

Appendix 1

Service Document Standard Form:

Project Management Process

Business Case



Buckinghamshire
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
we save lives

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AUTHOR:	Station Commander Aylesbury & USAR - SC K Mercer
PROJECT SPONSOR:	Area Commander Head of Prevention, Response & Resilience - AC D Norris
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1. Purpose

This business case supports the Organisational requirement that an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) training rig at Aylesbury is required to replace the existing drill tower. This training rig will enable USAR crews to carry out a range of risk critical training that the existing tower does not provide. This includes Line Access Casualty Extrication (LACE) acquisition and essential maintenance of competency training in other USAR disciplines. This can all be achieved on site while crews are on duty and available to provide a frontline Fire Service response from Aylesbury, where previously off-site facilities would not allow for this.

The USAR capability hosted by BFRS forms part of the New Dimension Programme and is a key part of the Government's investment to enhance the country's resilience and capability to respond to disruptive challenges. Over £200 million was invested nationally by the Government for the delivery of vehicles, training, equipment, procedures, and support mechanisms to enable host Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) to effectively respond to and manage major national incidents and more local USAR emergencies.

In addition to the initial investment and funding to all FRS's, host services continue to receive Home Office (HO) funding of £816'555 per annum (as of 2020/21) This is to ensure that each USAR team nationally is providing the full capability as detailed in National Resilience 'Concept of Operations'. Part of the initial investment was intended to be used to enable each host service to have access to bespoke USAR training facilities which would allow each FRS team to take part in regular training in the full range of USAR disciplines and at the appropriate frequencies to maintain an individual's competencies.

To ensure each hosting FRS is utilising the continued HO funding effectively and efficiently, the HO commissioned a National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) to measure the performance of each USAR FRS against current capability Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and capability specific Key Areas of Assessment (KAAs). This assurance programme is run over a rolling three-year cycle which consists of self-assessment, assurance visits and exercises. The outcomes from each are fed directly back to the HO.

To provide guidance and structure on expectations for each hosting FRS, a USAR Concept of Operations and National Resilience Competency Framework was created which details how the capability should be provided. These two documents form the basis for the NRAT assessment programme. Previous self-assessments and NRAT assurance visits have highlighted that the current training provision in relation to USAR

in BFRS is inadequate as it is difficult to maintain competencies in a range of USAR disciplines.

There is an expectation placed upon each USAR hosting service that they will provide qualified and competent LACE operatives as detailed in the National Resilience Concept of Operations. To ensure BFRS USAR crews can provide this capability, they have to take part in regular training in this rope rescue discipline while satisfying 6 monthly assessments.

The current arrangements for supporting LACE training or any USAR training at Aylesbury is limited as it only consists of an external area that is in the car park of Unit 7 plus a network of wooden tunnels inside the unit that the crews have built themselves. There is a standard fire station drill tower on site which is primarily used for generic Fire Service pumping and ladder drills, this tower is not rated or by any means suitable for providing anything other than day to day Fire Service training.

There are disadvantages to the current facilities and training requirements being undertaken at Aylesbury Fire Station, which include:

- Having to pay outside providers for venue hire and essential USAR courses;
- Limited opportunities for USAR crews to carry out regular Maintenance of Competencies (MOC) in specific and required disciplines;
- No evidence that a USAR specific training facility exists in BFRS to demonstrate the Authority's commitment to providing the capability.

The current drill tower is not fit for purpose for providing the full suite of working at height options that are required for a USAR team

If approved, this training facility will provide the Authority and our USAR qualified staff with the following advantages and opportunities:

- BFRS USAR crews will be able to train to the required level more frequently which will bring them in line with other national USAR teams who provide this capability;
- A USAR training rig at Aylesbury will demonstrate that the initial funding supplied to support training in the capability has been utilised;
- The training rig will fill the gap identified by NRAT who have stated that BFRS have some of the most limited training facilities in the country;
- BFRS will be able to run initial acquisition courses utilising our own USAR qualified and accredited instructors;
- Essential competency training can take place while crews are on duty which will reduce costs to the Organisation in terms of overtime, travel and accommodation costs;
- Bank payments, cover moves, and facility hire will be significantly reduced;
- It will also bring the training facilities in line with the other USAR Services, placing the Service in a stronger position in terms of protecting future funding from the Home Office and retaining the USAR provision at Aylesbury;
- An individual is only deemed qualified and a USAR asset once they have achieved all the required qualifications, this includes the LACE qualification. Having the ability at Aylesbury to carry out this acquisition course will see a much quicker turnaround which will assist BFRS having the required number of qualified staff available. This is essential for ensuring succession planning is achieved to support

staff turnover and training in all the disciplines and can be done in a more efficient and effective way.

Currently, BFRS utilise external providers for initial LACE acquisition courses which comes at a high cost to the Organisation with further costs then being incurred for the 6 monthly assessments and Maintenance of Competency (MOC) sessions which is essential in providing the USAR capability. On most occasions, BFRS qualified instructors are utilised to facilitate this training, especially when the Fire Service College facilities are utilised. This increases the costs further as accommodation and overtime is required to allow our instructors to attend. There is also the potential need for back filling at the station level if an instructor is required during their normal shift pattern.

Health and safety legislation that applies to any working at height activity is the Working at Height Regulations 2005. Regulation 5 states that "Every employer shall ensure that no person engages in any activity, including organisation, planning and supervision in relation to work at height or work equipment for use in such work unless he is competent to do so or, if being trained, is being supervised by a competent person". Regulation 7 states "An employer shall select work equipment for work at height which has characteristics, including dimensions which are appropriate to the nature of the work to be performed and the foreseeable loadings and allow passage without risk".

Working at height is a high-risk activity but a necessary one in the pursuance of rescuing persons and as such the USAR team are highly skilled individuals who can be called upon to conduct such activity locally, regionally and nationally. The current in-house training facilities available are extremely limited and in their current form do not allow LACE training to be carried out as the equipment required is not to the necessary standard. LACE training has to be 'brought in' from external suppliers to ensure competence and compliance with the legislation.

The safety of staff is paramount. To be able to train in-house on equipment which is bespoke to the specialisms that staff are trained for will provide assurance to the Service that staff are trained to the highest standards and able to maintain their competencies. Training opportunities will increase ensuring there is no potential for skills decay and the training can be readily cascaded to crews throughout the Service ensuring instructor skills are maintained. The purchase and use of a USAR training rig will also provide assurance of compliance with the Working at Height Regulations 2005 and Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974- Employers duties.

2. Project Context

2a Background of the proposed project

Since 2006, when the USAR capability was transferred to Aylesbury Fire Station, the staff at that location have acquired and maintained USAR competencies aligned to the Concept of Operations whilst also fulfilling the roles of operational firefighters and supervisory managers.

The USAR capability is amongst a number of national resilience assets which are monitored by NRAT to assure the Home Office that the Service uses the funding appropriately to provide a service aligned to the Concept of Operations. As stated, there is a three-year rolling programme where NRAT requires each host Service to provide a self-assessment and then samples those assessments with assurance and support visits to confirm accuracy. This Service received such a visit in February 2019 with the outcomes and areas for improvements, published and feedback to the Service provided.

A large majority of the required actions from the self-assessment have been or are being addressed with NRAT, stating that the Organisation is on an upward and developing curve which is seen as essential considering the Home Office led New Dimension 2 (ND2) review of the USAR capability.

The outcome of this review will feed directly into the capital asset refresh due to come into effect from 2024. The review will look at how each FRS is providing the capability, identify if the current location of each USAR team is suitable to deal with any national emergency, assess the number of teams available nationally and, if the same level of national resilience is required for the future. It is recognised that this will have an impact on the shape of the USAR capability in Buckinghamshire and any funding received from the Home Office.

Part of the ND2 review involves an understanding of the risk register for each host FRS for now and the future. It has long been recognised that the positioning of the national asset at Aylesbury is an optimum location which will bring a range of benefits nationally, if the capability remains after 2024. BFRS should provide all the evidence it can to assist with this decision and thus continue to receive the funding. This will also contribute to our present operational local response which USAR currently provides. The benefits and acknowledgment of the risk register include:

- Suitably placed to support an attendance at any of the Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) sites that are in and around Buckinghamshire;
- The HS2 project will see one of the largest underground tunnels constructed and then used, in the whole of Europe;
- Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire are positioned in a prime location, with road systems allowing for a rapid attendance into London in the event of a major incident impacting the capital city;
- Provide capability for BFRS to maintain its current response to a range of local incident types to support Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Public Safety Plan;
- With the Governments intention to develop a Nationally Resilience Strategy (NRS) following the outcomes from the recent Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. There is the real potential for the USAR capability to form part of this strategy to help plan for anticipated risks of the future (Appendix 2).

As stated, a great deal of work has taken place to address areas for development highlighted through the NRAT assessment process -one area that remains a concern for NRAT and the USAR crews based at Aylesbury is the distinct lack of suitable training facilities which are an essential requirement for ensuring competency in the full range of USAR disciplines. NRAT have documented on the self-assessment return that Buckinghamshire have some of the most limited training facilities in the country.

2b Business Need

Change is required to favorably realign the Authority with other Services that host the USAR capability. At present, Buckinghamshire are the only Service that do not have a specific USAR training rig on its site.

To date, BFRS USAR crews have worked hard in maintaining their competencies but ultimately had to rely on impromptu offers of training from other Services or have had to hire suitable training facilities to meet the required frequency of competency training, as detailed in the National Resilience Competency Framework.

The benefits to be had from this project and subsequent investment, can be separated into three main areas:

- Invest to save – The financial cost to the Authority for providing the USAR capability could be significantly reduced if training could take place in house and on site. This would result in £10,800 cashable savings in relation to current annual LACE training costs which will be removed from the budget. In addition to this, it will reduce overtime, bank cover costs which will reduce the financial burden on an existing constrained budget;
- Invest to protect – Having a dedicated training facility at the same location as our USAR crews will allow for a much higher frequency of training. This will ensure our staff are safer whilst demonstrating the Authority's commitment to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of its employees. An added benefit of the proposed style of training rig is that it will provide additional Working at Height training opportunities for operational staff across the Service;
- Invest to secure – A USAR specific training facility at Aylesbury will help demonstrate the Authority's commitment to NRAT for providing the capability. This is a critical time as we progress through the New Dimension 2 review commissioned by the Home Office and could play a vital role in securing future USAR funding to the Authority.

The provision of a rig at Aylesbury will also provide an opportunity for the Authority to demonstrate to NRAT that funding provided to support and purchase USAR specific training facilities has been effectively utilised.

2c Overview

A USAR training rig at Aylesbury will significantly reduce the annual cost for maintaining the range of competencies required to provide the USAR capability. The current cost for hiring suitable external training facilities and then the associated costs for overtime, resourcing and travel continues to increase (see section 4).

The training rig, if approved, will offer a real return on investment with year-on-year costs reducing (which include cashable and non-cashable savings) to the point the rig will become cost neutral in 8 years. As there are several qualified USAR instructors based at Aylesbury, there will be the added option for BFRS to run USAR courses to other FRSs and external agencies which could generate an income, as well as having the potential to improve training to staff across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

3. Strategic Case

Although being refreshed, the outcomes linked to BFRS 2020 – 2025 Corporate Plan priorities support this business case with the current strategic objectives and enablers.

Strategic Objectives

SO3.1 Evaluate impact of strategic infrastructure changes on operational response arrangements including disposition of resources and supporting training, equipment and vehicle requirements.

Intended benefit:

The training rig at Aylesbury will support training requirements bespoke to the USAR crews, as well as providing additional opportunities for other BFRS crews. Having the facility on site at Aylesbury will assist with reducing the disposition of front-line resources as training can take place while crews are available for incidents.

SO3.7 National resilience capability review - Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

The Home Office has stated an intention to fully review the national USAR capability in 2024, ahead of a national capability refresh. We will engage fully in any review and are committed to maintaining USAR funding for this Service.

Intended benefit:

With the Authority being committed to securing the Home Office funding, the investment towards a specific USAR training rig will help demonstrate this commitment. This will only have a positive influence when a decision is made around future funding and investment into BFRS.

SO4.3 Funding Pressures: Review potential sources of other income and services that we charge for.

Intended benefit:

BFRS are centrally located within Zone 2 of the National USAR teams, so is a prime location for training on a national scale to take place. With BFRS having a number of USAR specific instructors based at Aylesbury, there is the potential to run external courses to other FRS's and partner agencies e.g., HART, which could generate income. There is also the opportunity for BFRS USAR advisors to provide support to other FRS's to further support the national capability while ensuring BFRS USAR remains on the national map.

Strategic Enablers

SE3.2 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) – engagement with National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) assessments.

The National Resilience Assurance Team cover USAR on a 3-yearly rolling programme. We will continue to prepare for, and service this programme and the improvements from it, including compliance with national Concept of Operations.

Intended benefit:

BFRS continue to actively work with NRAT to ensure that recommendations and improvements from the rolling programme are actioned and adhered to. One area that has been highlighted from the Year 1 assessment is around the distinct lack of training facilities for the BFRS USAR crews. Feedback from NRAT following this review has been documented and states that "The training facilities are some of the most limited in the country and there is obvious frustration amongst the USAR team". In addition, the review also refers to the lack of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) training rig, for which funding was provided.

4. Financial Case

The total capital cost for the USAR Rig is projected to be £180,000 which will be funded from the existing property capital programme for 2021/22.

The provision of LACE training in-house will provide cashable savings of £10,800 per annum in training costs which will be taken from the existing budget and put forward as a saving.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity for non-cashable savings to be achieved from Bank and overtime. Bank savings are in relation to Officers attending training at the Fire Service College on their normal working pattern which then requires their existing stations to be backfilled by Bank staff. Overtime costs arise when operational staff carry out training outside their normal working pattern. Both elements are estimated to cost the Authority £14,500 per annum in total on an existing constrained budget. Therefore, this element has been identified as a non-cashable saving which will be utilised within the Service to provide Bank and overtime cover for other aspects of our services. Based on achieving both the cashable and non-cashable savings, the return on investment is estimated to be 8 years.

Previously, USAR crews have had opportunities to satisfy the LACE training frequency requirements by taking part in exercises hosted by other agencies. The National Ambulance Resilience Unit (NARU) have held several exercises at the Fire Service College where they have invited BFRS USAR crews along to take part. This has enabled the crews to utilise the training facilities at the FSC free of charge with the proviso that USAR awareness is provided to the NARU teams.

The National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) have requested that the opportunities to train at the NARU exercises is shared more broadly around the country which will in future limit the opportunity the Fire Service have in sharing these facilities free of charge. If we are looking to maintain our commitment to the Home Office for providing the full suite of USAR capabilities in relation to the funding received, then an additional annual revenue cost of £14,400 will be required for the hiring cost of the available training facilities to support the LACE discipline.

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5. Options Appraisal

6. Option 1	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Replace existing standard drill tower at Aylesbury with bespoke tower that supports the USAR capability.</p> <p>An indicative cost of £180,000 has been obtained from a training rig provider which considers the groundworks requiring substantial and solid foundations. This is on the worst-case scenario so it has been agreed that a soil survey will take place to confirm true</p>	<p>As detailed in section 4, year on year costs will be significantly reduced by providing this training and the MOCs in house.</p> <p>USAR crews will have the facilities to train more frequently and whilst on duty at Aylesbury, this will provide assurance to the Authority that the Service will have a greater degree of protection in relation to Health and Safety, being able to evidence commitment to the provision of the highest level of equipment and training.</p> <p>Building this rig at Aylesbury will demonstrate the BFRS commitment to the USAR capability which could influence the Home Office commissioned New Dimension 2 review into the future of USAR nationally. At present, it is documented by the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) that BFRS have some of the most limited USAR training facilities in the country.</p> <p>The Aylesbury USAR team are held in high regard nationally and have attended several high-profile incidents and exercise where they always receive positive feedback. This rig will</p>	<p>Initial outlay to build the rig and then oncosts associated with inspection and maintenance programme</p> <p>Impact on day-to-day business while the rig is being constructed.</p> <p>Potential impact on the department workloads who will need to oversee the project -Property, Procurement etc.</p> <p>Suggested rig footprint is slightly larger than existing drill tower: Current tower 2M x 3M approx. Proposed rig 5.5M x 6M approx. This footprint although bigger will not have any negative impact on parking spaces or appliance movements.</p>

<p>costings during the tender process.</p> <p>If agreed, it is recognised that there will need to be a robust tender process completed to ensure that the Authority remains compliant while achieving the correct return on investment.</p> <p>The time scales for completion of the project will be heavily dependent on the tender process timeframe and the capacity of other departments workloads.</p>	<p>demonstrate a willingness to invest in our staff and training facilities while recognising the important role BFRS have in supporting the UK in the event of a National or regional deployment.</p> <p>There is scope for the rig to incorporate additional elements to support the ongoing training of other USAR disciplines which will come at no extra cost than that already identified. In addition. The rig will offer a wide range of Working at Height opportunities to all BFRS crews.</p> <p>BFRS will have the potential to provide training to other FRS's and external bodies e.g., HART, thus generating a potential income.</p> <p>There is the option that the current tower at Aylesbury could be repurposed back into Service or sold back to the agreed supplier.</p> <p>Currently the only training area identified for USAR to use at Aylesbury consists of a section of carpark of Unit 7. With the longer-term future of this building unknown, if it was handed back then we would still have a training facility at Aylesbury which will support far more than just LACE and what is currently available.</p> <p>The construction of a new training rig at Aylesbury and subsequent groundwork could present an opportunity for the inclusion of a foam training facility. This is something that is required to allow for the safe and legal training with foam while protecting the environment.</p>	
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	There will be a positive Environmental impact as the carbon footprint caused by moving heavy vehicles away from Aylesbury for training will be significantly reduced.	
Option 2	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Continue with the current arrangements.</p> <p>For the LACE discipline, the current cost to the authority is approximately £39,700. This is for one LACE acquisition course per year (potentially two for 21/22). Hiring of suitable training facilities and then overtime payments to staff.</p> <p>This cost doesn't include any Bank payments, standby or cover moves required to backfill staff who attend the acquisition course. The fuel costs and wear and</p>	<p>No upfront investment required to support the build of a USAR training rig.</p> <p>No impact on other departments who would ordinarily need to assist with a project of this scale, property, procurement etc.</p>	<p>Increasing costs to external facilities, course providers, overtime, accommodation and Bank will continue, to support the USAR capability.</p> <p>Lack of control over training courses in terms of when they are available and if cancelled at short notice.</p> <p>With there being a distinct lack of suitable training facilities in Service, BFRS could face reputational and financial damage in the event of a Health and Safety investigation following an accident (prosecution and/or civil litigation).</p> <p>USAR crews will continue to struggle to maintain their competences to the level required as detailed in the National Resilience Competency Framework and Concept of Operations.</p> <p>No substantial evidence available to the Home Office that any investment in USAR training facilities has been made following on from the DCLG grant received for this purpose.</p> <p>The limited training opportunities currently on offer at Unit 7 will mean that no USAR training can take place of any nature if the lease for Unit 7 was terminated.</p>

<p>tear on vehicles is also excluded.</p> <p>These costs will continue every year in order to do the bare minimum of the required training.</p>		<p>USAR crews at Aylesbury will continue to feel undervalued when they see the facilities on offer with their Zonal and National USAR colleagues.</p>
<p>Option 3</p>	<p>Advantages</p>	<p>Disadvantages</p>
<p>Cease training in areas of the USAR capability where current training facilities are limited</p> <p>The annual costs to the Authority in option 2 will no longer be required which would provide a minimum saving of £119,100 over a three-year period.</p>	<p>Reduction in costs to the Authority for hiring suitable training facilities and associated on costs.</p> <p>Less requirement for Aylesbury staff to take part in additional USAR training days that sit outside of their current work pattern.</p> <p>Less impact on the environment as there will be a significant reduction in heavy vehicle movements.</p> <p>USAR crews will feel less vulnerable in certain capabilities where they are unable to train to the required level.</p>	<p>The current lack of suitable training facilities in Service and with external courses being cancelled at short notice, there is a risk that competencies cannot be maintained within the required timeframe. In the event of an accident where a member of staff /member of the public sustains serious injury as a result, BFRS could face reputational damage and financial loss due to prosecution and/or civil litigation.</p> <p>USAR crews will continue to struggle to maintain their competences to the level required as detailed in the National Resilience Competency Framework and Concept of Operations, this could result in Aylesbury USAR crews losing confidence in some disciplines and asking that certain capabilities are removed from BFRS.</p> <p>No evidence available to the Home Office that the initial Government funding provided to each hosting FRS has been fully utilised by BFRS.</p> <p>The limited training opportunities currently on offer at Unit 7 will mean that no USAR training can take</p>

		<p>place of any nature if the lease for Unit 7 was terminated.</p> <p>USAR crews at Aylesbury will continue to feel undervalued when they see the facilities on offer with their Zonal and National USAR colleagues.</p> <p>The distinct lack of commitment to the National Resilience Concept of Operations and USAR Competency Framework could have a detrimental impact to the Authority following the outcomes of the New Dimensions 2 review into the capability.</p>
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7. Preferred Option

Option 1 is preferred option as it will provide the Authority and the BFRS USAR crews with the following benefits:

- A return on investment with outgoing costs significantly reduced as crews will be able to train more regularly, whilst on duty at Aylesbury and without the need for hiring external training facilities.
- Acquisition courses can be run at Aylesbury, utilising Aylesbury based USAR instructors.
- Areas of concern identified by NRAT will be addressed which will demonstrate the commitment from the Authority to continually develop and improve the USAR capability in Buckinghamshire, and that the Service intends to stay firmly on the map following the review of USAR Nationally.
- Crews at Aylesbury will have access to training facilities on site, this will ensure that BFRS USAR crews are aligned to their peers across the country.
- Investment in the USAR capability will also demonstrate the Authority's commitment to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of the staff who fulfill the expectations placed upon them.

Should this project be approved, it is envisaged that it would take approximately 6 to 9 months to deliver. Key factors identified so far include:

- The requirement for a fair and robust tender process

- The potential need for planning from the local council for changing the style of the structure currently on site
- Other departments workloads for supporting this project

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are one of the only organisations that have no real training facilities for their USAR crews. This project if approved will redress this and prove to the Home Office of its intent to improve, at what could be a critical time for the Service considering the New Dimensions 2 review.

Buckinghamshire USAR crews are held in high regard nationally and have attended several high-profile incidents, exercises and competitions where they have consistently performed well while bringing back an impressive array of awards and trophies. With the HS2 construction phase underway and the fact that the longest tunnel in the country will pass through Buckinghamshire, there is the real desire to keep this essential National capability in Service, which is something this project will ultimately assist with.