



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024 AT 11 AM.

Present: Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Bailey, Banks, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Exon, Hall, Hussain OBE, Khan, McLean, O'Neill, Rouse, Stuchbury, Sullivan and Walsh

Officers: L Harrison (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), S Tuffley (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), P Scanes (Head of Prevention and CRMP), O Finch (Station Commander HR Projects), M Joseph-Hussain (Safety Centre Chief Executive) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Online: A Hussain (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets), F Mansfield (HR Advisory and Development Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager), J Cook (Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager) and A Collett (Organisational Development Manager),

Apologies: Councillor Lambert (joined online)

Councillor McLean opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Annual Meeting of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

Councillor McLean advised that although members of the public were able to attend and observe in person, following the meeting, a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

FA01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

(Councillor McLean in the Chair)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2024/25.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Authority for 2024/25.

(Councillor Rouse in the Chair)

FA02 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2024/25.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor McLean be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Authority for 2024/25.

FA03 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 14 February 2024, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman advised that there were the following matters arising from the previous minutes:

FA57 Recommendations from Committees – Executive Committee – 8 February 2024 (c) His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) 2023 update - The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that officers did continue to meet with the FBU on a regular basis, and it should be captured in the report, and would ensure it was going forward. In terms of Milton Keynes City Council, various teams did meet with them, and the references to key partners would be presented differently in future. The Chairman asked that perhaps on future updates, it be noted who had been communicated to in terms of the planning and engaged with. These have been actioned.

FA58 Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 - A Member asked the real term value of the money and if Members could see some bench marking against similar organisations to see how the Authority compares – The Director of Finance and Assets advised that when a report was next brought to the Overview and Audit Committee, it would look at the impact of inflation over the last five years on the value of the Authority’s investments.

FA05 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

Councillor Bailey disclosed she was employed by Cranfield University.

Councillor Banks disclosed he was employed by the Open University and Milton Keynes University Hospital.

FA06 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the new Members to the Fire Authority and announced that as some Members may already be aware, the Corporate Planning Manager, Stuart Gowanlock, retired at the end of May, after 18 years with the Service. Stuart was recognised for his outstanding contributions to the Service by his receipt of the Chairman's Award in 2019 from my predecessor Lesley Clarke OBE. Members may like to know that I wrote to Stuart on behalf of the Authority to say thank you for all he had done and for his important contributions during my time as Chairman, for which I will always be grateful.

Members gave a round of applause for Stuart Gowanlock.

The Chairman announced that he, the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer attended the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG) with HMIFRS and representatives from the Home Office, National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association. It was a very positive session.

The Chief Fire Officer thanked the team and said that HMIFRS acknowledged the incredible amount of work that had gone on to focus and prioritise the work that needed to be done.

FA07 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Authority noted that the following Members had been appointed by the Constituent Authorities to serve on the Fire Authority for 2024/25:

Buckinghamshire Council (11)

Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Hall, Hussain OBE, Lambert, Rouse, Stuchbury, Sullivan and Walsh

Milton Keynes Council (6)

Councillors Bailey, Banks, Exon, Khan, McLean and O'Neill

FA08 COMMITTEE MATTERS

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

The Authority noted that the allocation of seats on the Authority was:

(i) Conservative Group:	9 seats	(52.94%)
(ii) Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)
(iii) Labour Group:	4 seats	(23.53%)
(iv) Ungrouped:	1 seat	

(b) Committee Matters – Committee Appointments

RESOLVED –

That the following Committees be appointed, and seats be allocated, as follows:

Executive Committee (8 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 4 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 2 seats
- (iii) Labour – 2 seat

Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 5 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 1 seat
- (ii) Labour – 2 seats
- (iv) Ungrouped – 1 seat

RESOLVED –

1. That the following Members be appointed to the Executive Committee:

Councillors Bailey, Banks, Hall, Lambert, McLean, O’Neill, Rouse and Walsh in accordance with the Group Leaders’ wishes.

2. That the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee:

Councillors Adoh, Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Exon, Hussain OBE, Khan, Stuchbury and Sullivan and in accordance with the Group Leaders’ wishes and the ungrouped Member (Sullivan).

FA09 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Authority considered proposed dates for its meetings and meetings of its committees during 2024/25.

RESOLVED –

1. That meetings of the Authority be held on Wednesday 9 October 2024, Wednesday 4 December 2024, Wednesday 12 February 2025 and Wednesday 11 June 2025, all at 11 am.
2. That meetings of the Executive Committee be held on Wednesday 10 July 2024, Wednesday 11 September 2024, Wednesday 13 November 2024, Wednesday 5 February 2025 and Wednesday 19 March 2025, all at 10 am.
3. That meetings of the Overview and Audit Committee be held on Wednesday 17 July 2024, Thursday 7 November 2024 and Wednesday 12 March 2025, all at 10am.

FA10 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Authority considered the appointment of representatives to outside bodies having received nominations which were seconded:

RESOLVED –

1. That Councillors Rouse and McLean be appointed to attend the Local Government Association Annual Conference.
2. That Councillor Rouse be appointed as the Authority’s representative (and Councillor McLean as the Standing Deputy) to the Local Government Association Fire Commission.
3. That Councillors Rouse and McLean be appointed as the Authority’s representatives to the Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference.
4. That Councillors Rouse and Walsh be appointed as the Authority’s representatives on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.
5. That Councillors Hall and McLean be nominated as substitute members of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.

FA11 LEAD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Each having been nominated and seconded it was:

RESOLVED -

That Members be appointed as Lead Members for 2024/25 as follows:

Responsibility	Lead Member
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Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration	Councillor Rouse
People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance	Councillor Hall
Finance and Assets, Information Security, and IT	Councillor Walsh
Health and Safety and Corporate Risk	Councillor McLean

FA12 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN: YEAR 4 PROGRESS REVIEW AND YEAR 5 UPDATE

The Director of Legal and Governance advised Members this was a review of progress made over the fourth year of the five year Corporate Plan that the Authority approved at its annual meeting in June 2020. It also sets out the programme for the remaining year of the plan, through to the end of March 2025. Progress made during the third year and the year four refresh were approved by the Authority at its last annual meeting on 14 June 2023. In light of the progress made, officers had taken the opportunity to refresh the programme of activities that would be undertaken over the remaining year of the plan in pursuit of the Authority’s Strategic Objectives.

Since Members last received the plan, it had been updated to align with the Medium Term Financial Plan approved by the Authority at its February 2024 meeting. The new Promise and Values Structure refreshed Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Measures had recently been agreed by the Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Management Board. Members would see a summary of projects by status, 10 items had been completed and/or streamed into business as usual activity, and 14 had been carried over into the Year 5 plan. There were no items at red rag status, 8 were green (on track) and six amber (off track but recoverable).

A Member asked if officers were abiding by the Gunning Principles in the Standing Orders.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that the next report related to the public consultation of the CRMP and the Gunning Principles relate to the Authority making decisions, or changing policy, which required consultation with the public. In terms of the interface with the public regarding meetings which was set out in the Standing Orders, they were compliant.

The Chairman asked for confirmation on the timeline for business continuity and resilience, and when the Service would be in the position to move it forward.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that for continuity of the role, an interim officer was looking at what was currently in place. When a new person was appointed, they would look at making the process as automated as possible.

RESOLVED –

That the 2020-25 Corporate Plan Year 4 Progress Review and Year 5 Update be approved by the Authority.

FA13 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2030

The Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that this report presented the Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30 (CRMP) to be approved to go forward for consultation with the public, staff, and partner organisations. The consultation would run for a 12-week period during July through to September. Due to the upcoming General Election and period of heightened sensitivity, the earliest date to start would be the week commencing 8 July 2024. Previously known as the Public Safety Plan (PSP), this document reflected on the progress made over the past five years and looked ahead to the future.

The CRMP aims to explain how the Service plans to mitigate identified risks and improve community safety by aligning available resources with key objectives and utilising them in the most efficient way. It also reflected the Service's updated promise to the public, core values and core behaviours. As well as considering the full assessment of risks, it also addressed issues raised in the Service's most recent HMICFRS inspection report.

The document detailed three strategic objectives supported by three strategic enablers. Strategies for each were embedded within the document to ensure they were fully

aligned with the CRMP. The CRMP also contained details of the measures relevant to each objective and enabler so that performance could be tracked throughout the lifetime of the plan. Detailed plans for implementing the actions within each strategy would form the basis of the Annual Delivery Plan (previously known as the Corporate Plan) which would be presented to the Authority for approval at its meeting in February 2025.

The document had been produced with the assistance of an external design agency. Through the internal governance process, officers had noticed a number of typographical errors, which would be picked up, along with any feedback from Members today, before the document was published for consultation. While the whole document was subject to consultation, consultees were in particular being asked to provide responses to the proposed response standard and resourcing proposals.

The proposed response standard was that the first pump would, on average, arrive on scene in 10 minutes for all incidents. In terms of the resources available to respond to incidents the proposal set out in the document was to:

- Maintain the same number of wholetime and day-crewed pumps as currently in service.
- Review and optimise on-call pumps and specialist appliances to ensure the Authority could meet its risks and response standard, while looking for opportunities to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

The CRMP also referenced the changes being proposed to the Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) policy but noting that this was subject to a separate consultation under the current PSP.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) would be submitting a fully considered response as part of the formal consultation process, but had already agreed a couple of amendments to this version before it went out to public consultation:

- In the document it states that during the period of the CRMP the Service would plan to maintain the same number of wholetime and day-crewed pumps. Officers had agreed to say “at least” the same number, as depending on funding it may be desirable to have more guaranteed availability.

- To make it clearer that the table on page 29 was badged as risks and opportunities. The FBU manifesto was an opportunity to work together on common aims.

As part of the internal audit plan, a draft of the CRMP was shared with Mazars who had undertaken some assurance work on the extent to which the CRMP met the Fire Standard and addressed HMICFRS comments about the previous PSP.

There were two areas that had not yet been fully evidenced due to timings:

- Continually evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and the organisational impact of risk management decisions.
- The Service had held limited consultations with its communities and other relevant parties to inform the annual update and priorities of its Public Safety Plan.

For this CRMP, the Service had planned a number of initiatives to broaden its reach and community engagement beyond public and staff consultations, including:

- Engagement sessions centred around the CRMP facilitated by and at each fire station;
- Youth Council engagement sessions;
- Short-form surveys distributed through social media and/or in-person channels.

One other area highlighted would be further developed for the final version of the CRMP. HMICFRS noted that while the Service has done some positive work to reduce risk, it was still unclear how all its core functions of Prevention, Protection and Response would work together effectively to further reduce risk. Therefore, the area for improvement identified in 2021 remained.

Mazars noted that although these functions were known to work collaboratively in the Service, more work was needed to outline how the three functions would be working together in the CRMP.

Mazars also noted several positive aspects including noting that “Whilst the PSP outlined the Service’s (old) vision and strategic objectives, we found that the CRMP provides a much clearer linked-up storyline stretching from the

Service's vision (or promise) through to corresponding strategic objectives. The CRMP further clarifies specific aims, risks and actions related to each strategy which provides the reader with clearer ideas around the Service's direction, compared to the PSP."

A Member asked how the modelling was undertaken.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that the modelling was primarily done on historic incidents as it was hard to know where incidents may take place in the future. New housing did not necessarily mean more risk as new housing tended to be of better quality from a fire point of view than older housing stock. The Service does engage heavily with Milton Keynes City Council and Buckinghamshire Council around future plans as part of this and would continue to do so for the lifetime of the CRMP. This was an active document and would be kept up to date throughout the life of the plan, to ensure the Service always had the best risk information available.

A Member asked about response times, where the Service was now and where it was nationally,

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that response times were within 10 minutes. The 10 minutes was based on the initial public consultation. More context would be added to the final version.

A Member asked about financial growth.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that in terms of financing, the growth would go into the Council Tax base. About 70% of revenue came from Council Tax and about 30% from business rates. So in terms of funding, housing growth had a positive impact on the finances of the Authority. More houses do not necessarily mean more risk, it depends on what kind of housing it was.

RESOLVED –

That the Fire Authority approves the Community Risk Management Plan 2025-2030 for consultation with the public, staff and partner organisations.

FA14 POSITIVE ACTION PROGRAMME REVIEW 2024 AND POLICY STATEMENT

The Station Commander – HR Projects advised Members that this programme was run to support applicants during the most recent Wholetime recruitment campaign. The

HMICFRS report for the Service was published in October 2023 and identified causes for concern, one of these related to EDI. The report stated that the Service should be more ambitious in its efforts to attract a more diverse workforce that better reflected the community it served.

The success of the positive action work undertaken was demonstrated in the makeup of the successful candidates who were due to start in September 2024. 5 females and 7 males; of which 7 of the 10 who had attended the interview workshops secured a role with the Service.

A Member asked if some of the items raised in the FBU Manifesto would be included in future reports.

The Chairman advised new Members that the FBU representative was invited to the December 2023 meeting to present the FBU Manifesto. It was a very productive meeting and Members agreed with a vast majority of the Manifesto, as there were some very good ideas and recommendations. Officers were engaging with the FBU, but it was important that the progress was noted in reports.

The Chairman also advised that it was important that all Members supported officers in encouraging their local communities to support events, i.e. have a go days, and also support on social media promoting recruitment.

A Member asked what was being done to keep people once they were employed by the Service, as the staff turnover graph was amber, and it would be good to understand why the Service was losing people.

The Head of Human Resources advised that from the HMICFRS Inspection and the EDI Action Plan there were lots of actions being undertaken. The Service had recently had a Culture Survey which was asking employees for their opinions. There was work on stations to ensure the facilities provided were good. There was also a People and Culture Officer starting imminently.

A Member stated it was interesting to see the data on the selection process, was there any learnings to be had, what was the diversity of the interview panel and had they had any unconscious bias training.

The Station Commander – HR Projects advised the interview panel was made up of both operational and support staff and both male and female staff. They had not had unconscious bias training.

RESOLVED –

1. The Positive Action Policy Statement (at Appendix 6) be approved.
2. It be noted that:
 - a. The Physical Training programme to support underrepresented groups will form part of all future recruitment campaigns;
 - b. A programme to keep attendees that are unsuccessful for the current Wholetime campaign engaged for future opportunities is being explored; and
 - c. All essential joining criteria will be reviewed, and recommendations/risks presented to a future Strategic Management Board for approval.

FA15 TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS OVERVIEW & TRANSFORMATION BID

The Organisational Development Manager advised Members that this report provided an overview on the Authority's Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process, outcomes, and the rationale for requesting Members to approve funding of £190,000 for additional training this year via the Transformation Reserve. The Service's TNA collates staff training requirements annually and was monitored quarterly by the Training Strategy Group (TSG). The TNA was translated into prioritised learning programmes, submitted by department managers, approved by the TSG and scrutinised to ensure alignment with business priorities, business continuity succession plans and approved budgets.

Within the TNA submissions, managers were asked to assess the priority level of the training requests and were reminded that there was one budget that funds all training for all staff across the organisation, and that it was increasingly coming under pressure and therefore must ensure any training requested was role critical only. The base budget for all staff training was £260,000 this had increased this year by £30,000 to compensate for rising inflation over the last two years.

The Organisational Development Manager advised that the Service continued to demonstrate efficiencies through the use of apprenticeships and utilising the government levy

with a levy spend of £96,626 in 2023/24. Due to being effective in fully utilising the levy, the Service was now benefiting from co-funding arrangements with the Department of Education, where they fund 95% of the apprenticeship cost and the Service funds the other 5%.

The Organisational Development department had secured a transfer of levy arrangement with Santander, one of Milton Keynes largest employers, to fund the enrolment of three members of staff on to apprenticeships with Cranfield University. Santander had transferred the full levy cost to fund this.

The Strategic Management Board had approved establishing a People Oversight Board, chaired by the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development. The People Oversight Board would bring together all people related matters into one place. It would enable improved understanding of people measures, monitoring performance against them and translating them into informed people priorities which would enable the Service to be pro-active with its recruitment and training requirements and plan capacity and cost accordingly.

RESOLVED –

1. The Training Needs Analysis overview and provision approved by the Training Strategy Group for 2024/25 be noted.
2. The funding for the additional training requirements for 2024/25 via the transformation reserve be approved.
3. The work in progress (Appendix A) to align the approval of the Training Needs Analysis and budget setting processes is noted.

FA16 UPDATED CODE OF CONDUCT (V5.0)

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised Members that the Service's Code of Conduct provided employees with an understanding of the standards expected when performing duties as an employee and guides behaviour, placing an obligation on all employees to take responsibility for their own conduct.

The Code of Conduct supports the overarching employment related policy themes and was compliant with the strategic direction of the Service on employment related policy matters and supported delivery of corporate objectives. To ensure the Code of Conduct remained fully aligned with the

Service's key strategic documents, following the launch of the Services' new Promise, Values and Behaviours in April 2024, an in-year review of the Code of Conduct was undertaken, and the document updated.

The purpose of presenting this updated Code of Conduct, was for approval for publication. Section three had been amended to remove reference to the Service's vision and previous values and now detailed the Service's promise to the public and its people, updated core values and behaviours. With regards to the core Code of Ethics, this part of Section three had been slightly amended, with a link added to the core Code of Ethics and the five bullet points and wording underneath removed.

A Member asked if these changes had been made in consultation with the FBU.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that in the report it advised that the changes had been to the Joint Consultation Forum, which the FBU were represented on, so they had been sighted on the changes.

The Chairman asked if this changed the terms and conditions for employees.

The HR Advisory and Development Manager advised that the main changes were making reference to the new values and behaviours. There were no significant changes in the document and these did not change employees' contractual terms and conditions.

RESOLVED –

That the Code of Conduct, as detailed in Appendix one, is approved for publication.

FA17 SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY UPDATE

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that the Serious Violence Duty had its origins in the Government's strategic approach to cutting crime, homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime, exposing and ending the hidden harms and building capability and capacity to deal with fraud and online crime under the levelling up agenda. This led to the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act in 2022 with the National Fire Chiefs Council contributing to the development of the fire services role within the subsequent statutory guidance.

The definition of serious violence was agreed by local partners, it was not a national definition. It was agreed within the Thames Valley Violence Prevention Partnership, and it was that serious violence included specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat was inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing. Whilst domestic abuse related offences account for a large proportion of serious violence offences, these were not dealt with under the serious violence strategies. Both councils in this area had separate domestic abuse strategies and deliver their statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

The Serious Violence Duty places obligations on Community Safety Partnerships to work together to prevent serious violence by or against people under the age of 25. The Service fulfils its work within the obligation through partnerships with Safer Bucks and Safer MK. The Community Safety Partnerships had a specified role and contributed towards developing statutory guidance and delivery pathways. Alongside fire, the police, justice, health and local authorities were lead partners and the prison service and education were brought in as and when required to work together. The activity at local level had reporting lines into the Community Safety Partnerships (Safer MK and Safer Bucks) each of which had priority plans. In the Bucks area there were five priority plans, one of which was serious violence.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that the Statutory Guidance had 56 references to the role of fire and rescue services and took Members through the Statutory Guidance and how the Service evidenced the work it was doing.

RESOLVED –

That the Serious Violence Duty Update 2024 be noted.

FA18 SAFETY CENTRE IMPACT REPORT

The Head of Prevention and CRMP welcomed the Chief Executive of the Safety Centre to the meeting and advised that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update of the Authority's three year funding agreement with the Safety Centre, and part of that agreement was a yearly update.

The Chief Executive introduced herself and advised Members that the Safety Centre charity specialised in early intervention and preventative safety education and was celebrating 30 years this year as an organisation. Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was one of the founding partners. When it was created, it was a collaborative partnership approach, created by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Thames Valley Police, Network Rail, Coca-Cola Enterprises, and a whole host of organisations that recognised the need for early intervention and preventative education. When created, the Safety Centre was the world's first interactive, immersive education centre and over the 30 years the work had evolved. In that time frame, part of the legacy of the Safety Centre, was that it helped to create and inspire the creation of other Safety Centres across the UK. There were now ten Safety Centres across the UK and the National Safety Centre Alliance, came together twice a year to look at best practice.

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Safety Centre had expanded and grown and had been developing more outreach programmes because the Hazard Alley Education Centre was extremely popular and already fully booked for this academic year and into 2025. Education programmes had been designed and would be delivered by the education team. As well as expanding outside of the centre, they were also expanding who utilises the centre as it was a community asset, and a priority was to make sure as much of the community could use it as possible. Although the Education Centre was located in Milton Keynes, between August 2023 and March 2024 the education programmes had benefited 7292 people across Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire. 2824 of those had been specifically in Hazard Alley. 1645 were from Milton Keynes and 1179 from the rest of Buckinghamshire. Education was also provided outside of Buckinghamshire because people commute, socialise, travel and visit within Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire.

The Chief Executive also advised that she was in talks with national funders around the different range of programmes. For example, a programme had been designed and developed on violence against women and girls, around early intervention and prevention. Also, a huge amount of work had been done around knife crime.

Funding had been secured from the Department of Culture, Media and Support, administered by the National Lottery, about reducing anti-social behaviour, and the Centre had been funded to deliver some work specific to Milton Keynes. The Safety Centre, was pioneering, evolving, looking at what the emerging safety needs were which was only possible because of the partnership approach it had.

The Chairman asked for a visit to the Safety Centre be arranged for Members.

A Member asked if there had been any assessments on the impact of Hazard Alley on knife crime or crime in general.

The Chief Executive advised that Thames Valley Police had undertaken some analysis and had worked with a number of partners on education programmes, including knife crime and what have been the impact of it. The Chief Executive would try and get some of the data to share with Members. Work was also being undertaken with the Open University as to how the Safety Centre could better measure the short, medium, and longer term impact around all of the education programmes.

A Member asked what work was being undertaken specific to Buckinghamshire.

The Chief Executive advised that the education programmes benefit the whole of the county. Money had been provided by Heart of Bucks Community Foundation and a huge amount of work was done in Buckinghamshire, excluding Milton Keynes, regarding knife crime prevention work in schools across the county.

A Member asked about the knife crime programme in Milton Keynes.

The Chief Executive advised they had been funded by different partners over the past two years to deliver intervention and prevention workshops across schools in Milton Keynes.

A Member asked if the Centre had reached out to give general support to the ageing population.

The Chief Executive advised they had begun conversations with lots of partner organisations including Age UK and community groups, and other charities as they wanted as many people as possible to visit the Centre. In term time it

Democratic Services
Officer

was fully booked, but it was open and available all year for other groups.

RESOLVED –

That the Milton Keynes Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Ltd Partnership Impact Report April 2024 be noted.

FA19 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Q4 2023/24

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised Member that this report consisted of nearly 70 measures in which officers try to provide a holistic and transparent view of how the Service was performing. This included different types of measures such as inputs, outputs and outcomes. Where possible and appropriate, supporting commentary to certain measures had been provided. While the format of this report had remained the same as previous quarters, some of the commentary does refer to the year's performance as well as that of Q4.

As in previous reports, officers had provided a couple of highlighted measures at the beginning of the report, namely False Alarms in the Home and Bank Shift Costs. False Alarms in the home had been highlighted due to the significant numbers attended, as well as the increase in numbers. As mentioned in the commentary, our prevention team were currently working on a plan to improve those numbers. Bank Shift Costs were highlighted as yet another success story to come from being fully established. This coupled with the great work the Organisational Development team and Training Team had been undertaking to ensure crews had the relevant skills, had resulted in the Service needing to utilise its Bank facility much less.

A Member asked about hydrant availability, was there any update on reporting on this measure.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that there had been long term sickness, but the person was now back. The Service was also procuring a new system that allowed better measurement, so there would be reporting on it shortly.

A Member asked about the decrease in on call availability.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that recruitment had previously focussed mainly on wholetime and raising the establishment but now that area had been achieved and sustained, this year's focus would be on call.

There had been one recruitment process already this year, and those successful were currently undertaking Breathing Apparatus training. On call recruitment would now take place twice a year. As part of the CRMP, a lot of resource modelling was done to understand the benefits each on call appliance would provide and where the Service would prioritise and also understand the challenges in those areas.

A Member asked why over the border mobilisations had gone into the red when whole-time availability was very good with 12 appliances available.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that all mobilisations were based on the quickest. If an over the border appliance would be quickest, that's who would be mobilised, even if all BFRS appliances were available. In the south of the county, there were three over the border stations right on the border which had really quick access into this Service's area. It was monitored closely, and whilst numbers had gone up, it did not correlate to the cost. Within the Thames Valley the Service paid on time usage rather than mobilisations. The costs had significantly reduced based on the previous year.

The Chairman asked that if an appliance could respond five seconds later if it was a non-serious incident, had this been looked at.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that this work had not yet been addressed but tolerance levels would be looked at and brought back to a future meeting.

A Member asked about false alarms in the home and whether there was a breakdown of people more likely to have a false alarm in the home and what was the partnership working around it.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised there was a breakdown in the report of what the false alarms were. Work was ongoing with the service delivery, marketing and communications teams as to how these numbers could be reduced.

A Member asked what had happened with the mandatory eLearning in August and September as it had gone from green to red.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that he did not know why it had dropped in August and September, but a change had been made, similar to appraisals and how

Assistant Chief Fire
Officer

managers were encouraged to complete appraisals, the same system was being adopted for mandatory eLearning.

A Member asked for additional data around average attendance times for all incidents and how many incidents took over ten minutes.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that while that information could be provided, there were a lot of reasons why it could take longer to get to incidents. At the end of each year, a report was run which highlighted those type of things. As part of that report the county was broken down into square miles, with a highlighted colour code which would say on average an attendance time to a specific location whatever the incident.

The Chairman invited new members, if there was anything else they thought should be reported on, to please advise officers.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance Management – Q4 2023/24 be noted

FA20 HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (HMICFRS) – BUCKINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (BFRS) 2023-2025 UPDATE

The Chairman advised Members that this report set out the progress being made with the Corporate Plan and steps for the year ahead.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised Members that in October 2023, the Service received its 2023-2025/Round 3 HMICFRS Inspection report. The report detailed three causes of concern, focused on Prevention, Protection and EDI. The report was presented to the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting on 24 October, with input from HMI Roy Wilsher.

An HMICFRS Action Plan was developed and submitted to HMICFRS on 15 November and presented to this Authority on 6 December. This report showed progress against the Action Plan. Since this report was produced, three more actions had been completed, two in Protection and one in EDI.

To review the progress against the causes of concern HMICFRS completed a revisit to the Service the week commencing 20 May. The revisit included interviews,

desktop reviews and a station visit interacting with a wide range of staff. Initial feedback was positive, and HMI saw the progress the Service had made against the causes of concern. HMICFRS found all staff engaging throughout the process.

HMICFRS have made the decision to not publish any revisit outcome letters until after the General Election, mid July.

In November 2023, HMICFRS informed the Service that it would be entering the Supportive Engage Process. The focus of the engage process was to assist in finding ways to improve and resolve the identified causes of concern and provide a better service for the public. As part of the Engage Process the Service was invited to share an update on progress at the Fire Performance Oversight Group (FPOG).

Last week, the Chief Fire Officer, Chairman and Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the progress to FPOG. The initial feedback was that the Service was doing well, its plan was focused and had good support from the leadership team and the Authority. HMICFRS were pleased to see officers were ensuring all changes were embedded and reviewing the outcomes or 'so what' for both the staff and the community.

A member asked if the letter could be shared with members once received.

The Chairman advised new members that it was agreed that the HMICFRS Action Plan would go to the Overview and Audit Committee for review.

RESOLVED –

That the HMICFRS 2023-2025 Update be noted.

FA21 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That the public and press representatives be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report and minutes 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.

FA22 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 14 February 2024, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA23 DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Authority considered the report and appendices, and approved the recommendations, details of which were noted in the exempt minutes.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the appointment of Ronnie Davidson, to the role of Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development on a fixed-term two-year contract, on the salary package detailed, be approved.
- 2) It be noted that the start date will be agreed with the candidate following approval of the appointment (with the candidate being required to give three months' notice to his current employer).

The Chairman closed the meeting at 13.11PM