



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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| MEETING | Overview and Audit Committee |
| DATE OF MEETING | 22 July 2020 |
| OFFICER | AC 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, which are now customary for all notable incidents, assurance visits and external reviews.</p> <p>Our internal approach toward 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>A fundamental part of the external assurance process remains the Authority's contractual agreement with Operational Assurance Limited (OAL), which is due to end on the 31 August 2020. This agreement has enabled the Service's risk critical operations to be subject to regular independent scrutiny, thereby strengthening the Authority's ability to deliver the best possible public service and improve the safety of Firefighters by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving our performance at incidents; • Cope with future changes in the operational environment; • Drive development and innovation. <p>The second operational review undertaken by representatives from OAL, took place over a 4½ day period during November 2019, focusing on the following operational activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Rise Procedures • Command Support <p>As a consequence of the visit, specific areas of</p> |

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| | <p>improvement were identified that culminated in 14 recommendations being made within the final report, the content of which is currently being reviewed. It would be fair to say the timeframe between the conclusion of the visit and receipt of the final report, has for varying reasons taken longer than would normally be expected.</p> <p>All resultant recommendations were either marked as being Advisory, where OAL felt that positive management action in this area may be required, or Suggested, where OAL recommend that management undertake a review of the issue identified.</p> <p>The 14 recommendations were made up as follows: (x9) Advisory (x5) Suggested</p> <p>These recommendations will be presented to members of the Operational Assurance Group, who will then determine, which of these are deserving of further consideration and inclusion onto 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 | Whilst there are no negative, financial implications associated with this report. It is nevertheless important to be reminded of the previously approved £50,000 per annum investment that has 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 |

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| | improvement. |
| 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 | <p>Communication with stakeholders</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The system of internal control</p> <p>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).</p> <p>The Head of Operational Training and Assurance has responsibility for delivering the OAIP in conjunction with the OA team.</p> <p>The medium-term financial strategy</p> <p>It is intended that delivery of the OAIP, continues to be achieved within the existing budget.</p> <p>The balance between spending and resources</p> <p>In light of the previous challenges associated with adapting the already procured and purchased E-safety application and following approval of the growth bid during the BTB meeting held on the 1 August 2019. Coordinated visits to other fire services and informal discussions with suppliers have taken place, in order to identifying the different active monitoring systems commercially available. This has resulted in trial being</p> |

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| | <p>commenced that will then be subject to evaluation, before a final decision is made in respect to its suitability.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The management of the asset base</p> <p>There are currently no identified impacts on the asset base.</p> <p>The arrangements to promote and ensure probity and propriety</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Environmental</p> <p>Delivery of the OAIP will enhance the Service's ability to identify and manage potential environmental hazards in both the internal and external surroundings.</p> |
| <p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p> | <p>Background</p> <p>Overview and Audit Committee: 20 November 2019, 2019 (see pages 81-84)</p> <p>https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/overview_and_audit_committee_agenda_and_reports_20119-min.pdf/</p> |
| <p>APPENDICES</p> | <p>Appendix A: Operational Assurance Improvement Plan</p> |
| <p>TIME REQUIRED</p> | <p>10 minutes</p> |
| <p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p> | <p>Steve Wells, Head of Operational Training and Assurance</p> <p>swells@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744426</p> |