



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Overview and Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	17 March 2021
OFFICER	Area Commander Calum Bell, Head of Protection & Assurance
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Steven Lambert
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Operational Assurance Improvement Plan
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress that continues to be made, with regard to the delivery of the Service's approved Operational Assurance Improvement Plan (OAIP).</p> <p>The OAIP is a dynamic document, used to enhance our ability to capture, scrutinise and respond to operational learning originating from events such as our own operational debriefs and Learning Review of Command (LRC) which are now customary for all notable incidents, assurance visits and external reviews, such as the Grenfell enquiry.</p> <p>Our internal approach towards how we now gather and assess learning from operational activity, has better enabled us to effectively identify emerging issues and then implement practical and corrective solutions, in order to enhance operational performance.</p> <p>The recommendations for action from the final Operational Assurance Limited (OAL) audit, have now been added to the OAIP.</p> <p>The main areas of focus for the OAIP continue to be operational learning from incidents and this is not limited to just those we have attended. As part of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) we share information across all CAT 1 and 2 Responders through the Joint Operational Learning (JOL) portal and via the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) we access and share "Learning Events" through the National Operational Learning (NOL) framework.</p> <p>Most recently we have started to migrate the work and actions we have been taking, in response to the Grenfell Tower enquiry, into the OAIP.</p>
ACTION	Noting.

RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that the progress made against each improvement recommendation detailed within the updated OAIP is noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>Delivery of the OAIP will contribute toward ensuring the Service's operational safe systems of work are continuously improved to conform to the latest safety standards and are efficient, effective and responsive to significant changes in the external or internal environments.</p> <p>Failure to deliver the OAIP could expose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Service, its personnel and the public to operational, health and safety risks; • Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) to reputational and / or financial risks. <p>The OAIP will inform the ongoing development of our operational workforce plan particularly in relation to areas such as maintenance of operational skills, acquisition training and assessment.</p> <p>Furthermore, the OAIP does not appear to raise any immediate privacy issues.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	There are no direct financial implications associated with this report, as all expenditure is contained within existing budgets. Previously, a £50,000 per annum investment resulted in a contractual three-year (two years, with the option to extend by a further year) programme of assurance visits, intended to drive continual service improvement. This programme has now been completed.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	There are no negative legal implications associated with this report.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	Although the Authority has committed to a default position of collaboration with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). The OAIP relates specifically to BFRS operational activity, however any opportunity to collaborate will be explored, as will the sharing of any identified operational learning.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	There are no negative implications on health and safety associated with this report. The delivery of the OAIP will continue to promote and enhance the existing health and safety culture within the Service.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	No immediate issues identified in relation to the OAIP, however, IIAs and DPIAs will be completed for any changes that result from any subsequent activity, where there is the potential for equality, diversity and privacy issues to arise.
USE OF RESOURCES	Communication with stakeholders

Learning from operational activity or recommendations following debrief and assurance visits are routinely published and communicated to all staff, utilising either the I:Drive or Operational Assurance newsletter. This approach is intended to ensure there is a clear understanding and appreciation of the collective responsibility there is toward continuous improvement in respect to operational performance.

The system of internal control

From a monitoring and reporting perspective, the Head of Protection & Assurance leads on the improvement plan and is chair of the Operational Assurance Group (OAG).

The Head of Operational Training and Assurance has responsibility for delivering the OAIP in conjunction with the OA team.

The medium-term financial strategy

It is intended that delivery of the OAIP, continues to be achieved within the existing budget.

The balance between spending and resources

Coordinated visits to other fire services and informal discussions with suppliers have taken place, in order to identify the different active monitoring systems commercially available. This has resulted in a further 6-month trial being commenced utilising Effective Command commencing on 1 January 2021 that will then be subject to evaluation, before a final decision is made in respect to its suitability.

It was also recognised early on that by transferring the information held on the OAIP, within its current spreadsheet type format, onto 'Viper' would make it easier to both interpret and report on the progress being made, in relation to the different improvement recommendations. However, progress has unfortunately been delayed, primarily due to the other work commitments involving the Data Intelligence Manager.

The management of the asset base

There are currently no identified impacts on the asset base.

The arrangements to promote and ensure probity and propriety

Delivery of the OAIP is expected to have a positive impact against these criteria by creating a more vigorous and transparent operational assurance environment within the Service.

Environmental

Delivery of the OAIP will enhance the Service's ability to identify and manage potential environmental

	hazards in both the internal and external surroundings.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	Background Overview and Audit Committee: 22 July 2020 (see pages 297 - 300) Agenda Document for BMKFA Overview & Audit Committee, 22/07/2020 10:00 (bucksfire.gov.uk)
APPENDICES	Appendix A: Operational Assurance Improvement Plan
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Shaun Cunningham, Head of Operational Training and Assurance scunningham@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744426