



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Overview and Audit Committee

Report title: Prevention Improvement Plan – September / December 2023

Lead Member: Councillor Simon Rouse

Report sponsor: Area Commander Paul Scanes

Author and contact: Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager Joanne Cook

jcook@bucksfire.gov.uk

Action: Noting

Recommendations:

The Prevention Improvement Plan highlight report (September – December 2023) summarising the progress made against the measures required to secure long-term improvements to Prevention delivery in Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) is noted.

Executive summary:

The Prevention Improvement Plan was written and presented to the Overview and Audit Committee in November 2021, along with the finalised Phase One Prevention Evaluation Report which had commenced in July 2020 but was paused due to revised priorities during the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Prevention Improvement Plan contains 60 recommendations, drawn from the Prevention Evaluation, the findings of the then Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services and the areas required to meet the Prevention Fire Standard and associated National Operational Guidance.

Whilst the Prevention Improvement Plan was anticipated to run for a three-year period, as of 31 December 2023, 41 of the 60 recommendations have already been completed.

The aim is that the Prevention Improvement Plan will move to be a business plan from April 2024, once the outstanding recommendations relating to the development of the Premises Risk Management System (PRMS) and Firesetter Intervention Scheme (now nationally called Fire Safety Intervention) have been completed.

Work to evidence attainment against the removal of the HMICFRS Prevention cause for concern regarding referrals was awaiting development from the third-party provider of the Premises Risk Management System, which was scheduled for after

the delivery of the test environment for the Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) element.

As reported in the last period, this work commenced with the revised referral and visit forms submitted to the third-party provider to commence system development. Once that development has been completed, eight of the 19 recommendations remaining in the Prevention Improvement Plan will be able to be closed.

Work on the actions linked to the outstanding recommendations relating to Firesetter Intervention has been carried forward into the next period, due to the capacity issues previously identified within the Central Prevention Team.

As detailed in the highlight report (Appendix 1), the overall RAG rating continues to be Amber due to some significant delays in closing the recommendations related to system development and a documented process for triaging referrals in the Firewise scheme. These areas continue to be priorities for action in the next period.

Financial implications:

The National Fire Chiefs Council Central Program Office for Prevention and the digital technologies workstream have developed a number of tools with the associated guidance which will be launched in quarters three and four of the year. These closely align to some of the outstanding recommendation actions and will be delivered at no cost to the Service.

Any requirement for growth will be submitted through the established internal governance arrangements for consideration.

Risk management:

This Prevention Improvement Plan is the most effective way of ensuring continued improvement to ensure the best possible service is provided to the communities we serve.

The provision of regular highlight reports is an assurance tool to ensure that we are ultimately working towards aligning to national best-practice and more effectively reducing risk in our communities.

There remain reputational corporate risks to the organisation should we be judged as inadequate by HMICFRS. The Service had already taken steps to mitigate this through having extensive internal and external audits of a number of areas of the Service, notably, elements of our operational activity have been subject to external independent assurance. The prevention evaluation is another example of applying constructive internal scrutiny to drive improvement and reduce risk.

Key risks are identified in the highlight report, of which the staffing issue has already been seen to impact upon delivery.

Legal implications:

As identified in the Prevention Fire Standard, the key legislation, regulation, and duties linked to a Fire and Rescue Service's prevention function are numerous.

Delivery against the identified areas of improving the Premises Risk Management System and Firesetter Intervention Scheme (FIS) sit within this.

Privacy and security implications:

No privacy or security implications have been identified that are directly associated with this report or its appendices. The respective strands of the improvement plan will ensure Data Protection Impact Screening and full impact assessments are completed and reviewed where appropriate. The report and its appendices are not protectively marked.

Duty to collaborate:

Collaboration with partners to ensure a collective and shared approach to identify and mitigating community risk is critical to ensure Prevention activity is effective. The evaluation identifies a number of areas where collaboration and partnerships can be developed for the benefit of community safety through both the statutory Community Safety Partnerships and other boards as appropriate.

Health and safety implications:

There are no Health, Safety or Wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

Whilst there are no identified implications directly associated with this report or its appendices, elements of work contributing to the progression of individual recommendations have a positive impact upon some groups, specifically those where age is the protected characteristic. The respective strands of the improvement plan will ensure impact screening and full impact assessments are completed and reviewed where appropriate.

Consultation and communication:

The Prevention evaluation involved extensive engagement with stakeholders to ensure an effective and thorough evaluation of all our activity.

Background papers:

23 January 2020 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) Inspection Findings Report:

https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/230120_item_7_hmicfrs_cover_report_23012020_appendix-min.pdf/

10 November 2021 – Prevention Evaluation – Phase One Report

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/10/oa-item-17-17-10-21.pdf/>

12 October 2022 – Fire Authority – Prevention Strategy

[Fire Authority Meeting - 12 October 2022 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

15 March 2023 – Overview and Audit Committee – Prevention Improvement Plan Update 2

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/authority/overview-and-audit-committee-15-march-2023/>

8 November 2023 – Overview and Audit Committee – Prevention Improvement Plan Update 3

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/10/overview-and-audit-committee-8-november-2023-item-17-prevention-highlight-report.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Prevention Improvement Plan highlight report September / December 2023	Not protectively marked