



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 6 December 2023

Report title: Protection Strategy 2023-2025

Lead Member: Chairman of the Authority

Report sponsor: Area Commander Doug Buchanan

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Action: Decision

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Protection Strategy be approved by the Fire Authority.

Executive summary:

The Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30 (CRMP) will shape future considerations relating to service provision. However, in recognition of changing legislation, new guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the findings from the Services' inspection report, it is appropriate and prudent to review and realign the protection strategy with immediate effect. This proposed Protection Strategy is for a shorter period than usual, noting a requirement to align future strategy with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

This revised strategy is designed to ensure the Service are giving due consideration to our legislative requirements and that our activities in respect of protection are considered and targeted to manage those premises considered to be highest risk and/or low compliance. The introduction of a risk-based interventions programme will provide clarity on how the Service will prioritise resource against planned and demand led activity.

Financial implications:

There is no anticipated increase in budgetary requirements within the life of the Strategy.

Risk management:

The Risk Based Interventions Programme (RBIP) is at the heart of this revised strategy. It is underpinned by a number of locally agreed data sets, which broadly align to NFCC guidance. This data allows the Service to identify the highest risk

commercial and residential premises and target our resources accordingly across planned and demand led activity.

Whilst the Service are committed to taking a supportive and advisory approach to businesses, as the enforcing authority for fire safety legislation, we also have a duty to take legal action where appropriate.

Legal implications:

The Authority has responsibilities under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to promote fire safety and to give advice about how to prevent fires, how to restrict their spread and about means of escape. However, it is also the enforcing authority for dealing with breaches by any Responsible Person (RP) of fire safety requirements imposed by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the Order).

The Order does not apply to most domestic premises, but it does apply to the 'common parts' of residential properties, such as high-rise residential buildings, where typically the RP will be the owner of the freehold or leasehold.

This strategy and revised approach to protection interventions positions the Service appropriately to balance our various legislative requirements.

Privacy and security implications:

There are no direct privacy or security implications identified as part of the Protection Strategy.

Duty to collaborate:

Whilst there is no specific requirement to collaborate on Protection programmes, BFRS continue to work closely with the other Thames Valley FRs on a variety of protection activities.

There are regular meetings with Thames Valley Protection colleagues to discuss and progress opportunities of joint working and best practice.

Home Office Protection programmes are standing agenda items for the NFCC Southeast Protection and Business Safety Group. This group is currently exploring the feasibility of a Southeast Fire Engineering specialist.

The Protection team also consults upon and feeds back to both the Home Office and NFCC on all its programmes and proposed legislative changes.

Health and safety implications:

Any general Health & Safety issues have been considered as part of business-as-usual activities.

The continued delivery of the activities above, will lead to a reduction of risk for all residents in BFRS's highest risk buildings and improvements in firefighter safety due to more compliant premises.

Environmental implications:

There are no direct environmental impacts identified as part of the Protection activities considered within in this paper though throughout all Protection Activity there is an implicit acceptance that fire safety is concerned with the environment and the local community and any reduction in fires will have a positive impact on both.

The Authority will be working with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) from October 2023. The BSR will be tasked with looking at the full impact (including environmental) of the full life of new high rise residential buildings.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

An increase in Protection activity and engagement will support life safety and assist businesses to comply with relevant legislation, supporting business continuity and the economy.

This continued and increased engagement with the Home Office through the NFCC around recent changes to legislation and guidance will assist in understanding different community needs and deliver accessible local services, building safer places.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to accompany the Protection Strategy.

Consultation and communication:

Joint Consultation Forum (JCF) – July 2023

Business Transformation Board (BTB) – November 2023

Strategic Management Board (SMB) – October 2023

Background papers:

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Protection Strategy 2023-2025	
2	Risk-based interventions programme	
3	Equality Impact Assessment for the Protection Strategy 2023-2025	