and two causes of concern, accompanied by eight recommendations. Additionally, the previous cause of concern arising from the first round of inspections had been closed, and the Inspectorate recognised the work undertaken to address key areas from the last report against the difficult landscape of a global pandemic and over a short timeframe.

Although the closure of this efficiency Cause of Concern could be seen as progress, this inspection had revealed an improvement to the resourcing performance during a time of various lockdown periods during the global pandemic. Over this period, many staff were either furloughed from their primary employment or not necessarily taking their leave until later in the year, which had a positive impact on crewing levels across the immediate response and resilience capabilities. The improvement had not been fully maintained in the longer term and resilience of frontline services remained a key area of focus and priority for the Service.

The Head of Covid 19 Preparedness and Response advised Members that the first cause of concern from round two was issued to the Service by letter on 6 August 2021 and related to Prevention activity, under the effectiveness pillar. The Service provided an improvement plan to Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) Matt Parr before the September deadline, setting out how the issues identified would be addressed. Officers had since met HMICFRS, who were planning to revisit the Service in 2022, with an opportunity to close-off this cause of concern if sufficient progress was demonstrated. This was confirmed in a follow up letter to the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer on 12 January 2022.

The Head of Covid 19 Preparedness and Response advised Members that the second cause of concern from round two was issued under the people pillar on 15 December 2021. Much of the work required to meet the recommendations was included within the Authority's EDI objectives for 2020-2025; including the year-one update presented to the Fire Authority on 16 June 2021. Owing to the deadline of addressing these recommendations by the 31 January 2022, a progress



meeting was held on 7 January 2022, where HMICFRS were assured that there had been continued and significant progress in this area.

The Head of Covid 19 Preparedness and Response advised Members that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Tom Winsor had published his annual assessment of fire and rescue services in England. Notably within his annual assessment, Sir Tom Winsor recognised this Service to have made significant progress in increasing the numbers of fire safety inspectors, developing risk-based inspection programmes and ensuring that protection activity was a main strategic priority. The report also recognised that this Service had been 'creative and flexible' in its approach to using on-call firefighters and by introducing a flexi-firefighter contract which enabled staff to work more flexible shift patterns.

An updated HMICFRS improvement plan had been prepared and would be presented to the 16 March 2022, Overview and Audit Committee meeting, and thereafter to all Overview and Audit Committee meetings. Furthermore, as per requirements set out in the report covering letter to the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer on 14 December 2021, a copy of the action plan would be sent to HMI Matt Parr within 56 working days of the report publication; no later than 7 March 2022.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services advised Members that he understood the Chief Fire Officer and his team were disappointed with the report, but Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was not one of the fire services that he was concerned about. There were things that needed improving, but the way the Service was run was not of concern. The cause of concern was particularly specific.

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services advised Members that the inspection was carried out in July 2021, nearly seven months ago, and he recognised that a lot of work had been undertaken since then, although the report was just a snapshot of what was seen in July. He also recognised that things would have changed since then and recognised the impact of Covid-19, which had impacted all inspections and also this Service had less time to recover back to something approaching normality after the pandemic.

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services advised Members that second time around, the inspectorate knew more about fire and rescue services and the standards were much higher. With regard to the two causes of concern and the general grading report, he wanted to reassure Members that the inspectorate had a very rigorous way of determining whether the grades were fair, and they were also moderated against a range of other inspected fire and rescue services.

The Inspectorate also had lawyers check the report to confirm that what was said was fair and justified, and backed up by evidence.

HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services advised Members that the model of response in Buckinghamshire was unusual, verging on unique. It was very impressive, but what their report reflected was a doubt whether it was sustainable in the long term. The fundamental question facing the Authority was is the model of response the right one and was it sustainable in the long term.

Members discussed the HMICFRS Inspection Report with the HM Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services. Members put questions and received responses. This can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7leYPXI9y0&t=163s> (18.10 minutes approximately)

RESOLVED –

That the BFRS HMICFRS round 2 inspection report be noted.

**FA40**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES:**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 9 FEBRUARY 2022**

**(A) THE PRUDENTIAL CODE, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION**

The Principal Accountant presented the Prudential Code, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision for 2022/23. The report supported the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which was also being presented at the meeting. The Prudential Code was established to ensure the capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

The Prudential Indicators presented here demonstrate that the current plans for capital investment meet these criteria and present an acceptable level of risk to the Authority. The Minimum Revenue Provision was a statutory charge to the General Fund (revenue budget), which ensured that the Authority had sufficient cash balances to repay borrowing upon maturity, reducing the refinancing risk. Since 2015/16, there had been sufficient funds set aside to cover the repayment of the long-term borrowing. However, early repayment of these loans was currently not an option due to the prohibitive penalties on early repayment. There were also no plans for additional borrowing according to the MTFP.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Prudential Indicators for 2022/23 be approved.

2. That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement be approved.

### **(B) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP) 2022/23 – 2026/27**

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security, IT and Climate Change advised Members that there was a line of text missing that should have preceded the recommendations that was erroneously omitted from the paper, which should have read “It is recommended that the Authority be recommended to:” Also, Appendices 1 and 2 had been updated following more accurate council tax and rates collection figures provided by the respective billing authorities.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that the report presented the proposed revenue and capital Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27. The final settlement was published on 7 February 2022 and showed there was one key change this year from previous settlements, which was that the government provided the lowest charging quartile of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) with the flexibility to increase their band D precepts by £5 in 2022/23 only, without the need to hold a referendum. This was to assist these FRAs in addressing immediate pressures and to maintain a sustainable income baseline for future years. The Authority was included within these eight FRA’s and had the option to increase the council tax precept by £5.

The Service’s most recent report (December 2021) by HMICFRS noted in its summary, “that they were encouraged by the service’s work to improve value for money, but still have concerns about the service’s funding model as its limited reserves are being used to supplement funding of its response functions.” If the Authority were to approve a £5 increase in precept, this would result in approximately £1.1m additional funding compared to a standard precept increase of 2%. The additional funding would predominantly be utilised to recruit additional firefighters to build its response functions. Furthermore, the Authority would be able to increase the revenue contributions to capital which would build the reserves that were used for funding the capital programme, in the process, addressing another concern raised within the HMICFRS report.

Furthermore, an additional £822m unringfenced Services grant would be distributed to all tiers of government. This grant was for 2022/23 only and the government would work with the sector on how they distribute this funding from 2023/24 onwards. The funding was in recognition of the range of vital services delivered by all tiers of government across the country. Published figures showed that the Authority would receive £0.355m, which had been reflected in the projections under the heading Services Grant. Council tax collection

funds were adversely impacted since the start of the Pandemic, whereby the tax base reduce by 0.65% in 2021/22. However, the latest projections show a recovery in the collection fund with a projected growth of 2.19% in the tax base.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that uncertainty persisted regarding pensions following the ruling in December 2018 that the transitional arrangements introduced for the firefighters' pension schemes in 2015 were discriminatory. The Executive Committee had adopted the immediate detriment framework in November 2021, and officers were currently processing claims from members who want to be treated as if they remained on their original pension scheme. It was expected that this would increase the longer-term costs of the firefighters' pension schemes, although it was not yet possible to quantify the impact.

The Revenue Support Grant/Business Rates for 2022/23 had been revised downwards from £8.000m to £7.826m (a decrease of £174k). Future years forecasts had been updated to reflect this movement. Previous figures used were taken from the provisional funding settlement which was an estimate, more accurate figures were provided when billing authorities confirmed them.

The Council Tax surplus figure for 2022/23 had been revised downwards from £257k to £222k (a decrease of £35k) as one of the billing authorities had recently confirmed their deficit which was not available at the time of producing the papers. Due to these changes, the Revenue Contribution to Capital budget had been revised downwards from £1.825m to £1.616m (a net decrease of £209k). The Net Budget requirement had therefore also decreased by £209k (from £33.689m to £33.480m).

The Chairman asked if the recent increase in inflation, would have an adverse outcome on the Authority.

The Deputy Director of Finance and Assets advised that where officers were aware of increases, for example, utilities, it had been factored into the budget, but it would have an impact in terms of services and contracts that were being renegotiated. The Procurement team were trying to ensure that the risk was mitigated as best it could be.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that as they were aware, there were a lot of areas of deprivation in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and the £5 would have quite a significant effect on some people's budgets. Any further increases in funding should be spent appropriately and properly. There was a Members Workshop scheduled in March, and the discussion with Members would include taking a longer-term view of the increase in the precept, and the recommendations in the HMICFRS report to try to answer the question

about the resilience of the model that was currently employed, but also the resilience and the longer-term view in terms of some of the property assets the Authority currently had.

Members discussed the Medium Term Financial Plan, as lobbying for an increase in the precept had been supported by all political parties and Members were in agreement that additional funding was necessary. The additional funding needed to be spent wisely, looking at resourcing, investing in front line firefighters and addressing the HMICFRS cause for concern, including allowing the Service to focus on Prevention activities. Members were keen to discuss this further at the meeting on 23 March 2022.

The debate can viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7leYPXI9y0&t=163s> (1.10.45 minutes approximately)

RESOLVED –

1(a) that the report and Statement of the Chief Finance Officer (see section 8 of Annex A) be noted.

1(b) that a Council Tax precept of £72.16 for a band D equivalent property (equal to an increase of 9.6p per week) and the revenue budget as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

1(c) that the capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

1(d) that £600k be transferred from the referendum reserve to the revenue contribution to capital reserve.

Details of the recorded vote for resolutions 1(a) to 1(d) are set out below:

	For	Against	Abstained
Bagge	✓		
Carroll	✓		
Chapple	✓		
Clarke OBE	✓		
Darlington	✓		
Exon	✓		
Hall	✓		
Hopkins	✓		

Lambert	✓		
Marland	✓		
McLean	✓		
Rankine	✓		
Stuchbury	✓		
Waite	✓		
Walsh	✓		

### **(C) MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that as a standalone fire and rescue authority, the Authority had a wide discretion in adopting an Annual Scheme of Allowances. The main proviso was that the Authority must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels of its two constituent councils.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that as set out in the executive summary of the cover report, the scheme of allowances had been linked to the NJC 'Grey Book' annual pay award for firefighters since 2012/13. The application of this index linking had been endorsed annually by the Authority until 2021/22. Although there had been a Grey Book 2% pay award effective from 1 July 2020, the Authority agreed in February 2021 to suspend the indexation for the year 2021/22, resulting in a 0% increase in Members' allowances. If the link to the Grey Book were to be reinstated for 2022/23 this would result in an increase of 1.5%. A draft proposed Scheme of Allowances for the year 2022/23 was appended as Appendix C and showed in the alternative the effect of a 1.5% increase from the current financial year.

Regulations required that the Authority makes a scheme providing for the payment of a basic allowance to each member of the Authority, which must be the same for every member of the Authority, irrespective of political party. The Scheme of Allowances reflects the requirements in the Regulations that allow Members to individually elect to forgo entitlements or any part of their entitlement to allowances by giving notice to a specified Officer. If the Authority approved an increase, individual Members retain a personal choice to decline to receive an increase in any allowance. The Executive Committee had put forward alternative options for the Authority to

agree, either a 0% increase or a 1.5% increase, the latter being based on index linking to last year's Grey Book pay award.

The options having been considered, and it having been moved and seconded it was:

RESOLVED –

That the Authority adopt a Scheme for Members' Allowances for 2022/23 with a 1.5% increase in allowances.

The Chairman advised that Members in the Conservative Group would be choosing to forego the 1.5% increase.

**FA41**

### **PAY POLICY PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENT 2022/23**

The HR and Advisory Manager advised Members that the pay policy was required to be updated each financial year and was being presented for approval as the 2022/23 pay policy for the Authority, effective 1 April 2022. This pay policy was based on the current 2021/22 pay policy and had been updated with minor amendments made where appropriate, as detailed with red and unlined or struck through.

Looking at specific sections of the pay policy and the pay multiples and ratio of highest to lowest pay, it continued to fall for the tenth year, which was positive, seeing this tenth year ratio improving again by 2% from the previous year and by 30% since first reporting in 2012.

The HR and Advisory Manager advised Members that apart from the yearly update to figures, the only other change within the 2022/23 pay policy was the removal of reference to the exit payment cap. In November 2020 the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations came into force and was detailed within the Pay Policy for 2021/22. However, in February 2021, HM Treasury published a Treasury Direction dis-applying the parts of the Regulations which implemented a £95,000 cap on public sector exit payments and the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payment (Revocation) Regulations 2021 (the Revocation Regulations), was placed before Parliament, and came into force formally revoking the 2020 Regulations on 19 March 2021. The Revocation Regulations contained a legal obligation for employers to make termination payments to employees with an exit date in the period the Regulations applied (4 November 2020 to 11 February 2021). For the Authority there were no employees impacted by the exit payment cap.

Since the Revocation Regulations, the Government continued to discuss exit payments and the importance of delivering value for the taxpayer. It was anticipated an exit payment cap or similar would be reintroduced in some form, and the Authority would contribute to any

Government consultation process as appropriate, and thereafter, await details of any Regulation changes and implementation dates.

The Chairman asked that as London Fire Brigade were currently recruiting for firefighters, if this would have an impact on the Service.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that London Fire Brigade were recruiting and advertising widely, he also advised that London Fire Brigade pay London weighting which was 20% more than the Authority currently paid its firefighters. There was a risk to the Authority, it had been included on the risk register, and he was aware of a number of staff considering or may even have applied in that respect. It was a risk to the Authority because of the proximity to London.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Pay Policy Principles and Statement as set out in Appendix one as the statutory Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 is approved for publication.
2. That the Authority notes the Pay Multiple ratio continues to fall for the tenth year running, with the tenth-year period seeing the ratio improved by 30 per cent since 2012.

(Councillor McLean left the meeting)

**FA42**

#### **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022/23**

The Principal Accountant presented the Treasury Management Strategy for the financial year 2022/23, which included statements in relation to the Treasury Management Policy, Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy. There were no significant changes from the previous strategy and the Authority was still operating with a higher liquidity than it would have done previously. However, in May 2022, the Authority has a long-term loan due for repayment. This repayment does not directly impact the revenue budget and funds had been set aside to ensure the Authority could repay this loan when due.

The Principal Accountant advised Members that on 2 February 2022, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to increase the base rate by 0.25 percentage points to 0.50%, with the minority 4 preferring to increase the base rate by 0.50 percentage points to 0.75%. The proposed investment income budget for 2022/23 remained at £30k. The reason for this was because the Authority had a number of investments that were made prior to the last two base rate increases and were maturing during 2022/23. Any additional income above the set budget would be welcome and if the investment income was sustainable for future years, this would be reflected as part of the next MTFP. During 2022/23 officers would continue to monitor the Treasury Management Performance and this would be reported to the Overview and Audit Committee.



A Member asked about the strategy in terms of investing in climate change and the impact of investments on climate change. The Member hoped that in future, the Authority would look at its investment portfolio and decide not to invest in fossil fuel companies or those that promote or impact on the climate.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that the Environment and Climate Action Plan was approved by the Authority at its last meeting in December 2021, and one of the outcomes would be to look at sustainable investments. It had been raised previously when looking at the Treasury Management Strategy and historically they hadn't had the same kind of security that more traditional investments had. However, that was starting to change and there were some investment products that had the same kind of security, liquidity and similar yield as more traditional investment products. This was something that would be investigated during the current year, and a proposal would be brought back for next year's Treasury Management Strategy for Members to consider.

RESOLVED –

That the Authority approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23.

**FA43**

#### **ARMED FORCES COVENANT**

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance updated Members on the work being undertaken to support the Armed Forces Community. The two main areas of focus were veteran walk-in centres and armed forces cadet association engagement. The Service was currently running two walk-in centres, one in Marlow which was in partnership with NHS Op Courage and also involved the Buckinghamshire Council Civilian Military Partnership Group, and one at the Blue Light Hub, West Ashlands, in partnership with the Veterans Community Network.

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance read out a testimony from a member of the Veterans Community Network "Asking for help can be tough, especially for those who have served their country and are more comfortable protecting and supporting others, rather than asking for it themselves. The Fire Station walk-ins provide a uniformed, familiar environment for veterans who either don't know how to ask for help, don't know what help is available or are not sure they 'deserve' it. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have worked hard to make these sessions completely accessible and welcoming and provide a safe space to provide the right support to those who have served." Both events were aimed at those veterans with complex needs and had deliberately been kept low key.

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance advised Members that crews had developed a program of monthly events, inviting Armed Forces Cadet Associations to Aylesbury Fire Station to undertake tasks, such as searching in a dark environment and firefighting. Instructors from the relevant forces would also be in attendance throughout as 64 cadets gain an understanding of what being a firefighter was all about. This would help some of the young adults obtain their Duke of Edinburgh Award and help the Service to build relationships across other public sector organisations.

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance advised Members that the Authority also supported the armed forces in other ways, by joining in and holding Remembrance Day Parades, by providing a safe place for one-to-one clinical meetings and by advertising vacancies, not just operational but support staff vacancies in forces magazines, aimed at people leaving the services.

The Leader of Milton Keynes Council advised that Milton Keynes Council share a specific officer for the Armed Forces Covenant with Bedfordshire and Central Bedfordshire and suggested that it might be something that officers from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services might want to join in with.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

(Councillor Lambert left the meeting)

**FA44**

#### **COMPOSITION OF THE AUTHORITY FOR 2022/23**

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members that the constituent councils appoint Members on to the Authority annually at their respective meetings in May each year. The Statutory Instrument required this to be done proportionately, based on the relative numbers of local government electors in each council's area. The data point used for this was always the register of local government electors published on 1 December in the preceding year separately by the councils.

However, following a recommendation of the Authority, Officers started in 2015 to use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) datasets. Although based on the same 1 December data points, the ONS was publishing the information later each year, with the effect being that last year, the 1 December 2020 figures were not published by the ONS until after the 2021 Annual Meeting of Milton Keynes Council. The only ONS figures available in time last year were interim figures based on 2 March 2020 local government registers which resulted in a 11:6 ratio, rather than a 12:5 ratio if the December 2020 figures had been used.

To remove the uncertainty this year, officers had reverted to using the source information and it was proposed to continue to do this in future years.

A Member asked why the Authority needed to change the composition, if it was such a small percentage and would probably need to be reversed next year.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that the Electoral Registration Officers from both councils had confidence in the figures. If the Authority had been able to use the 1 December 2020 figures from the ONS last year, the switch from 11:6 to 12:5 would have been made last year. The Statutory Instrument for the Authority was clear, and both councils were required to appoint members proportionate to the local government electorate figures.

RESOLVED –

That it be noted that the Councils of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes will be requested to appoint 12 Councillors and 5 Councillors respectively as representatives to be Members of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes fire Authority for the municipal year 2022/23.

**FA45**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 11am.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.55 PM

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority - 15 June 2022

**Report title:** 2020-25 Corporate Plan: Year 2 Progress Review and Year 3 Update

**Lead Member:** Fire Authority Chairman

**Report sponsor:** Graham Britten – Director of Legal and Governance

**Author and contact:** Stuart Gowanlock – Corporate Planning Manager

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendations:** That the 2020-25 Corporate Plan Progress Review and Update be approved by the Authority.

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## **Executive summary:**

The updated 2020-25 Corporate Plan sets out how the Authority intends to equip and develop the Service and its people to meet the challenges that it faces over the next three years, in particular the need to develop the Service to address the strategic context and priorities set out in the 2020-25 Public Safety Plan.

Recommendations and 'Areas for Improvement' identified by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in their report on the findings from their second inspection of the Service undertaken in 2021 are addressed in the HMICFRS 2021 Inspection Report [Action Plan](#) which was presented to the Authority's Overview and Audit Committee on 16 March 2022.

In the final quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year, Service Management undertook a review of the programme of projects and tasks contained in the Corporate Plan, that was approved in June 2021, to: ascertain progress; consider capacity to deliver; and, set priorities for the remaining life of the Plan. The updated plan is at Appendix 1. Three of the 22 workstreams were identified as complete having been embedded as part of normal operating processes. Two new workstreams were added to maintain momentum with the pursuit of the Protection Strategic Objective replacing the two identified as complete (see pages 8-9 of Appendix 1). A review of progress against the original programme is shown at the Appendix 2, along with the outcomes of the Service Management Review in relation to each project or task. The updated programme for the remaining three years of the Plan (2022/23 – 2024/25) is set out at section 6 (pages 8 – 12) of the plan (Appendix 1).

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## **Financial implications:**

Fire Authority, 15 June 2022 | Item 15 2020-25 Corporate Plan: Year 2 Progress Review and Year 3 Update

Successful implementation of the plan is critical to the achievement of the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

**Risk management:**

Alongside the Public Safety Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan, the Corporate Plan sets out how the strategic risks facing the Authority over the period to March 2025 will be managed.

Risks to achieving the plan together with mitigating actions are identified at page 13 of the updated plan.

**Legal implications:**

The Terms of Reference for the Authority require it to determine issues in respect of both the “Integrated Risk Management Plan and Action Plan” following recommendations from the Executive Committee.

**Privacy and security implications:**

No privacy issues have been identified as a direct consequence of the updating of 2020-25 Corporate Plan itself. However, it does include activities designed to address future requirements in relation to these areas.

**Duty to collaborate:**

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty for emergency services to consider whether entering into a collaboration agreement with one or more other relevant emergency services in England could be in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of that Service and those other Services.

The new Corporate Plan has been aligned with the collaboration priorities agreed between the three Thames Valley Chief Fire Officers. It also identifies other areas in which collaboration opportunities with other blue light services and local resilience forum partners such as the NHS and local authorities are being pursued.

**Health and safety implications:**

Some elements of the programme of activities set out in the Corporate Plan may have health and safety implications e.g. Public Safety Plan reviews of emergency services provision. Detailed assessments of any health and safety implications will be conducted within the scope of the individual projects and work streams.

**Environmental implications:**

Environmental impact assessments of changes arising from implementation of changes specified in the Corporate Plan will be carried where required or appropriate. The 2020-25 Public Safety Plan requires that the Service “Continue to identify and act on opportunities to reduce our own carbon footprint”.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

Where required, detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken within the scope of the individual projects and work streams identified in the Corporate Plan. Also, the Plan includes provision to continue pursuit of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives 2020 - 2025, associated action plans and progress reporting against these to the Authority.

**Consultation and communication:**

Following workshops convened to obtain input from Service officers responsible for the delivery of the corporate plan, the updated plan was reviewed by the Strategic Management Board at its 17 May 2022 meeting.

Following approval of the updated Plan by the Authority, it will be circulated to the Service Managers for cascading throughout the Service.

**Background papers:**

The 2020-25 Corporate Plan schedules the key work programmes arising out of the 2020-25 Public Safety Plan which was approved by the Fire Authority at its 12 February 2020 meeting. At that meeting, the Fire Authority determined that the Chief Fire Officer be granted discretion to determine the sequencing and timing of the work required to further progress the approved proposals.

The updated 2020-25 Corporate Plan reflects the sequencing and timing agreed by the Chief Fire Officer for the specific projects and workstreams required to deliver the proposals and priorities set out in the 2020-25 Public Safety Plan.

The updated 2020-25 Corporate Plan supersedes the second version which was approved by the Authority on the 16 June 2021:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/06/fa-160621-item-14.pdf/>

The first version of the Plan was approved by the Authority on 10 June 2020:

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/06/fire-authority.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Updated (Year 3) 2020–25 Corporate Plan	None
2	Year 2 Progress Review	None

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**2020–2025 Corporate Plan**  
**Year 3 Update**  
**June 2022**

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

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**1. Introduction**

This document sets out how the Authority intends to equip and develop the Service and its people to meet the challenges that it faces over the remaining three years of the 2020-2025 Corporate Plan and continue to make progress towards the achievement of its vision and strategic objectives. It also sets out the programme of work that will be needed to develop and implement the proposals approved by the Fire Authority following the outcomes of the public consultation on our 2020 - 2025 Public Safety Plan. These were:

<p><b>Infrastructure projects</b></p> <p>Consider temporary re-location of fire appliances to reduce impact on emergency response.</p> <p>Review range of potential risks and identify any additional training, equipment and vehicle requirements.</p>	<p><b>Population</b></p> <p>Consider changing current response to automatic fire alarms policy, potentially freeing up capacity to deal with an increase in higher risk incident types.</p> <p>Review station resourcing models.</p> <p>Continue to improve our ability to target and engage with vulnerable groups.</p>	<p><b>Civil emergencies</b></p> <p>Review current capacity and capabilities to meet emerging risks in collaboration with Local Resilience Forum partners.</p> <p>Continue to identify and act on opportunities to reduce our own carbon footprint by using electric vehicles, for example.</p>
<p><b>Technology information and systems security</b></p> <p>Continue to improve resilience of information and communication systems via opportunities such as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).</p> <p>Assess, identify and resolve potential capability gaps in relation to emerging information and systems security risks.</p>	<p><b>Workforce pressures</b></p> <p>Continue to develop our approach to workforce planning to inform recruitment and staff development strategies.</p> <p>Continue development and roll-out of more flexible and innovative employment opportunities to optimise recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Align training strategy and priorities to meet future needs.</p> <p>Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and well-being of our staff as their life circumstances change.</p>	<p><b>Funding pressures</b></p> <p>Review / optimise zero base approach to budgeting to ensure that the right amount of money is being spent in the right areas.</p> <p>Continue to pursue the case for relaxation of the Government’s Council Tax referendum limits.</p> <p>Consider withdrawing from some non-statutory services to reduce costs.</p>

**2. Strategic Context**

The table below summarises the key strategic challenges identified and evaluated in the 2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan.

<p><b>Infrastructure projects</b></p> <p>Road closures during construction leading to slower emergency response times.</p> <p>On-site risks during construction such as working at heights or depths.</p> <p>New technical risks following project completion such as tunnel rescues.</p>	<p><b>Population</b></p> <p>Potential for increases in all types of emergency response.</p> <p>Potential increase in accidental dwelling fire injuries and fatalities particularly in vulnerable groups such as the 80+ age group.</p>	<p><b>Civil emergencies</b></p> <p>Increase in frequency and / or severity of incidents as a result of factors such as the effects of climate change.</p>
<p><b>Technology information and systems security</b></p> <p>Disruption to our ability to deliver emergency response and other services due to cyberattack.</p> <p>New risks arising from the introduction of emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, and robotics.</p>	<p><b>Workforce pressures</b></p> <p>Maintenance of range or level of service to the public due to staff retention and recruitment challenges.</p>	<p><b>Funding pressures</b></p> <p>Insufficient funding to maintain current range or level of service to the public.</p>

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

### 3. Financial Context

In February 2022, the Authority approved the budget for 2022-23 (and indicative amounts for future years). The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated to reflect:

- The additional £1.1m of funding resulting from the Fire Authority’s decision to utilise the Precept flexibility offered to lower quartile Fire Authorities by Central Government (equating to a £5 rise in the annual Council Tax paid by a Band D taxpayer).
- Continuing uncertainty over future funding for firefighter pensions and the impact on entitlements of recent rulings that found the 2015 scheme to be discriminatory on grounds of age.
- The current and anticipated economic disruption due to the remaining effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on Council Tax and Business Rates revenue receipts.

The net effect of these factors means that the Authority will not need to draw on its reserves over the lifetime of the Plan in order to achieve a balanced revenue budget on an annual basis.

#### MTFP Summary

Medium Term Financial Plan	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>32,277</b>	<b>33,689</b>	<b>34,160</b>	<b>35,206</b>	<b>36,257</b>	<b>37,340</b>
<b>Total Funding Available</b>	<b>-32,277</b>	<b>-33,689</b>	<b>-34,160</b>	<b>-35,206</b>	<b>-36,257</b>	<b>-37,340</b>
General Fund Balance	-1500	-1500	-1500	-1500	-1500	-1500
Other Earmarked Reserves (excluding Control Room Res.)	-1,304	-1304	-1304	-1,304	-1304	-1304
Earmarked Capital Reserves	-2,484	-4,347	-4,089	-4,061	-4,448	-5,327
<b>Total</b>	<b>-5,288</b>	<b>-7,151</b>	<b>-6,893</b>	<b>-6,865</b>	<b>-7,252</b>	<b>-8,131</b>

### 4. Planning Inputs

This plan has been developed to prioritise and programme:

- The proposals contained in the 2020 – 2025 Public Safety Plan which was approved by the Fire Authority on 12 February 2020, following the outcomes of a public consultation.
- Areas for Improvement identified by the Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) following their inspection of the Service in 2019.
- Thames Valley Collaboration Programme projects to be continued or initiated during the period of this plan.
- Other improvement requirements of strategic importance. For example, identified by recent internal or external audit and assurance activities.
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the final quarter of the 2021/22 Financial Year, Service Management undertook a review of the programme of projects and tasks contained in the Corporate Plan, that was approved in June 2021, to: ascertain progress; consider capacity to deliver; and, set priorities for the remaining life of the Plan. Three of the 22 workstreams were identified as complete having been embedded as part of normal operating processes. Two new workstreams were added to maintain momentum with the pursuit of the Protection Strategic Objective, replacing the two identified as complete (see pages 8-9). A review of progress against the original programme is reported here [[hyperlink](#)], along with the outcomes of the Service Management Review in relation to each project or task. The updated programme for the remaining three years of the Plan (2022/23 – 2024/25) is set out at section 6 (pages 8 – 12) of this plan.

**5. Vision and Values**

As important as what is done, is how it is done, the Service’s values therefore form an integral part of its approach to planning and delivery of its services. These also translate through to individual objective setting and performance appraisal via the behavioural elements of our appraisal process, training needs assessments and annual workforce development plans.

<b>Vision</b>			
Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are the safest places in England in which to live, work and travel			
<p><b>Service to the community</b> We will serve the community by:</p> <p>Working with all groups to reduce risk</p> <p>Treating everyone fairly and with respect</p> <p>Striving for excellence in all we do</p> <p>Being answerable to those we serve</p>	<p><b>People</b> We practice and promote:</p> <p>Fairness and respect</p> <p>Recognition of commitment and the achievement of excellent service</p> <p>Honesty and trust</p> <p>Opportunities to develop and learn</p> <p>Co-operation and inclusive working</p>	<p><b>Diversity</b> We value diversity in our service and in the community by:</p> <p>Treating everyone fairly and with respect</p> <p>Challenging prejudice and discrimination</p> <p>Creating opportunities to meet the different needs of people and the communities</p> <p>Promoting equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, promotion and retention</p>	<p><b>Improvement</b> We value improvement at all levels of the service by:</p> <p>Accepting responsibility for our performance and actions</p> <p>Being open-minded and receptive to alternative approaches</p> <p>Learning from our experiences</p> <p>Supporting others to enable them to achieve their goals</p> <p>Encourage innovation and creativity</p>

6. Strategic Objectives, Enablers and Performance Measures

Strategic Objectives			
Prevent Incidents that cause harm from happening.	Protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.	To provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets and resources in relation to risk and demand	To offer best value for money to our residents and businesses & ensure that the Service is compliant with regulatory requirements and recognised ‘good practice’ standards and can readily evidence this at all times.
Outcome Measures			
Number of accidental dwelling fires	Number of fire deaths	Emergency response time trends	Net expenditure per 1,000 population  Firefighter cost per 1,000 population
Numbers of primary fires in non-domestic buildings	Number of injuries in accidental dwelling fires	Appliance availability	
Number of deliberate fires	Number of Injuries in non-domestic building fires.	Customer satisfaction (After the Incident Survey)	
Number of road traffic collision killed and seriously injured	False alarms  Real alarms	Co-Responding, incidents attended  Number of persons rescued from fires, road traffic collisions and ‘Special Service’ calls	
Strategic Enablers			
People	To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people.		
Information Management Systems and Processes	To ensure that risk, performance, financial and management information is accurate, relevant and delivered to users in an efficient, timely, effective and secure way.		
Assets and Equipment	To provide high-quality, cost-effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements.		



**7. Schedule of Key Projects and Tasks**

**Strategic objective 1: Prevent incidents that cause harm from happening.**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO1.2 Promote and evaluate the effectiveness and value of the Safety Centre against the requirements set out in the three yearly funding agreement.	Public Safety Plan	Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience	Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager	✓		
SO1.3 Develop partner agencies understanding of the risks from fire and other emergencies. Implement a collaborative community risk methodology and targeting approach, to achieve a reduction in risk and impact of fire.	Public Safety Plan	Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience	Group Commander Service Delivery North / Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager	✓		

**Strategic objective 2: Protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO2.5 Review and evaluate the process by which all areas of the Service identify new buildings and incorporate them into the existing Premises Risk Management system. Improve the timeliness with which these premises are inspected by Protection and assessed by Response where applicable by improving the exchange of information between departments when new buildings are identified.	HMICRS	Head of Protection & Assurance	Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy	✓		

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO2.6 Provide training to Response staff in order to improve their Protection knowledge to allow their greater use in Protection activity and improve the effectiveness of inter-departmental communication. Improve the effectiveness with which Response and Protection communicate in identifying and resolving fire Safety concerns.	HMICFRS	Head of Protection & Assurance	Group Commander Community and Business Safety Policy	✓		

### **Strategic objective 3: To provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets and resources in relation to risk & demand**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO3.1 Evaluate impact of strategic infrastructure developments focusing on operational response capability (resources, equipment and training) and community risk.	Public Safety Plan	Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience	Station Commander Resourcing & Projects	✓	✓	✓
SO3.4 Review Incident Command Support arrangements to ensure they meet the full range of foreseeable incidents and organisational capability.	Operational Assurance	Head of Protection & Assurance	Group Commanders Technical / Operational Training and Assurance	✓		
SO3.5 Evaluate / review our premises risk management system and processes when implemented, to drive improvement that ensures accurate and appropriate risk information can be effectively gathered and made available at point of need to improve understanding of risk in Service Delivery and the wider organisation.	Operational Assurance	Heads of Protection & Assurance / Prevention, Response & Resilience	Group Commanders Technical / Protection & Service Delivery North	✓		

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO3.6 Evaluate and implement the results of operational capability reviews, including the operational resourcing model, specialist equipment and skills requirements, incorporating the findings of ongoing evaluation activity.	HMICFRS	Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience	Group Commander's Service Delivery North / Resourcing & Projects	✓	✓	
SO3.8 Develop and deliver collaboration opportunities across the Service, utilising partnerships.	Collaboration	Collective Senior Management Team	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	✓	✓	✓
SO3.9 Mid-term review of 2020-25 Public Safety Plan	National Framework	Chief Operating Officer (DCFO)	Corporate Planning Manager	✓		
SO3.10 Prepare 2025 – 2030 Public Safety Plan (PSP)	National Framework	Chief Operating Officer (DCFO)	Corporate Planning Manager		✓	✓

**Strategic objective 4: To offer best value for money to our residents and businesses & ensure that the Service is compliant with regulatory requirements and recognised 'good practice' standards and can readily evidence this at all times.**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO4.3 Funding: Identify and agree options for optimal use of additional Council Tax Precept funding; review services that we charge for.	Public Safety Plan	Director Finance & Assets	Deputy Director Finance & Assets	✓		

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SO4.4 Implement legislated changes to Firefighter Pension Scheme and ensure processes for recompensing staff affected by the Sargeant judgement are sufficiently resourced	Employment Appeal Tribunal	Director Finance & Assets	Deputy Director Finance & Assets	✓	✓	

### **Strategic Enabler 1: To optimise the contribution and wellbeing of our people.**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SE1.1 Supported by workforce planning, develop and roll-out of more flexible & innovative employment propositions, which are attractive and competitive and result in the best people being recruited	Public Safety Plan	Chief Operating Officer (DCFO)	Head of Human Resources	✓	✓	✓
SE1.4 Develop and implement pan organisational development supporting succession planning, ongoing training needs and future proofing the organisation.	HMICFRS	Head of Protection & Assurance	Organisational Development Manager	✓	✓	
SE1.5 Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of staff as their life circumstances change, through ongoing engagement.	Public Safety Plan / HMICFRS	Chief Operating Officer (DCFO)	Head of Human Resources	✓	✓	✓

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

**Strategic Enabler 2: Information Management Systems and Processes: to ensure that risk, performance, financial and management information is accurate, relevant and delivered to users in an efficient, timely, effective and secure way.**

Initiative/Project/Key Task	What is the trigger?	SMT Sponsor	Tactical Lead	22/23	23/24	24/25
SE2.1 Continue to improve resilience and security of information and communication technology across the Service.	Public Safety Plan	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	ICT Manager / Programme Manager	✓	✓	✓
SE2.3 Deliver improvements in records management, to include the completion and maintenance of retention schedules, to facilitate development of file structures that enable and assure security, integrity and availability of Authority information and compliance with data protection legislation / regulations.	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Director Legal & Governance	To be confirmed	✓		
SE2.6 Refresh performance management arrangements.	Annual Governance Statement	Head of Technology, Transformation & PMO	Data Intelligence Team Manager	✓		
SE2.8 Review / enhance overall Service resilience / business continuity management structures and processes.	Corporate Risk	Director Legal & Governance / Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience	Station Commander Resilience & Business Continuity	✓		

**Strategic Enabler 3: Assets and Equipment: to provide high-quality, cost-effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements.**

SE3.8 Review of estate requirements to accommodate improved flexible / hybrid working, potential rationalisation of the property estate and new strategic facilities as required.	Continuous Improvement	Director Finance & Assets	Property Manager	✓	✓	✓
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**8. Risk Management Plan**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Management actions &amp; controls</b>
Costs of implementing plan exceed current funding allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget Monitoring Process (officer and member scrutiny)</li> <li>▪ Medium term financial planning process / Zero Base Budgeting</li> <li>▪ Earmarked Authority Reserves (see Medium Term Financial Plan)</li> </ul>
Staff competencies and / or capacity insufficient to deliver key tasks / projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Training Review</li> <li>▪ Workforce Plan</li> <li>▪ Resourcing, Retention and Remuneration strategies</li> </ul>
Competing resources for strategic enablers delay the delivery of critical processes for the security, integrity and availability of Authority information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate the risks associated with the delivery of each initiative / project / key task and weight the selection criteria.</li> </ul>
Prolonged business continuity issue (e.g. pandemic, industrial action)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer reviewed business continuity plan in place and tested</li> <li>▪ Employee relations engagement strategy in place</li> <li>▪ Development of resilience arrangements and contractual incentives for staff.</li> </ul>
Unexpected financial pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budget Monitoring Process (officer and member scrutiny)</li> <li>▪ Medium term financial planning process / Zero Base Budgeting</li> <li>▪ Earmarked Authority Reserves (see Medium Term Financial Plan)</li> <li>▪ Reserves Strategy</li> </ul>
Dependencies on external parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contract / Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) monitoring</li> <li>▪ Business continuity plan</li> </ul>
Further delay / failure of the national Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme project (ESMCP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resilience, maintenance and support of legacy systems</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: 2020–2025 Corporate Plan – Year 3 Update

Breaks in continuity of membership on the Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Member induction, familiarisation and workshops</li></ul>
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### 9. Plan Governance and Monitoring

The key activities and projects specified within this plan will each be supported and developed in more detail through annual Senior Management Team collective objectives. In turn these objectives are delivered by cascading them throughout the organisation via our objective setting and review process. New projects are costed and risk-assessed and submitted through rigorous approval processes. Each activity or project will be cascaded to a department to deliver through project and individual departmental action plan.

#### Regular Monitoring

Directorates / Departments will review their performance against their action plans and assess progress of the key activities / projects and monitor their position against agreed performance indicators and risk treatments, updating their progress using our performance management system and its associated risk register.

This will be supported by monthly budget monitoring reports assessing actual / projected spend against planned expenditure ensuring that financial issues are appropriately raised in good time.

At the monthly Business Transformation Board meetings, the Corporate Plan's programme of projects and tasks are reviewed to ensure that any issues and risks arising are, where appropriate, highlighted to our Strategic Management Board, and assurances given that any remedial actions will address the issues. On a quarterly basis, the Data Intelligence Team produce reports bringing a range of performance information based on the key measures identified in at section 5 above (page 7). These are scrutinised by the Performance Monitoring Board and form the basis of performance reports to the Fire Authority.

#### Annual Monitoring

An annual performance report, aligned directly with our Corporate Plan strategic objectives, enablers, and measures, is presented to the Authority's Overview and Audit Committee. Annual reports are also presented by the Chief Fire Officer to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Councils. Finally, all staff receive an annual performance review based on their achievements against the strategic objectives and / or enablers.



**2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW**

**KEY**

<b>C</b>	Project / task / activity complete
<b>R</b>	Project / task / activity behind plan and / or not delivering required benefits – irrecoverable.
<b>A</b>	Project / task / activity behind plan and / or not delivering required benefits - but recoverable
<b>G</b>	Project / task / activity proceeding as planned and / or delivering expected benefits

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

**Strategic objective 1: Prevent incidents that cause harm from happening.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO1.2 Promote and evaluate the effectiveness and value of the Safety Centre, against the requirements set out in the three yearly funding agreement.	21/22	G	A decision on a new funding agreement has been deferred to 1 August 2022 pending evaluation of the effectiveness and value of the Safety Centre against the outstanding element of the requirements set out in the three yearly funding agreement.	Continue into 22/23
SO1.3 Develop partner agencies understanding of the risks from fire and other emergencies. Implement a collaborative community risk methodology and targeting approach, to achieve a reduction on risk and impact of fire.	21/22 to 22/23	G	Comprehensive Service Delivery Area (SDA) profiles to inform station planning developed and launched to all nine SDAs. These comprise socio-demographic, geo-spatial, risk and demand related information. Station planning process now includes liaison and collaboration with external partners / agencies (for example, MK Council to address increase in fires in their housing stock). NHS 'Exeter' data now being leveraged to inform targeting at local level of higher risk groups such as the 80+ population.	Continue into 22/23 as planned.

**Strategic objective 2: Protect homes, public buildings and businesses from the effects of fire.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO2.1 Evaluate and review Service policy towards Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS)	20/21 to 21/22	C	Evaluation complete and steps taken to streamline the process and reduce administrative burden. UFS are now monitored by inspection officers rather than a dedicated UFS resource and allocated to the Protection team for localised follow up.	Project complete and ongoing work now absorbed into business as usual.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO2.2 Evaluate and review Protection Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP), including local and national themes. Prioritise and allocate the most appropriate resources to identified risks, increasing the amount of information shared through Business Engagement to improve compliance with fire safety regulations.	20/21 to 21/22	C	Programme evaluation now complete. Premises across the county have been identified through the corporate gazetteer and these premises have been allocated a score according to risk. These are prioritised and allocated to the Protection team on a monthly basis based upon the risk score. Business engagement will continue and will focus on the lower risk premises or those who we are asking to undertake a self-assessment. These will be reviewed and acted upon accordingly.	Project complete and ongoing work absorbed into business as usual.

**Strategic objective 3: To provide a timely and proportionate response to incidents by allocating our assets & resources in relation to risk & demand**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO3.1 Evaluate impact of strategic infrastructure developments focussing on operational response capability (resources, equipment, and training) and community risk.	20/21 to 24/25	G	Active monitoring, risk assessment and engagement with key strategic infrastructure projects (e.g. HS2, Smart Motorways and the East West Rail line) continues. Work on the HS2 South Portal, a major construction site located just outside Buckinghamshire, commenced in June 2021. Twin boring machines are currently tunnelling 16km through the Chiltern Hills. This will take approximately three and a half years, terminating at a North Portal in the Great Missenden area. Along the route through Buckinghamshire are a series of shafts which join	This work will continue throughout the remaining years of the Plan and beyond. It is a key theme and strategic priority of the Current 2020-25 Public Safety Plan.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

			<p>the main tunnel, the first one is a vent shaft at Chalfont St Peter. USAR crews, in conjunction with SCAS and HS2, have completed a multi-agency exercise to determine risks and operational response requirements. Additional multi-agency drills will be conducted at key locations as the line progresses.</p> <p>Work continues to assess smart motorway risks and operational response requirements across the range of potential incidents. Also, a gap analysis has been performed and through multi-agency interaction BFRS continues to develop joint multi-agency response arrangements.</p> <p>Other longer-term trends such as population growth and associated housing development are also monitored to identify risks and resourcing implications.</p>	
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Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO3.4 Review Incident Command Support arrangements to ensure they meet the full range of foreseeable incidents and organisational capability	20/21 to 21/22	A	Royal Berkshire are the Tri-Service Thames Valley lead for this and have been working with Airbus on the development of the new Incident Command software. A Tri-Service meeting was held in January 2022 to agree commitments and set direction for the project. Draft Statements of Requirements have been prepared for submission to the next Thames Valley Interoperability Group meeting for approval and agreement to progress as a Tri-Service project.	Work on the project was paused by RBFRS for a period during the Covid pandemic which means it is now running beyond the originally envisaged timescale. Continue into 22/23.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO3.5 Evaluate / review our premises risk management system and processes when implemented, to drive improvement that ensures accurate and appropriate risk information can be effectively gathered and made available at point of need to improve understanding of risk in Service Delivery and the wider organisation.	20/21 to 22/23	A	Functional requirements across Prevention, Protection and Response reviewed. Work is ongoing with current focus on removal of outdated questions, addition of high-rise building related information and agreement of change control requirements for system changes.	Continue into 22/23 as planned.
SO3.6 Evaluate and implement the results of operational capability reviews, including operational resourcing model, Urban Search and Rescue, incorporating the findings of ongoing evaluation activity.	21/22 to 23/24	G	Improvements to reporting processes within RMT have enabled more accurate forecasting of future staff and appliance availability (including USAR, Water Rescue boats and other specialist appliances). Ongoing firefighter recruitment and development activity should improve the future resilience of our operational resourcing model with effect from Summer 2022.	Keep in Plan.  Remove USAR from project description as evaluation complete and reference other specialist equipment and skills which will be the focus for the next stages of this work.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO3.8 Develop and deliver collaboration opportunities across the Service, utilising partnerships.	20/21 to 24/25	<b>G</b>	<p>Over the last 12 months there have been a number of projects worked on supporting Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breathing apparatus (BA) - all 3 Thames Valley Services will have the same BA by April 2023. The contract has now been awarded and Berkshire are in the process of transitioning.</li> <li>• Appliances: BFRS have continued to purchase new appliances from via the Thames Valley appliance agreement;</li> <li>• National Operational Guidance - all 3 Services continue to align their operational ways of working;</li> <li>• Fire Investigation - in partnership with Thames Valley Police work has started to ensure the Thames Valley Fire Services have accredited fire investigation.</li> </ul> <p>These projects sit alongside the 'business as usual' work.</p> <p>A 2022-2027 Business plan has been drafted, highlighting progress and the opportunities for the future. This will be shared with Fire Authority Members in the coming months.</p>	This remains a strategic priority for the Service – keep in Plan.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

SO3.9 Mid-term review of 2020-25 Public Safety Plan	22/23	N/A	This will encompass review of improvement opportunities identified by the HMICRS in their 2 <sup>nd</sup> inspection of the Service and the requirements of the new Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP) Fire Standard.	Keep in Plan
SO3.10 Prepare 2025 – 2030 Public Safety Plan (PSP)	23/24 to 24/25	N/A	The mid-term review will define the strategic context and development requirements and priorities for the 2025 – 2030 PSP.	Keep in Plan

**Strategic objective 4: To offer best value for money to our residents and businesses & ensure that the Service is compliant with regulatory requirements and recognised ‘good practice’ standards and can readily evidence this at all times.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO4.3 Funding Pressures: Review options to deliver savings, potential sources of other income and services that we charge for.	21/22 to 22/23	G	The Fire Authority approved the £5 (Band D) precept increase in February which has resulted in additional £1.1m increase in funding (compared to a 2% precept increase). Work is on-going through various departments to best identify how this additional funding will be utilised. A clear direction from Members was for most to be allocated to front line service.	A review of chargeable services will be undertaken in 22/23.
SO4.4 Implement legislated changes to Firefighter Pension Scheme and ensure processes for recompensing staff affected by the Sargeant judgement are sufficiently resourced.	20/21 to 23/24	G	The Executive Committee adopted the LGA Immediate Detriment Framework in November 2021. We continue to process Immediate Detriment cases in line with the Framework.	Keep in Plan

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SO4.5 Process mapping and review of key cross-departmental processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness.	20/21 to 24/25	C	Office 365 functionality being used to improve efficiency (e.g. Microsoft Forms for change control). Fire Authority Members approved contract extensions for key systems during the year including - Premises Risk Management, Resource Management, and Asset Management. A budget for systems development will be available from 22/23 and a more structured process for identification of efficiency improvement opportunities will be introduced in Q1 2022/23.	This work is now embedded as part of 'business as usual' activities.  Remove from Plan.

**Strategic Enabler 1: To optimise the contribution and wellbeing of our people.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE1.1 Supported by workforce planning, develop and roll-out of more flexible & innovative employment propositions, which are attractive and competitive and result in the best people being recruited.	20/21 to 22/23	G	Significant progress is being made with the recruitment of new firefighters with 38 joining us during the 21/22-year -15 Apprentice, 5 Flexi (including 3 transferees) and 18 On-Call. Learning from recruitment drives undertaken during the year and from approaches used by other Fire and Rescue Services is being used to inform the development of our recruitment 'toolkit'. A Recruitment Oversight Board was convened in April 2022, with Member	This remains a key priority for the Service given that neighbouring Services, particularly London, are continually recruiting for transferees and able to pay London weighting



## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

			involvement, to agree future strategic direction for firefighter recruitment which will seek to achieve a balance between attracting competent firefighters from other Services and new apprentices. A new Workforce Planning Group has been established to drive the overall strategy with an initial focus on the attracting candidates from the Asian community.	allowances. This has already had an impact on staff retention and the risk of further leavers remains high. Keep in Plan.
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Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE1.4 Develop and implement pan organisational development supporting succession planning, ongoing training needs and future proofing the organisation.	21/22 To 22/23	G	During the year, Members approved a £50k revenue budget allocation to fund a leadership programme to accelerate development of management at all levels across the Service. The programme was launched in October 2021 with positive feedback from the initial cohorts. The programme will continue into 22/23 and focus on junior and supervisory management tiers. In March 2022 assessment centres were held for Crew, Watch and Station Commanders to identify internal and external candidates with the potential for promotion to the next level and also potential transferees in at their current rank. A further round of assessment centres is planned for September 2022.	Given that neighbouring Services' recruitment activity, particularly London Fire Brigade's, tends to be most attractive to longer serving / more experienced staff, prioritising development of existing Service staff and also attracting more experienced external recruits remains a key priority. Keep in Plan.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE1.5 Continue to explore ways of supporting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of staff as their life circumstances change, through ongoing engagement.	20/21 to 22/23	G	Feedback from the staff Culture Survey undertaken in January 2022 is being used to identify opportunities to enhance support to staff and inform future development of the Service's health and wellbeing strategy. New procedures have been agreed and launched to facilitate flexible and hybrid working. A range of other activities have been undertaken to improve inclusivity within the Service including: participation in the <a href="#">Change 100 initiative</a> that provides work placements, professional development and mentoring for disabled graduates who experience difficulty in entering the workplace; the launch of a range of online toolkits to aid understanding of different needs such as for those with hidden disabilities and users of sign language; and, the creation of specific interest groups. Also, mental health first aid and refresher training has been undertaken to ensure employees are fully supported. A review of the Service's Equality Impact Assessment processes and training is planned for 2022/23. The EDI objectives update paper will be presented to the June Fire Authority	Maintaining and enhancing the health and well-being of all of our staff remains a key priority for the Service especially in the wake of the challenges of the Covid pandemic and recovery from this. Keep in Plan.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

**Strategic Enabler 2: Information Management Systems and Processes: to ensure that risk, performance, financial and management information is accurate, relevant and delivered to users in an efficient, timely, effective and secure way.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE2.1 Continue to improve resilience and security of information and communication technology across the Service.	21/22 to 24/25	A	Migration from Skype to Teams for telephony has been successfully completed. The migration of our ICT network provider from Udata to BT / Buckinghamshire Council is progressing. New fibre connections are now in place and tested for all Service sites and installation of new data cabinets, firewalls, routers and switches, and wireless access points complete. Completion of the programme of improvements including new Wide Area and Local Area Networks (WAN / LAN) is on track for completion by July 2022. However, the project RAG status has been moved to amber, given dependencies on external providers and pressure on internal resources. The Service continues to engage with the national ESMCP project as required and will continue to provide updates on progress to the Authority's Executive Committee on a regular basis.	Keep in Plan pending completion of the roll-out of the new WAN / LAN and ongoing engagement with the ESMCP.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE2.3 Deliver improvements in records management, to include the completion and maintenance of retention schedules, to facilitate development of file structures that enable and assure security, integrity and availability of Authority information and compliance with data protection legislation / regulations.	20/21 to 21/22	A	This project has been on hold pending resourcing of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) functions previously provided by the 'in-house' Information Governance and Compliance Manager role. Currently, the plan is to insource these from an external provider in line with the Authority approved succession plan. The remaining functions of the role will continue to be performed by the remaining members of the Legal and Governance team.	Extend into 22/23 pending implementation of the new DPO arrangements.
SE2.6 Refresh performance management arrangements.	21/22 to 22/23	A	Work on this project was paused during the Covid pandemic. Scoping of requirements will be undertaken in Q1 of 22/23	Keep in Plan.
SE2.8 Review / enhance overall Service resilience structures and processes including roll out of new business continuity management process and supporting software.	20/21 to 21/22	A	Following a review of projects by the Strategic Management Board, the plan to undertake complete re-engineering of the business continuity management process via implementation of an externally provided software system was terminated in favour of making incremental improvements to the existing process. Implementation of the proposed system had been paused during the Covid pandemic and the decision not to proceed was taken in the context of an assessment of the Service's capacity to absorb all of the changes arising from implementation of the Service's overall portfolio of projects.	Keep in plan for 22/23 but re-scope in light of SMB decision.

## 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN - YEAR TWO (2021/22) PROGRESS REVIEW

**Strategic Enabler 3: Assets and Equipment: to provide high-quality, cost-effective assets and equipment with sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing requirements.**

Initiative / Project	Years	RAG	Status Report	Review Outcome
SE3.8 Review of estate requirements to accommodate improved flexible working and potential rationalisation of estate.	20/21 to 24/25	A	The initial scope of this work has focused on the future of the Unit 7 facility at the Service's Aylesbury Headquarters. Exit from this is unlikely to occur before 23/24. However, a further review of the need for this facility will be undertaken in Q4 of 22/23 in light of the impact of the new hybrid working policy and procedures on office space requirements.	Keep in Plan.

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 15 June 2022

**Report title:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year two update

**Lead Member:** Councillor Steven Lambert, People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

**Report sponsor:** Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

**Author and contact:** Anne Stunell, Head of Human Resources  
[astunell@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:astunell@bucksfire.gov.uk) 01296 744621

**Action:** Noting and Decision

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that:

1. The contents of the report, EDI objectives 2020–2025 in Appendix 1, EDI Workforce Data in Appendix 3 and BMKFA EDI Headlines in Appendix 4 be noted.
  2. The revised EDI objectives 2022/2023 in Appendix 2 be approved.
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## **Executive summary:**

The Authority's objective is to embed Equality and Diversity into everything it does, both internally and externally.

In late 2019, it was recognised that a refresh of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives was necessary; EDI group members from across the Service met to review progress and set tangible objectives, which aligned with the Public Safety Plan and would give the opportunity to developed EDI further.

Work was undertaken to review the overarching objectives. The June 2020 Fire Authority approved the EDI Objectives 2020 to 2025 which are set out against elements of the Authority's core values – Diversity, Service to the Community, Improvement and People.

The objectives were further broken down into six, twelve and eighteen month objectives. In 2021, they were reviewed and revised to include twenty-four months. These were approved at the June 2021 Fire Authority. The objectives are regularly reviewed for progress and additions made to support the EDI work. The EDI group have discussed the EDI objectives and to ensure continuation of the strong focused approach, they have revised them, which can be seen in Appendix 2.

This report is to update on progress made on EDI and the EDI objectives. The objectives have been amended to ensure the refreshed Corporate Plan priorities and the HMICFRS report recommendations and learning are aligned with it.

Appendix 1 provides an introduction to the statutory duties outlined by the prevailing legislation and the overarching objectives.

Appendix 2 shows the revised EDI objectives 2022/2023, with actions, resources and timescales.

Appendix 3 illustrates EDI workforce data in the form of charts in comparison to the latest census data (2011) for the population of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. We have reported the current data set for a number of years and are refreshing the way we collect and present data.

Appendix 4 provides a summary of BMKFA EDI headlines.

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### **Financial implications:**

The EDI objectives for 2020-2025 will continue to be delivered from within existing budgets and will help to move the provision of equality and diversity to a more integrated provision within public safety work.

The Change 100 internship programme incurs a cost. These have been agreed through the budget setting process for 2022/2023.

The proposed EDI Champions training incurs a cost, it has been submitted to the Training Strategy Group for review and is subject to approval.

The Authority's objective is to embed EDI into everything it does internally and externally, and to work in partnership to ensure a consistent approach to delivering equality and diversity - where possible reducing and sharing the cost of activities.

### **Risk management:**

A significant identified risk is the Authority's ability to deliver a more diverse workforce within the funding and recruitment constraints against a background of changing demographics.

This report and the objectives contained within the appendices and proposed monitoring aim to mitigate these risks.

Discrimination in the workplace may give rise to a claim through the employment tribunal. In general, failure to comply with the statutory duties may give rise to a claim for compensation for injury to feelings and costs may be awarded on such a claim if it is successful. There is also a risk to reputational damage.

Any new or revised processes or procedures which deal with equality data or personally identifiable information are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

The Authority's People Strategy and well-developed policies and procedures aim to mitigate these risks wherever possible.

Monitoring arrangements include updates to the Performance Management Board, and annual reports to the Strategic Management Board and Fire Authority.



## **Legal implications:**

The Authority is subject to the general and specific duties set out in the Equality Act 2010. The general duty requires the Authority, when carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- 1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and
- 2) advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.

Specific duties are set out in regulations made under Equality Act 2010, which related to the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/353) requires the Authority to:

- 1) publish information to demonstrate compliance with the duty imposed by the Act, which must include information relating to persons who share a “protected characteristic” (see above) who are a) employees; and b) other persons affected by its policies and practices; and

- 2) to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives that should achieve any of the aims set out in the Act at least every four years.

Guidance on how and what to publish, and how to comply with the general and the specific duties, is provided in the “The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty” (Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 7 Jan 2014, updated March 2022).

## **Privacy and security implications:**

All statistical data used to evaluate diverse groups are suitably pseudonymised to ensure individuals cannot be identified.

Following this Authority meeting, relevant EDI workforce data as outlined within this report will be published on the external website in line with the PSED.

## **Duty to collaborate:**

The [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#) requires the Authority to keep opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services under review.

The three Thames Valley Fire Services are progressing common approaches to operational On Call Firefighter recruitment. Joint working to promote fire service careers and raise awareness across community groups with the aim of improving employee diversity.

Collaboration with Thames Valley Police (TVP) on apprenticeships and promoting careers for young people is well established.

Members of the EDI group have been active participants of the Five Shires Addressing Inequalities collaboration (Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire,

Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services) which was originally set up following the Black Lives Matter movement. They have contributed to workshops and are lead members of working groups on a collaborative video, planning webinars and sharing best practice.

The Head of Human Resources attends Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) South East region events. A range of AFSA events are attended by the EDI group and learning, and resources are shared with across the service.

EDI members have collaborated on NFCC consultations on a range of EDI subjects and attend the NFCC EDI Forum.

**Health and safety implications:** There are no implications with regard to health and safety.

**Environmental implications:** There are no environmental implications.

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

Our vision and values align to the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) Code of Ethics which members of the EDI group contributed to during consultation. It was launched nationally and communicated through our internal channels. Our current vision and values are planned to be reviewed in late 2022 / early 2023.

In the 2019 HMICFRS report, the People pillar where EDI is assessed was deemed good. In the 2021 HMICFRS Covid-19 report "staff wellbeing was a clear priority." In the forthcoming inspection EDI will be a key area; the EDI group welcome the external review and will ensure EDI development areas will be worked on, to drive improvement.

The 2021 HMICFRS Pandemic report stated "The service communicated well with its staff throughout the pandemic and provided guidance and support on wellbeing. Extra wellbeing services were put in place for those at higher risk of COVID-19 including black, Asian and minority ethnic staff. The service also provided coronavirus testing to staff and their families who were showing symptoms of the virus. The service made sure all staff had the resources they needed to do their jobs effectively, including extra IT and new flexible working arrangements. It has continued to collaborate with its partners, and has supported the Thames Valley LRF effectively" In the December 2021 HMICFRS report a Cause of Concern was reported for the People Pillar. The Service has met with them regularly to show the progress made and future plans.

The Service has a statutory obligation under equality legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The Authority's People Strategy, policies, and procedures aim to support it in meeting these requirements. Diversity is one of our core values. Employee engagement workshops have been undertaken across the Service by the Station Commander - HR Projects to raise awareness of the People strategy and aid discussion.

The culture survey took place in January 2022, 75 per cent of employees completed it. The results were analysed by the Employee Engagement Group and Listening workshops undertaken throughout April and May 2022.

If we have greater representation of our diverse communities, then we will be able to find solutions to barriers in relation to employment and accessing services.

Staff are encouraged to disclose their protected characteristics; the data is used to inform our EDI strategies. The EDI workforce data in Appendix 3, is presented to ensure it is inclusive and can be viewed by individuals who find it hard to distinguish between different colours.

Recruitment Strategies are in place to improve the diversity of the workforce. The Authority continues to support the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN). This network is proving helpful in sourcing and sharing best practice to improve workforce diversity.

The Recruitment Oversight Board and Workforce Planning Group meet regularly to review progress on our recruitment strategy, community engagement and future plans.

The Authority's innovative Apprenticeship programme provides an excellent opportunity to improve the diversity make-up of the Authority.

#### **Consultation and communication:**

A comprehensive communication and consultation programme is in position to ensure the Authority is best placed to move the EDI agenda forward in a positive and co-ordinated way. For example, EDI is an agenda item at the Joint Consultation Forum, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Performance Management Board. The Head of Human Resources attends Senior Management Team on a weekly basis and gives formal updates at the monthly formal Senior Management Board meetings.

The EDI Group is jointly chaired by the Head of Human Resources and Deputy Director of Finance and Assets, and attended by the Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance and Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. The group's terms of reference include supporting the Authority to strive for future improvements in EDI and developing networks to enable the sharing of best practice.

This report promotes Equality and Diversity and is intended to comply with the PSED.

This report fulfils the Authority's legislative requirements under the Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2017 and complements the Authority's strategic objectives.

This paper has been discussed at the 6 April 2022 Joint Consultation Forum and reviewed and approved at the monthly EDI Group meetings, at Performance Management Board on 28 April 2022, and Strategic Management Board on 17 May 2022.

#### **Background papers:**

March 2022 Executive Committee – Gender Pay Gap Report

Fire Authority, 15 June 2022 | Item 16 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020–2025 – Year two update

[Gender Pay Gap report](#)

HMICFRS report December 2021

[Buckinghamshire - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectrates.gov.uk\)](#)

October 2021 Fire Authority - People Strategy

[People Strategy October 2021](#)

June 2021 Fire Authority – EDI objectives 2020 – 2025 – Year one update

[BMKFA June 2021 EDI Objectives](#)

January 2021 Covid-19 Inspection report

[COVID-19 inspection: Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service \(justiceinspectrates.gov.uk\)](#)

June 2020 Fire Authority – EDI Objectives 2020 – 2025

[BMKFA, 10 June 2020 EDI Objectives](#)

HMICFRS report 17 December 2019

<https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/frs-assessment/frs-2018/buckinghamshire/>

The Equality Act 2010

The Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/353/contents/made>

The Equalities Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/172/contents/made>

The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty (EHRC 7 Jan 2014, updated March 2022:

[The Essential Guide to the Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Introduction; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives 2020 – 2025	
2	EDI Objectives 2022/2023	
3	EDI workforce data	
4	BMKFA EDI Headlines	

## **Introduction**

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) is fully committed to Equality and Diversity. The Authority recognises fairness and inclusion is fundamental to everything it does, to achieve its vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live work and travel.

The Authority believes a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the local working population will create a stronger, more enriched and well-informed organisation, able to meet the expectations of a modern Fire and Rescue Service. This is a key aspect of our People Strategy. The Authority's objective is to embed Equality and Diversity into everything it does internally and externally.

The Authority recognises having a diverse flexible workforce, which better reflects the community it serves, can enhance performance as well as improve its service to the community.

Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector organisations are expected to use this understanding to demonstrate 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by, or under, the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The aim of the PSED is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public authorities so they tackle discrimination and inequality, and contribute to making society fairer.

The Equality Duty covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The duty applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 that came into effect in 2017 require public sector organisations employing over 250 staff

## Appendix 1

### Introduction: Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives 2020–2025

to carry out gender pay gap reporting. In accordance with the Regulations, the Authority is required to annually publish six pieces of prescribed data about the pay and bonuses of male and female workers within the organisation:

1. Mean gender pay gap in hourly pay
2. Median gender pay gap in hourly pay
3. Mean bonus gender pay gap
4. Median bonus gender pay gap
5. Proportion of males and females receiving a bonus payment
6. Proportion of males and females in each pay quartile

This data must be published 'within the period of 12 months beginning with the snapshot date' (Regulation 2(2)). The snapshot date for public sector employers is 31 March each year.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Objectives 2020 - 2025**

The Authority's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020 to 2025, which were approved at the June 2020 Fire Authority are set out against elements of the Authority's core values:

- **Diversity** - Our culture will engage and value diversity and difference to enhance our service offering to the public.
- **Service to the Community** - We will provide a more diverse range of services to better protect the communities we serve.
- **Improvement** - Our employment offer will be inclusive and embrace flexibility to support improved diversity representation across the service.
- **People** - We aim to be an employer of choice, attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing staff from diverse backgrounds, to reflect the communities we serve.

Progress against objectives has been reported to the Fire Authority on an annual basis. Regular updates are planned against the EDI objectives detailed in Appendix 2. For the BMKFA EDI headlines, please see the Appendix 4.

## Appendix 2 EDI Objectives 2022/2023

Please find below the proposed EDI Objectives for 2022/2023

<b>EDI Objective</b>	<b>Actions Associated</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Timescales</b>
Change 100 Internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with Provider</li> <li>• Document completion</li> <li>• Role profile written</li> <li>• HR and Host department preparation</li> <li>• Selection process undertaken</li> <li>• HR Administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host department time</li> <li>• Human Resources planning and implementation time</li> <li>• Budget £10K per annum</li> </ul>	Quarter 2 and 3 2022 and yearly as per approved budget
EDI Champions training for EDI group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact training providers for specification and costings</li> <li>• Submit proposal to Training Strategy Group</li> <li>• Following approval, organisation of training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Administration</li> <li>• External provider time</li> <li>• Budget £750 agreed by Training Strategy Group</li> <li>• EDI group members</li> </ul>	Quarter 3 2022
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Review, consultation and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review current guidance and templates</li> <li>• Undertake consultation</li> <li>• Seek approval using governance in place</li> <li>• Implement new guidance, training materials and templates</li> <li>• Utilise NFCC guidance, videos etc. to complement our guidance and templates</li> <li>• Communicate and train on the importance of carrying out EIA's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group members</li> <li>• HR team time</li> <li>• OD team time for building e-learning packages</li> <li>• Communications and Marketing teams time</li> </ul>	Quarter 2 and 3 2022

Appendix 2 EDI Objectives 2022/2023

<p>Individual training toolkits for example Hidden Disabilities, Sign Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toolkit designed</li> <li>• Toolkit implementation and communications to the Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group members time</li> <li>• OD team time for building e-learning packages</li> <li>• Communications and Marketing team time</li> </ul>	<p>Quarter 1 2022 and ongoing</p>
<p>Create interest groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group Members and Officers to create specific interest group – internally and nationally</li> <li>• Gauge interest from employees</li> <li>• Set up meetings</li> <li>• Write terms of reference</li> <li>• Communicate meetings and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group member or Officer time</li> <li>• Communication and Marketing teams’ time</li> </ul>	<p>Quarter 2 2022 and ongoing</p>
<p>EDI Calendar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI calendar in place</li> <li>• Updates given at monthly EDI group</li> <li>• EDI group members to write articles and communicate via social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group members time</li> <li>• Officer time</li> </ul>	<p>Quarter 1 2022 and ongoing</p>
<p>Community engagement to increase the diversity of the service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at community events for example recruitment activities - “Have a go” days, apprenticeship and careers fairs</li> <li>• Focus on specific protected characteristics as per the Recruitment Oversight Board and Workforce Planning Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers across the Service</li> <li>• HR team time</li> <li>• Communication and Marketing teams time</li> </ul>	<p>Quarter 1 2022 and ongoing</p>



Appendix 2 EDI Objectives 2022/2023

Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete ENEI TIDE survey, attaching evidence and submit</li> <li>• Review report findings and implement areas of best practice, where applicable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI group members time</li> </ul>	Quarter 1 2022 and annually
Addressing Inequalities Five Shires collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend monthly meetings and work on joint collaboration projects, sharing best practice and EDI work to date and planned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of Human Resources</li> </ul>	Quarter 1 2022 and ongoing
Focus on ensuring our current employees have what they need to carry out their role effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality impact assessments are carried out on our premises to ensure equality of access for all employees</li> <li>• Meetings undertaken with under-represented groups on their individual needs for example female Firefighters and uniform, facilities on station and welfare whilst at incidents</li> <li>• Scope written for work to be carried out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities team</li> <li>• Group Commanders</li> <li>• Station Commanders</li> <li>• EDI group members</li> <li>• Technical Team</li> </ul>	Quarter 1 2022 and ongoing

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## **Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data**

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### **Notes about the dataset**

#### **Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) Workforce data**

The data provided in this report is set at 31 March 2022.

The majority of BFRS employee figures within this document include employees being counted once only, based on their primary role in the organisation. This, however, does not account for our entire On Call population as some Wholetime and Support employees have secondary employment in On Call roles at BFRS. To reflect the diversity of On Call as an entire group, the On Call figures include *all* employees with On Call roles being counted once only. Please note employees with more than one role will be included in more than one group.

BFRS does not hold enough available information to report on all the protected characteristics within BFRS (specifically religion, sexual orientation and disability). Therefore, these have not been included in this report.

#### **Nomis population data**

Population information is extracted from a range of data available on the Nomis website, based on the 2011 Census to provide a comparison with our local communities (Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire). It is important to bear in mind that this information is now ten years old. Data from the recent (2021) Census is not yet available and therefore comparisons with the communities are limited, with the focus of this report being on BFRS employees alone.

Please note that for the purpose of this report, figures have been rounded to one decimal place which may affect some of the totals shown.

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\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

# Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

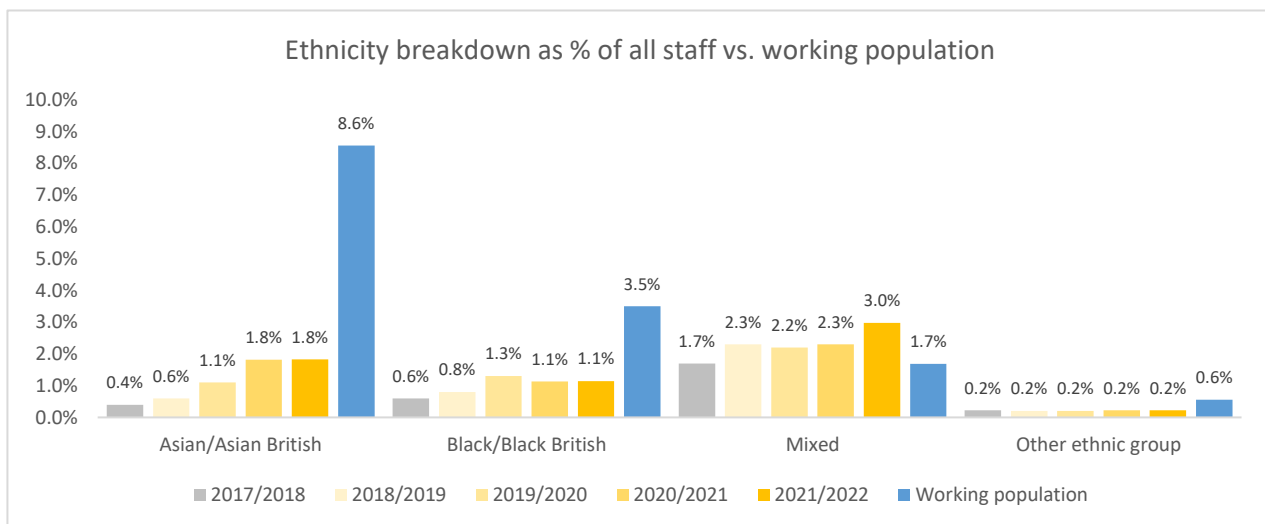
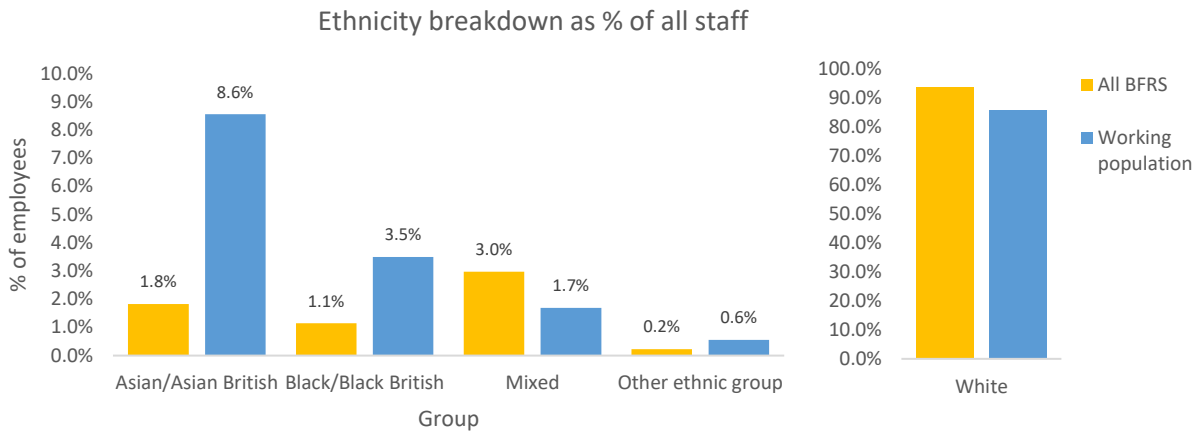
## 1. BFRS vs. Public (working population)

The following charts examine how well diversity within BFRS reflects that of our local communities (Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire) according to the 2011 Census.

### 1.1 Ethnicity

The following chart depicts the ethnicity breakdown of employees as a percentage of all staff. It compares BFRS against the working age population (Age 16 to 74).

Please note percentages in the below chart are calculated on the number of employees at BFRS for whom we hold data. 8.2 per cent of employees have not declared their ethnicity and are excluded from these figures.



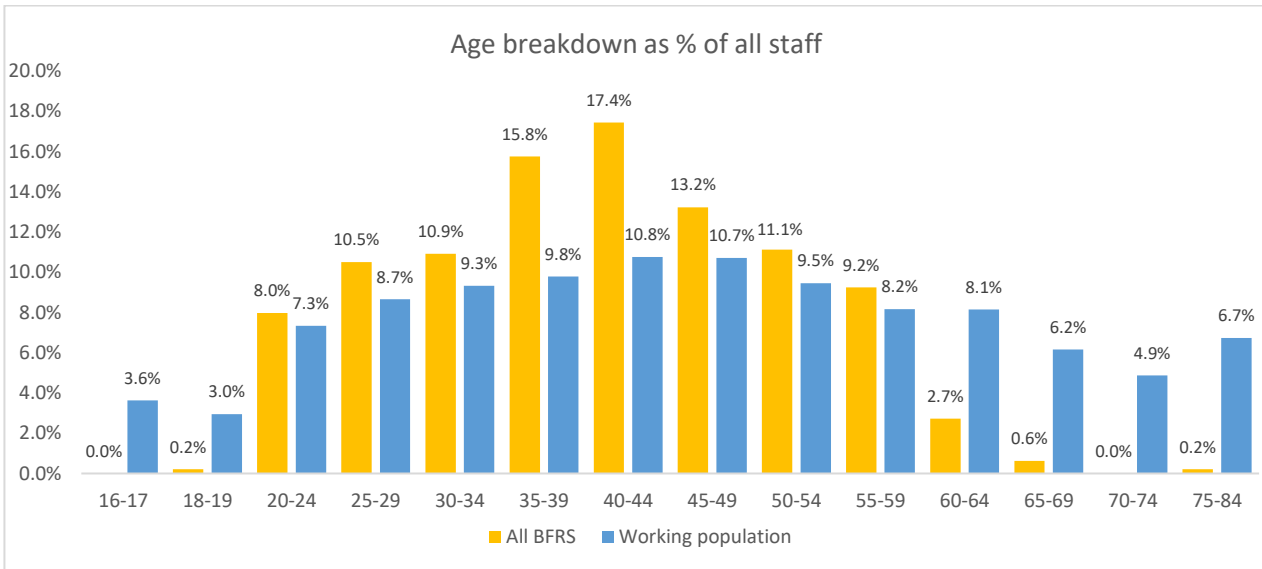
\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crowded firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

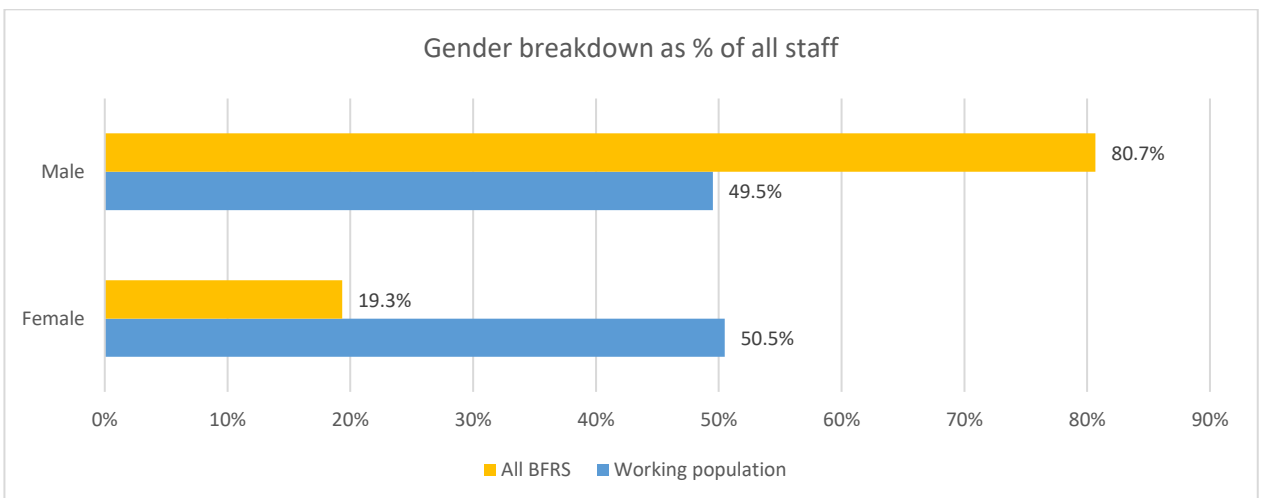
### 1.2 Age

The working population is relatively evenly spread between the ages of 20 and 65, however, it is clear at BFRS that the two largest age groups range between age 35 and 44.



### 1.3 Gender

At BFRS, the number of male employees outweighs that of female employees, with the current male population making up approximately 80 per cent of the organisation. In contrast, females account for the majority of the working age population with 50.5 per cent.



\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crowded firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

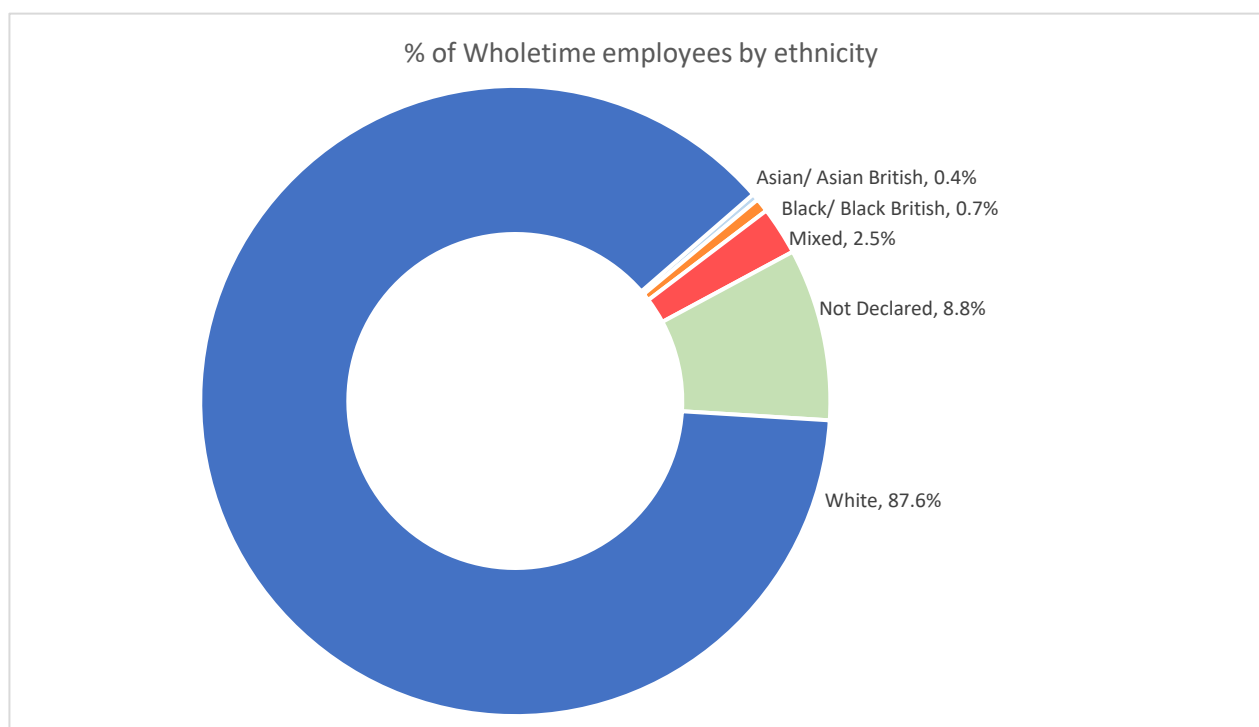
### 2. Diversity of BFRS workforce

The remaining charts in this report focus entirely on the diversity of BFRS employees within each of the core employee groups: - Wholetime (including Apprentices), On Call (all employees with On Call roles) and Support staff.

Employees with more than one role have been counted once within each of the relevant groups. For instance, a Wholetime employee with an additional On Call role is counted in both the Wholetime and On Call groups.

#### 2.1 Wholetime employees

##### 2.1.1 Ethnicity



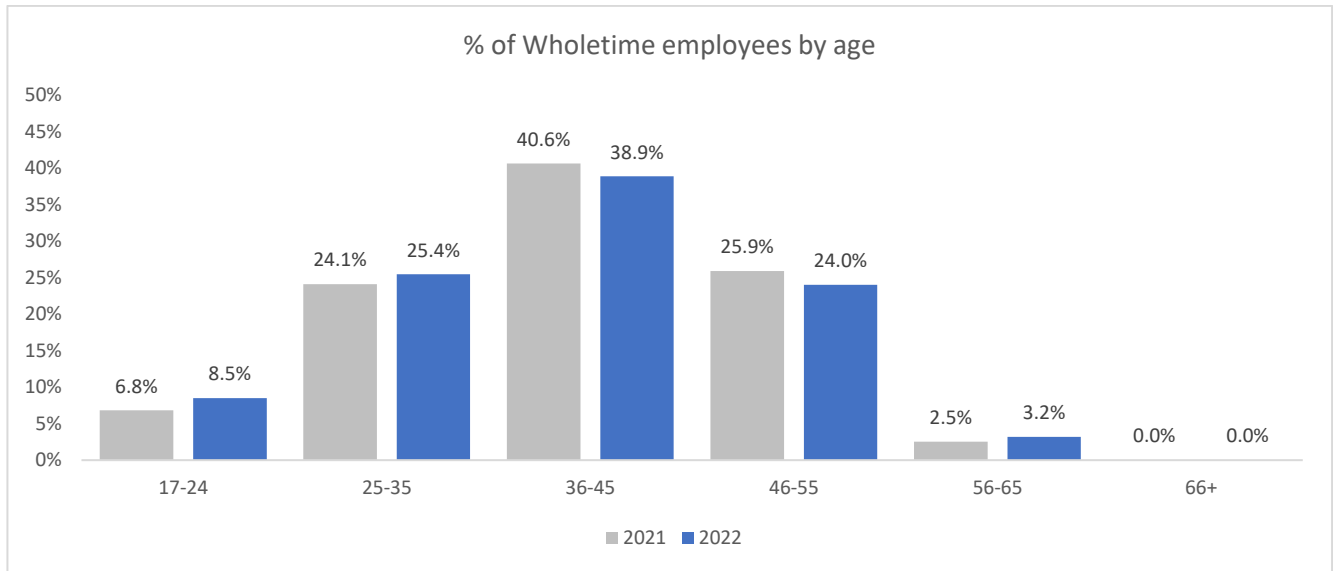
The above chart provides a breakdown of ethnicity for Wholetime employees in 2022. The total number of employees in minority ethnic groups make up 3.5 per cent of the group.

\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

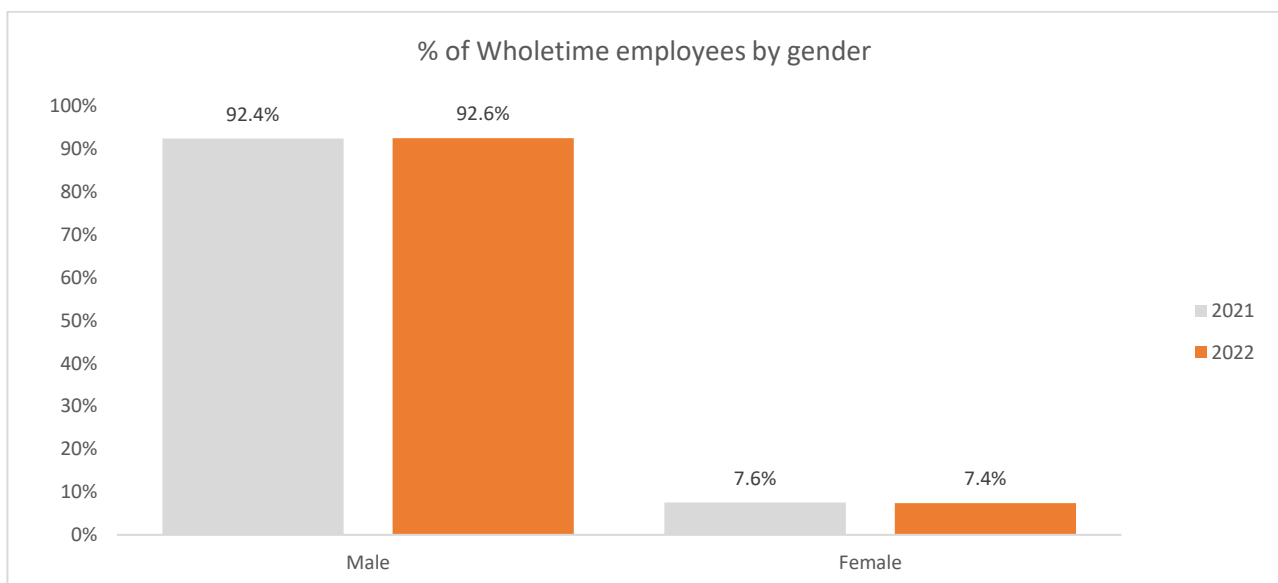
## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

### 2.1.2 Age



The above chart displays the range of ages that make up the Wholetime firefighter group. The majority of Wholetime firefighters fall within the 36 to 45 year age bracket, with the average age of a BFRS Wholetime firefighter standing at 39 at the end of March 2022.

### 2.1.3 Gender



\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

07/04/2022

## **Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data**

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### **2.1.3 Gender continued**

The above chart shows the split of male and female Wholetime employees in 2021 compared to now, in 2022. The number of females has decreased by 0.2 per cent since 2021.

Female Wholetime firefighters make up just 4.4 per cent of the total organisation. This is an improvement on the 0.1 per cent they represented in 2021. Male Wholetime firefighters have seen little change in numbers since 2021 and make up 55 per cent of the organisation.

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\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

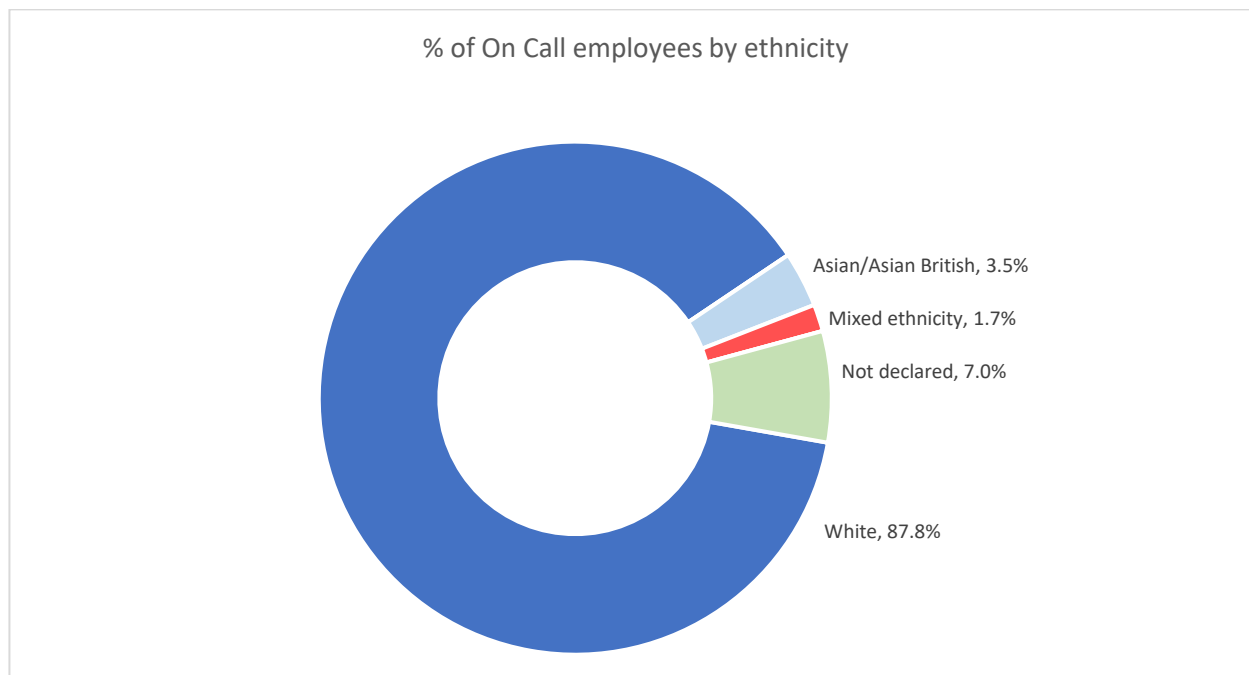
Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census



## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

### 2.2 On Call employees

#### 2.2.1 Ethnicity



Numbers of On Call employees within the minority ethnic groupings are low, making up just 5.2 per cent, as demonstrated in the chart above.

#### 2.2.2 Age

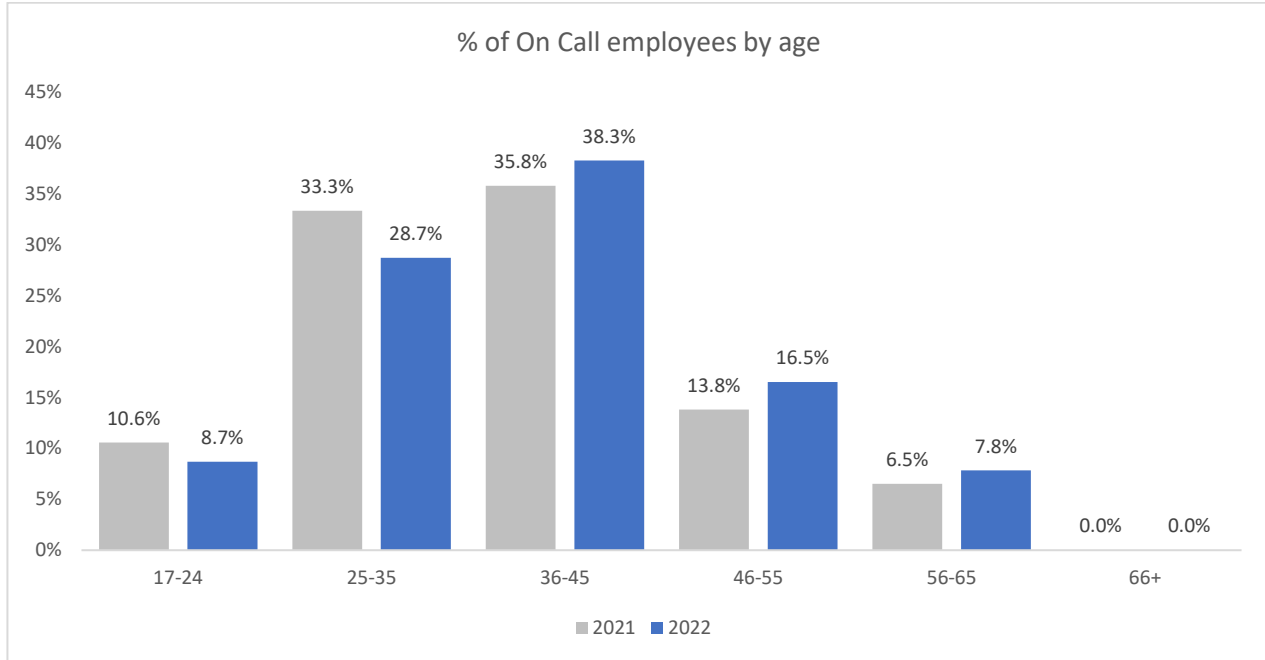
In 2021, the age breakdown of On Call employees is more closely representative of those for Wholetime firefighters with more employees in the 36 to 45 age range as demonstrated in the following chart. This is partly because the On Call group includes employees whose primary role is within Wholetime, and who have secondary On Call roles.

\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

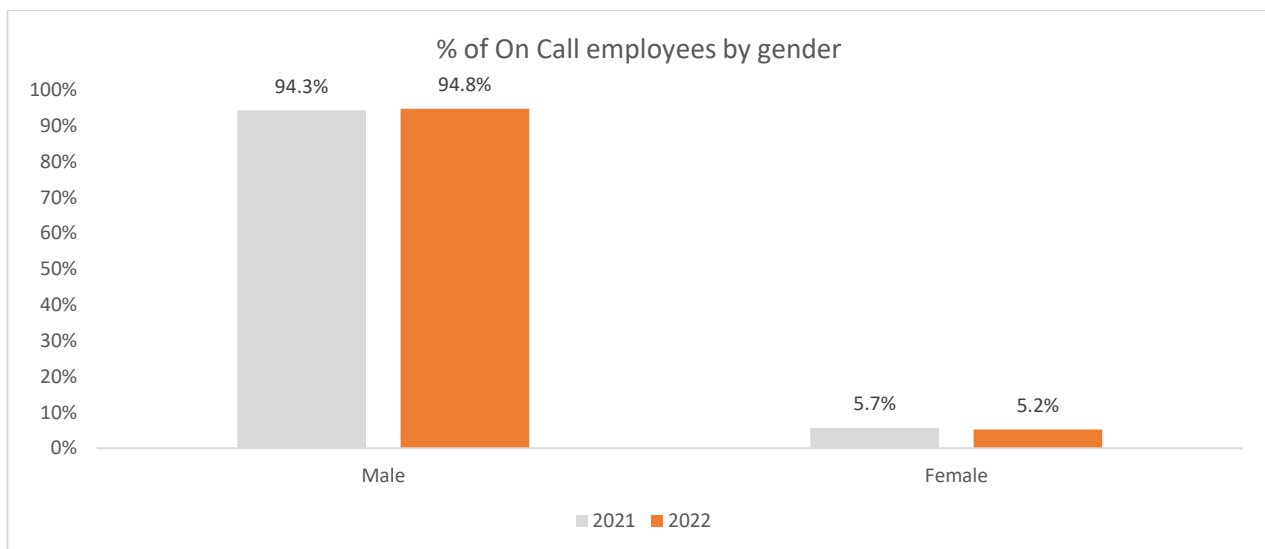
## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

### 2.2.2 Age continued



### 2.2.3 Gender

Similar to the Wholetime group, On Call employees are predominantly male, representing 94.8 per cent of all On Call employees in 2022, an increase of 0.5 per cent since 2021. It is worth noting that On Call diversity is constantly changing due to turnover.



\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crowded firefighters and secondees.

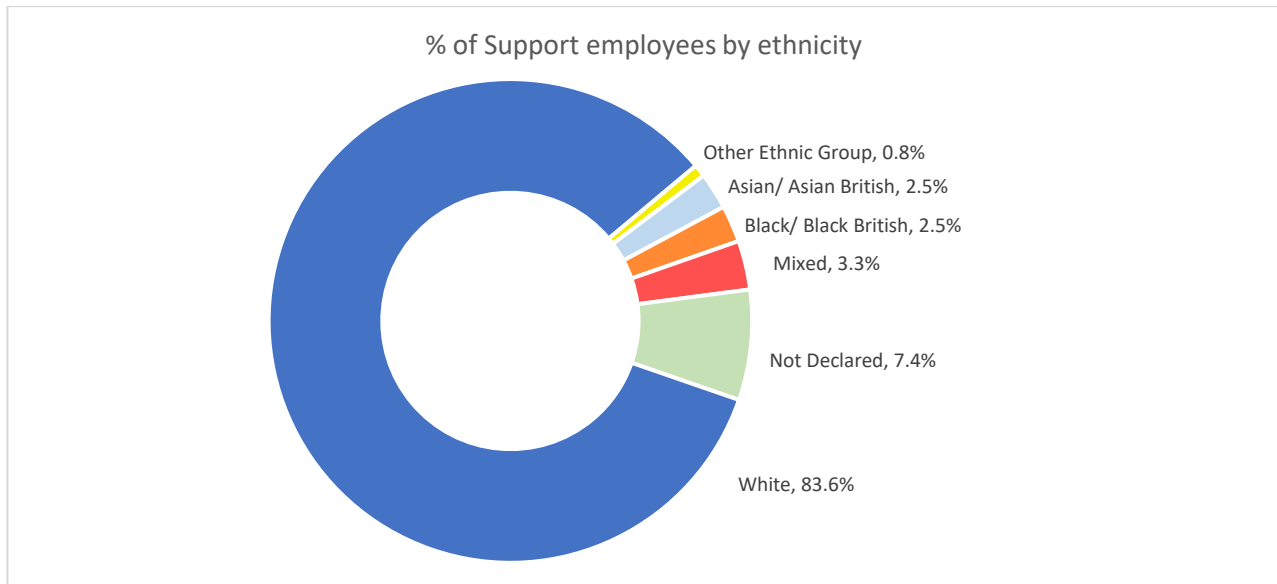
Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

### 2.3 Support employees

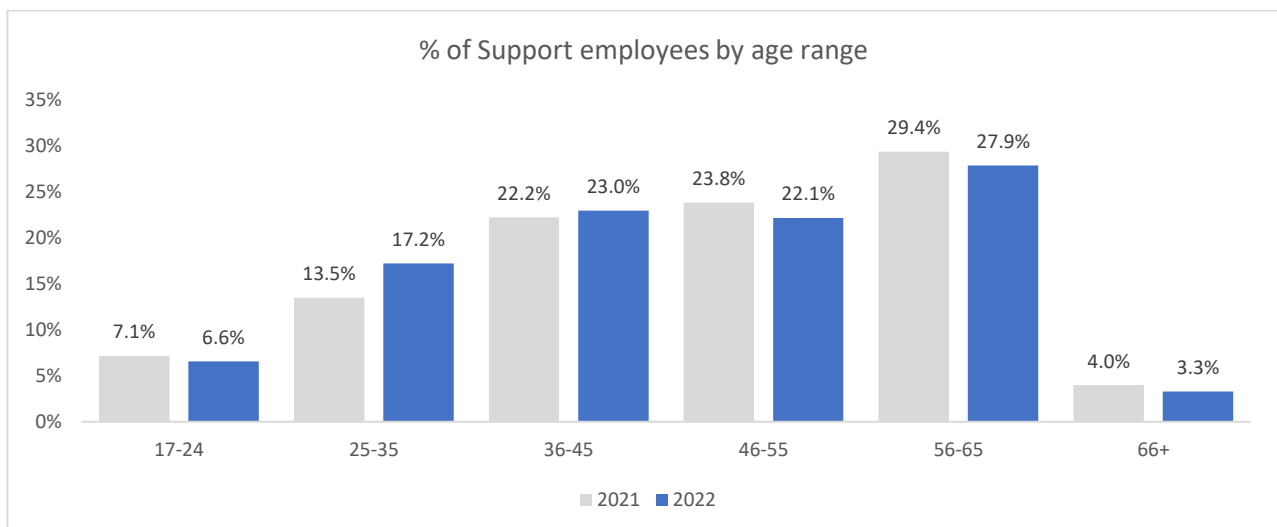
#### 2.3.1 Ethnicity

In 2022, Support is the most diverse of the core groups with representation in each of the ethnic groupings.



#### 2.3.2 Age

Most of the Support employees' range between ages 36 and 65, with the highest number of employees in the 56 to 65 age range, as shown below.



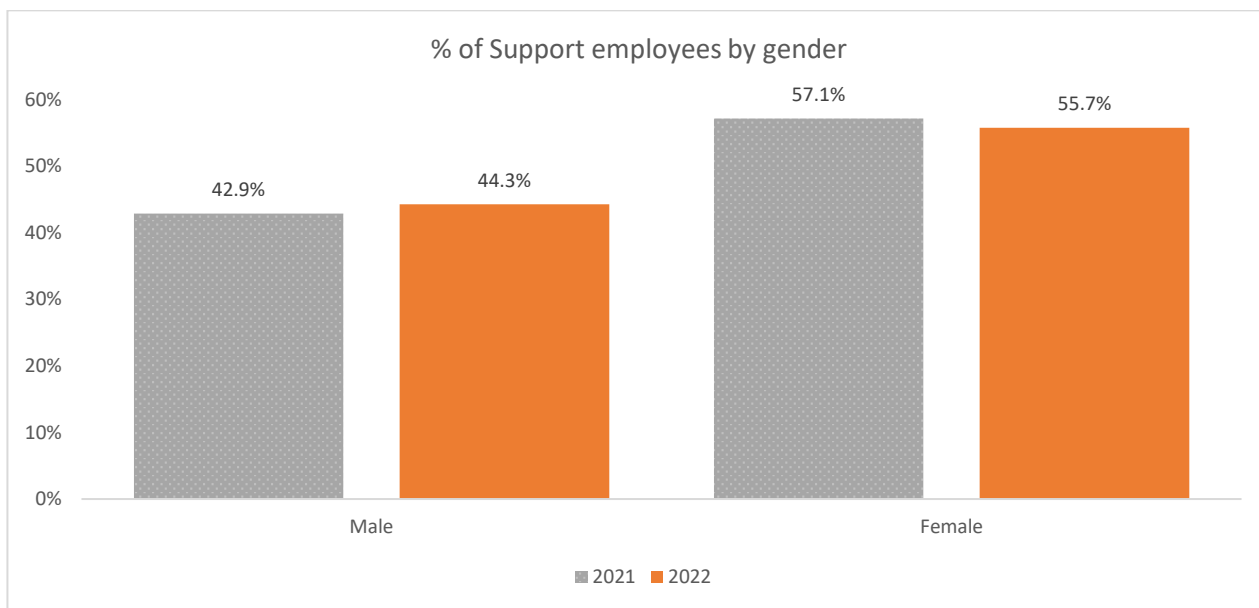
\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crowded firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

## Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Workforce Data

### 2.3.3 Gender

Support is currently the only core group within BFRS containing more females than males, accounting for 55.7 per cent of the group in 2022 despite a reduction of 1.4 per cent since 2021.



\*\*The "Wholetime" group in this report includes all ranks across BFRS, Apprentice firefighters, flexi firefighters, day-crewed firefighters and secondees.

Data Source: iTrent for BFRS employee data; Nomis population data taken from the 2011 Census

## BMKFA EDI Headlines

- In January 2022 Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service carried out a follow up **Employee Culture Survey**. 75 per cent of employees completed the survey. It



featured questions relating to EDI, Respect and Recognition. The results and data provided the Service with an insight to how its employees felt about EDI.

Employees were invited to provide a free text response, where 221 were received and analysed. Of these 15.8 per cent featured EDI.

These responses are helping the Service to explore opportunities and inform future actions. The Employee Engagement Group meet regularly to ensure engagement with employees continues. Listening workshops facilitated by the Employee Engagement Group took place throughout April and May 2022.

- The **People Strategy** which was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority was refreshed to ensure it was fully reflective of the 2020 – 2025 Corporate Plan. The strategy details the Service’s vision, values, aim and key areas. EDI is one of the five key areas and highlights our EDI objectives. The Service’s People Strategy is intended to be flexible to address how we can most effectively respond to our current and future needs. The strategy features on both our internal intranet and external public facing website.

The October 2021 Fire Authority approved the **employee engagement plan** for the Station Commander - HR Projects to carry out a series of face to face workshops (People Strategy Roadshow) across the service. These took place for all Wholetime employees between November 2021 and April 2022. Support Services Employees and On Call employees had a combination of virtual and face to face workshops.

- **Community Engagement** was progressed through new ways of working including:

- Attendance at the National Apprenticeship Show and careers fairs across the County
- Recruitment engagement event at West Ashland, for previously unsuccessful applicants
- Welfare visits
- Virtual school and uniformed group visits
- Fire and Wellness visits to high-risk occupants



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

BMKFA EDI Headlines

- Virtual On-Call awareness evenings and interviews, which moved to socially distanced, covid secure interviews when restrictions allowed
- West Ashland Fire Station and the Prevention team took part in a Dementia Friends information session in May 2022, to help raise awareness and understanding of what it is like to live with Dementia.
- **Service policies and procedures** are under regular review to ensure they reflect the community we serve and support employees for example – Pay Policy, Hybrid working guidance note and Flexible working procedures.

- In June 2021 the **Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) Survey** was completed and the Bronze Standard awarded to BFRS for the second year running. The 2022 survey has been submitted and the results due shortly.



- In August 2021 the service were awarded the **Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award** by the Southeast Reserve Forces' and Cadets Association. A youth engagement initiative commenced on 20 January 2022; it runs monthly with both the Army and Royal Air Force Cadets undertaking a programme of activities from Aylesbury Fire Station. BFRS are taking steps towards achieving the Gold Award.



- Our Prevention team has been working closely with our Local Authority partners to receive **Fire and Wellness referrals from sponsor households who have applied to house Ukrainian families seeking refuge**. Sponsor households will receive a visit from BFRS to ensure adequate smoke detection is in place and appropriate fire safety advice is given. This will either be prior to the sponsors matching a suitable family to their household, or after they arrive. To date, over 250 sponsors (housing over 600 refugees) are established in Buckinghamshire, and we are committed to ensuring each household receives fire prevention interventions to improve the safety of all residents.

Another workstream is to include **fire safety information within a welcome pack** for arriving families. This information will give simple advice, such as electrical safety, cooking safely and smoking risks, and is similar to the initiative for the Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme where BFRS provided appropriate information to families arriving in the resettlement hotels within our area.

BMKFA EDI Headlines

As the partnership gathers momentum and more families are expected to arrive, we remain committed to the partnerships to assist and consider any fire safety matters for the people arriving in Buckinghamshire and MK.

- BFRS is proud to provide support to the humanitarian crisis in the Ukraine. In March 2022, **UK fire services came together to donate more than 5,000 items of equipment and fire service vehicles to support Ukraine firefighters.**

Eighteen fire engines, thermal imaging cameras for finding victims, generators, lighting, hoses, rescue equipment, and thousands of sets of PPE are among the items being donated. Every fire service across the UK has stepped in to support these efforts.

At very short notice, BFRS were able to donate portable fire pumps, hydraulic rescue equipment, fire hose, first aid kits and other pieces of equipment. This was delivered to a central logistics site, prior to it being transported to where it is needed.

Further conveyances are planned, and we continue to support where we can. Notably one of our On-call firefighters volunteered to deliver a large amount of kit from around the region to a logistics centre in Kent, utilising one of his own lorries from his haulage company. This assisted greatly in the coordination of the national effort and is credit to the individual who volunteered.



This work is being coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector, items will be sent in convoy. Financial support is being given by the Home Office.

- The **Replacement Breathing Apparatus (BA) project**, has included the following:
  - Weight reduction of sets from 18kg to 14.5kg, with further work ongoing to try and obtain a new cylinder that will further reduce the weight by up to 0.5kg.
  - Personal facemasks will be issued to all staff, allowing aids to vision to be fitted permanently
  - Larger range of facemask sizes available which allows better face fitting process and for a wider range of hairstyles.
  - Improved adjustable range of sets via backplate adjustment (S, M, L, XL)
  - Improved ergonomics
  - Chest straps now on every BA set to stop slippage off shoulders caused by either those with larger chest or those with higher/larger shoulders

BMKFA EDI Headlines

- Working is ongoing with the supplier to look at options to allow for those with hearing aids to use BA communications more efficiently.
- The **Gender Pay Gap report** detailed the Authority's gender pay gap as at 31 March 2021. Both the mean (average) and median (mid-point) gender pay gaps decreased in 2021, which is positive, and takes the Authority's gender pay gap data below the UK national average for 2021. For 2021, the mean gender pay gap is 13.8 per cent and the median gender pay gap is 9.0 per cent. In comparison to 2020, the mean gender pay gap was 18.8 per cent and the median gender pay gap 15.3 per cent.
- Home Office figures reveal a worrying trend in the number of hate crimes recorded in the space of five years. De Montfort University is the United Nations Academic Impact Hub for Sustainable Development Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions the underlying aim of which is to address all forms of organised crime, instances of violent crimes, hate crime, child abuse, exploitation and genocide including genocide denial. During spring, the Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager completed the **'Strengthening Communities' intensive program** under SDG16 with De Montfort University, working amongst academics, colleagues from Police, the Home Office, Cabinet Office and community safety leads in a series of international seminars, panel discussions and lectures. In this inaugural cohort of 50, BFRS were the only participant working in the Fire and Rescue sector. The program culminated with an awards presentation and reception.
- The **Addressing Inequalities collaboration** was set up originally to address inequalities following the Black Lives Matter movement. The five Fire Services - Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire are working together to demonstrate their commitment to drive the initiatives forward. The Chief Fire Officers from each service have a strong commitment to improve awareness and understanding of racial equality issues in each Fire and Rescue Service.

The aims of this project are that the services across all five counties:

- are better educated in the issues regarding race inequality and injustice
- are safe spaces where people can have respectful and constructive dialogue about racism and all the other prejudices present in society
- will have action plans that support continuous and sustainable improvement that makes the service more diverse and inclusive.



BMKFA EDI Headlines

To date a joint video has been published internally, and Black Lives Matter interactive webinar held. The group meet monthly to progress the joint collaborative workstreams and share best practice.

- The **EDI group membership** includes new employees from across the organisation. Members of the EDI group sit on the Senior Management Team, namely the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy Director of Finance and Assets and the Head of Human Resources. An update on EDI workstreams is given at every monthly formal Senior Management Board meeting.

There is more confidence from group members, who are actively engaging and sharing with colleagues. Group members take ownership of the EDI objectives for example working on the following areas:

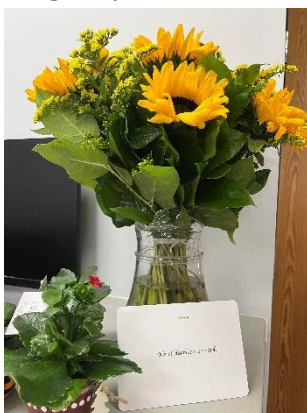
- attendance a wide range of **collaboration events** and participating in National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) consultations for Equality of access documents, toolkits on neurodiversity, gender, equality impact assessments and staff networks.
- attendance at a range of **EDI virtual workshops and webinars** are attended by the EDI group and learning, and resources are shared with employees across the service.
- Presenting at the **NFCC lunch and learn event** on International day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May 2022



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

example

- The **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme** was launched in April 2022. An EDI group member and the Marcomms team helped to promote the scheme throughout the service. A HEAT elearning package was developed and launched Sunflower lanyards are available to all operational crews and employees that deal with members of the public on a day-to-day basis. This is to support any individual who has a hidden disability who may be unaware of the scheme and would benefit from the support of them having a sunflower lanyard.



BMKFA EDI Headlines

- In August 2021 the **Banter v Bullying elearning package** was created and launched across the Service its aim is to help employees identify the difference between banter and bullying.
  - Challenging the use of the term 'banter' as an excuse to cover up bullying and harassment.
  - Challenging the use of offensive jokes and language (banter) used by others both unintentionally and intentionally.
  - Promoting dignity and respect within the Service – aligned to our values and EDI objectives and support our service procedures.
  - Empowering employees to stand up for themselves or speak to a representative body before going to formal proceedings.
  - Making the mess room self-policing, for others to step in if they think someone has gone too far or is out of order.
  - Stopping employees going to disciplinary because they have misread their audience.
  
- The **Change 100 internship programme** is paid summer work placements and mentoring for disabled students and recent graduates undertaken. Talented university students and recent graduates with a disability or long-term condition are matched with employers. Change 100 allows access to a unique candidate we might never have reached otherwise. We are currently liaising with the programme to offer one internship placement in 2022/2023.
  
- A HEAT elearning package is being developed for **sign language**, with the aim of promoting understanding across the service.
  
- A **calendar of events** is in place, the EDI group write articles for the “Valuing our Diversity” intranet site and for our social media platforms for example for International Women’s Day, Ramadan, Deaf Awareness week, International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia, Easter, and Refuge week.



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 15 June 2022

**Report title:** Home Office Consultation 'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service'

**Lead Member:** Chairman of the Authority

**Report sponsor:** Graham Britten, Director of Legal & Governance

**Author and contact:** Graham Britten, Director of Legal & Governance

**Action:** Decision

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that:

1. The content of the Home Office white paper consultation document be noted.
2. The establishment of a working group comprised of the Group Leaders, the Vice Chairman, and Lead Members be agreed in order for it to formulate responses to be approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 13 July.

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**Executive summary:** The purpose of this report is to bring to the Authority's attention the publication by the Home Office of its white paper 'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service - Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance'; and to agree the mechanism for finalising responses.

The proposals were published on 18 May and are being consulted on, with the deadline for responses being 23:59 on 26 July 2022.

A copy of the consultation document ('the Consultation'), is attached as **Appendix 1**.

On 16 March 2021, the Home Secretary laid a Written Ministerial Statement in Parliament. This foreshadowed the Consultation as follows:

"[...] the Government is clear that further reform of fire and rescue is required in order to respond to the recommendations from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Kerslake Review<sup>1</sup> and to build on the findings from Sir Thomas Winsor's State of Fire and Rescue Report<sup>2</sup>. Our reform agenda will

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<sup>1</sup> The Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham commissioned a non-statutory independent review of the events and aftermath of the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack. The review panel was chaired by Lord Kerslake and its report was published on 27 March 2018.

<sup>2</sup> On 15 January 2020, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published his first annual report regarding the state of fire and rescue services in England. The report provided an overview of his assessment, along with the recommendations for the Home Office and the National Fire Chiefs Council.

focus on three key areas: people; professionalism; and governance. Taken together, improvements in these areas will help deliver higher standards and greater consistency across fire and rescue services.

The Review kick-started our work on fire service governance and the findings signalled strong support for a directly elected individual taking on fire functions to help simplify and strengthen the governance of fire and rescue services across England. The Home Office will be launching a consultative White Paper on fire reform later this year. The White Paper will be used to set out our reform agenda in further detail and explore the Review proposals on fire governance which include:

- Consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model across England where boundaries are coterminous, unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.
- Consulting on how to address coterminosity challenges, including in the South West.
- Legislating to create operational independence for Chief Fire Officers and to clearly separate and delineate strategic and operational planning for fire and rescue.
- Considering options to clarify the legal entities within the PFCC model.”

HMICFRS had also published on 20 June 2019 [‘Fire and Rescue Service inspections 2018/19 - summary of findings from tranche 2’](#) which contained 2 recommendations. Together with the 4 recommendations from the ‘State of Fire and Rescue’ report for 2019, these recommendations are set out at **Appendix 2**.

Since that Ministerial Statement, two subsequent annual State of Fire and Rescue reports have been published - [2020, published 17 March 2021](#) and [2021, 15 December 2021](#). Updates on progress on, and revised implementation dates for, the recommendations were included in these annual reports.

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**Financial implications:** No direct impact. Resources required to respond to the consultation can be accommodated within existing budgets.

**Risk management:** Whether, or the degree to which, responses are made to the white paper creates no risk to the delivery of the Authority’s functions. The wide array of questions in this White Paper lend themselves to a blended approach requiring differing levels of input as between Members of the Authority and Officers dependent on the matters in question.

**Legal implications:** The Authority’s Scheme of Delegation to Officers provides that ‘Delegation to Chief Fire Officer does not include: [...]making a formal response on behalf of the Authority to any White Paper, Green Paper, Government Consultation

Paper [...] without reference first to the Chairman of the Authority. However, when the timescales so requires, the Chief Fire Officer is authorised to respond without discussion with the Chairman. The content of such response shall be referred to the appropriate committee for their attention.”

**Privacy and security implications:** The Consultation requests respondents to provide the following information: job title or capacity in which they are responding to this consultation exercise and company name/organisation (if applicable). The approved response will be treated by the Authority as being in the public domain.

**Duty to collaborate:** The [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#) requires the Authority to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services. The Monitoring Officer has been in contact with the Office of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, with the intention of liaising further before any response is finalised.

**Health and safety implications:** None arising from the recommendations

**Environmental implications:** None arising from the recommendations

**Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:** None arising from the recommendations

**Consultation and communication:** An article has been posted on the Authority’s intranet encouraging all staff to look at the proposals in the White Paper and to respond in their own right, or via a representative body, should they so wish.

**Background papers:**

[Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 Report, The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick, October 2019](#)

[The Kerslake Report: An independent review into the preparedness for, and emergency response to, the Manchester Arena attack on 22nd May 2017](#)

[State of Fire and Rescue, 2019, published 15 January 2020](#)

[Scheme of Delegation to Officers](#)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Home Office white paper ‘Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service’	None
2	HMICFRS Recommendations and status updates as at 15 December 2021	None

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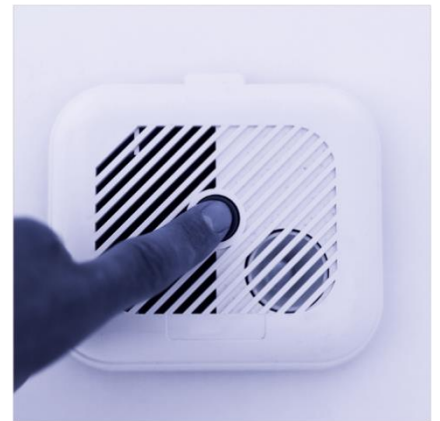
Home Office

# Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

Building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance

May 2022

CP 670









# Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service

**Building professionalism, boosting performance  
and strengthening governance**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department  
by Command of Her Majesty

May 2022



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## About this consultation

**To:** This white paper and consultation covers a package of proposals for the reform of fire and rescue services in England. The proposals cover three principal areas of the reform vision: People, Professionalism and Governance. Views are sought on the specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented.

**Duration:** From 18/05/22 to 26/07/22

**Enquiries (including requests for the paper in an alternative format) to:** **Email:** [firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Or

Fire Reform Consultation  
Fire Strategy & Reform Unit  
4th Floor, Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street,  
London  
SW1P 4DF

**How to respond:** There are three thematic sections in this consultation. Each section is divided into topical chapters which provide background information to the lead question(s).

Respondents can answer as many or as few questions as they wish. You do not have to comment on every section or respond to every question in each section but can focus on where you have relevant views and evidence to share. If you wish to respond to all questions, you do not have to complete the whole form at once.

Please send your response by 11:59pm on 26 July 2022

Please respond to the questions in this consultation online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternatively, you can send in electronic copies to: [firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk); or,

Alternatively, you may send paper copies to:  
Fire Reform Consultation  
Fire Strategy & Reform Unit  
4th Floor, Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street,  
London  
SW1P 4DF

**Additional ways to respond:** If you wish to submit other evidence, or a long-form response, please do so by sending it to the email address or postal address above.

**Response paper:** A response to this consultation exercise is due to be published at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

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# Ministerial Foreword

## Home Secretary



I never cease to be impressed by the dedication of our fire and rescue professionals. As Home Secretary, I have always regarded the police as the first public service but I have come to realise that the fire and rescue service plays an equal part. Together they provide vital pillars of support in the mission to keep the public safe which is the first duty of any government.

It has been a challenging period for us all. Despite the difficulties that we have faced, I have been immeasurably proud to witness the efforts of fire and rescue services in responding to the needs of our communities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Fire and rescue professionals have taken on a number of the responsibilities that the emergency demanded. From driving ambulances, supporting the vulnerable, to managing food and distribution hubs and administering vaccinations, fire and rescue services have been ready, willing and able to play a critical role in protecting communities. I would also like to acknowledge the important role on call firefighters provide in keeping their communities safe. Looking beyond our borders, I was proud to be able to offer the expertise of our fire and rescue services to help their Greek colleagues in the fight against horrific wildfires in the summer of 2021.

We are immensely grateful for their efforts. We should strip away any barriers that hold our fire professionals back and provide them with the support they deserve.

Our fire and rescue services protect communities and save lives. It is imperative that they are fully supported to respond to the changing risks they face. This means building on the response to the pandemic, learning from major public inquiries, and responding to the challenges identified by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to leadership, culture and collaboration.

Nonetheless, there is a compelling case for reform of our fire and rescue services. Both of Sir Thomas Winsor's HMICFRS State of Fire reports have concluded that significant reform is needed. The need to improve the emergency response of fire and rescue services to a major incident is compelling. The fire at Grenfell Tower was a national tragedy resulting in the greatest loss of life in a residential fire since World War 2. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report made 46 recommendations for the London Fire Brigade (LFB), all fire and rescue services, other emergency services, building owners and the government. The government has committed to implementing all 46 recommendations in the most practical and proportionate way possible. An independent report (known as the Kerslake report) into the Manchester Arena bombing found that the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service was "bought to a point of paralysis" as their response was delayed for two hours. The need to improve fire protection is also clear. Dame Judith Hackitt's review into building safety, alongside the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, has highlighted its importance.

Now the government must take action to enable fire and rescue services to perform and fulfil their core functions of prevention, protection, response and resilience effectively in a way that responds to the local needs, the changing risks and challenges faced, and that enables collaboration with other emergency services on a range of public safety challenges. This white paper sets out this government's vision for fire reform.

## **Fire Minister**



The white paper concerns the reform and strengthening of fire and rescue services in England. This builds on fire and building safety system reform in recent years and the government response to the fire at Grenfell Tower. Our vision for the reform seeks to drive change and improvement in three key areas: People, Professionalism and Governance.

### **People**

Our reform proposals seek to introduce changes that will allow fire professionals to further develop their skills and thrive in their work. We want to clarify the role of fire and rescue services and of the firefighter, unlock talent and improve diversity within services, take action to ensure that we are supporting the creation of a positive culture, and further develop schemes to consistently identify and nurture talent. Finally, we will commission an independent review into the current pay negotiation process and consider if it is fit for a modern emergency service.

### **Professionalism**

Our reform proposals seek to modernise the fire and rescue service, to enable greater professionalism and to ensure that we are recruiting and training our fire and rescue services to be the best that they can be. We want to increase professionalism by moving from a Fire Standards Board (which sets clear expectations for the sector) to the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue. We want to develop a mandatory 21st century leadership programme for progression to senior roles, set clearer entry requirements for recruitment, and put in place a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue service oath.

### **Governance**

Our reform proposals seek to strengthen governance arrangements across the sector. Out of 44 fire and rescue authorities, 38 operate a committee structure. We want to transfer fire functions to a single, elected – ideally directly elected – individual who would hold their operationally independent Chief Fire Officer to account. This person could be: a mayor who could delegate day-to-day oversight to a deputy mayor; or a council leader who could delegate to a cabinet member or a police, fire and crime commissioner. This effective political oversight would maintain and enhance public accountability.

Fire professionals put their lives on the line to protect and serve their communities. It is only right that they have our full support. This Fire Reform white paper is the first step towards reforms that will achieve this profoundly essential public interest objective.

# Building on Success

## **The Case for Change**

The government intends, through this White paper, consultation and future legislation to strengthen fire and rescue services across England.

Our ambition is to develop services with communities at their heart that provide excellent support and development for their teams. This will be underpinned by clear decision-making processes and operational leaders who are empowered to plan and respond quickly to new challenges held to account by a single executive leader, ideally a directly elected politician. We want to ensure that services play to their strengths in responding to emergencies, as well as sharpen their focus on their prevention and protection functions. This will allow service leaders and their professional teams to face the future with confidence, reduce the risk of harm, and help keep people safe.

Fire and rescue is already a highly skilled profession. We want to support staff further, ensuring that they are given the opportunities, development, and oversight to match their status. Our fire and rescue professionals and our communities deserve nothing less.

## **Fire and Rescue Reform to Date**

The proposals in this white paper build on a legacy of reform of fire and rescue services introduced by the Home Office over recent years. Changes have been designed to make services and those working within them more able to work efficiently and effectively, and to adapt to the public safety challenges and emergencies we face, both now and in the future.

The reforms of the past five to ten years have seen the establishment of an independent inspection regime to report to the public on the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and rescue services, stronger national coordination amongst operational leaders, increased government funding for service improvement, and the development of clear and consistent expectations of fire and rescue services. We have supported fire and rescue services as they serve the most vulnerable in communities. We have done this by increasing both the focus and funding for fire protection, nationally and locally, by helping services across England to respond to the lessons highlighted by the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and by continuing to promote fire prevention, including through the national Fire Kills campaign.

We have also strengthened the governance of fire and rescue services by legislating to enable police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to take on responsibility for services, with the intention of improving their transparency, collaboration and accountability.

While meaningful national and local reform has taken place, recent inspections and inquiries have established that there is further to go to ensure both employees and the public are getting the support and service they should expect. That is why the government proposes to introduce a comprehensive reform programme, as set out in this white paper.



## **Stepping Up During the Pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a huge challenge for all emergency services, and we are proud of how fire and rescue employees across the country stepped up to support their communities.

Last January, HMICFRS highlighted how services continued to respond to fires and other emergencies, while also supporting communities through one of the most difficult periods in our country's history. Most services were involved in proactive work through their local resilience forums (LRFs) – from supporting strategic coordination of the multi-agency response, driving ambulances and joining multi-agency teams responding to deaths in the community, to delivering food and medicines to the vulnerable and using their skills to help others to work safely.

However, the report also highlighted the barriers services face to becoming more effective and efficient, including the challenges posed by a sluggish national negotiation system for pay and conditions, between unions and employers. For example, during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, service leaders were not able to deploy their staff to support communities in a timely manner. Instead, a series of national agreements (the 'tripartite agreement') had to be painstakingly negotiated before fire and rescue professionals could act. In the pandemic this process slowed down – and in some places, stopped – services fully supporting their communities.

Following the end of the restrictive national agreements, services were freed up to safely provide an even greater range of support to their communities. Chief fire officers were able to work with local partners to take a leading role in testing and vaccine logistics, and in administering vaccinations in many areas. This work is rightly a source of pride for service leaders and fire and rescue professionals who, empowered to make operational decisions and risk assessments at a local level, were able to step up to serve their communities.

## **Shining a Light Through Independent Inspection**

Independent, expert, objective and fearless inspection is essential to the promotion of improvement. On the basis of rigorous analysis of evidence and professional judgment, it establishes where policies and practices are working well, so they can be adopted everywhere, and it explains to services, elected representatives and the public where things are not as they should be. Its analysis and the reasons for its conclusions and recommendations for improvement are fully explained, so that services, the public and others can see and easily understand them.

Since 2018, every service in England has been inspected at least twice. Her Majesty's Chief Fire and Rescue Inspector, Sir Thomas Winsor, has produced three annual State of Fire and Rescue reports that have provided clear assessments of the state of the sector and highlighted where reform is needed. They have been significant catalysts for our proposals to further strengthen services.

The inspectorate found that while the fire and rescue services have many commendable strengths, the system needs national and local reform. Based on the inspectorate's reports, it is clear that the strength of fire and rescue services is rooted in their operational response. When the public dial 999, services will respond with highly skilled and committed crews. While response is the most urgent function of a fire and rescue service, some services have unduly neglected vital protection and prevention work. And while some services have taken steps to improve productivity, more could and should be done to ensure that they are making the best use of public resources in ways that always put communities first.

Sir Thomas recognised that in recent years some reform and innovation has been implemented, but improvements have been sporadic. To date, the inspectorate has made six national recommendations. These include: improving the governance of services by granting chief fire officers operational independence to enable flexibility; providing greater clarity on the precise scope of the role of the fire and rescue service, improving the transparency and effectiveness of the negotiation mechanism for pay and conditions; and putting in place measures to improve the culture in fire and rescue services.

### **Lessons from Grenfell**

The fire at Grenfell Tower, on 14 June 2017, is an indelible tragedy in the history of our country. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report (GTI phase 1) made 46 recommendations for the London Fire Brigade, all fire and rescue services, other emergency services, building owners and the government. The government has worked alongside service leaders to ensure that action is being taken across the country, supported by legislative change and significant additional funding to drive improvement. The reforms set out in this white paper will complement the work already underway to strengthen fire safety and protection - building the capacity and capability within services that our communities deserve.

Last April, the government secured the passage of the Fire Safety Act 2021. The Act establishes that the scope of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) applies to the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors. On 17 March 2021, the government published its response to the fire safety consultation which set out proposals to strengthen fire safety in all regulated buildings in England. Further changes will be introduced through the government's Building Safety Bill, which will enable the establishment of a Building Safety Regulator, as part of the overhaul of building and fire safety regimes for higher-risk buildings. Furthermore, the government held a consultation from 8 June to 19 July 2021 to seek people's views on proposals relating to the complex issue of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs). While there was considerable support for the idea of PEEPs, the consultation also raised operational challenges to implementing PEEPs in high rise residential buildings which typically would have no staffing or very limited staffing. Concerns include the practical challenges of ensuring safety when evacuating using the stairs, both for the vulnerable persons with the PEEPs and for other residents using the same stairwell; and the operational impact on firefighters using the same space. Further, there are concerns that, if extra staff are needed to make PEEPs work, it would result in disproportionately increased costs for residents. We intend to shortly propose a collection of initiatives that

together seek to achieve our policy aim of enhancing the safety of residents in high rise residential buildings whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised in a way that is proportional and implementable. While this package would not directly implement the PEEPs-related recommendations in the GTI Phase 1 report, we are confident that it will satisfy the principles of improved fire safety of vulnerable persons behind the recommendations. The government intends shortly to lay regulations that implement the majority of the recommendations made by the Inquiry's Phase 1 report which require a change in the law.

The need to strengthen fire protection is clear. Dame Judith Hackitt's review into building regulations and fire safety, the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, other fires and HMICFRS inspection findings have highlighted its importance. That is why we provided £30 million in additional funding during 2020/21 and have continued to provide further funding this financial year. This funding supports services to review or inspect every high-rise residential building in England by the end of 2021 and strengthen the response to risks in other buildings, including residential buildings under 18 metres, care homes and hospitals. £7 million of this funding helped services to implement Grenfell recommendations through new training, equipment (such as smoke hoods) and technology to support communications and control room systems. In addition, we have commissioned research to support the development of national guidelines on evacuations from high-rise buildings.

### **A Clear Role for Fire and Rescue Services**

The role of the fire and rescue authority (FRA) is set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. However, the work of fire and rescue services has evolved over the years. The built environment has become more complex and the nature of the risk facing communities has changed. The vulnerability of occupants is having a tangible impact on how services manage and respond to risk. Prevention, legislation, regulation, innovation and better building and product design have mitigated some longstanding public safety risks, and communities are safer as a result. This major public service success story does not get the recognition it deserves.

Historically, services have managed their resources to meet foreseeable risks to the public. But cumbersome industrial relationships have limited chief fire officers' ability to flexibly use their resources to truly meet changing risk, for example, by changing working patterns to respond to changing demand. Services need to plan for instances where they may need to simultaneously respond to large scale emergencies and a range of smaller incidents. Furthermore, staff need to be trained to respond to incidents safely, adapting to the ever-changing nature of malicious risks, such as terrorist incidents. The challenge, then, is to ensure flexibility so that fire and rescue professionals can fully serve their communities in partnership with other services. Crucially, local flexibility must be available to operationally independent service leaders to make the best use of their people and assets, balancing innovation with the core functions established in statute.

# The Way Forward - Strengthening our Fire and Rescue Service

The case for strengthening fire and rescue services is clear. We want to improve the offer to professionals and the public, ensuring that services can adapt and change.

## Our Vision

We want to see services providing excellence in their core prevention, protection, response, and resilience functions, responding to local needs in line with national expectations and guidance. Services will be helped to make the best use of the resources available to them, with the ability to come together quickly and respond safely to local and national emergencies, based on good data and evidence. Services need to be more able to adapt to changing threats and risks, working flexibly with other local partners.

Chief fire officers will be skilled leaders and managers, with clear responsibility to run and manage their services effectively and efficiently, in order to meet their local risk. Strong political, executive oversight will ensure services are properly accountable to the communities they serve and run in the public interest.

Twenty-first century fire and rescue services will embrace an ethical culture that attracts and retains talented people, values diversity and reflects the communities they serve. Their employees will be well supported and trained to do their jobs. At the same time, services will embrace learning, use data and evidence to inform their decision-making, and share best practice and innovation.

Employment arrangements across the sector need to be modernised. They need to be more transparent and should recognise staff for their skills and competence and not just for time served. The interests of all parties will be fairly represented during discussions on pay, terms and conditions and other workplace matters.

## People, Professionalism and Governance

Our reform agenda seeks to drive improvement in three essential areas: well-trained and supported **people**; high levels of **professionalism**; and strong and effective **governance**.

On **People**, it is vital that fire and rescue services create an environment where they get the best out of their people. Staff should feel confident that they will be supported to reach their full potential, with accessible development opportunities and structured learning available. As recommended by HMICFRS, the role of fire and rescue services needs clarification with greater local flexibility for firefighters and staff to add value; the proposals in this white paper seek to address this recommendation, amongst others. Furthermore, fire and rescue professionals should be supported by a professional pay negotiation process. The current National Joint Council has strayed beyond its original scope and into negotiation of operational response, which should be a matter for operational leaders.

On **Professionalism**, this white paper examines how we can continue to support fire and rescue professionals to help them better protect their communities. Our reform plans set out

our ambition for an independent College of Fire and Rescue focussed on the following five areas:

- Research
- Data
- Leadership,
- Ethics
- Clear expectations for fire and rescue services

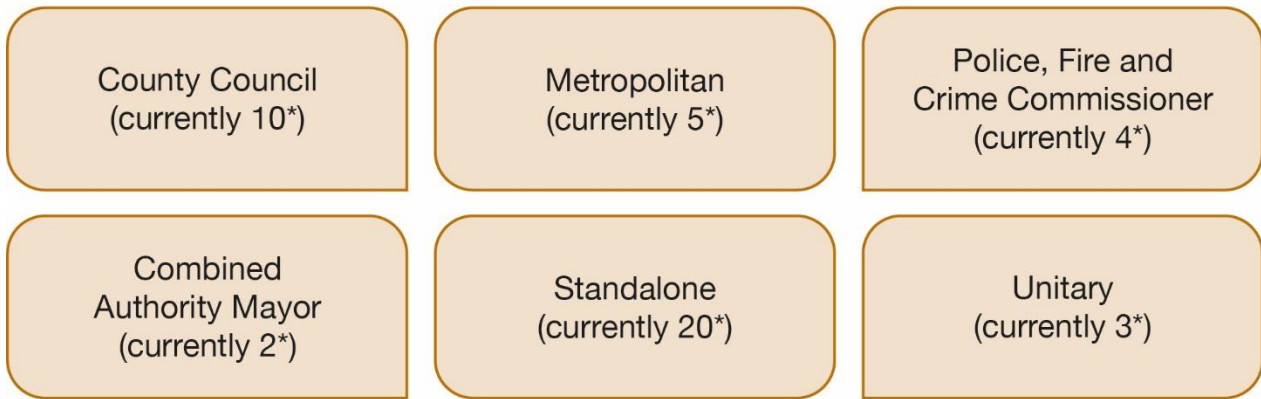
Subject to the response to the consultation, this College of Fire and Rescue could be located at an existing body such as a training provider, fire and rescue service or other professional body. This could include the Fire Service College (FSC) at potentially no cost, for example, given its historic links to government. The FSC is one of a number of training providers, all with a similar market share, available to fire and rescue services. We would like to hear from potential hosts to understand where the proposed college could be located given the potential benefit to both the host and the college of co-location. The proposed college should take on the functions carried out currently by the Fire Standards Board, which sets out clear expectations for the sector. Development opportunities for staff should include support for progression to leadership roles and development schemes to identify and nurture talent. Further, we want to examine the opportunity to support a consistently positive culture within services through the creation of a statutory code of ethics and a fire and rescue service oath.

On **Governance**, the lack of executive oversight in most FRAs and the variation and inconsistency between governance models have hampered accountability and transparency for the public. A review of the role of PCCs found that simplifying and strengthening the governance regime for fire services across England is critical to unlocking the wider reforms that are needed. We are setting out criteria for good governance and our ambition is to move governance to an executive leader, such as a combined authority mayor, a police, fire and crime commissioner (PFCC), or a county council leader. These options are illustrated in Figure 1. They, as ‘the Occupant’, would be able to delegate some or all of their day-to-day responsibilities to a deputy mayor, deputy PFCC or council cabinet member respectively. We also intend to implement HMICFRS’s recommendation to confer operational independence on chief fire officers. This will enable the chief fire officer to have direction and control over their resources to meet the executive leader’s priorities. We propose – whether in primary legislation or statutory guidance – to clearly define the role and responsibilities of both the executive leader and chief fire officer with clear demarcation between the two. Effective governance will ensure a publicly accountable figure can set clear priorities and hold the chief fire officer firmly to account for their performance in order to best deliver for the public.

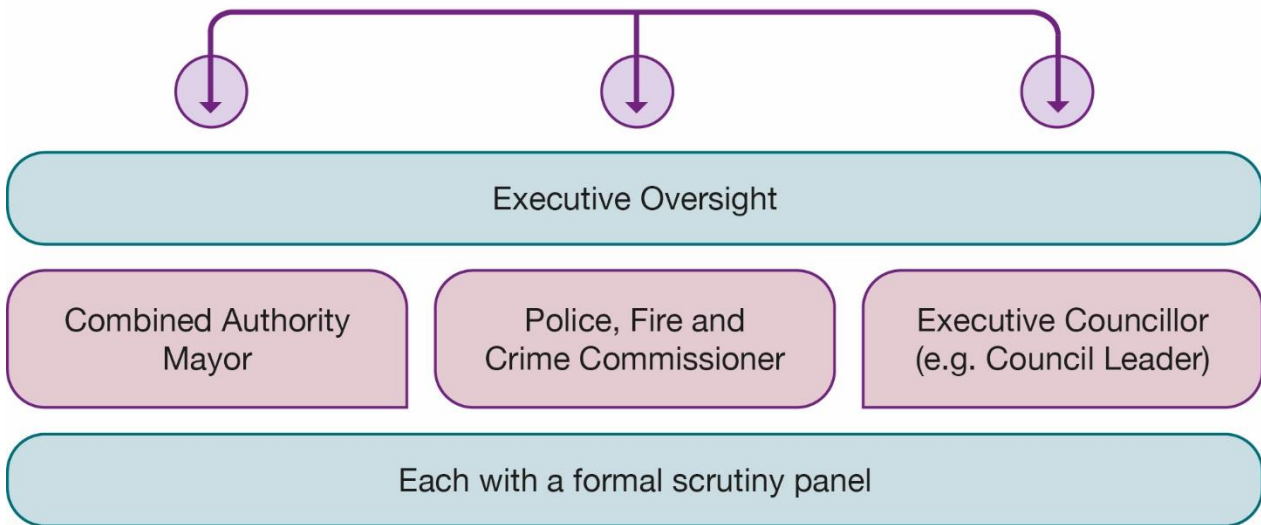
This could be alongside making chief fire officers corporations sole, thereby making them the employers of fire professionals.

We believe that these governance changes will enable effective executive oversight to hold an operationally independent chief fire officer to account with appropriate support and challenge. The executive would be required to produce a strategic fire and rescue plan listing their priorities while the chief fire officer would focus on their operational requirements to meet those priorities. Finally, we do not wish to lose the skills and experiences of existing councillors on the fire and rescue authority who could be used to scrutinise the decisions of this individual.

### Current Types of Fire and Rescue Authority



### Proposed reform



\*fire and rescue authorities as at 1 January 2022

# People

The biggest asset available to fire and rescue services is the people who work for them. Their dedication and skill, and the respect they command from their communities, make them a crucial part of the public safety system. We are committed to ensuring that fire and rescue employees are representative of the communities they serve and are equipped with the skills they need to reduce risk, save lives, and meet the challenges of the future.

However, current working practices are highly inflexible and, in some services, no longer reflect the range of incidents faced. In his 2020 State of Fire and Rescue report, Sir Thomas Winsor recognised that for services to better serve the public, they need to be able to adapt and do things differently. He noted substantial barriers to change and efficiency and recommended that the government takes an active role in clarifying fire fighters' true responsibilities and improves the mechanism for establishing pay and conditions.

## **The Role of Fire and Rescue Services**

The principal role of fire and rescue services is to keep the public safe through prevention, protection and response work. The statutory functions of fire and rescue authorities are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Furthermore, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 sets out their role as Category 1 responders in response to civil emergencies. This includes their increasingly significant role in local resilience forums, civil protection and in incidents where there is the threat of serious damage to human welfare or the environment.

The Cabinet Office's Integrated Review 2021 put an increasing focus on building national resilience and commits the government to consider strengthening the roles and responsibilities of Local Resilience Forums in England alongside a wider National Resilience Strategy. Fire and rescue services and senior fire officers play key roles in the operation and leadership of LRFs in preparing for emergencies and in responding to emergencies in multi-agency Strategic Coordination Groups.

The Cabinet Office's National Resilience Strategy Call for Evidence closed in September 2021. The Home Office has consulted with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), to ensure the fire sector continues to play a strong role in both national and local community resilience, across the resilience cycle.

In carrying out their functions, services must work with the public and businesses to reduce incidents of fire and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate their impact. Firefighters need to be prepared, equipped with the right skills and expertise to attend, assess the risk and respond to a range of incidents, across the complex, built environment and national infrastructure. They are supported, where necessary, by expert fire safety inspectors and engineers.

HMICFRS inspections have highlighted that operational response is a key strength of services but reported that there is considerable variation in how prevention and protection work is carried out, understood and prioritised. The most effective services have protected and extended their reach in this area, and we will continue to work with the NFCC on the development and implementation of prevention and protection programmes.

## Modern Working Practices

Just as society continues to change, so have public safety challenges to which services must respond: from the increased risk from terrorism and environmental challenges, to pandemics and the increasing demands on local authorities, given that people are living longer and vulnerability is better understood. The role of services, and of those who work for them, needs to continuously evolve. Fire and rescue services provide a skilled, capable and engaged workforce that is ready, willing and able to step into these challenges in the Community Risk Programme. It is right that the public can expect them to be deployed to assist their communities as the need arises.

However, the barriers to doing so were seen during the sector’s ongoing response to Covid-19, where the determination of fire and rescue staff to assist their communities was not always matched by flexible and modern employment practices. The national negotiation mechanism established by the National Joint Council has been recognised by inspectors and others as a barrier to a rapid and flexible response. These barriers have meant services have struggled to adapt and communities have not always been well served in the process. For example, previous collaborations with health partners have floundered in some places and in Greater Manchester, a team formed to respond to marauding terrorist attacks in the city withdrew their labour because of a dispute, leaving the community unacceptably vulnerable. While this capability has been restored through a local agreement that costs more taxpayer money, the government is clear that under current arrangements there is a role for services and their employees to respond to terrorism in all its forms.

Chief fire officers should be empowered to safely make decisions on the basis of risk and resources. While it is right that all relevant trade unions have a role to play in discussions on terms and conditions and the health and safety of their members, this must not come at the expense of safe and sensible progress and efficiency when communities need action.

We will work with fire and rescue leaders to ensure that services can fully support their communities. The need to identify emerging issues and continually assess risk extends to prevention and protection functions where services should ensure that they adapt to meet emerging issues and levels of risk, with their activity tailored to those they target.

**Q1: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should have the flexibility to deploy resources to help address current and future threats faced by the public beyond core fire and rescue duties?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

## Public Safety

Fire and rescue services play an important role in assisting communities with health and crime prevention and reduction. Services have already demonstrated their ability to support wider public safety. For example, StayWise is an NFCC-led partnership initiative that supports blue light and educational professionals in the provision of safety messaging to children. Some services have collaborated with local partners to help prevent crime and support their communities. For instance, a multi-agency partnership involving Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, local councillors, Northumbria Police, a local housing company and Sunderland City Council led to the formation of SARA (Southwick Altogether



Raising Aspirations). SARA brings together partners to help the most vulnerable members of the community – from supporting those with mental health problems, helping victims of crime and working in schools to divert and dissuade vulnerable teenagers from a life of crime.

Other activity ranges from identifying and referring those at risk of domestic abuse, modern slavery and hate crime, to diverting young people away from trouble through fire cadets and other schemes. The new Serious Violence Duty in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which proposes to bring together local agencies to prevent and reduce serious violence, will also apply to fire and rescue authorities.

As discussed later, as well as considering the merging of fire and policing governance under democratically elected combined authority mayors or police, fire and crime commissioners, we would also seek to strengthen the emergency service response to local issues and promote greater collaboration between agencies to support public safety needs.

**Q2: To what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue services should play an active role in supporting the wider health and public safety agenda?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Business Continuity**

The first duty of any government is to keep the public safe. Unlike the police, firefighters and control staff can strike, which inevitably puts the public and non-striking fire professionals at risk. While we do not propose removing the freedom for staff to choose to participate in industrial action, we believe that public safety needs to be ensured.

Fire and rescue services are ‘Category 1 responders’ under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This requires them to carry out specific civil protection duties, which chief fire officers must bear in mind when considering their business continuity plans. Requirements for business continuity are also set out in the fire and rescue service National Framework for England. The Home Office will work closely with the NFCC to ensure that each service has a robust business continuity plan that considers a range of challenges, including the impact of industrial action. Working with the NFCC, the National Resilience Assurance Team and HMICFRS, we will commission that the plans are independently assured. As outlined later in this white paper, the operational independence of chief fire officers plays a crucial role in allowing them to manage risk within their service.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is also under review, alongside the wider National Resilience Strategy and includes the duties on fire and rescue services in relation to civil emergencies and in collaboration with key local partners. As part this review, we will consider strengthening the basis on which all Category 1 and 2 responders cooperate and support local resilience structures, with FRS services being central to this.

**Q3: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the business continuity requirements set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 provide sufficient oversight to keep the public safe in the event of strike action?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

### Pay Negotiation

Everyone is entitled to be treated fairly. When it comes to public sector pay, those who provide public services, and those who pay for them, deserve no less. The process for determining pay should be open to scrutiny, so that all concerned can understand the decisions that are made.

The effectiveness of the National Joint Council (NJC) – the body that oversees decisions on firefighter pay and terms and conditions – has long been questioned. Adrian Thomas, in his review of conditions of service in 2015, concluded that it needs to be modernised and in the State of Fire and Rescue 2020 report, Sir Thomas Winsor called for fundamental reform. The negotiation of annual firefighter pay awards is a closed process until after any decisions is effectively made, with the views and agreement of only one union being sought and considered. HMICFRS have made recommendations on the current pay negotiation structure, including a suggestion to review its current operation and effectiveness. We welcome this recommendation and will consider how best to take it forward as part of our package for reform. The independent review would consider whether the current pay negotiation process is dynamic enough to respond to changing priorities. It could consider evidence from other employment models and sectors.

**Q4: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the current pay negotiation arrangements are appropriate?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q5: Please provide the reasons for your response.**

### Nurturing New and Existing Talent

There is more to do nationally to stimulate the debate about talent and to ensure that services open and modern employers who value diversity and nurture talent. Fire and Rescue professionals deserve development and support to achieve their full potential. Inconsistent identification and management of talent limits the scope to specialise and professionalise, and means that high-potential individuals may be overlooked.

HMICFRS found that services need to do more to support future leaders, and that diversity in senior leadership positions is even more limited than in the wider workforce. They also found that services often do not actively manage talent, relying on traditional models of development and progression, often linked to time served.

Some services have talent and development schemes, but there are no standardised national progression routes or consistent levels of education or experience required for entry into roles, in contrast to comparable public services including health and policing. We seek views on whether we should explore clearer, consistent entry requirements for fire service roles, so that a consistent approach is applied across the country. In doing this, we need to consider the impacts not only on professionalising services, but also any unintended consequences on the recruitment and retention of people from the widest possible talent pool. Consistent entry requirements, along with consistently applied personal development and progression, could be key to developing the management and leadership cadre of the future.

We want to ensure that fire and rescue is open to the best and brightest. As well as a focus on developing the talent already working in the fire services, there have been positive recent steps to bring in people with experience from other sectors at a range of levels. The NFCC leadership hub is leading a project on direct entry schemes at station and area manager level, as well as developing a coaching and talent-focused culture. This is a welcome development and should be supported by all services. We will also explore the potential to learn from national talent and recruitment schemes such as Teach First, Police Now, Unlocked and the civil service’s Fast Stream scheme model to establish high-potential development programmes. Such schemes could be open to both new entrants and existing staff and would offer a structured development programme. Skills could be tested and extended through placements in a range of roles and projects.

**Q6: To what extent do you agree/disagree that consistent entry requirements should be explored for fire and rescue service roles?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q7: Please provide the reasons for your response.**

**Q8: To what extent do you agree/disagree that other roles, in addition to station and area managers, would benefit from a direct entry and talent management scheme?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

# Professionalism

The vision in this white paper is for fire and rescue services to continue to be a vital asset to our communities, and a great public sector profession with a focus on continuous improvement and professional development. Services will continue to attract talented people who understand the communities they are serving. This will be supported with clear and consistent expectations and training opportunities that build on the effective use of data and evidence. To realise this vision, we need to have the right support structures at the head of the profession to ensure that the improvement cycle functions well, with clear expectations, strong implementation, and a robust inspection regime.

## Leadership of the Profession to Date

The National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) was established in 2017 with the goal of supporting operational leaders to transform services, thereby maximising effectiveness and partnership working. The independently chaired Fire Standards Board (FSB) was created in 2019 to produce and maintain a suite of national professional standards for fire and rescue services. Eight fire standards have now been published, ranging from operational matters such as community risk management planning to issues related to culture and ethics. Fire standards are intended to drive consistency and have a positive impact on the performance and professionalism of services, supporting continuous improvement and setting clear expectations for the service the public should receive. HMICFRS have regard to these expectations in their inspections.

This first wave of reform has clearly moved the fire and rescue profession forwards and government has provided significant financial support, totalling over £15 million over the last four years. The NFCC has provided leadership that the sector was lacking and is in the process of carrying out a significant programme of work. We want to explore how we can build on this success to further support professionals and strengthen fire and rescue services across five key areas of leadership, data, research, ethics and clear expectations.

## Leadership

In several reports and inspections, leadership has been found to be problematical. Twenty years ago, an independent review (the Bain Report, 2002) reported “a lack of leadership throughout the service at the political, institutional and operational levels”. The report also detailed the need for senior staff to receive “more training in general and personnel management,” that “a proportion of officers should come from outside the Service” and the importance of sector organisations to provide “a body of expertise on technical matters and business processes.” By 2019, inspections identified that only 12 out of 45 services were ‘good’ at developing leadership and capability.

Effective leadership is not only about strengthening the role of the chief fire officer, but about building capability, embedding values and nurturing talent within services. Indeed, there are many accomplished individuals in the current leadership cadre, but there is no current structure or assessment that ensures that this is consistent. The work of chief fire officers is vital and could become even more complex and challenging if they are provided with operational independence, as recommended by HMICFRS.

Senior operational leaders require a range of skills. They must take on-the-spot decisions in highly pressurised circumstances, which can be matters of life or death. The aftermath of

such decisions can also present leadership challenges both in terms of public confidence and achieving organisational learning. Fire and Rescue leaders are also required to manage complex organisations through change, building positive and inclusive teams as well as taking account of contextual issues such as industrial relations.

### A 21st Century Leadership Offer

In December 2020, the Home Office surveyed chief, deputy and assistant fire officers' views on leadership in three domains of command, leadership and organisational management. Around four in ten (42%) thought that services were 'not very' or 'not at all' effective at both identifying and developing high potential or talent and while most were at least 'fairly satisfied' nearly 70% said they would value a mandatory and standardised training programme for senior leaders.

In some sectors, a standardised assessment to reach levels equivalent to assistant chief officer and above provides greater national consistency, transparency and clarity. A new, statutory leadership programme designed for the challenges of the 21st century could allow for a standardised approach in how services identify and prepare the leaders of tomorrow. Officers completing the course should also find it easier to move between leadership roles in fire and rescue services. The police Strategic Command Course provides a model we wish to explore. As with policing, we will need to consider how direct entrants would be able to demonstrate comparable experience and competence gained outside fire services, particularly in relation to command, and how the skills and competence required could be developed in a fair and consistent way.

**Q9: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed introduction of a 21st century leadership programme?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q10: Please provide reasons for your response.**

**Q11: To what extent do you agree/disagree that completion of the proposed 21st century leadership programme should be mandatory before becoming an assistant chief fire officer or above?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

### Smarter Use of Data

Data is a vital asset in helping services to deploy resources and manage services more effectively and professionally. While there are undoubtedly services where data is being used well, in his State of Fire and Rescue report in 2019, Sir Thomas Winsor identified that

**Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service: Government Consultation**

“the sector is missing opportunities to use data and technology effectively” and lacks an overall national strategy to bring consistency and promote innovation.

We have provided funding to the NFCC for them to help set a common direction for services and to consider how best to provide central digital and data support. We want to explore how best to offer further data support to fire and rescue services. This could include improving national data analytics capability and developing data-focused training for those working with data in services and a consistent approach to structuring data. In addition, this could include setting expectations for data governance and for securing data-sharing agreements.

Central to this should be the capacity and capability of fire and rescue services to cooperate with other responding organisations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and share data, when appropriate with local and national partners, including LRFs. This will support activity across the resilience cycle including preparation, response and recovery to ensure we make the best use of the data we have.

**Q12: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for helping improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data?**

- A national data analytics capability.**
- Data-focused training.**
- Consistent approaches to structuring data**
- Clear expectations for data governance**
- Securing data-sharing agreements.**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q13: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of fire and rescue service data? Please give the reasons for your response.**

**Research**

It is vital that the work of services is supported by the best available evidence and research to ensure that services can effectively serve their communities. The current landscape, with a variety of organisations pursuing research activities, presents the risk that research is not co-ordinated to an optimal degree. Further, many individuals in services who conduct research work are doing so alongside other pressing roles.

We want to explore whether central fire and rescue research personnel, working closely with services, could help to ensure that research carried out within the physical and social sciences is effectively prioritised, co-ordinated, quality assured, and disseminated.

A central fire and rescue research capability could undertake the following activities:

- **collaborating** – providing a permanent set of skilled analysts to collaborate with others, including services, to promote good quality research that will provide benefits to services
- **commissioning** – commissioning other organisations to conduct research on behalf of the central fire and rescue research function when national-level research is appropriate
- **conducting** – directly undertaking research, including reviews of existing evidence, using staff permanently housed within the central fire and rescue research function
- **collating** – identifying emergent issues, opportunities, and ongoing fire-related research undertaken across services, academia, industry and other organisations, ensuring that priorities are being addressed and learning is being shared to avoid duplication of effort

**Q14: To what extent do you agree/disagree that each of the activities outlined above are high priorities for improving the use and quality of fire evidence and research?**

- Collaborating
- Commissioning
- Conducting
- Collating

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q15: What other activities, beyond those listed above, would help improve the use and quality of evidence and research on fire and other hazards? Please provide the reasons for your responses.**

### Clear Expectations

A hallmark of professionalism is the creation and implementation of clear expectations. While local flexibility is important, robust and consistent national standards help improve the quality of service provided to the public.

Currently, the independently chaired FSB is tasked with creating and maintaining fire standards (the documents through which the FSB sets clear expectations for services) for fire and rescue services. Eight fire standards have now been published, ranging from operational matters such as community risk management planning to issues related to culture and ethics. A 9th fire standard on safeguarding is due to be published imminently. The FSB is supported in this work by the NFCC’s Central Programme Office. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires services to implement these standards. HMICFRS will have regard to them in their inspections.

We want to build on the successes of the FSB and ensure we continue to set clear expectations. We want to ensure effective implementation in support of the fire and rescue

profession. We also want to consider how best to ensure that there is a continued close link between these common expectations and the guidance that supports their implementation, including National Operational Guidance.

## Ethics and Culture

We want to see fire and rescue services where everyone is welcome, treated with respect and able to thrive. The need for more consistent application of a robust ethical framework is clear. HMICFRS found in their 2019 State of Fire report that “the culture in some services is toxic”, that 20 out of 45 services required improvement and that a further three were inadequate.

### *Code of Ethics*

In response to the HMICFRS recommendation, the Local Government Association, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the NFCC developed a core code of ethics that all services should embed in their work. This is a positive first step, but we want to consider whether more is needed to ensure we have a consistently positive culture in all fire and rescue services.

The current code has no legal status but is supported by a fire standard (the documents through which the Fire Standards Board sets clear expectations for services) which requires services ‘adopt and embed’ the code. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, to which fire and rescue authorities must have regard, provides that all authorities must adhere to these clear expectations. The duty on fire and rescue services to adhere to the core code is therefore indirect and we are seeking views on whether to place a code on a statutory footing (a ‘statutory code’) to ensure its application in every service. This could involve the creation of powers in legislation, when parliamentary time allows, to create and maintain a statutory code. These powers could enable a statutory code to be created or amended via secondary legislation. If follow the outcome of this consultation the government proceeds with this proposal, the core code could be subject to review before being placed on a statutory basis.

**Q16: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a statutory code of ethics for services in England?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q17: To what extent do you agree/disagree that placing a code of ethics on a statutory basis would better embed ethical principles in services than the present core code of ethics?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree



If a statutory code were to be created, a duty would need to be placed on services to follow it. We are consulting on this duty being placed on chief fire officers who, under proposals outlined in the governance section of this document, could be operationally independent and therefore best placed to ensure their services act in accordance with the statutory code. We believe fire and rescue authorities would retain an important role in holding chiefs accountable for the discharge of their duties to ensure they and their services adhere to the code. However, we do not propose that the statutory code would apply to elected representatives in fire and rescue authorities.

We do not believe that the duty to adhere to the statutory code should be placed on individual employees of authorities as this would not address the need for a service’s policies, as well as its people, to adhere to the statutory code. The need for individuals to adhere to ethical values is considered below in relation to the fire and rescue service oath.

We are consulting on the enforcement of the statutory code – and the related oath – being an employment matter for chiefs to determine within their services, in accordance with the proposal for operational independence contained elsewhere in this document.

**Q18: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the duty to ensure services act in accordance with the proposed statutory code should be placed on operationally independent chief fire officers?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q19: To what extent do you agree/disagree with making enforcement of the proposed statutory code an employment matter for chief fire officers to determine within their services?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

*Fire and Rescue Service Oath*

We are also consulting on introducing a fire and rescue service oath (‘the Oath’) in England. The Oath would be a promise to uphold the principles in the statutory code while undertaking tasks on behalf of fire and rescue authorities, to help address the cultural challenges identified above and provide a positive expression of the role services can play in their communities. A mandatory duty to take the Oath would need to be placed on all FRA employees although it would not apply to the elected representatives in the authority as separate ethical standards arrangements are already in place. As is the case with police officers and PCCs, the Oath would be specified and provided for in legislation. We consider that a requirement for all FRA employees to consciously affirm ethical principles through an Oath would make it more likely that the principles would be adhered to. We think this would be preferable to a voluntary option because it would provide a more consistent approach across all services.

As noted above, the core code may be subject to review before being placed on a statutory basis, if that option is pursued. However, by way of example, an Oath based on the core

code may include affirming such principles as acting with integrity, and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion. As we anticipate the Oath and the statutory code to be intrinsically linked, subject to the outcome of this consultation, we will continue to work closely with interested parties on the content and process associated with the statutory code and Oath.

If a breach of the Oath occurred, we believe it would be most appropriate for it to be dealt with by each service as an employment matter. Managers should exercise their professional judgment, reflecting service disciplinary procedures and the circumstances of the individual case. We consider that, in the absence of congruent criminal offence, it would be disproportionate for breach of the Oath alone to be a criminal offence.

**Q20: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of a fire and rescue service oath for services in England?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q21: Please give the reasons for your response.**

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**Q22: To what extent do you agree/disagree that an Oath would embed the principles of the Code of Ethics amongst fire and rescue authority employees?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q23: To what extent do you agree/disagree with an Oath being mandatory for all employees?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q24: To what extent do you agree/disagree that breach of the fire and rescue service oath should be dealt with as an employment matter?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

## Professionalism Summary

We consider that action in these five key areas of improvement could help facilitate further professionalisation of fire and rescue services. Drawing on responses to this consultation, we intend to continue building capacity and capability across these five areas of leadership, data, research, ethics and clear expectations. It will be vital to make efficient use of resources in supporting services. We will therefore seek to prioritise those areas of delivery that are most beneficial in strengthening services and protecting the public.

**Q25: To what extent do you agree/disagree that the five areas listed above are priorities for professionalising fire and rescue services?**

- Leadership
- Data
- Research
- Ethics
- Clear Expectations

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q26: What other activities, beyond the five listed above, could help to professionalise fire and rescue services?**

## Independent Strategic Oversight

We believe there could be an opportunity for an independent body to build on the foundations laid and continue to drive forward the further professionalisation of services.

A key benefit of creating an independent professional body could be to provide an organisation independent of fire and rescue services and at arm's length from government to lead the continuing development of the fire and rescue profession. It could comprise and be led by staff working in the organisation as their primary role and providing a dedicated resource to support services rather than by those who also must undertake pressing operational roles. This would help it carry out important activities not currently conducted on a sustainable basis. While we see benefits to independence, it would be vital for any new organisation to work with services, employers, the NFCC, the unions, HMICFRS and others, to ensure that work is fully informed by the views of the sector.

### *A College of Fire and Rescue*

We therefore want to explore our ambition for the creation of a College of Fire and Rescue (CoFR) to be the independent body to support our fire and rescue professionals to best protect their communities. Through providing a permanent body of independent expertise and sharing the outputs of its various proposed strands of work, the independent CoFR could provide a vital aid to services in implementing the reforms outlined in this white paper.

## Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service: Government Consultation

We will carefully consider the creation and appropriate remit of a CoFR using the views gathered through this consultation. We would want to ensure we prioritise areas of work that add greatest value to services, making best use of available resources. We are therefore seeking views on which of the five opportunities for further professionalisation should be priorities for the proposed independent CoFR.

By way of example, the proposed independent CoFR could have the following remit:

- on **Leadership**, developing and maintaining courses such as Leadership Programmes and direct entry schemes
- on **Data**, providing a home for a strategic centre of data excellence
- on **Research**, housing a central research function to ensure that research is prioritised, conducted effectively, and shared
- on **Clear Expectations**, taking on responsibility for the creation of fire standards, building on the work of the Fire Standards Board
- on **Ethics**, the proposed independent body could be provided with powers to create and maintain the proposed statutory code of ethics and fire and rescue service oath, and also keep practical implementation of the code and Oath under review

The remit outlined above could help ensure that these vital activities are conducted in a sustainable and independent manner by an organisation dedicated to undertaking this work. Placing multiple strands of work in the same organisation focused solely on their delivery would allow each strand to be supported by the others. Taking the examples above, a CoFR could allow expectations of services to be informed by the latest research and help leadership programmes to be imbued with strong ethical principles.

We also want to make sure that the proposed independent CoFR has the power to effect further improvement in fire and rescue services. We therefore wish to consider whether it should be given legislative powers to support its work. These could mirror the powers held by the College of Policing under the Police Act 1996, as amended by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, or could involve the extension to the College of Fire of the powers held by the Secretary of State under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. For example, legislative powers provided to the CoFR could include the power to issue statutory codes of practice with the approval of the Secretary of State.

It should be noted that the remit of the NFCC extends significantly beyond the functions outlined above. Therefore, if the independent College of Fire were to be created, a strong co-operative working relationship with the NFCC would be vital in achieving the aims of both organisations.

**Q27: To what extent do you agree/disagree with the creation of an independent College of Fire and Rescue to lead the professionalisation of fire and rescue services?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q28: Please provide your reasons for your response**

# Governance

## Governance Structures

There are 44 FRAs across England operating under a range of different governance models. We believe this variation in the operation of models is unhelpful and leads to problems in relation to accountability and transparency.

Unlike FRAs overseen by PFCCs or combined authority mayors, the majority of authorities still operate a committee structure comprising many members (in the case of one authority, nearly 90). This can slow decision making and impair accountability. And across most of England, the public do not have a direct say in who is responsible for their fire service. In most areas, while members are elected (for example, as a councillor), they are not directly elected with a clear mandate in relation to fire.

Public awareness of FRAs and their members is not high. Our public polling as part of the review of PCCs found that the majority (89%) could not name a member of their FRA. In contrast, the awareness of PCCs (including police, fire and crime commissioners) is growing since the first candidates were elected in 2012. In the same polling, nearly two thirds (65%) of the public in these areas said they were either aware of their commissioner, or aware that they were responsible for policing (this figure is in line with other recent estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales). The 2021 PCC elections saw a significantly increased turnout – provisionally up 6.5 percent more than in 2016 - and more than double that of the 2012 elections. This shows the model is maturing and public awareness is growing.

After considering the conclusions of the PCC review, and reviewing inspection and other reports, the government view is that oversight of fire services needs to change. Our preferred governance model is one that meets the following criteria:

- there has a single, elected – ideally directly elected – individual who is accountable for the service rather than governance by committee
- there is clear demarcation between the political and strategic oversight by this individual, and the operationally independent running of the service by the chief fire officer
- that the person with oversight has control of necessary funding and estates
- decision-making, including budgets and spending, is transparent and linked to local public priorities

Therefore, to strengthen governance across the sector, we believe there is a strong case to consider options to transfer governance to an elected individual.

We seek views on this approach and who the most appropriate person may be. Options will need to be discussed with each local area. There are a number of options for who this person could be. These include a directly elected combined authority mayor or a PCC. Each is a single directly elected individual who can provide the accountable leadership that we envisage, enabling the public to have a say in who oversees their local service. But there may be other options, including retaining fire in county council's under a designated leader. We seek views on who else could provide this executive leadership.

**Q29: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to a single elected individual?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q30: What factors should be considered when transferring fire governance to a directly elected individual?**

**Please provide the reasons for your response.**

### **The Mayoral Model**

An option to achieve directly elected oversight of fire could be through the combined authority mayoral model. The government would like to see more combined authority mayors exercising public safety functions.

As set out in the Home Secretary’s response to the PCC review (2021) and the Levelling Up white paper, combined authority mayors could also take on public safety functions where boundaries allow.

Of the eight existing MCAs without fire and rescue functions currently, four (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Sheffield City Region, West Midlands and West Yorkshire) are already coterminous with fire and rescue boundaries. Subject to this consultation, we will explore options for transferring the fire functions directly to the MCAs for exercise by the mayors in these areas at the earliest opportunity. The four remaining existing MCAs (Liverpool City Region, North of Tyne, Tees Valley and West of England) are not currently coterminous with fire and rescue boundaries and so, subject to this consultation, we will need to consult with those in the local areas to establish the way forward.

**Q31: Where Mayoral Combined Authorities already exist, to what extent do you agree/disagree that fire and rescue functions should be transferred directly to these MCAs for exercise by the Mayor?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

### **Police and Crime Commissioners**

Another option could be to transfer responsibility to a police, fire and crime commissioner. In 2017, measures were introduced through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 to enable PCCs to take on oversight of their local fire services.

It is for each commissioner to determine whether they want responsibility for fire. If so, they need to produce a proposal for the Home Secretary that demonstrates how a governance transfer meets the statutory tests of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, and that it does not have a detrimental impact on public safety. To date, four areas have made the transition to a police, fire and crime commissioner.

The PCC review considered how PCCs' accountability could be strengthened, and their role expanded in line with the government's manifesto commitment, and considered the benefits of directly elected oversight of fire services. Those interviewed from both policing and fire in the review were broadly supportive of the benefits of bringing policing and fire governance together under a directly elected individual, particularly to maximise the benefits of emergency services collaboration and strengthen accountability and transparency to the public. To achieve a more consistent approach to fire governance, many were strongly in favour of mandating governance change across England, rather than the current bottom-up piecemeal approach.

We have seen the immense value in what PFCCs in the four areas who have responsibility for fire have provided, including strengthened local accountability, enhanced collaboration and improvements in what their fire services provide the public. The business cases for the first four PFCCs estimated savings of between £6.6 million to £30 million over the first ten years. In Northamptonshire, the financial autonomy provided by the commissioner enabled the service to recruit new firefighters and replace equipment and facilities, thereby improving the support it provides to people and businesses. In North Yorkshire, the 'Enable' service brings together police and fire back-office staff to work as one team, under one roof, improving efficiency and affordability for all. The enhanced collaboration driven by commissioners is not only improving organisational efficiency but is saving lives. In Staffordshire, the commissioner agreed a missing persons support protocol between Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Staffordshire Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service in which 90% of relevant incidents attended by fire and rescue crews were lifesaving or injury preventing.

The PCC review crystalised our proposals on fire service governance which the Home Secretary set out in her Written Ministerial Statement of March 2021. We therefore seek views on whether this is another acceptable option.

**Q32: To what extent do you agree/disagree that Government should transfer responsibility for fire and rescue services in England to police and crime commissioners?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Other Options, such as an executive councillor**

We recognise, reflecting the circumstances of each local area, that it may be preferable for somebody a different option other than a PCC or mayor to be given responsibility. This may be where a fire service is currently part of a county council or local boundaries aren't aligned. We are therefore filling to consider other options, although any option will need to meet our

criteria for good governance as listed above, in particular the need for clear executive – rather than committee – leadership.

**Q33: Apart from combined authority mayors and police and crime commissioners, is there anyone else who we could transfer fire governance that aligns with the principles set out above?**

Yes	No

**Q34: If yes, please explain other options and your reasons for proposing them.**

As part of any governance change, we could take the opportunity to strengthen and clarify the legal basis against which fire and rescue authorities operate. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires fire authorities to make provision to provide ‘core functions’ (for example, fire safety, firefighting, rescuing people from road traffic accidents, functions in emergencies). While the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England provides a little more in terms of defining the role of authorities, further work could be done to define their scrutiny and oversight function.

In transferring responsibility to a single individual, we could also put good governance principles in statute. For example, legislation could expressly set out the role and function of the FRAs including its oversight and scrutiny functions, specifying how transparency objectives should be met, and clarifying the relationship between political oversight and operational decision making. If not in statute, this could also be included in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

**Q35: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the legal basis for fire and rescue authorities could be strengthened and clarified?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q36: Please provide the reasons for your response.**

Should we decide to bring forward governance change and transfer governance from existing fire and rescue authorities, we do not want to lose the skills and expertise built up by FRAs. And regardless of who the executive leader is, each would need a body to scrutinise their decision making. Part 2 of our PCC review is assessing the current scrutiny arrangements for PCCs in more detail and how they could be improved. In the light of this, we will consider carefully what may be the appropriate arrangements for fire, including the findings from Part 2 of our PCC review which considered how the current scrutiny arrangements for PCCs could be improved.



## Boundaries

In order to transfer fire governance to an elected official, the boundaries of the fire and rescue service and the police force/combined authority/county council must align. This is to ensure that there is a consistent electoral mandate across the whole of the area concerned. Across most of England, the boundaries for fire and rescue services and police forces/combined authorities (where present) are coterminous, making the transfer of governance to combined authority mayors and PCCs practicable. In areas where there is more than one fire and rescue service within a police force area (for example, Sussex Police covers the area of both East Sussex and West Sussex fire and rescue services) a transfer of functions is still possible as the PCC can take responsibility for each fire and rescue service that falls within their area. We would not seek to combine services unless there was local appetite to do so.

However, in other parts of the country such as the south-west of England, fire and police boundaries do not align. This means the transfer of fire governance to someone like a PCC would not be practicable unless steps were taken to bring about coterminous boundaries. We will discuss options for these areas with interested parties to determine how to achieve the necessary change.

**Q37: To what extent do you agree/disagree that boundary changes should be made so that fire and rescue service areas and police force/combined authorities (where present) areas are coterminous?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

## Fire Funding

We are aware that any governance change will have funding implications. This will be particularly acute in services that are part of a county council or unitary authority. Should any governance transfer be made, we will need to assess that impact, for example on staff, assets and revenue transferred, and council tax precept. We are keen to ensure that both the financial sustainability for all local authorities and the operational capabilities of fire services are maintained throughout, including during any transition period. The government's aim is that we will keep council tax bills low and this will not be adversely affected by our governance proposals.

Where fire is part of a county or unitary authority, we have seen that fire and rescue does not always receive the resources it might otherwise be allocated due to competing priorities within the parent authority. As a result, fire and rescue can see its budget reduced mid-year to meet pressures elsewhere in its parent authority. The fire and rescue service also must compete with other parts of the local authority for capital funding to replace essential equipment. Subject to the results of this consultation, should fire stay within a county council or unitary authority rather than be transferred to a PCC or mayor, we propose taking steps to ring-fence the operational fire budgets within all county councils and unitary authorities who run fire services. This will enable the executive leader and chief fire officer to have certainty at the start – and throughout – the financial year over what resources they have available to them in order to meet the requirements of their local plan.

On conclusion of this consultation, we will work with national and local government representatives to consider these issues further. Should any changes to governance be given effect, we will consider options to ensure that authorities in all their forms continue to take effective decisions on their service provision ahead of any governance change.

**Q38: To what extent do you agree/disagree with ring-fencing the operational fire budget within fire and rescue services run by county councils and unitary authorities?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q39: Please provide the reasons for your response.**

### A Balanced Leadership Model

Chief fire officers, properly held to account for performance by stronger governance, must also be able to make operational deployments and use their resources in the most efficient and effective ways to meet known and foreseeable risks. Yet in many cases, they are required to engage in prolonged negotiation at both the national and local levels on matters that should be within their operational responsibility.

In their first inspections, HMICFRS found that the lack of clear operational independence of chief fire officers created a barrier to services becoming more effective and efficient, and they found examples where chiefs were prevented by their authorities from implementing operational changes. HMICFRS recommended that the Home Office should take steps to give chiefs operational independence, including issuing clear guidance on the demarcation between governance and operational decision making. We agree with this recommendation and will legislate to do so when parliamentary time allows. While good governance, accountability and robust political decision-making is critical, it should be for the chief fire officer to determine the operational deployment of their staff.

We want to move to a consistent position where the political, executive leader of the fire and rescue authority will be responsible for their fire service and will be accountable – ultimately at the ballot box – for the service’s performance. This will be alongside the chief fire officer being accountable for operational decisions, with the two working effectively together to ensure the best service to the public.

The table below illustrates the possible demarcation of responsibility between the political (executive) leader and the chief fire officer. For example, the chief fire officer would make decisions in relation to the appointment and dismissal of staff, and the configuration, deployment and organisation of fire service resources. They would also make decisions to balance competing operational needs aligned to the strategic priorities set by the executive leader, to which they must have regard; including operational decisions to reallocate resources to meet immediate and ongoing demand and allocate staff to specific duties to reduce risk and save lives. We will work with those in the fire sector and local government to define this further ahead of making the required legislative changes.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
<u>Setting priorities</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Budget setting</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Setting precept</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Setting response standards</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
Opening and closing fire stations	Executive leader*
<u>Appointment and dismissal of chief fire officer</u>	<u>Executive leader</u>
<u>Appointment and dismissal of other fire service staff</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Allocation of staff to meet strategic priorities</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Configuration and organisation of resources</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Deployment of resources to meet operational requirements</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Balancing of competing operational needs</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>
<u>Expenditure up to certain (delegated) levels</u>	<u>Chief fire officer</u>

\*Opening and closing of fire stations could be a joint decision; operationally fire chiefs could be responsible for decisions on moving teams, whilst ultimate political and executive responsibility lies with the executive leader.

There will be a bright, clear line demarcating the nature and extent of the chief fire officer's operational independence against the role of the executive leader. We will consider best practice in local government to develop this, as well as learning from the relationships between PCCs and their chief constables. We could consider producing something akin to the Policing Protocol to clarify roles and responsibilities and provide safeguards.

To support that, the declaration of the acceptance of office of PCCs and mayors could be extended to respect the operational independence of chief fire officers in the same way it presently applies to the independence of police officers.

At all times, the strengthened governance model of an executive leader will hold the chief to account for their decisions and performance.

**Q40. To what extent do you agree with this proposed approach (as outlined in the table above)?**

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>

**Q41. Do you have any other comments to further support your answer?**

**Q42. Are there any factors we should consider when implementing these proposals?**

**Q43: What factors should we consider when giving chief fire officers operational independence?**

Please provide the reasons for your opinions.

**Legal Entity of Chief Fire Officers**

When considering the role of chief fire officers in the context of transferring governance to a PCC, the extent of operational independence granted to them becomes even more relevant.

In the PCC model for policing governance, chief constables have operational independence from their commissioner in relation to the running of their police forces. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 provides that a police force and its civilian staff are under the direction and control of the chief constable. The 2011 Act also makes each chief constable a corporation sole. That means that the chief constable is a legal entity in their own right, occupying a single incorporated office. It makes the chief constable the employer of all those who work for the police force, and gives them legal authority over certain decisions and functions.

We therefore will consider whether to legislate to make chief fire officers corporations sole. This could clarify their role and responsibilities, and make them the employers of all fire personnel. This would mirror the arrangement in policing, although we will ensure these new arrangements are appropriate for fire. Subject to the views of the consultation, should we decide to proceed, we recognise specific arrangements may need to be put in place for chief fire officers employed by fire and rescue services run by county-councils and unitary authorities due to how closely fire professionals and assets are embedded in those organisations. We will work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and others in local government to consider this further.

**Q44: What factors should we consider should we make chief fire officers corporations sole?**

**Clear Distinction Between Strategic and Operational Planning**

Fire and rescue authorities are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to publish an Integrated Risk Management Plan (or similar for mayors and PFCCs). Put simply, the plan should assess all foreseeable fire-and-rescue related risks the service may face, and list how they will be met or responded to.

We are seeking views on how best to clarify the distinction between strategic and operational planning. We believe there should be a clear distinction between a strategic fire and rescue plan established by the fire authority and for which it is responsible, that sets priorities for the service on behalf of the public, and an operational plan which would become the responsibility of the chief fire officer and would deal with how strategic priorities will be met and risks mitigated.

Regardless of whether we require a new strategic plan, we propose to change the title of the operational plan to ‘the Community Risk Management Plan’. This better reflects the focus that these plans should have on risks to communities and more closely aligns to the newly established Community Risk Fire Standard introduced by the Fire Standards Board.

**Q45: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the responsibility for strategic and operational planning should be better distinguished?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q46: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the strategic plan should be the responsibility of the fire and rescue authority?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q47: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the operational plan should be the responsibility of the chief fire officer?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

**Q48: Please provide the reasons for your response.**

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# About you

Please use this section to tell us about yourself

<b>Full name</b>	
<b>Job title</b> or capacity in which you are responding to this consultation exercise (for example, member of the public)	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Company name/organisation</b> (if applicable)	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	
If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your response, please tick this box	<input type="checkbox"/> (please tick box)
Address to which the acknowledgement should be sent, if different from above	

**If you are a representative of a group**, please tell us the name of the group and give a summary of the people or organisations that you represent.

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# Contact details and how to respond

Please respond to this consultation online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternatively, you can send in electronic copies to:

[firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you may send paper copies to:

Fire Reform Consultation

Fire Strategy & Reform Unit

4th Floor, Peel Building

2 Marsham Street,

London

SW1P 4DF

## Complaints or comments

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process you should contact the Home Office at the above address.

## Extra copies

Further paper copies of this consultation can be obtained from this address and it is also available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

Alternative format versions of this publication can be requested from:

[firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:firereformconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk)

## Publication of response

A paper summarising the responses to this consultation will be published online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

## Representative groups

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent when they respond.

## Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Home Office.

The Home Office will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.



# Impact Assessment

The Government is mindful of its duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and the need to assess the potential impact of any proposal on those with protected characteristics. In each part of the consultation, we invite views and evidence on the potential impact of the proposals and the package of proposals as a whole on such persons.

The impact assessment for this consultation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-our-fire-and-rescue-service>

# Consultation principles

The principles that government departments and other public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation are set out in the consultation principles.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>



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**HMICFRS Recommendations and status updates as at 15 December 2021**Recommendations from 'Fire and Rescue Service inspections 2018/19, Summary of findings from Tranche 2' HMICFRS 20 June 2019

## Recommendation 1

As soon as is practicable the Home Office, National Fire Chiefs Council and Local Government Association, in consultation with the Fire Standards Board and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, should establish a programme of work that will result in consistency in the four priority areas. (1. identifying and determining risk as part of the IRMP process; 2. identifying and measuring emergency response standards and approaches; 3. defining what are high-risk premises for the purposes of fire protection; and 4. setting an expectation for how frequently high-risk premises, and parts of those premises, should be audited for compliance with fire safety legislation). By December 2020, there will be completion or significant progress in the four priority areas specified above, towards a common set of definitions and standards for fire and rescue services to adopt and apply as soon as reasonably practicable, for each of the four priority areas.

## HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

The Home Office confirmed it has funded the NFCC's community risk programme, which is designed to develop a single method for services to use so that they identify and assess risk in the same way. The programme will also provide support to services so that they can use this method successfully. The NFCC told us that it expected the community risk programme work to be completed by the end of 2021/22. In February 2021, the Fire Standards Board published the fire standards for operational competence, operational learning and operational preparedness. In September 2021, the Fire Standards Board published its protection standard. Since then, a range of guidance documents have been published which are designed to support services in their implementation of the standard. In addition to its continued work on high risk premises, the NFCC has been coordinating the building risk review programme. This programme provides the most up-to-date information on a subset of buildings that will be in the jurisdiction of the new building safety regulator. These projects are still in progress and the specific requirements of this recommendation must be met in its entirety for it to be considered as complete

## Recommendation 2

As part of the next Spending Review, the Home Office in consultation with the Fire and Rescue Sector should address the deficit in the fire sector's national capacity and capability to support change.

HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

Complete

Recommendations from 'State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019' HMICFRS 15 January 2020

## Recommendation 1

(1) By June 2020 the Home Office, in consultation with the fire and rescue sector, should review and with precision determine the roles of:

- (a) fire and rescue services; and
- (b) those who work in them.

HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

The Home Office intends to consult on this matter in its forthcoming White Paper on fire reform.

## Recommendation 2

(2) By June 2020, the Home Office, the Local Government Association (LGA), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and trade unions should consider whether the current pay negotiation machinery requires fundamental reform. If so, this should include the need for an independent pay review body and the future of the 'Grey Book'.

HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

The Home Office intends to consult on this matter in its forthcoming White Paper on fire reform.

## Recommendation 3

(3) By September 2020, the Home Office should consider the case for legislating to give chief fire officers operational independence. In the

meantime, it should issue clear guidance, possibly through an amendment to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, on the demarcation between those responsible for governance and operational decision making by the chief fire officer.

HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

The Home Office is considering ways to make progress against this recommendation.

#### Recommendation 4

(4) By December 2020, the National Fire Chiefs Council, with the Local Government Association, should produce a code of ethics for fire and rescue services. The code should be adopted by every service in England and considered as part of each employee's progression and annual performance appraisal.

HMICFRS update, 15 December 2021

Complete

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# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 15 June 2022

**Report title:** Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Project Progress Update (March 2022)

**Lead Member:** Chairman of the Fire Authority

**Report sponsor:** Area Commander Calum Bell – Head of Protection, Assurance and Development

**Author and contact:** Station Commander Dave Tubbs – Operational Preparedness & BA – [dtubbs@bucksfire.gov.uk](mailto:dtubbs@bucksfire.gov.uk)

**Action:** Noting

**Recommendations:** That the report is noted

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## **Executive summary:**

This report outlines the progress that has and is currently being made by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) alongside Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) with regards to the collaborative procurement and roll out of new breathing apparatus (BA) equipment across the three Services. It highlights the extensive work being undertaken by the project team and within each Service in line with the agreed project plan.

The report demonstrates that the project is running to the identified schedule within each objective and further shows when each area will be complete, leading up to the staggered 'go-live' dates within each Service.

The report also covers financial implications, both current expenditure and projected savings in areas.

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## **Financial implications:**

The capital budget for this project was approved as part of the MTFP 2022/23 which totals £1.056m (BFRS share only) for both BA and BA radio communications. To date, current allocated spend for all three Services is £1.96M (£655k for BFRS) with further identified expenditure for other ongoing capital and revenue costs.

Significant cost savings have been achieved through collaborative purchase with Thames Valley partners.

Monitoring is undertaken by Station Commander Operational Preparedness & BA, Group Commander Technical and is authorised by the Director of Finance and Assets.

**Risk management:**

Risks to the delivery of the project are recorded, managed, and monitored at a departmental level as indicated in the Corporate Risk Management Procedure. Risks can be escalated from the project register to the Protection and Assurance Risk Register or Corporate Risk Register as required.

The project coordinator continues to review progress and risk levels within the work being undertaken. This is coordinated through the project team and in regular consultation with the awarded supplier.

**Legal implications:**

Any legal implications are considered as the respective strands of this project are implemented.

**Privacy and security implications:**

Following the successful conclusion of the procurement process, there are no identified privacy issues or security implications.

**Duty to collaborate:**

The entire project has adopted a collaborative approach, each Service agreeing to ensure operational alignment throughout, including procedures and training, which will support the recognised goal of a 'Thames Valley BA wearer'. However, this further alignment work falls outside of scope for the project and continues to progress through the wider collaboration programme.

**Health and safety implications:**

The imbedded practical application of the health and safety management policies and procedures ensure the Service's compliance is demonstrated and evidenced as it continues to implement the respective strands of the project. The Service Health and Safety manager is the lead stakeholder for health and safety on the project team and continues to work with counterparts in each Service, plus the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) regional health and safety representative.

Improvements in health and safety with the equipment include:

- Reduced weight for wearers to carry, with improved ergonomics
- Change in materials to reduce build-up of contaminants, particularly carbonaceous particles and now easier to clean, including options to use machine washers

- Personal issue facemasks will reduce the risk of transmission of airborne illnesses
- Improved monitoring of BA wearers, both in 'real time' and post incident

#### **Environmental implications:**

Environmental considerations formed part of the procurement process through the technical response that suppliers had to demonstrate. This is in turn with maximising the efficient delivery of equipment and training to Services. Example of this includes collection of old items for re-circulation through fire service charities (e.g. Fire Aid) and responsible recycling/disposal of items unable to be used. Delivery schedules have been identified to maximise transportation and reduce carbon footprint.

#### **Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters are considered routinely as each respective action is undertaken. A survey was sent out at the start of the project to all BA wearers to identify issues and feedback on BA equipment. Work was then carried out through the technical specification element of the procurement process to address areas where possible. Personnel were then identified to trial the equipment ensuring a range of body sizes, genders and duty systems, representative of our workforce. Feedback was sought at all stages of the trials, which was then collated and scored towards the final award. The resulting award was in line with the most favourable equipment on trial. Work continues with the Equality impact assessment to ensure any further improvements are identified for staff. This involves a focus group sought by the project team and liaison with the respective ED&I groups within each FRS.

#### **Consultation and communication:**

Regular stakeholder engagement is achieved across both the Thames Valley and BFRS through the dedicated project coordinator and within the project team, involving a range of departments across the Service. The involvement of a communications lead will now also assist for external communications pieces when required.

#### **Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase One Recommendations:**

The project further enhances the equipment within recommendation 26 of the GTI Phase One report (namely BA communications). Our current communication devices have had no notable deficiencies, but the updating of these radios ensures alignment across the Thames Valley services, future proofed systems with additional capabilities and a dedicated radio for BA wearers.

The equipment being supplied is also fully operable with the existing escape hoods purchased by the Service in response to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower (which then became recommendation no.34 within the outcome report of the Phase One inquiry).

The paper is for noting and further updates will continue as required to ensure robust communications are upheld up until 'go-live' within BFRS.

**Background papers:**

Project Initiation Document - Joint Procurement of Breathing Apparatus and Associated Equipment – Thames Valley Executive Board - 2020

<b>Appendix</b>		<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Annex A – Thames Valley BA Project Update Presentation (March 2022)	None



Buckinghamshire Fire  
& Rescue Service

# Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Project

Fire Authority Meeting – June 2022

**Station Commander  
Dave Tubbs**

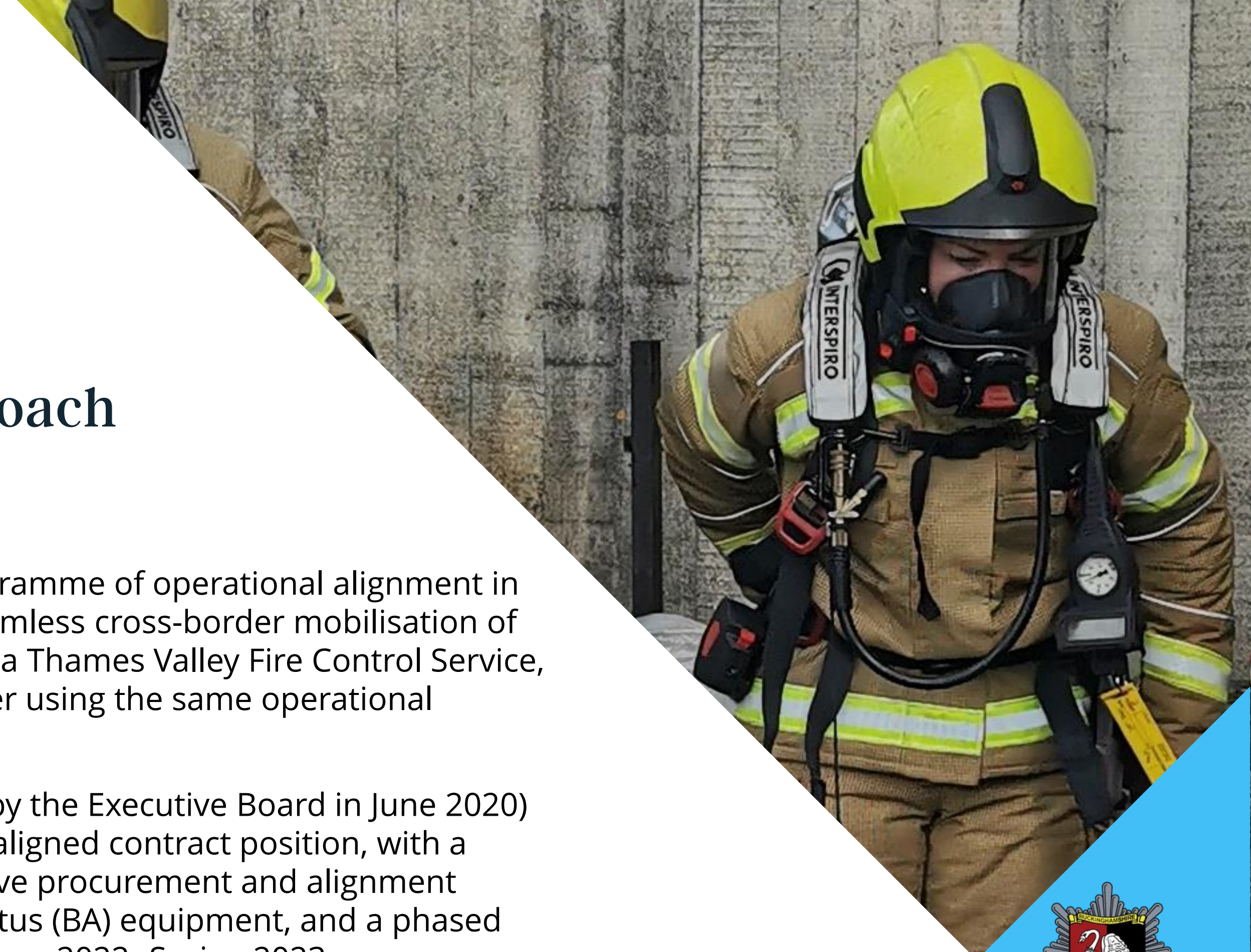




## Background and approach

The project falls under the wider programme of operational alignment in the Thames Valley, which aims for seamless cross-border mobilisation of Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) assets via Thames Valley Fire Control Service, and firefighters who can work together using the same operational guidance, training and equipment.

The project business case (approved by the Executive Board in June 2020) explored various options to reach an aligned contract position, with a favoured option for a joint collaborative procurement and alignment (standardisation) of Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment, and a phased implementation period between Autumn 2022- Spring 2023.



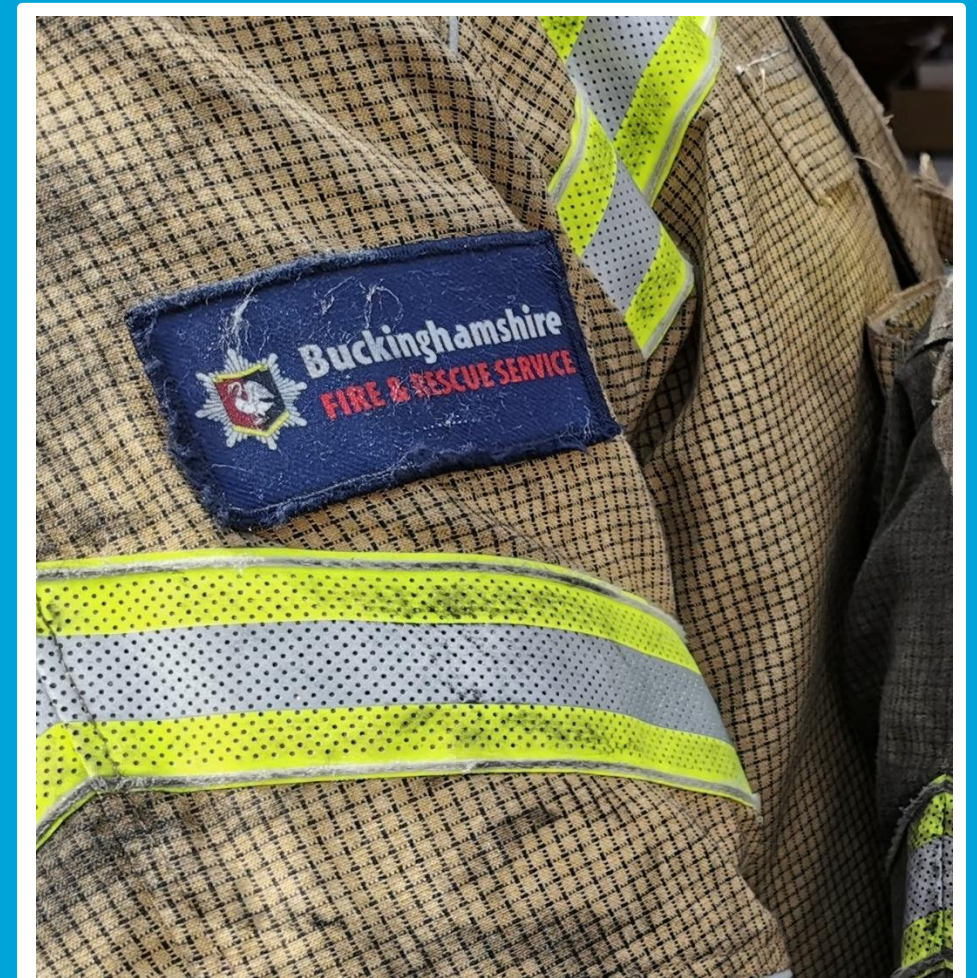
# Aims and Objectives

The project will align and standardise the Breathing Apparatus (BA) and ancillary equipment utilised in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Services into one commonly recognised provision under a joint collaborative contract.

## Proposed Outputs

- BA sets and all ancillary equipment are the same
- BA Entry Control Systems are the same
- BA Cylinder charging facilities are interchangeable
- Contracts are aligned
- Communications equipment specification is compatible with the aligned BA

Wider performance will be measured in the operational alignment programme perceived benefits. E.g. fewer cross-border mobilisations and knock-on standby moves, less complexity at incidents by demonstrating cross-border crews can work from the same entry control board, and aligned pre-determined attendances categorised by incident type.



# Achievements

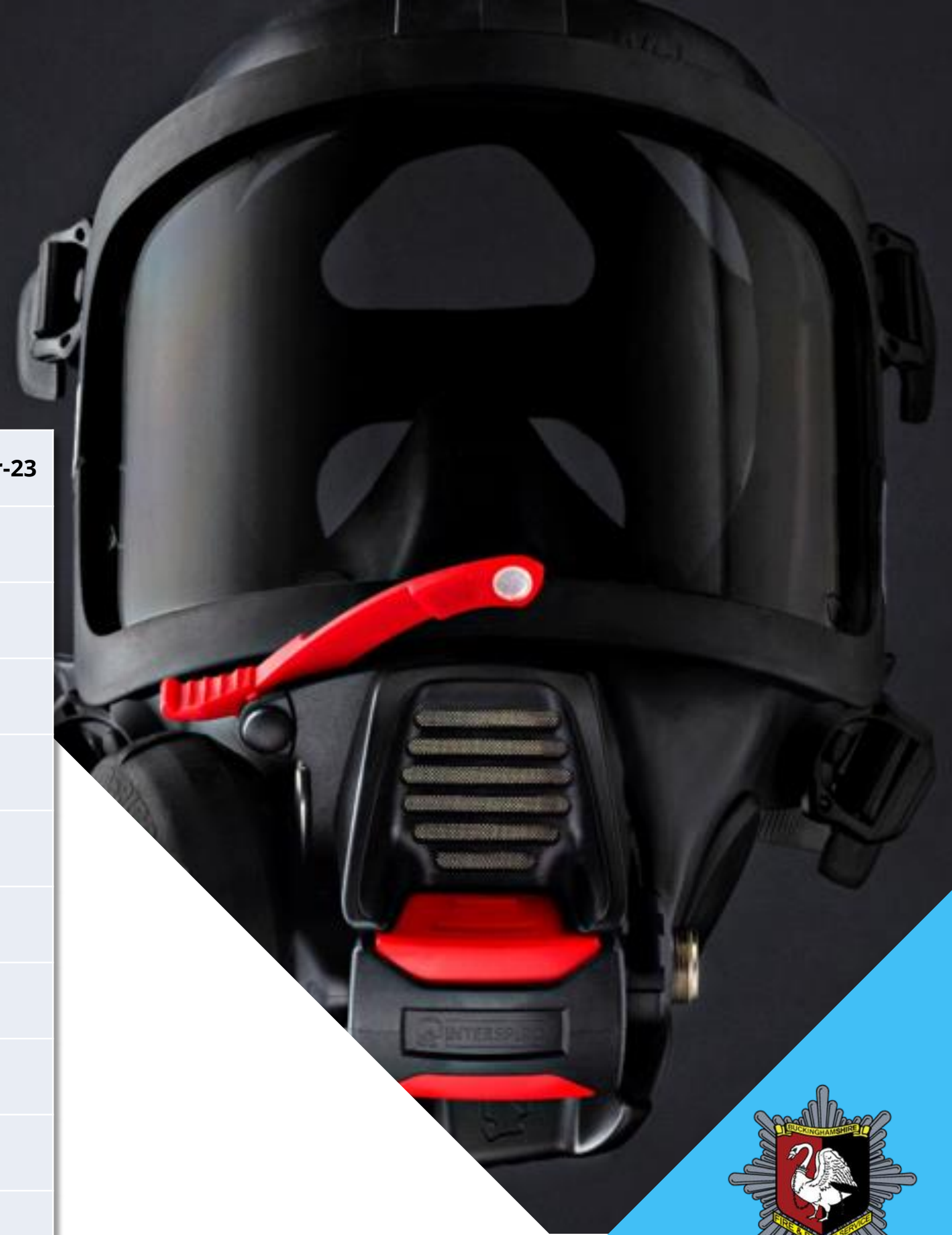
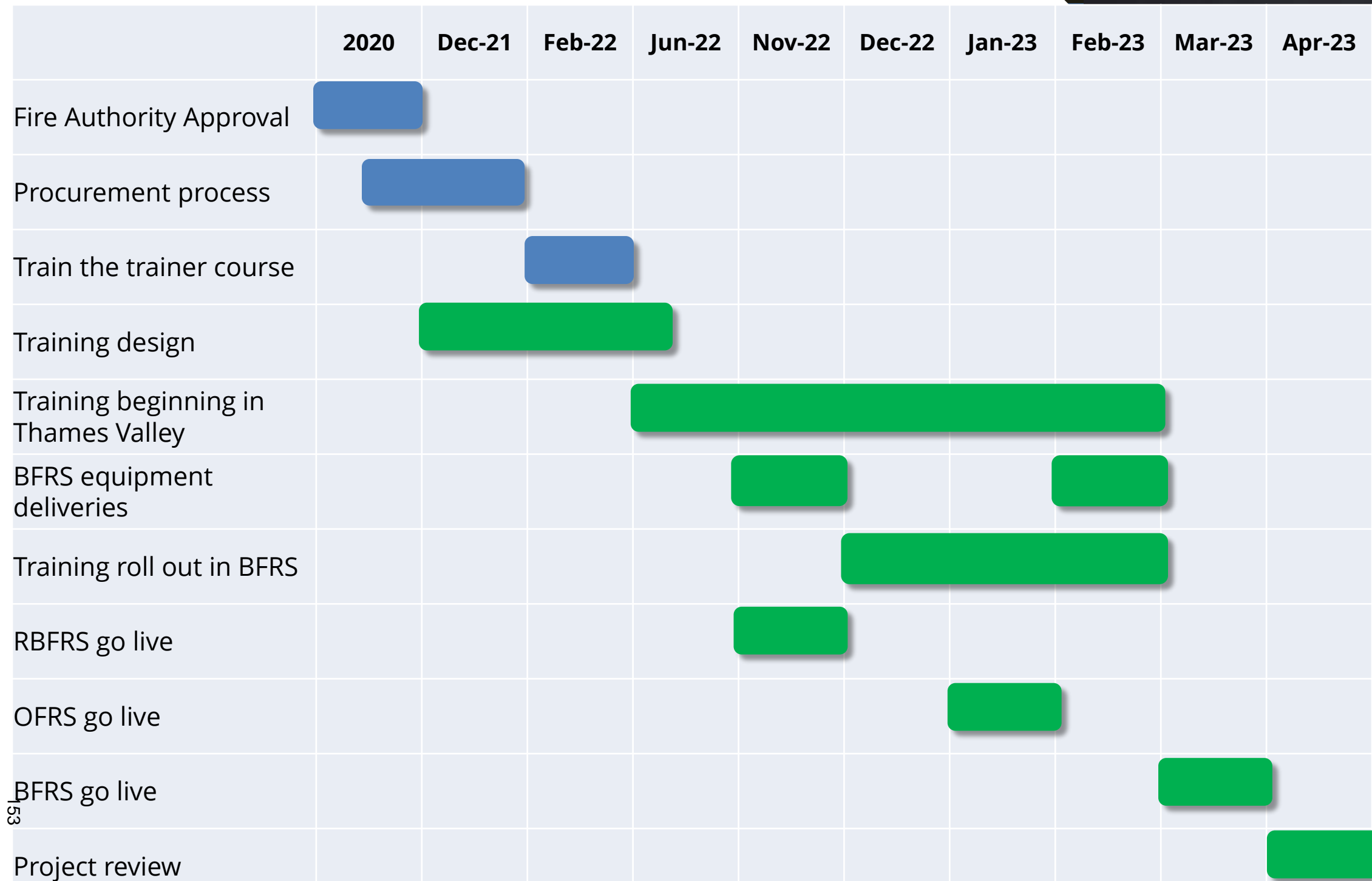


- ✓ New equipment contract awarded, providing better management of contamination, increasing firefighter safety both during and post incident
- ✓ BA wearer survey completed and responses reviewed
- ✓ Successful practical trials by operational staff, providing feedback and scoring to assist in identifying the best equipment offering
- ✓ Collaborative procurement process successfully completed, resulting in significant efficiency savings
- ✓ Equipment specification aligned across the Thames Valley
- ✓ Personal facemasks for all staff to improve equipment offering and firefighter safety
- ✓ Joint Thames Valley training team established to provide efficiency and resilience in aligned training delivery





# Project Timeline



# Breathing Apparatus equipment overview



# Incurve-E Breathing Apparatus (BA) Set



- Electronically enabled to communicate critical information and safety warnings to and from the BA set (telemetry)
- Reduced weight and better ergonomics (weight saving of 2kg for the BA set)
- New materials are easier to clean, resulting in better management of contamination assisting with cleaner crew cabs in appliances.
- Fully adjustable in size, to support a wide range in body sizes and statures
- Improved firefighter safety introducing new technology
- Ability to easily adapt to twin cylinders to extended wearer duration, supporting our operational capability to manage risks associated with major infrastructure changes
- Collaborative purchase has resulted in approx. 6.8% reduction in cost per unit



# Inspire Facemask



- Available in various sizes to give an effective face seal, regardless of size or face shape
- Issued on a personal basis, with dual contract staff having one for each role undertaken
- All staff will be 'portacount' tested in line with HSE guidance
- Collaborative purchase has resulted in approx. 65% reduction in cost per unit

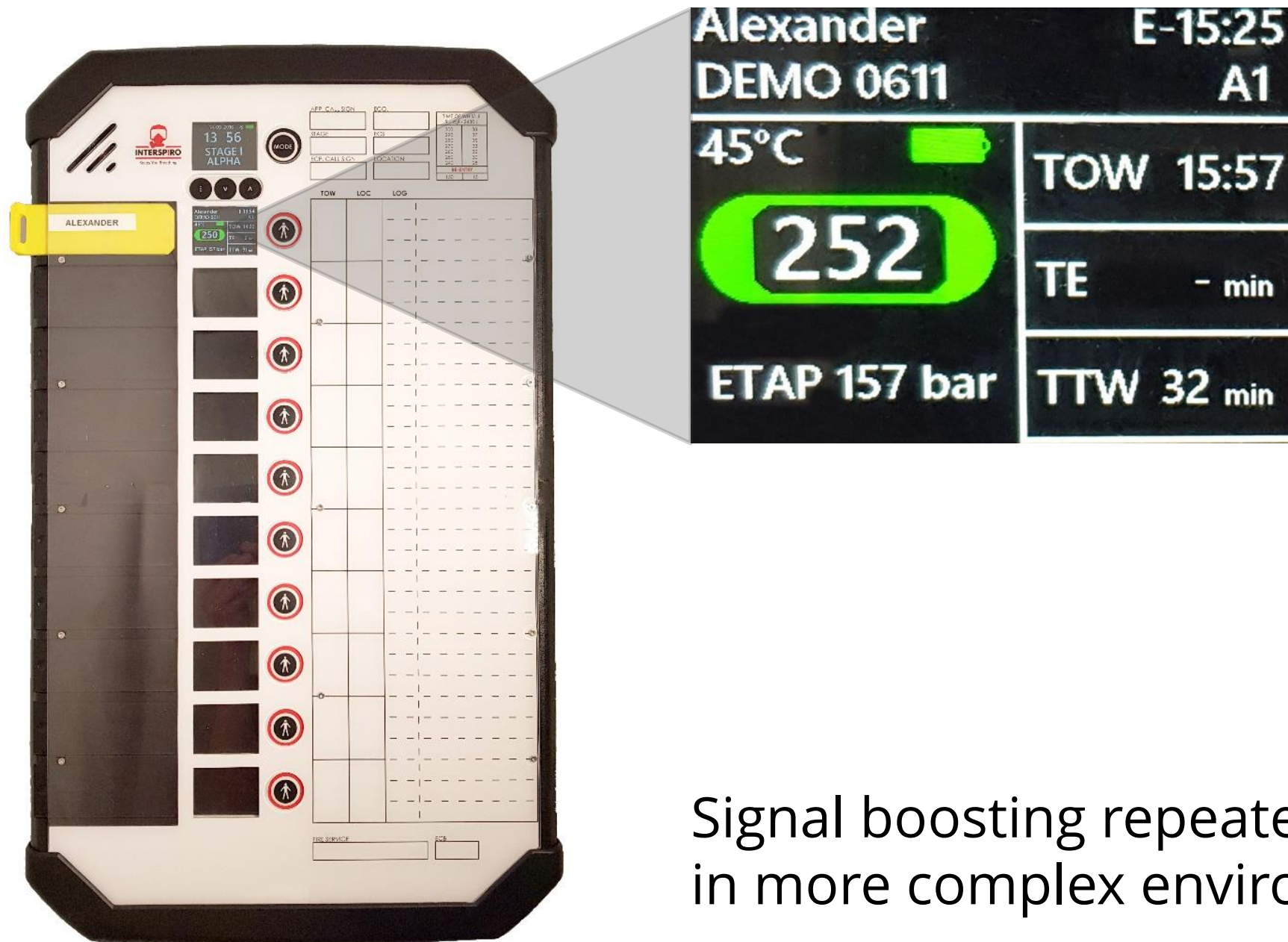


# Cylinders

- 9 Litre, 300 bar multi-purpose use cylinders
- 'Quick Connect' technology
- Improved ratchet handwheel
- Project team undertaking work to identify new cylinder technology which will see further weight saving of 0.5kg
- Collaborative purchase has resulted in approx. 60% reduction in cost per unit



# Telemetry

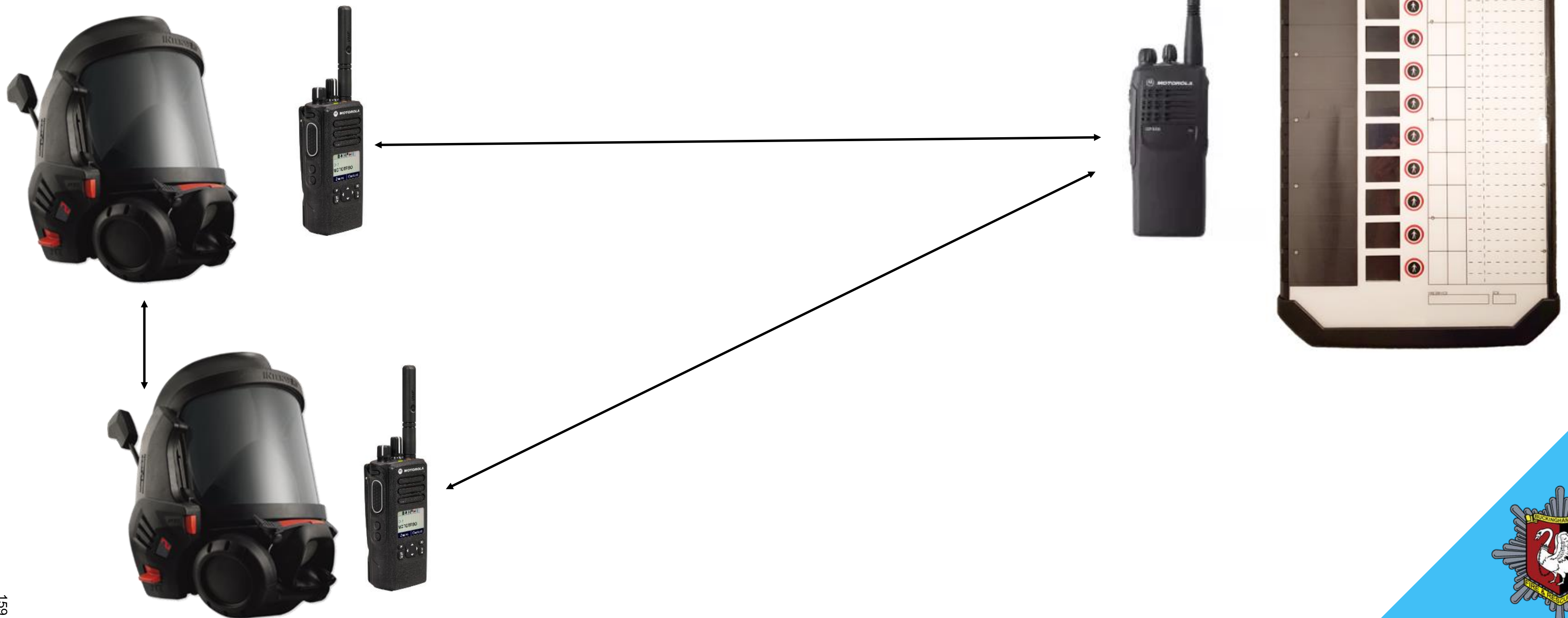


- Intuitive 'real time' monitoring of personnel
- ID system
- Enhanced firefighter safety features and alerting
- Improved post incident reporting and data analysis
- Scalable from small to large incidents
- Collaborative purchase has resulted in approx. 46% reduction in cost per unit

Signal boosting repeaters allow safe operations in more complex environments or tall buildings



# BA Radio Communications



# Benefits

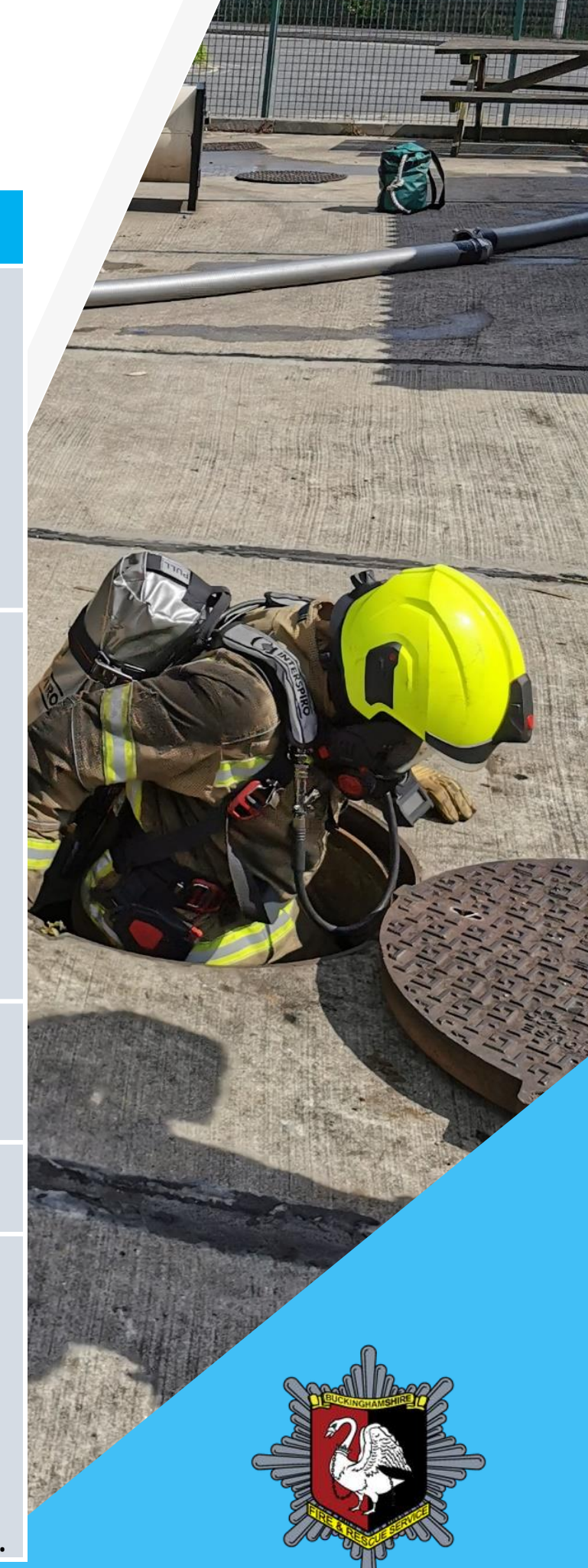
- ✓ Better equipment with latest technologies
- ✓ Improved firefighter safety and monitoring
- ✓ Lighter, better fitting equipment for use by a diverse workforce
- ✓ Standardised equipment across Thames Valley
- ✓ Resilience with equipment and maintenance
- ✓ Reduced procurement and technical costs
- ✓ More efficient service delivery with fewer mobilisations and increased interoperability
- ✓ Reduction in complexity of management of incidents
- ✓ Supports aligned procedures and training in Thames Valley





# Benefits

	Current equipment	New equipment
Firefighter safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Manual tally system</li> <li>✗ Limited monitoring capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Electronic ID system</li> <li>✓ Improved post incident reporting and data analysis</li> <li>✓ Intuitive 'real time' monitoring of personnel</li> <li>✓ Improved management of contamination</li> <li>✓ Extended duration ability through twin cylinder configuration</li> </ul>
Operational alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Different equipment specification offering to OFRS and RBFRS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fully aligned equipment offering across the Thames Valley</li> <li>✓ More efficient service delivery through reduction in mobilisations</li> <li>✓ Increased interoperability through equipment, training and procedural alignment</li> <li>✓ Reduction in resources allocated to cross border incidents</li> </ul>
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Total equipment weight – 16kg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Total equipment weight – 14kg</li> <li>✓ Personal issue facemasks for every wearer</li> <li>✓ Better fitting equipment for diverse workforce</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Analogue handheld radios</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dedicated analogue/digital BA radios using latest Bluetooth technology</li> </ul>
Finance & procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Projected cost of <b>£855K</b> to remain with current supplier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Projected total initial cost of <b>£700K for BFRS</b>. Collaborative procurement process successfully completed, resulting in significant efficiency savings against indicative costs (£1.1 million across total contract)</li> <li>✓ Thames Valley regionally aligned contract timescale and single shared procurement process.</li> </ul>



Any questions?

