

Public Document Pack



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

Bedford Borough Councillors: C Atkins, M Headley and J Mingay

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: F Chapman, J Chatterley, P Downing, P Duckett and D McVicar

Luton Borough Councillors: D Franks, T Khan, R Saleem and Y Waheed

A meeting of **Fire and Rescue Authority** will be held at **Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA** on **Thursday, 8 February 2018** starting at **10.00 am**.

John Atkinson
Secretary/Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
1.	Apologies	Secretary/ Monitoring Officer	
2.	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests	Chair	Members are requested to disclose the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and any other interests as required by the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct.
3.	Communications		
4.	Minutes	Chair	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2017 (Pages 1 - 8)
5.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
6.	Audit and Standards Committee 6 December 2017	Cllr Chapman	To consider a report (Pages 9 - 42)
7.	Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group 11 January 2018	Cllr Waheed	To consider a report (Pages 43 - 50)
8.	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring	HFT	To consider a report (Pages 51 - 58)
9.	The 2018/19 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme	HFT	To consider a report (Pages 59 - 112)
10.	Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement 2018	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 113 - 122)
11.	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Consultation	HSP	To consider a report (Pages 123 - 144)
12.	Home Office Fire & Rescue National Framework for England Government Consultation	HOA	To consider a report (Pages 145 - 150)
13.	Collaboration Working Group	ACFO	To consider a report (Pages 151 - 156)
14.	Information Bulletin	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 157 - 164)
15.	Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1: Exclusion of the Public (Change in Benefit in Kind Calculation on Emergency Vehicles)	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 165 - 170)

Next Meeting

10.00 am on 26 April 2018 at Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

From 1 July 2012 new regulations were introduced on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs). The interests are set out in the Schedule to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Fire Authority on 28 June 2012. Members are statutorily required to notify the Monitoring Officer (MO) of any such interest which they, or a spouse or civil partner or a person they live with as such, have where they know of the interest.

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
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A Member must make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and any other interest as defined in paragraph 7 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct at any meeting of the Fire Authority, a Committee (or Sub-Committee) at which the Member is present and, in the case of a DPI, withdraw from participating in the meeting where an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

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For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No 4

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

14 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors C Atkins (Chair), F Chapman, J Chatterley, P Downing (Vice-Chair), P Duckett, D Franks, M Headley, T Khan, D McVicar, J Mingay, R Saleem and Y Waheed

Mr G Chambers, AC D Cook, ACO Z Evans, CFO P Fuller and DCFO G Ranger

17-18/FRA/41 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, Kathryn Holloway.

17-18/FRA/42 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests.

17-18/FRA/43 Communications

A list of the communications was tabled for information and included the following:

Civic Events

The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer had attended the Business Awards in Bedford as the Service had presented an award for Lifetime Achievement.

The Chief Fire Officer and Councillor Waheed had attended the Love Luton Awards as the Service had presented an award for Safer Communities.

The young woman who was the recipient of the Child Courage Award was also one of the Service's Fire Cadets.

Representatives of the Authority and the Service had attended Remembrance Sunday events throughout the County.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire had recently given evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee requesting additional funding for the Force.

Dunstable Community Fire Station

Dunstable Community Fire Station were about to participate in a trial to act as a blood donation centre. It was recognised that the Blood and Transfusion Service was always seeking

additional venues and this was a good example of partnership working and providing additional services to the community.

Employment Appeal Tribunal

The Assistant Chief Officer advised that the firefighters' case against the transitional arrangements relating to the new pensions scheme had been referred to the Employment Appeal Tribunal and that the Tribunal had sat the previous week. The judgement was expected in mid-January 2018 and would be reported to Members at that time.

Mouth Cancer Screening

The Assistant Chief Officer reported on the visit of a mobile mouth cancer screening unit to Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. Take-up of the screening was extremely high.

One Public Estate

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that an interest free loan of £230,000 had been awarded from One Public Estate to fund a feasibility study for a joint Police and Fire Headquarters. Details about the use and the repayment of the loan had not yet been received.

Chief Fire Officer Kevin Pearson

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the funeral of the Chief Fire Officer Kevin Pearson, the serving Chief of Avon Fire and Rescue Service, was being held that day.

17-18/FRA/44 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

17-18/FRA/45 Public Participation

Members noted that no questions had been received in accordance with the public participation scheme approved at the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 5 April 2000 (Minute 99/fa/94 refers).

17-18/FRA/46 Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group 29 November 2017

Councillor Headley submitted the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group held on 29 November 2017.

The Group had made two recommendations, one in relation to the addition of an aerial drone to the Capital Programme and the other recommending a five-year extension of the current ICT Shared Service with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Councillor Headley advised that the option for either Service to end the contract before the expiry of the five-year period remained.

RESOLVED:

1. That the addition of an aerial drone to the capital programme, to be purchased in conjunction with Bedfordshire Police, be approved.
2. That the Shared Services agreement between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Authority for a further period of five years with the same terms as the existing agreement be agreed, acknowledging that the agreement would have to be amended to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.
3. That the submitted draft Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2017 be received.

17-18/FRA/47 Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group 30 November 2017

Councillor Mingay submitted the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group held on 30 November 2017.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that a letter was currently being drafted for the Chair to sign requesting the Chief Executives of the three unitary authorities to formally agree to a “developer pays” scheme in relation to the provision of fire hydrants in new developments.

At present an informal arrangement was in place and this had been working well, with no challenge from the developers. It was recognised that fire hydrants were easier and cheaper to fit at the construction stage rather than retrospectively.

Councillor Mingay highlighted the other following matters:

- The tender process for an aerial drone had commenced and should conclude in February 2018.
- The Service had responded to over 500 incidents as part of the effecting entry agreement.
- 15 new on call recruits had recently attended a Retained Foundation Training Course and 10 had attended Breathing Apparatus training.
- The performance indicator measuring the number of primary fires had missed its target by 16%. This was an improvement from the previous quarter but remained a concern.
- The Arson State of the Nation Report for 2017 had recently been published. 47% of fires attended by Fire and Rescue Services nationally were deliberate. There had been a 44% increase in deliberate road vehicle fires and an 11% overall increase in deliberate fires nationally.
- There were also a number of areas of high performance, including a significant reduction in mobilisations to automatic fire detector false alarms following the introduction of a new mobilisation policy. The number of mobilisations to these calls had reduced by 44% from the previous year.
- Customer satisfaction rates with the Service were currently 100%.
- During its consideration of the Review of Effectiveness, Members of the Group had agreed that the Group was well supported by Officers.

Members commented on the low rate of prosecutions for arson and suggested that pressure should be placed on the Police to reassess the Force Strategy so that arson was a higher priority, recognising that it was a blight on local communities.

In response to a question on the Strategic Road Safety Partnership, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that this group was a rebranding of the former Casualty Reduction Partnership and would consist of the same key stakeholders as that Partnership. It was hoped that this would lead to a more consistent approach regarding road safety issues across the County.

RESOLVED:

1. That a letter be drafted for the Chair of the Authority to sign requesting the commitment of the Chief Executives of the three unitary authorities in Bedfordshire to formally agree a “developer pays” scheme in relation to the provision of fire hydrants.
2. That the submitted draft Minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group held on 30 November 2017 be received.

17-18/FRA/48 Mobilising System Options Appraisal

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced his report which set out the contractual situation in relation to the current emergency call handling and mobilisation system and recommended an approach to identify the most appropriate arrangements for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation.

The current system had been procured jointly with Essex Fire and Rescue Service in 2012 following the demise of the Government’s regional control project. The current contract expired in 2019 and Essex Fire and Rescue Service had indicated that it would be running a procurement exercise for a new mobilising system, in part due to the cost of upgrading the current system to ensure compliance with the Emergency Services Network that would replace Airwave.

It was recognised that the Service did not have the expertise internally to assess all the available options and the Authority was recommended to approve the engagement of specialist consultants to produce an options appraisal for consideration by Members.

This provided the Service with opportunities to consider collaborating with other emergency services.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that discussions had been held with the current provider regarding an extension of the contract in the interim period.

It was noted that the current provider could tender for the new contract.

RESOLVED:

That the options appraisal approach for the future provision of emergency call handling and mobilisation set out in the report be endorsed.

17-18/FRA/49 Draft 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Programme

Mr G Chambers, the Head of Finance and Treasurer, submitted his report on the draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2018/19. This information had previously been presented at the first Members’ Budget Workshop in November.

The Authority was being asked to approve a draft revenue budget requirement of £29.15 million with a Council Tax increase of 1.99% and a draft Capital Programme of £1.219 million for public consultation.

A Council Tax increase of 1.99% equated to an annual £1.85 increase per Band D equivalent property, or just over 3.5 pence per week. It was anticipated that a cap of 2% would remain, although confirmation from the Department for Communities and Local Government had not yet been received. If the cap was removed, Members may be asked to consider options to increase Council Tax above 2%.

The Head of Finance and Treasurer reported that there had been an increase of 1,328 in Band D equivalent properties from the constituent Councils' original estimates for 2018/19. This equated to approximately £126,000 of additional Council Tax income. The variance in the business rates income from the original forecasts was negligible.

There was currently a collection fund surplus of £348,000 forecast for 2017/18, with £339,000 of this generated from Council Tax.

Members were referred to the Medium Term Revenue Plan that was attached as an appendix to the report. Additional costs had been forecast in relation to the firefighters' pension scheme. £750,000 had also been added in 2019/20 in relation to the new mobilising system. Other amendments included the addition of the Collection Fund surplus and an updated utilisation of the transformational earmarked reserves up to 2021/22.

It was noted that the business rate income may need to be updated and that the new budget bids would be discussed in greater detail at the Authority's next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That subject to review and consideration of these papers, the following be approved for public consultation:

1. A draft revenue budget requirement of £29.195 million, as per Appendix 1, with a council tax increase of 1.99%; and
2. A draft Capital Programme of £1.219 million as per Appendix 3.

17-18/FRA/50 Members' Allowances Scheme 2018/19

The Secretary and Monitoring Officer submitted the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2018/19. An increase in accordance with the local government pay award was proposed.

RESOLVED:

That the Members' Allowances Scheme be updated from 1 April 2018 in accordance with the proposals set out in the report and included as part of consideration of the Budget for 2018/19.

17-18/FRA/51 Collaboration Working Group

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented an update on the collaboration with the Police and Ambulance Service. In presenting the report, he highlighted the following:

- The Collaboration Working Group was now meeting at two-monthly intervals. A joint Fire and Police management team meeting was being held later in the week to consider progress to date and to discuss plans for the future.
- An internal audit of collaboration had recently been completed by RSM. A number of recommendations had been identified in the audit report and the Service was in the process of implementing these.
- As discussed earlier in the meeting, the bid for One Public Estate funding for a feasibility study for a joint Police and Fire Headquarters had been successful. This would be the largest collaboration project to date.
- Co-location of the Police at a number of the Community Fire Stations continued to be very successful.
- The effecting entry pilot had proved to be effective. The evaluation was currently in process but it was anticipated that this workstream would continue as part of normal response arrangements.

- The drone which would be purchased in conjunction with Bedfordshire Police would comply with recently released national specifications and may be listed on the national assets register.
- Control staff had recently been granted access to the Police incident monitoring system.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that a representative of East of England Ambulance Trust had attended a recent meeting of the Collaboration Working Group.

The view was expressed that the collaboration programme should include projects that could provide measurable improvements to service.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be acknowledged and that the progress that has been made to date be welcomed.

17-18/FRA/52 DCFO Appointment Process

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Executive had recently decided to proceed with a national advertisement for an operationally competent Deputy Chief Fire Officer in January 2018 following consideration of a range of options.

The Executive had delegated the detailed arrangements and content of the advertisement and selection process arrangements to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Authority.

In response to a question, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the Executive Members would be involved in every stage of the recruitment process.

RESOLVED:

That the decision of the Authority's Executive to proceed with a national advertisement for the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer in January 2018 be endorsed.

17-18/FRA/53 Calendar of Meetings 2018/19

Members received the draft calendar of meetings for 2018/19. School holidays and meetings of the constituent authorities had been avoided wherever possible.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the visit to the Fire Service College proposed for 20 June 2018 and encouraged all Members to attend. It was hoped that the Service's new recruits would be training there at the time.

RESOLVED:

That the submitted calendar of dates for meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority and its' associated Committees and Groups for the forthcoming year be approved.

17-18/FRA/54 Paperless Meetings Trial

The Assistant Chief Officer submitted a report on the possible introduction of paperless meetings across all Fire and Rescue Authority, Audit and Standards and Policy and Challenge Group meetings.

The Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group had been trialling paperless meetings successfully for over two years. With the introduction of modern.gov, it would be easier for Members to access all agendas electronically. A move towards paperless meetings could save the Authority in the region of £3230 in printing costs and postage per annum.

Members of the Authority would be supported to become paperless and could contact Area Commander Cook directly if they had any issues. It was noted that Members of the Luton Borough Council had been issued with tablets from the Council and that they were not allowed to download any applications directly onto this. This would require liaison between Officers from the Authority and Luton Borough Council to allow Luton Borough Council Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority access to the modern.gov application.

In relation to the recommendations set out in the report, it was acknowledged that the first two were advisory.

Many Members expressed the view that they did not want to use separate bedshire.com email addresses as they already had a number of different email accounts and would prefer to use their personal email addresses to access modern.gov.

In response to comments, the Assistant Chief Officer advised that paper copies of the agenda could still be provided to Members chairing meetings and that restricted reports could be sent out to Members in hard copy if they were not able to access these through the firewall if they chose to use their own personal email addresses.

It was also noted that anyone unable to access agendas and minutes electronically due to disability would be issued with hard copies.

RESOLVED:

That the approach set out below for the trial of paperless working be endorsed:

1. That Members respond to the email from Service Assurance Manager to confirm what type of device and operating systems (Apple iOS, windows or android) are loaded on to their device.
2. That Members download Modern.gov application from iTunes or google play to their tablet device and register within 48 hours of the email notification.
3. That the Modern.gov trial at Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group meetings, with the meeting packs in landscape view, continue.
4. That the implementation of paperless meetings take place from a set date in 2018 for all meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority, Audit and Standards Committee and the Policy and Challenge Groups.
5. That the trial of paperless meetings be reviewed at the Authority's Annual Meeting in 2019.

(Please note: Councillors T Khan and Y Waheed left the meeting during the consideration of this item as a result of other commitments.)

17-18/FRA/55 Information Bulletin

Members received the information bulletin for the period 1 July – 30 September 2017.

The Chair invited Members to the Christingle Service on 21 December 2017 at St Mary's Church in Woburn and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. She asked that her thanks to those firefighters and other Fire and Rescue staff who were working over the holiday period be recorded.

RESOLVED:

That the information bulletin be received.

17-18/FRA/56 Supplementary Item: Enabling Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to sit and vote on Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) - Government Consultation

The Chair advised that this item had been included on the agenda as a late item of urgent business as the deadline for responses to the consultation was 15 January 2018, which was before the next scheduled meeting of the Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the proposed changes to FRA Combination Scheme Orders were to allow Fire and Rescue Authorities to appoint the relevant Police and Crime Commissioner to the Authority with voting rights and to enable the Police and Crime Commissioner to appoint a substitute to attend meetings on his/her behalf. The substitute could speak at meetings but would not be granted voting rights.

Whilst supporting the proposals in principal, Members expressed concern about the possible impact that an additional member would have on the political balance of the Authority and agreed that Government should be recommended to consider this as part of the consultation feedback.

RESOLVED:

That the following response to the consultation be submitted on behalf of the Authority: That the proposals as set out in the consultation document be supported, and that the Home Office be recommended to give consideration to the change it might make to the political balance of Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 6**

REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR F CHAPMAN

SUBJECT: AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

For further information on this Report contact: Nicky Upton
Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor
Tel No: 01234 845149

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES			EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To report on the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 6 December 2017.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017 be received and the recommendations of the meeting, as noted below, be considered.

1. Introduction

1.1 The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 6 December 2017 are appended for Members' consideration.

1.2 The Audit and Standards Committee made the following recommendation to the Fire Authority.

17-18/ASC/36 Statement of Assurance

That the Chair be authorised to sign off the Statement of Assurance for 2016/17, subject to the minor amendments to the formatting and to the section on external audit, on behalf of the Committee for reporting to the full Fire and Rescue Authority meeting.

**COUNCILLOR F CHAPMAN
CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2017**

Present: Councillors R Saleem, F Chapman (Chair), J Chatterley, D Franks,
M Headley (Vice-Chair) and Y Waheed

ACO Z Evans, Mr G Chambers and AC D Cook

17-18/ASC/29 Apologies

There were no apologies.

17-18/ASC/30 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

Councillor Chapman disclosed a local interest in the Statement of Assurance (Minute 17-18/AS/036 refers) as a trustee of Hazard Alley, a safety centre located in Milton Keynes.

17-18/ASC/31 Communications

Firefighters Pension Changes Dispute

The Assistant Chief Officer advised that the Appeals Court was sitting this week to hear both the firefighters and judges cases in relation to the changes to the Firefighters Pensions Scheme and its transition and protection arrangements. An update would be provided to Members when an outcome was known.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the legal costs were being funded through a cost-sharing agreement in place between all Fire and Rescue Services.

Emergency Services Sector Update

The Committee received the Emergency Services Sector update from RSM and considered the following questions:

Does your organisation know the answers to the NAO's questions on cyber security and are ongoing assurances received on these matters?

A gap analysis was being undertaken to identify the level of compliance with the ten recommendations set out by the National Audit Office and ISO standards.

An internal audit of risk management was being undertaken in February 2018 and the audit report would be submitted to this Committee for information following its completion.

Are you satisfied with the level of specialist fire safety staff and is this having an impact operationally?

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the Service was satisfied with its level of specialist fire safety staff. There were currently 8.5 FTE allocated to this resource.

In response to a question relating to the Grenfell Tower inquiry, the Assistant Chief Officer advised that an email had been received that morning from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) who were running workshops to consider Dame Judith Hackitt's interim Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety report. Post the workshops the NFCC would formulate a National response.

Are you aware of the recommendations in the report and what is your service doing about it? Do you understand what data you hold?

In relation to the use of big data, the Committee was advised that the Service had a good understanding of the Exeter data set, along with its limitations. In addition to the Exeter data, the Service also produced its own local MOSAIC data to inform its prevention and protection work.

Have you considered this data and recommendations as part of the implementation of GDPR and wider projects in this area?

These were being considered and the Service's internal auditors, RSM, had been asked to undertake an audit to assist in this process.

Area Commander Cook reported that a GDPR project had been created, with actions being identified and tracked. This was not currently a corporate project reported to Members through the Policy and Challenge Groups and it was suggested that an update report on the progress of this project be submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group.

The Assistant Chief Officer referred Members to the section on contract management and the questions relating to life-cycle management arrangements.

Ernst & Young Audit Committee Briefing

Ernst & Young's most recent Fire and Rescue Sector Audit Committee Briefing was tabled and reference was made to the following questions set out in the briefing document:

What actions has your organisation taken to ensure that it is best placed to achieve the financial accounts early closure timetable of 31 July 2018?

The Committee was advised that Mr J Harrison, the Service's Chief Accountant, had attended an Ernst and Young briefing on preparedness for an earlier closure of accounts and a number of actions were being taken forward in this respect.

Is your fire authority prepared for the first inspection by HMICFRS? What actions do you need to take in order to meet the requirements?

A senior Officer in the Service had been allocated the task of preparing data for the inspection. This included the documentation of any audits or actions undertaken.

Have you assessed how the changes to the pension schemes will affect your authority's pensions contributions and pensions liability? Do you have arrangements in place to ensure all the changes are applied correctly?

These had been taken into account in the preparation of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the communications be received.

17-18/ASC/32 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

17-18/ASC/33 Annual Audit Letter for year ended 31 March 2017

Ms K Storey of Ernst & Young reported that Ernst & Young had issued the Service with an unqualified audit opinion in relation to both the statement of accounts and the value for money statement.

Members' attention was drawn to the narrative text setting out the Service's planned actions to ensure that the closure of accounts was completed by 31 July 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Audit Letter dated October 2017 be received.

17-18/ASC/34 Internal Audit Progress Report

Mr D Harris introduced the internal audit progress report. He advised that the final reports had been issued in relation to the audits of procurement and collaboration and that the draft audit report on Key Financial Controls had been issued in November. This had received an opinion of substantial assurance.

Four further audits were scheduled for completion during the fourth quarter. The final audit reports would be submitted to the appropriate Policy and Challenge Group or Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

17-18/ASC/35 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring - Exception Report and Summary Analysis

The Assistant Chief Officer submitted the summary statistical analysis of actions arising from internal audit reports over the last three financial years to date and from the Authority's current Annual Governance Statement.

Members' attention was drawn to the actions in progress. Two low priority recommendations arising from the audit of Governance- Transparency and Decision Making had been subject to extension requests and were still progressing.

It was noted that the monitoring reports presented to the Committee would provide evidence for the HMICFRS as to how actions were monitored.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

17-18/ASC/36 Statement of Assurance

Area Commander Cook introduced the 2016/17 Statement of Assurance to the Committee for approval. The annual production of a Statement of Assurance was a requirement under the National Framework. The Statement included information on financial assurance, the governance framework, operational assurance and future improvements.

Changes to the previous Statement of Accounts were set out in red text.

Ms K Storey suggested changes to the external audit section of the report and advised that she would email these to the Assistant Chief Officer for incorporation into the final version of the Statement.

In relation to road safety activity, the Chair requested that the Service consider involvement in the work undertaken by Hazard Alley in Milton Keynes. A number of children from Bedfordshire had visited the facility, largely with the support of Crime Beat, but she requested more support from the Service to promote the work of Hazard Alley and encourage visits from the Authority's area, recognising the impact of early education on behaviour and awareness.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the Service was supportive of Hazard Alley; however, there was a difficulty around transport as the facility was not located within the County. The Service also supported the Fire House in Luton.

A Member requested information on the number of visits by children from Bedfordshire, broken down into the three unitary areas. The Chair advised that this information was available and could be provided.

Inconsistent formatting on pages 18-19 of the report was identified and would be rectified in the final version of the Statement.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair be authorised to sign off the Statement of Assurance for 2016/17, subject to the minor amendments to the formatting and to the section on external audit, on behalf of the Committee for reporting to the full Fire and Rescue Authority meeting.
2. That a report on the Service's involvement with Hazard Alley be submitted to a future meeting of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group, including usage figures for Bedfordshire children broken down by unitary authority area and the resource implications of greater involvement from the Service which Cllr Chapman would provide.

17-18/ASC/37 Review of Code of Conduct

The Secretary and Monitoring Officer introduced his report on the Code of Conduct. The Authority had referred the whole Code to the Committee for review following its agreement to changes recommended by the Committee at its meetings in June and September 2017.

Appended to the report was illustrative text for a Code dealing with the conduct expected of Members and co-opted members of the Authority when acting in that capacity as issued by Government.

In response to a question about misinformation spread through social media, the Secretary and Monitoring Officer advised that the behaviour was covered in the Code, although it did not explicitly refer to the misuse of social media.

It was noted that two of the ten paragraphs set out in the Government's illustrative text were not included in the Authority's Code, namely the fourth and sixth paragraphs relating to obligations and accountability, and it was suggested that, for the sake of completion, they should be added.

The wording of paragraphs 7.2.1 and 7.2.2, relating to interests was also questioned. The concern relating to paragraph 7.2.1 related to the widening of the area that the Member or a member of his/her family or close associate would be affected more than the majority of Council taxpayers from the ward or electoral area the Member had been elected, which was the standard clause for local authority Codes, to the FRA's administrative area. It was also unclear what was meant by electoral area.

The view was expressed that paragraph 7.2.2 was covered by 7.2.1 and was not required. There were also other areas of the Code that could be streamlined or amalgamated.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary and Monitoring Officer be asked to review the Code of Conduct, particularly in relation to the section on interests, and to ascertain if there were any areas that could be amalgamated to produce a more streamlined document and to include those paragraphs in the illustrative text provided by Central Government and submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee.

17-18/ASC/38 Review of 'Monitored Policies'

The Assistant Chief Officer presented the annual review of the policies on Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing), Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy incorporating the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), Use of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Authority's Complaints and Compliments Process.

The Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy had been updated in line with changes in legislation. No complaints had been received under the Policy in the twelve month period ending in November 2017.

No cases of suspected fraud had been reported and no RIPA authorisations had been required in 2017.

In response to a question, Area Commander Cook advised that the Service had procedures for the authorisation of covert surveillance, with Service Operational Managers required to provide the final sign-off.

The Assistant Chief Officer suggested that the RIPA Policy be recirculated to Members for their information.

The Assistant Chief Officer referred to the breakdown of compliments and complaints received in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to date. Three complaints had been received during the year to date, all of which had been upheld.

The 2016/17 National Fraud Initiative had commenced in October 2016. Matches were released in January 2017. Out of 54 matches, investigations were ongoing in relation to two cases.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing) policy, the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy incorporating the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Authority's Complaints and Compliments process be reviewed and the arrangements for their review be noted.
2. That the Service's RIPA Policy be forwarded to Members of the Committee for information.

17-18/ASC/39 Report on Registration of Interests and Gifts/Hospitality

The Secretary and Monitoring Officer presented his report and advised that all Members had completed and submitted their registration of interest forms and no entries had been made in the gifts and hospitality register.

RESOLVED:

That the report be acknowledged.

17-18/ASC/40 Review of the Audit and Standards Committee Effectiveness

The Assistant Chief Officer introduced her report on proposals for the review of the Fire and Rescue Authority's effectiveness in 2017/18.

It was agreed that a discussion should take place on the following questions:

- Does the Committee consider that they have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's/Committee's terms of reference?
- Considering the Committee's terms of reference are there any areas that have not been considered and should be addressed?
- Does the Committee consider any training and development would assist them with the areas of work of the Committee?

The Assistant Chief Officer referred to the training on effective governance provided for all Members of the Authority at the Member Development Day on 1 November 2017. As a result of this training, a report on the review of the entire Corporate Risk Register would be submitted to the March 2018 meeting of the Committee.

During a discussion on the content of the training, the view was expressed that the Committee could do more to explain its work to both internal and external stakeholders. Although this was not set out in the Committee's terms of reference, it was an important area as it was recognised that the Committee performed a different role from the Policy and Challenge Groups and was a decision making body.

The Assistant Chief Officer replied that the work of the Committee was set out in the Annual Governance Statement and the Review of Effectiveness, as well as the Statement of Assurance.

It was suggested that the Committee could produce an annual report detailing its work or that, if Members were satisfied that this information was contained elsewhere, stakeholders could be signposted to the relevant documentation.

The Committee agreed that it had effectively discharged its duties in regard to its terms of reference and that there were no areas of the terms of reference, as they currently stood, that had not been addressed.

Members commented on the audit training received and agreed that this should be provided on an annual basis.

RESOLVED:

1. That the recorded Minutes of the meeting be fed into a facilitated meeting to be held on 18 January 2018 to review the Fire Authority's Effectiveness in 2017/18.
2. That Members be offered training on effective governance from RSM in November 2018.
3. That a review be undertaken on how the work of the Committee is currently recorded and published and that the outcomes of this be reported to the Committee for further consideration.

17-18/ASC/41 Corporate Risk Register

Area Commander D Cook presented an update on the review of the Corporate Risk Register. There had been no changes to individual risk ratings and the following updates had been reported to the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group:

CRR29 (If we do not communicate well, both internal and external to the Service, then we will suffer from poor staff morale, miss the opportunity to promote ourselves and the excellent work we do and potentially impact upon our ability to deliver a full range of services): focus groups had been held with the service provider Zengenti to inform the 'look and feel' of the proposed platform.

CRR05 (If we are unable to provide adequate asset management and tracking facilities then we may cause serious injuries to our staff due to a lack of safety testing. We may also incur unnecessary significant costs and be in breach of health and safety legislation): the current paper-based system was being reviewed by the Technical Support Manager. Research into cloud based asset tracking systems would be undertaken in Summer 2018.

CRR04 (If there are a large number of staff absent from the workplace then our ability to deliver services to our communities is severely compromised and our reputation will be adversely affected): the Service offered vaccinations to its staff.

Area Commander Cook also reported on the following update that would be provided to the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group at its meeting in January 2018:

CRR40 (if there is a retirement of large numbers of operational officers over a short period of time then we lose significant operational and managerial experience within the Service which could ultimately affect our service delivery and wider corporate functionality in the shorter term): the Service continued to attract experienced operational staff on transfer. Corporate Management Team regularly undertook analysis of the establishment profile.

RESOLVED:

1. That the continuing development of the Service's Corporate Risk Register be acknowledged.
2. That it be acknowledged that the appropriate Policy and Challenge Groups have considered and reviewed controls proposed to reduce the identified risks.

17-18/ASC/42 Review of Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered the proposed work programme for 2017/18. In addition to the review of the risk register which had previously been discussed, the Committee would also receive a report on the direction of service performance reports at its next meeting.

Ms K Storey advised that the annual audit fees to be considered at the July 2018 meeting of the Committee would relate to 2018/19.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme for 2017/18 be received, with the addition of the reports requested at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.43 am



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2016/17



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

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1. Introduction

The Government sets out its high level expectations and requirements for Fire and Rescue Authorities through the [Fire and Rescue National Framework \(England\) 2012](#).

The Framework is issued under Section 21 of the [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) with the stated purpose to give Fire and Rescue Authorities the freedom and flexibility to deliver services to their communities, moving accountability away from Central Government and placing responsibility with local communities.

Under the National Framework, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (BFRA) have a responsibility to publish an *Annual Statement of Assurance* which provides a report on the Service's performance in the previous year with regard to:

- **Financial:** How BFRA ensures that public money is properly accounted for, managed, audited and reported along with management of financial assets and the production of the *Annual Statement of Accounts* which is produced in line with accounting codes of practice.
- **Governance:** How BFRA ensures that it conducts its business lawfully and that public money is properly accounted for and managed economically, efficiently and

effectively and that an *Annual Governance Statement* (AGS) is published.

- **Operational:** How BFRA operates within a clear defined statutory framework including key documents such as National Framework (England (2012) and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 etc.

Statements of Assurance are required to be published annually and where possible form part of the existing governance reporting arrangements. This Statement of Assurance is subject to normal scrutiny arrangements which comprise of:

- Approval by the Audit and Standards Committee who oversee the production of the Annual Statement of Assurance.
- Reported to the Full Authority Meeting by the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee and,
- Published on the Service's website.

In summary this Statement of Assurance aims to provide information to the communities, government, local authorities and partners in an easy and accessible way in which a valid assessment can be made of their local fire and rescue authority's performance during 2016/17.

2. Financial Assurance

BFRA is a precepting authority; this means that its net cost, after receiving Government Grant and a proportion of local business rates, is met by all council tax payers in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton as a proportion to the valuation band of their home.

BFRA has the responsibility for ensuring that public money collected by way of grant and council tax is properly accounted for and managed appropriately in accordance with Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999. This responsibility extends to securing the continuous improvement in which BFRA's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of managing the financial arrangements of the Authority, BFRA have robust control measures in place for protecting the public purse which are supported by accurate budget monitoring processes which are subject to rigorous scrutiny and reporting.

The Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) has the responsibility for ensuring that the right measures are in place to manage the Authority's financial assets that the financial reporting arrangements are

sound and that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements.

The Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2017 is a document that summarises BFRA's transactions for the previous financial year detailing how the funding was used to provide a Fire and Rescue Service to the communities of Bedfordshire and includes:

- a) The Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts which sets out the responsibilities of the FRA and the Treasurer to the FRA.
- b) The Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- c) The Movement in Reserves Statement which summarises the FRA's spending against the council tax it raised, taking into account the use of reserves during the year.
- d) The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which summarises the income and expenditure of the FRA.
- e) The Balance Sheet which displays the financial position of the FRA as at 31st March 2017.
- f) The Cash Flow Statement which summarises the changes in the FRAs funds and,

g) The Pension Fund Account for the year together with the Net Assets Statement at the year end.

The Accounts are supported by a Statement of Accounting Policies and Core Financial Statements and prepared by the Finance Team under the direction of the Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Statement of Accounts is signed off by the Chairperson of the Audit and Standards Committee which oversees the audit activity, regulatory framework, accounts and standards of the Service and are prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices that include:

- [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2015](#).
- [Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom](#) and,
- International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

BFRA are subject to independent external audit and scrutiny to ensure that appropriate and effective financial arrangements are in place.

At the conclusion of the audit for 2016/17 the Annual Audit Letter was produced which reported on the audit of the Authority's financial statements and an assessment of

the arrangements to achieve value for money in the use of resources.

In summary the auditor's provided an unqualified opinion and stated that the Financial Statements of BFRA:

- **Give a true and fair view of the financial position of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31st March 2017 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended and,**
- **Have been prepared properly in accordance with the [CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17](#).**

In addition, the auditors concluded that on the basis of their work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), they were satisfied that, in all significant respects, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31st March 2017.

3. Governance Framework

BFRA is made up of twelve elected members who are appointed in proportion to the number of local government electors in each constituent authority area with Members from the 3 Local Authorities of Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton comprising:

- Three members from Bedford Borough Council.
- Five members from Central Bedfordshire Council and,
- Four members from Luton Borough Council.

The responsibility for ensuring proper governance arrangements and controls rests with BFRA that enables for the effective exercise of the Authority's functions and the management of risk. The Governance Framework includes systems, processes, culture and values to enable BFRA to monitor the achievement of strategic objectives and consider whether the objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services to the communities of Bedfordshire and stakeholders.

BFRA's governance framework derives from seven core principles identified in the [International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector \(CIPFA/IFAC\) 2014, which was reviewed by CIPFA in 2015 and published in 2016.](#)

The seven core principles are:

1. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law.
2. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
3. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
4. Determining the interventions necessary to optimize the achievement of the intended outcomes.
5. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
6. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
7. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

3.1 Annual Governance Statement

The [Annual Governance Statement \(AGS\) for 2016/17](#) explains how the Authority manages its governance arrangements and internal control measures. It is an open and transparent account of how the Authority ensures its financial management systems are adequate and effective, as well as ensuring there is a robust and sound system of internal control.

The AGS also explains how BFRA has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement. BFRA's financial arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA – Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. The Treasurer to the Authority reports in this role directly to the Chief Fire Officer.

3.2 Internal Audit

The role of internal audit is to review the internal control framework that governs the operations of the Authority and, in so doing, provide an independent opinion to both Management and Members of the Authority on the robustness of the Authority's internal control environment. Each year an Internal Audit Plan is produced and developed by the auditors, in conjunction with the Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority and is based on a risk

assessment of all the services/systems of the Authority. Members and Service Managers are directly involved in the development of the plan and subject to review by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), prior to being approved by the Audit and Standards Committee. In summary, the plan identifies the audits to be completed each year, including core fundamental systems and other operational systems.

The appointed Internal Auditors also work with both Essex, and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services as part of a joint contract and where possible are able to audit on areas of commonality and shared service areas across all three FRAs. The work of the audit team complies fully with the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK.

The Annual Internal Audit report for 2016/17 by the Service's appointed internal auditors, RSM, advises that they were satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow them to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements. The report summarises that BFRA has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.

3.3 External Audit

BFRA remains committed to continuing to improve its performance towards achieving excellence in all areas.

Value for Money (VFM) is still part of an annual review carried out by the Service's external auditors leading to a conclusion on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

An integral part of this assurance is the role of the external auditor in the annual review report which complies with the statutory requirements governing audit and inspection work, in particular:

- The criteria published by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2016.
- The 2016/17 Code of Practice.
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

On the 29th September 2017 External Audit issued an unqualified opinion on the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts.

This means that in the auditor's opinion, the Statement of Accounts provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and has been prepared properly in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. In addition the External Audit also confirmed that in all significant respects that the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

3.4 Committee and Groups

BFRA has adopted a Constitution which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people and stakeholders.

BFRA meets a minimum of five times per year and have established an Audit and Standards Committee and three Policy and Challenge Groups which align with the structure of the Service to ensure a more interactive relationship between Elected Members and the managers and employees to facilitate the scrutiny role of Members more visibly effective. The Audit and Standards Committee and Policy and Challenge Groups have responsibilities covering all areas of the Service to ensure that the Service is

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functioning efficiently and effectively. This is achieved by providing checks and challenges, monitoring performance and approving associated policy and activity. These groups make recommendations on matters within their terms of reference to the Authority according to their area of concern.

The Chairs of the Audit and Standards Committee and Policy and Challenge Groups report any recommendations arising from meetings to each meeting of the Full FRA with on-going policy and decision making facilitated by a clear framework of delegation set out in the Authority's Constitution, with clear details of delegated authorities to officers.

All reports are reviewed for legal, human resource, financial and risk considerations prior to being presented to Members of the Authority for formal decision-making. This, together with an appropriate level of delegation to both the Authority Executive and senior managers, enables prompt decision making.

3.5 Review of Authority Effectiveness

The Authority publishes an Annual Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness and Record of Member Attendance. Implementation and formal review of the agreed actions arising from the *Annual Review of Effectiveness* is

incorporated as a standing item in each year's Annual Governance Statement. Review of effectiveness, including the processes of Internal and External Audit has ensured that the Authority's overall financial management and corporate governance arrangements continue to be sound.

3.6 Internal Control Framework

BFRA has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

The Internal Auditors provide an annual opinion on the internal control framework and operate to standards set out in the *Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government in the UK*. The key features of the Authority's internal control framework which directly contribute to review of effectiveness are:

- The Fire and Rescue Authority;
- The Audit and Standards Committee;
- Internal Audit;
- External Audit;
- Assurance Statements; and,
- Internal Performance Management Framework.

BFRA has a robust Performance Management Framework in place for securing
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continuous improvement in its services and where the quality of service to the communities can be measured by the use of local performance indicators. Other forms of measures include external performance assessment, external inspections, peer reviews, the Authority's internal reviews and audits, consultation exercises, and Service improvements identified by the Authority's Customer Care Complaints and Compliments procedure.

An integral part of the performance framework includes the setting of organisational key performance indicators. These are agreed and monitored on a bi-monthly basis by senior managers of the Service with performance being reported through the Corporate Management Team, the Authority's Policy and Challenge Groups, and to full FRA Meetings.

For the year ending 2016/17 the Annual Internal Audit report advises that the Auditors were satisfied that sufficient internal audit work had been undertaken to allow them to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements.

3.7 Data Transparency

In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local

Authorities on Data Transparency, BFRA is committed to greater openness and financial transparency through the publication, on the Authority's website, of information regarding how public money is spent. This includes payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £500, and details of salaries and allowances paid to staff and Members.

In doing so, BFRA utilise a number of information sources and data sets to improve delivery of service to the communities and reports its performance accordingly. The performance data and information is published in the form of reports against targets and outcomes showing the performance of BFRA.

4. Operational Assurance

The National Framework does not prescribe operational firefighting matters; this is determined locally by respective FRAs.

However it does set out the government's priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England with the key priorities that include:

- Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks in the respective areas.
- Making provision for prevention and protection activities and responding to incidents appropriately.

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- Working with partners within the communities both locally and nationally to deliver their services and,
- Being accountable to communities for the service they provide through the 'Statement of Assurance'.

FRAAs do however operate within a clear defined boundary of a statutory framework that has a number of key documents that outline their responsibilities, these include:

- [The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.](#)
- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004.](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005.](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007.](#)
- [The Localism Act 2011.](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue National Framework.](#)
- [Local Government Act 2010](#) and,
- [Health and Safety & Work Act 1974.](#)

In addition to the statutory framework and assurance detailed above BFRA have a range of key performance indicators and measures reported throughout the year. An integral part of operational assurance includes prevention and protection services and emergency response standards; which are regularly monitored and reviewed by the Service and the FRA that include:

- Internal audits of service delivery Functions.

- Quarterly performance reporting against station-based targets.
- Formal evaluation of prevention and protection activities and,
- Full summary report of performance for the previous financial year.

4.1 **Performance Summary**

BFRA oversees the performance of the Service throughout the year by the setting and review of robust and challenging Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated stretch targets aimed to maximise the effort and resources of the Service. In 2016/17 the Service's performance was met and surpassed in 9 out of the 20 PIs set with the remaining 11 being narrowly missed and will be targeted to improve the Service's performance in these areas.

Looking forward for 2017/18 the Service delivery PIs have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by the FRA. Full details of the Service's performance for 2016/17 and comparison against performance for 2015/16 can be found in the published document detailed below:

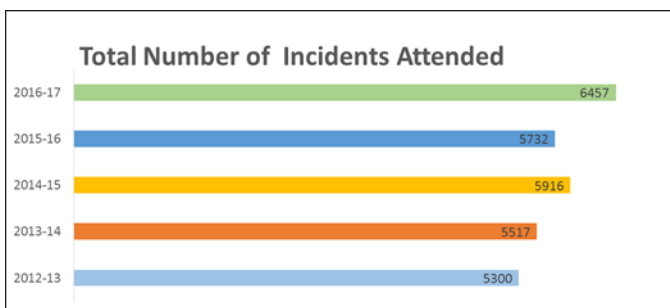
- [Annual Overarching Performance Report 2016/17: A summary report detailing performance against the Service's strategic objectives and strategies and,](#)
- [Statement of Assurance 2015/16.](#)

4.2 Overview of Service Activity

The following charts provide an overview of the Service's Emergency Response, Prevention, and Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) activities over a 5 year period to provide a balanced view of performance over the short and medium¹ term. In particular, providing examples of incident types the Service attended.

4.2.1 Total Number of Incidents Attended

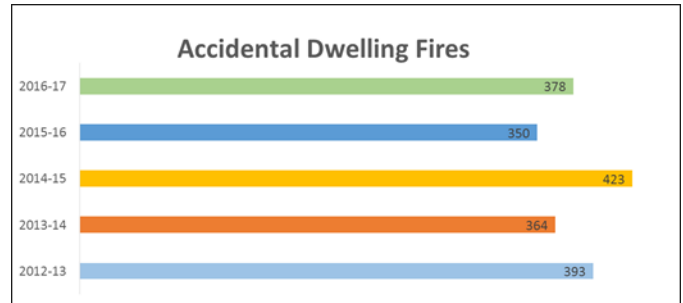
Over the 5 year period the number of incidents attended by the Service has fluctuated with the lowest in 2012/13. The increase is due to increased collaborative working which has expanded the services now delivered by BFRS. See Section 6.



4.2.2 Accidental Dwelling Fires

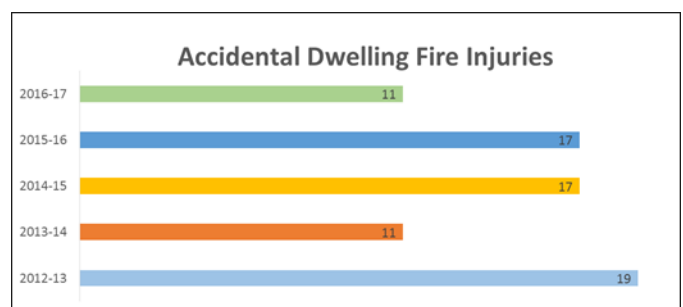
Accidental Dwelling fires are fires that occur in the home and in 2016/17 the number across Bedfordshire totaled 378, this is a slight increase from 2015/16.

A positive relationship to the prevention activities carried out by BFRS to drive down the number of dwelling fires.



4.2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries

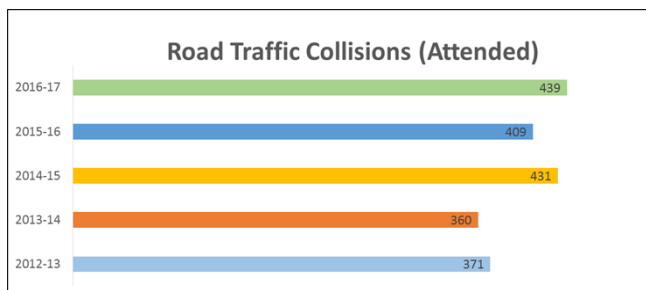
Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries have reduced in 2016/17 from 17 to 11 compared to the previous year with indications of the start of a downward trend. The performance improvement in 2016/17 is supported by the Service continuing to target advice and guidance to those most at risk in the community on fire safety awareness in the home.



¹Source: Service Performance Data is updated frequently that may affect previously reported performance figures; this should be noted when comparing previous reports.

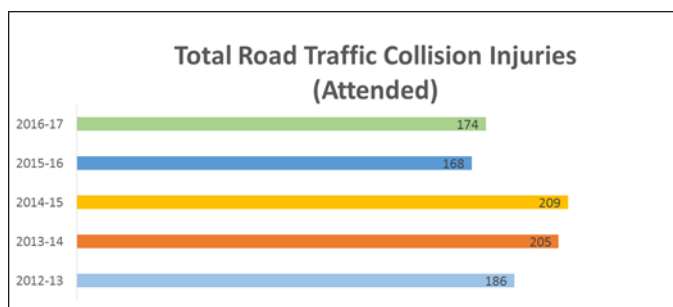
1.1.1 Road Traffic Incidents (Attended)

In 2016/17 the Service attended the highest number of Road Traffic Incidents since 2013/14, peaking at 439



1.1.2 Road Traffic Collision Injuries (Attended)

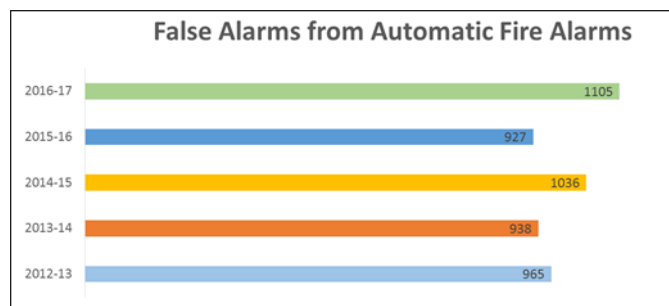
Road Traffic Injuries almost mirrors those seen in the number of Road Traffic Incidents Attended by the Service; in particular an increase in 2016/17 compared to the previous year.



1.1.3 False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarms

During 2016/17 the Service attended 178 more calls to False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarm Systems when compared to the previous year. The Service continues to target the reduction in false alarms from fire alarm systems and has put in place further

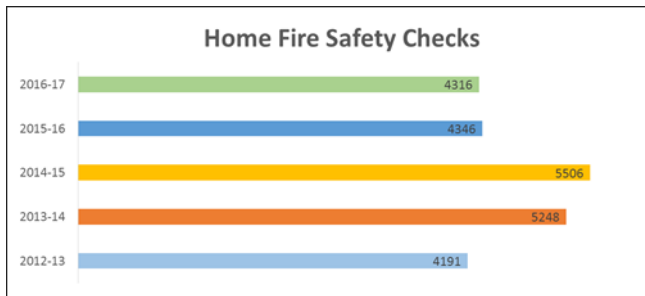
processes during 2016/17.



1.1.4 Total Home Fire Safety Checks

The Service uses a variety of preventative risk reduction activities in keeping the communities' safe, in particular the delivery of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs). Home Fire Safety Checks are free, and are completed by members of the Service during a home visit. The HFSC includes advice on how to prevent fires occurring, what to do in the event of a fire, and how to devise an escape plan. During the visit and if appropriate a free smoke alarm and other safety equipment may also be installed.

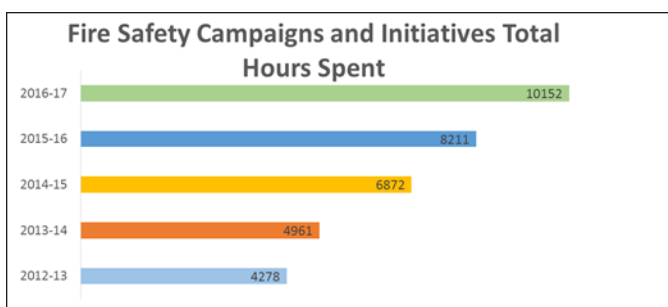
BFRS uses a number of other interventions working with partner agencies in reducing risk in the community. Therefore a reduction in the number of HFSCs is the desired outcome targeting resources more effectively, keeping risk low and releasing capacity to deliver more prevention and risk reduction activities. This approach is evidenced in the increased number of hours spent on fire safety campaigns and initiatives in providing a diverse range of safety interventions and preventative actions. See 4.2.8.



1.1.5 Total Hours spent on Fire Safety Campaigns and Initiatives

The number of hours spent on Fire Safety Campaigns and Initiatives has shown an increasing commitment over the 5 year period. In 2016/17 the increase was detailed as 24% compared to 2015/16 and increased by 137% compared to 2012/13.

The Service delivers a broad range of risk reduction interventions and themed safety campaigns. These include school visits working with young people, Fire Cadets, road safety advice for all road users, and seasonal advice including electrical safety, chimney safety and cooking safely in the home plus many others.



1.2 Community Risk Management Plan

The [Community Risk Management Plan 2015 – 2019 Summary](#) (CRMP) is the Authority's

programme for securing continuous improvement in its services and outlines the Authority's vision, objectives and priorities for the future, sets performance targets and outlines the Authority's accountability to its stakeholders and the communities.

In summary the aim of the CRMP is to inform the communities of Bedfordshire how the resources of the Service contribute in a co-ordinated and meaningful way, towards keeping the communities safe.

Within Bedfordshire the assessment of all fire and rescue related risk to life and injury formulates the basis of the production of the CRMP. When identifying priorities for the CRMP the views of stakeholders and the communities are taken into account to ensure that they are aware of the aims, objectives, priorities and performance of BFRA.

Views on the 2015-2019 CRMP were obtained through the Service's *Consultation Portal*, a consultation resource shared with other public service authorities and sent to 121 Parish Councils, 41 Community Group Leaders, 300 Citizen Panelists and other agencies and local authorities. The consultations sought the views from all stakeholders on the recommendations for

improvement in driving the Service forward which covered:

- Making Every Contact Count: Ensuring we make every possible use of the contact we have with the vulnerable by way of education and advice where appropriate, making referrals to partner agencies.
- Service Delivery Effectiveness and Improvement; Providing excellent prevention, protection and response functions to our communities and,
- Firefighter Safety; keeping our operational firefighters as safe as possible through the application of robust risk assessment processes, training, personal protective equipment, and operational equipment.

The Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) aims to inform our communities of our plans and ensures that the Service contributes, in a co-ordinated and meaningful way towards keeping our communities safe. The CRMP is a long term plan that is refreshed annually to assist the Service in being more agile and responsive to locally identified needs and trends. This approach enables the effective targeting of resources to prevent incidents occurring in the first place whilst putting resources in the right location to best protect the communities.

In 2017 we will be carrying out further research to understand our communities to inform our approach to risk. A new CRMP will be developed for 2017-2021.

In January 2016 we carried out a consultation on our budget for 2016/17 using the Beds Fire Alert Community Messaging Service, social media, our website and the media to encourage engagement. Over 1,000 people gave their views. Consultation will commence again in in December 2016 and January 2017 to seek views on our proposals for our 2017/18 budget.

Each quarter we consult those people who have received a HFSCs and those business who have taken part in a Fire Safety Audit, as well as those involved in incidents, to ensure they have been satisfied with the services they receive from us. This ensures we constantly monitor our customer service and are able to respond to any issues that might arise when delivering services to our communities. See Customer Satisfaction result.

1.3 Mutual Aid and Reinforcement Schemes

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 place a requirement on all FRAs to enter in to Mutual Aid agreements with neighboring FRSs. The purpose of these agreements is to enable the summoning of assistance to provide and utilise resources such as fire engines when required to attend a range of incidents. In addition to Mutual Aid, FRAs, as far as is practicable, should enter into Reinforcement Schemes, for securing mutual assistance between authorities and for the purpose of discharging their functions. BFRA has in place mutual agreements with neighboring FRAs. In addition the Service, through National Resilience, provides specialist appliances and crews for mass decontamination. See 4.6.

4.5 Business Continuity Arrangements

The [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004](#) and the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#) places a legal duty for all FRAs to write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its functions.

In response to these duties BFRA has robust Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans in place which are integral in managing corporate risk and to provide, in the event of a

major disruption, a fire and rescue service to the community. The BCM Plans cover a broad range of interruptions for specific events such as Pandemics to individual functions of the Service providing resilience arrangements across the entire Service.

In summary our BCM plans provide clear and defined strategies to be adopted to aid achievement of the following objectives:

- Provide a response to events that threaten the delivery of services to the community of Bedfordshire.
- Protect the Service from business interruptions.
- In the event of business interruptions to provide a co-ordinated recovery and,
- Facilitated a risk management culture embedded into the Service to enable risks to be identified and managed effectively.

1.4 National Resilience

The UK Fire and Rescue Service forms an integral part of the Governments National Resilience capability as Category 1 Responders.

Category 1 Responders include Blue-light emergency services as well Local Authorities and NHS hospitals etc. where the capacity and capability of FRSs work together with Category 1, and Category 2 Responders (Utilities/Transport infrastructure providers

etc.) to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive challenges.

In addition to working with other FRAs, BFRA work closely with and are members of the [Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum](#) (BLRF) which is a statutory body covering a police force area, designed to bring together Category 1 and Category 2 Responders for multi-agency co-operation and information sharing. For information, under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) every area of the United Kingdom is required to establish a Local Resilience Forum.

BFRA is a major contributor to national and regional resilience with the capability to respond to major disasters and terrorist attacks where some types of incident that are larger in scale may require a Fire and Rescue Service response.

BFRA are actively involved in national resilience arrangements and hold a number of national assets including two Prime Movers and a Module for Mass Decontamination. The Service also has Water Rescue national assets which have been mobilised on several occasions following requests from the [National Asset Co-ordination Centre in Merseyside to assist other Fire and Rescue Services.](#)

BFRS, one of only several FRSs in the UK have a Fire Special Operations Team (FSOT) to support Police and Ambulance operations. This team is exercised on a regular basis with other Category 1 Responders ensuring that the team is ready for operational deployment. As part of the assurance process to the Service, the Fire Special Operations Team were audited in 2016 as part of the National Audit Programme and a number of areas were highlighted as notable practice.

2. Awards and Commendations

The Long Service and Good Conduct medal is awarded to uniformed members of the Fire and Rescue Service who have completed 20 years meritorious service and are awarded under Royal Warrant. [In 2016/17 six members of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service was awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.](#)

Not resting on our achievements the Service strives for continuous improvement in the services delivered to the community and the use of Customer Satisfaction surveys plays a key role in obtaining feedback from the Communities and users of the services we deliver. [From 1st April 2016 – 31st March 2017, 99.6% of all those surveyed in the communities of Bedfordshire were satisfied with the service they received. This is consistent with previous years and the high standards BFRS sets.](#)

3. Improvements

The finance settlements for FRAs from Central Government since 2010 have significantly reduced, leading to the need for increased efficiencies from existing resources and developing new ways of working to meet the funding reductions. The Authority's CRMP process is the principal route for the development of a balanced approach to reducing risks within the community and to the delivery of future improvements.

During 2016/17 the Service had a number of strategic projects that are scheduled to deliver efficiencies and effective improvements over the life of the current CRMP:

- Closer Working Between the Emergency Services: Working collaboratively with other Blue Light Services to include:
- Estates: Exploring the potential of further sharing estates with Bedfordshire Police building upon our current estate sharing with the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) and the St. John's Ambulance Service.
- BFRS has worked closely with other Voluntary Community organisations Midlands Search and Rescue and The Road Victims Trust, and has enabled sharing of spare capacity within Barkers Lane Station Bedford to improve the cost efficiency in estate management.
- Assisting the EEAS in gaining entry to property in the event of a Medical Emergency to help save lives.
- Co-Responding: A pilot scheme between BFRS and EEAS to provide emergency medical cover to preserve life until the arrival of either a Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) or an ambulance has been operating successfully. The intention is to undertake an evaluation to provide learning and subject to national developments, aid the process of decision making on whether it becomes a routine operation and expanded to more stations.
- Vulnerable Missing Person Search: Working with Bedfordshire Police to assist in searching for vulnerable missing persons using our resources to support the communities we serve.
- There are now more than 70 front line Police response vehicles with Authority and access to Community Fire stations with the benefit of enabling officers to remain in local communities longer and use Fire stations as community havens to complete paperwork or take comfort breaks.
- Combined Crime Prevention / Community Protection Teams. Teams are co-located in Fire stations in Barkers Lane Bedford, Ampthill and Leighton Buzzard with benefits in addition to improved cost efficiency on estates, including a sharing of local community intelligence. Options appraisals being conducted to seek possible extension of this list.
- BFRS Control now has remote direct online access to the Police Incident

reporting system “STORM”. This provides more detailed information to inform operational response.

- BFRS as a member of the National Dementia Action Alliance is working closely with Bedfordshire Police and other agencies on “The Herbert Protocol”, a scheme which supports people affected by dementia and who go missing placing themselves at risk.
- Replacement Mobilising System: Replace the Service’s mobilising system to provide resilient, dynamic mobilisation of Fire Service assets.
- HR/Payroll System and Services: Implement a new HR/Payroll Business system and associated payroll services to support and optimise HR and Payroll activities across the Service.

Building upon the previous year’s three successful bids to the Government’s Transformation Fund the Service has made considerable progress in the following areas:

- Review of the On-call (Retained Duty System): Further improvements to the crewing and management of on call personnel have been achieved by the project.
- Improvements have been made to the recording and monitoring of contracted hours of all On-call personnel and provision of a smartphone App has

enabled Officers to plan and monitor availability of appliances and crewing levels.

- IT Collaboration Project: The joint project between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Services has made significant in-roads in the development of on-call recruitment processes that can be adopted by any organisation regardless of the technology they use. Progress to 31st March 2016 includes the formation of a shared team, the completion of a *cloud environment* and the associated technical Infrastructure which once developed and integrated further will assist in increasing success rates and throughput whilst reducing cost and administrative burden.

6.1 Future Improvements

In addition to the efficiencies and improved effectiveness already delivered the Service have a number of projects that once completed, delivered and integrated will provide improvements to service delivery, safety of the community and partners.

- Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle (UAV): Arrangements confirmed to jointly procure a UAV between both Bedfordshire Police and the Service to assist in operational and search and rescue situations.
- Corporate Communications Teams: Explore closer working between

Bedfordshire Police and BFRS's Corporate Communications teams sharing expertise and resources as well as increasing the frequency of joint "good news" publication through printed and social media.

- ESMCP: A National Project to meet the future requirements for mobile voice and data communications for the emergency services, to replace and upgrade the current Airwave System.
- **Telephony System Replacement:** Replacement of existing business Telephony system, including main switchboard, to a network (VOIP) system.
- In 2017-2018 it is planned to roll out an electronic payroll system for all On-call personnel, optimising the efficiency and effectiveness for processing and recording of On-Call pay. This in turn will reduce the administration for Watch Officers and provide clear indications of expenditure against station budgets.
- An On-call Firefighter Standby scheme will provide an opportunity for the Service to redeploy existing On-call personnel to stations with identified crewing deficiencies, resulting in an increase in available appliances throughout the County.
- Fitting of PC screens at all On-call stations will support crews responding to incidents through provision of live crewing data,

confirming the expected number responding crew members and giving an early opportunity to plan for maintenance of remaining appliances.

- Improved On-call Annual leave arrangements will lead to improved crewing levels and greater flexibility for staff.

4. Conclusion

This Statement of Assurance provides an accurate account of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Financial, Governance and Operational Assurance arrangements secured from the 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. In addition I am satisfied that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority conducted its business practices within the appropriate legal framework and standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. This Statement of Assurance was approved by the Audit and Standards Committee on 6th December 2017.

Signed

Chief Fire Officer

Signed

Chair Audit and Standards Committee on
behalf of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue
Authority

Signed

Chair of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue
Authority

GLOSSARY

AGS - Annual Governance Statement

BFRA - Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

BLRF - Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum

BCM - Business Continuity Management

CFRS - Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service

CIPFA - Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

CRMP - Community Risk Management Plan

C&AG - Comptroller and Auditor General

CMT - Corporate Management Team

EEAS - East of England Ambulance Service

FSOT – Fire Service Operations Team

FRA - Fire and Rescue Authority

FRIC - Fire and Rescue Service Indemnity Company

HFSCs - Home Fire Safety Checks

HR - Human Resources

IRU - Incident Response Unit

IFRS - International Financial Reporting Standards

NHS - National Health Service

PIs - Performance Indicators

RRV - Rapid Response Vehicle

UAV - Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle

VFM - Value for Money

VOIP - Voice over Internet Protocol

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For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
08 February 2018
Item No. 7**

REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR Y WAHEED

SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP

For further information on this Report contact: Nicky Upton
Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor
Tel No: 01234 845149

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES			EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To report on the meeting of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group held on 11 January 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted draft Minutes of the meeting held on and 11 January 2018 be received.

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group held on 11 January 2018 are appended for Members' consideration.
 - 1.2 The Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group made no recommendations to the Fire Authority.

**COUNCILLOR Y WAHEED
CHAIR OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP**

**MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP
MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018**

Present: Councillors R Saleem, Y Waheed (Chair), P Downing and J Mingay
(Vice-Chair)

AC D Cook, ACO Z Evans, Ms D Clarke, SOC A Peckham, Mr R Jones
and SOC C Ball

17-18/HR/25 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C Atkins as she was unwell.

The Policy and Challenge Group wished Councillor Atkins a speedy recovery.

17-18/HR/26 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

17-18/HR/27 Communications

Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, presented examples of the banners that were displayed at Service positive action events.

17-18/HR/28 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Downing's apologies.

17-18/HR/29 Human Resources Programme and Performance 2017/18 Quarter 2

ACO Evans submitted the performance for the second quarter of 2017/18 against the Human Resources programme, projects to date and Human Resources performance indicators and associated targets.

She reported on the HR/Payroll System and Services project which was reporting as Amber due to delays in the application for non-sickness absence and the iTrent/MIS synchronisation.

SOC Peckham highlighted the positive performance against EQ1a (percentage of new entrants to the retained duty system to be women) which had exceeded target levels. Another training course was being run in Quarter 3 with female recruits and it was anticipated that strong performance would be reported at year-end.

In relation to EQ1b (percentage of new entrants to the whole time operational duty system to be women), which had narrowly missed its target, SOC Peckham advised that performance was expected to improve by the end of quarter 4.

EQ2 (recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation) had missed its target and SOC Peckham reported that 18 people were appointed in quarter 2, with only one from a BAME background. The Service continued to run an ongoing positive action campaign in an attempt to become more representative of the communities that it served.

In response to a comment, Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, acknowledged that some minority ethnic communities may not consider firefighting as a career, however, this misperception was being addressed through the positive action campaign, recognising that there were a number of roles within the Service.

It was acknowledged that the Service was working with the Police to share good practice following the Police's recent success in recruiting a number of Police Officers that were more representative of the local community.

The Chair commented on the diversity of the Fire Cadets. It was hoped that this would eventually filter through to the Service itself.

It was acknowledged that, whilst the Service's percentage of black and minority ethnic employees was above the national average, much more work needed to be done.

Ms D Clarke, the Head of Human Resources, reported that HR3 (the percentage of returned appraisal documents (all staff)) was reported on annually following the conclusion of the appraisal process. Performance had exceeded target levels.

SOC Ball reported on the training indicators, four of which were RAG rated as Amber. He referred specifically to T5 (percentage of station based operational Emergency Care for Fire and Rescue trained personnel that have attended a requalification course within the last three years) as this had missed its target by 7%. The individuals requiring training had been identified and an additional trauma care course was being provided in quarter 4.

ACO Evans advised that all the health and safety indicators were reporting as Green.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on Human Resources Programmes and Performance be acknowledged.

17-18/HR/30 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

ACO Evans introduced the report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports.

Three actions, including the two actions which had been subject to extensions, were due for completion in March 2018. All the other actions were completed.

Ms D Clarke, Head of Human Resources, confirmed that the first action listed had been completed.

RESOLVED:

1. That progress made to date against the action plans be acknowledged.
2. That the requests for extensions to completion dates for actions arising from the audit of Governance, Transparency and Decision Making be approved.

17-18/HR/31 Equality Duty Report

Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, submitted the Public Sector Equality Duty Report for 2016/17. This was the fifth annual report produced by the Service. The report included information on the local population, the Service's practice, its workforce and the services it provided and the Service's equality objectives for 2016 to 2020.

The Service employed 551 people, 389 of whom were fire fighters. 51 people left the Service during the year, the majority through retirement. 5.4% of wholetime and 7.8% of RDS firefighters were female. 7.6% of the workforce had declared they were from an ethnic minority group, an increase from the previous year.

In relation to services provided, there had been an increase in the total number of incidents attended. This was as a result of the increase in collaborative work, an increase in road traffic collisions and lift releases.

The Service continued to receive high levels of customer satisfaction. There had also been 14 complaints and 61 compliments during the year.

In response to questions, the Diversity Adviser reported that the majority of visitors to the Community Fire Safety House were from Luton or the immediate surrounding areas.

Station Open Days remained popular and provided opportunities for engagement with the local communities. A questionnaire for visitors to the Open Days had been developed which captured equality data. This had been trialled at 6 stations in 2017 and would be rolled out across all stations during 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the submitted report be approved.

17-18/HR/32 Single Equality Scheme Review

Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, introduced the progress report against the objectives set out in the 2016-2020 Single Equality Scheme. There were 20 actions related to the six objectives.

He reported that the Equality Framework Assessment had been postponed due to capacity issues allowing the Service to focus on the forthcoming HMICFRS inspections and actions to support the Employee Survey.

The action relating to developing an accessible website with translation audio and large print facilities was currently in progress and was scheduled for completion in March 2018.

The other action which had not yet been completed related to the provision of evidence demonstrating how the procurement process was contributing to equality related priorities. An equality audit against key suppliers was scheduled for March 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made in meeting the Service's Equality Objectives be acknowledged.

17-18/HR/33 Positive Action Report

SOC Peckham reported on the positive action work being undertaken to address the under-representation of women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff employed by the Service.

He referred the Group to the summary of all the positive action work undertaken between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2017 and the Action Plan for 2017-19. This consisted of 15 actions, along with expected outcomes, Management Lead and timescale for completion.

The Service was working closely with Police colleagues on its recruitment campaign and had recently recruited an individual with Police experience to its HR team.

It was noted that the employee breakdown included in the report was from 2015/16 and that it would need to be updated with the 2016/17 figures.

RESOLVED:

That the submitted Positive Action report be acknowledged.

17-18/HR/34 Employee Opinion Survey Report

SOC Peckham introduced his report informing Members of the main outcomes of the Employee Opinion Survey 2017, highlighting the changes from previous survey responses. 370 surveys had been returned, which was a 62.8% response rate.

The survey responses were set out in relation to eight themes, in the three areas of staff engagement, satisfaction and equality and diversity.

Satisfaction with senior management had reduced to levels previously reported in 2009. This related to posts at Group Manager and above.

An action plan had been developed to address the issues identified through the opinion survey.

Members noted that 68% of staff reported that they were likely to leave the Service in the next five years. This was an increase of 17% over the levels recorded in 2014/15.

ACO Evans advised that the Service had run confidential independent workshops and interviews to further triangulate issues and actions were being put in place going forward.

She acknowledged that workloads were an issue across the Service and that improvements must be made in managing the demands of the Service. Other issues which needed to be addressed were work-life balance and communication within the Service.

In relation to the communication within the Service, it was noted that this should flow from both the top and the bottom. Management briefings were being increased and managers were being encouraged to be more visible to their staff.

It was noted that, although there were a number of areas which required improvement, there were a number of positives identified in the survey.

Members acknowledged the openness and transparency of the Service in providing this information to Members and for seeking to address the areas of concern.

RESOLVED:

1. That the key indicators, additional comments and considerations within the report be acknowledged.
2. That the Action Plan and the wider engagement with staff on the outcomes be supported.

17-18/HR/35 Review of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group's Effectiveness

The Group considered the following questions relating to its effectiveness during 2017/18:

- i. Does the Group/Committee consider that they have been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's/Committee's terms of reference?
- ii. Considering the Group's/Committee terms of reference are there any areas that have not been considered and should be addressed?
- iii. Does the Committee/Group consider any training and development that would assist them with the areas of work of the Group/Committee?

Members agreed that they had been effective and discharged their responsibility in regard to the Group's terms of reference and that there were no areas that had not been considered that needed to be addressed.

The view was expressed that the Group was well briefed on current issues and that Members were confident in providing challenge when required.

In relation to training and development, ACO Evans reminded Members that a visit to the Fire Services College was being arranged for a future Member Development Day where it was hoped to observe firefighters on the Foundation Training course.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Group's discussion of its effectiveness be fed into the facilitated meeting to be held on 18 January 2018 to review the Fire Authority's Effectiveness in 2017/18.

17-18/HR/36 Corporate Risk Register

AC D Cook presented his report on the Corporate Risk Register. There were no changes to risk ratings and one update as follows:

CRR40 (If there is a retirement of a large number of operational officers over a short period of time then we lose significant operational and managerial experience within the service which would ultimately affect our service delivery and wider corporate functionality in the shorter term): a number of experienced firefighters had joined the Service on transfer. The Corporate Management Team received regular workforce planning reports that included assumed resignation rates.

RESOLVED:

That the review of the Service's Corporate Risk Register in relation to the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group be noted and approved.

17-18/HR/37 Annual Appraisal Process

Ms D Clarke, Head of Human Resources, introduced her report which provided a sample of employee annual appraisals for 2017/18, as requested by Members of the Group at a previous meeting.

The appraisal process sought to measure and review performance against a number of agreed objectives. Until a few years ago, appraisals were only conducted for posts at Station Manager and above, these had now been rolled out across the Service and had been well received.

RESOLVED:

That, following the review of the appraisals provided, the appraisal process followed be endorsed.

17-18/HR/38 Firefighter Pension - 2017 Regulation Amendments

Ms D Clarke, Head of Human Resources, submitted her report on the recent changes in fire pension legislation and the measures put in place to ensure compliance.

The main changes were that widows, widowers and surviving civil partners of firefighters who had passed away would no longer lose survivor benefits if they remarried or formed civil partnership and that transitional members moving from the 1992 scheme who were being considered for ill health retirement by an independent qualified medical practitioner would remain in their existing pension scheme until a final decision was made.

RESOLVED:

That the action taken following legislative changes be endorsed.

17-18/HR/39 Review of Work Programme 2017/18

Members received the updated Work Programme for 2017/18.

ACO Evans advised that the report on the annual appraisal process needed to be captured as an additional item that had been commissioned by Members.

The Chair referred to the need to defer the next meeting of the Group, scheduled for 20 March 2018, as the DCFO selection process would be taking place during that week. It was noted that this meeting would be the annual target-setting meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Work Programme be agreed
2. That the next meeting of the Group be held on 29 March 2018.
3. That the Group receive an update on the updated fitness standards at its next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.35 am

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 8**

REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF FINANCE/TREASURER

**SUBJECT: REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME
MONITORING 2017/18 AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017**

For further information on this Report contact: Mr G Chambers
Head of Finance/Treasurer
Tel No: 01234 845163

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	✓
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority of the forecast year end budget monitoring position as at 31 December 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Fire and Rescue Authority:

1. Review and comment on the forecast outturn for revenue and capital.
2. Consider the addition to the Capital Programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 9 February 2017, the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) approved a Revenue Budget Requirement for 2017/18 of £28.716m and a Capital Programme of £1.278m.

2. Revenue Budget Monitoring

2.1 A full analysis of the Revenue Budget efficiency savings for 2017/18 to 2020/21 can be found in Appendix 1. The budgets have been reduced for these areas. This appendix forms part of the Government return, in order to receive the four year Government funding offer.

2.2 The funding of the 2017/18 Revenue Budget is by way of Government Funding £7.296m, local Business Rates redistribution £2.048m and Council Tax of £18.994m. There is also funding from a Collection Fund surplus of £0.378 m.

2.3 **Forecasting Outturn:**

2.3.1 Table 1 below is populated during the year in line with the spread sheet returns that Corporate Management Team (CMT) members submit to the Finance Team and also through the meetings that Finance Officers have with CMT members. The forecast outturn positions are as accurate as the information received from each CMT member.

2.3.2 Table 1 below details the current budget excluding salary budgets, for each CMT service area. The forecast year end outturn is shown in column four, with the variance and RAG (red, amber, green) status shown in columns five and six.

2.3.3 **Table 1: 2017/18 Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn (excluding salary budgets)**

Title	Current Budget	Actual Spend as at 31 st December 2017	F/cast yr end outturn	Variance	RAG status (see note below**)
	£	£	£	£	
Strategic Management	146,500	35,802	146,500	0	Green
Head of Finance and Treasurer	3,755,250	2,372,588	3,650,250	(120,000)	Green
Head of Service Delivery	1,297,550	812,637	1,206,550	(91,000)	Green
Head of Service Delivery Support	1,266,900	915,173	1,260,900	(6,000)	Green
Head of Operational Assurance	132,100	99,329	135,100	3,000	Green
Head of Special Projects	42,100	25,187	42,100	0	Green
Head of Information Communications Technology	1,223,100	816,535	1,223,100	0	Green
Head of Human Resources	173,300	71,497	180,800	7,500	Green
Total	8,036,800	5,148,748	7,845,300	(206,500)	

**RAG Status: Red would identify where there is a large overspend equal to or greater than £100,000 and/or a key service aspect was not being delivered. Amber would identify where there is a possibility of an overspend and/or a key service aspect may not be delivered. It may be that there are action plans in place to address an issue, where until they are successful it is flagged as Amber. Green identifies where service delivery is being performed and as above, where there are underspends. Underspends are not necessarily always green, if for example, there was a key service aspect not being delivered causing the underspend, it would be shown as Red.

2.3.4 The underspend within the Head of Finance/Treasurer is due to an underspend on injury pensions (£60,000), additional income following a successful court case claim (£20,000), an underspend on Gas (£15,000), a refund of external audit fees from the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) (£5,000) and an underspend on contracted waste services (£20,000).

The (£91,000) underspend in Head of Service Delivery relates to an unbudgeted (£11,000) contribution from Luton Borough Council for Community Safety partnership work, a predicted underspend of (£70,000) on Derv across the Service as a result of continued low prices due to current and predicted economic circumstances and (£10,000) on electricity across the Service.

The (£6,000) underspend in Service Delivery Support relates unbudgeted income received from DEFRA for the National Flood Assessment Grant.

There are minor variances with the Head of Operational Assurance and the Head of Human Resources.

2.3.5 With the salary budgets being such a large proportion of the overall budget, the split from the budgets above is justified.

Table 2: 2017/18 Salary Budget Forecast Outturn

Title	Current Budget	Actual Spend as at 31st December 2017	Forecast year end outturn	Variance
	£	£	£	£
Whole-time	12,877,100	9,376,643	12,657,100	(220,000)
Control	996,800	767,455	996,800	0
Retained	2,009,000	1,267,303	1,829,000	(180,000)
Non Uniform	4,629,500	3,462,693	4,664,500	35,000
Agency	670,000	618,084	770,000	100,000
Total	21,182,400	15,492,178	20,917,400	(265,000)

- 2.3.6 Of the forecast £265,000 underspend, £35,000 Non-Uniform relates to the saving/efficiency item number 5 in Appendix 1, where this element will not be achieved due to the ongoing necessity of the post. £100,000 relates to the overspend within ICT due to agency staff costs covering posts that have not been filled through the recruitment process. A review of the ICT service is currently underway including reconciliation between the two shared services (BFRA and CFRS) of the staffing costs incurred to date by each partner.

Underspends within Wholetime and Retained are as a result of a difference between budgeted recruitment and retirement profiles, £100,000 has been removed from the retained budget for 2018/19. Further underspends are as a result of lower than budgeted Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments and overtime payments across the Service. A forecast underspend on pensions is due to the reduction of employer pension contributions between the 1992 scheme and the 2015 scheme. The Wholetime salary budgets have also been reduced for the 2018/19 budget.

2.4 **Total Forecast Outturn, Salary and Non Salary:**

- 2.4.1 The total forecast variance at year end including both the non-salary figure in Table 1 above and for pay and on costs, including agency staff shown in Table 2, is currently expected to be an underspend of (£471,500).

2.5 Write-Off to Note

- 2.5.1 The Executive Committee of the FRA made a decision in between meetings to write-off an overpayment of £10,101.61 due to exceptional personal circumstances.

3. Capital Programme Monitoring

- 3.1 Table 3 below is a summary of the Authority's 2017/18 Capital Programme. The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status indicates how well the schemes are progressing (Green being on target for year-end completion within budget; Amber indicating possible slippage or overspend; and Red indicating actual slippage/overspend or deletion of the scheme).

Table 3: The 2017/18 Capital Programme

Scheme	Budget 2017/18	Additions	Forecast Outturn	RAG status
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Vehicles	864	0	864	Green
Whole-time availability system project	70	0	70	Green
Phase 2 Human Resource Project	50	0	50	Green
Smoke House renovation and upgrade	40	80	120	Green
Diesel dispensing monitoring equipment (across all sites)	35	0	35	Green
Refurbishment of Luton Station facilities	40	0	25	Green
Replacement of tannoy systems at Kempston & Stopsley stations	30	0	30	Green
Service wide – Capital works	80	0	80	Green
Fitness Equipment	20	0	20	Green
Core hydraulic hose	49	0	49	Green
Aerial Drone	0	25	25	Green
HQ Car parking expansion	0	75	75	
Total	1,278	180	1,458	

3.2 It should be noted that the Vehicles, ICT and HR System Projects and Property Capital Works Programmes need to be treated with fluidity as the costs and expected completion dates can vary considerably and span across financial years. However, in accordance with the financial regulations, any significant changes of expenditure over 10% of an approved capital scheme need to be reported back to the FRA.

3.3 Capital Programme – Withdrawals, Additions or Variations:

3.4 Additions:

Parking is already difficult at Service HQ and this is exacerbated when there are training courses being held. The introduction of double yellow lines in early 2018 along one side of Southfields Road and additional parking restrictions will clearly lead to a significant parking shortage.

The proposal is to extend the Training Centre car park with a grass grid base to enable twelve more spaces and redesign the main car park in front of the HQ Workshops, to create twenty-one additional spaces. As part of this, there will also be improvements to the current surfacing and drainage, a requirement from wear and tear over the years. It is proposed to fund this from the capital budget allocated to Property.

3.5 Variations and Slippages:

There are no additions or slippages to report.

**PAUL FULLER
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**GAVIN CHAMBERS
HEAD OF FINANCE/TREASURER**

Appendix 1

Transformational Savings and Efficiencies 2017/18 to 2020/21

Ref	Savings/Efficiencies	£'000s 2017/18	£'000s 2018/19	£'000s 2019/20	£'000s 2020/21
1	Continued roll out/removal of 24 Wholetime station-based posts through revision to Wholetime Shift Duty System.	157			
2	Service Control/Operational Support Establishment	34			
3	Reduction of One Area Commander post and a Service Operational Commander (SOC) allowance.	78	35		
4	Hydrant - contributions (estimated) from developers, therefore reduction in revenue budget	30	20		
5	Non-operational structure review	53			
6	Administrative post review service wide	47			
7	Anticipated initial savings from Insurance pooling	10			
8	Watch Manager Technical - Change post from Grey Book (operational) to Green Book (non-operational)	18			
9	Disclosure Barring Service checks - reduction to specific groups	5			
10	Potential for sharing Fire Investigation Service with Herts/Cambs FRS	0	7		
	New items for 2017/18 budget round:				
11	Changes resulting from Equal Pay policies	27	1		
12	Income from Property Sharing	10	7		
13	Resource and Contractual Savings resulting from the new HR system	21			
14	Control Income	0	15		
15	Health and Safety Officer (Grey to Green book)	25			
16	Collaborative working - Printing device contract saving	15			
17	Management Information System (MIS) - Whole-time Rota/Availability System, Human Resources, Technical Equipment	0	0	80	
18	Review and implementation of revised crewing arrangements	0	156	156	312
		529	241	236	312

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For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 9**

REPORT AUTHORS: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

SUBJECT: THE 2018/19 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

For further information on this Report contact: G Chambers
Head of Finance/Treasurer
Tel No: 01234 845016

Background Papers:

2018/19 Revenue Budget Strategy Report to the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group meeting 13 September 2017, 2018/19 Draft Revenue Budget Report to the FRA meeting on 14 December 2017.

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	✓
HUMAN RESOURCES	✓	EQUALITY IMPACT	✓
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
ORGANISATIONAL RISK	✓	OTHER (please specify)	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To present information to allow the Authority to:

- a. set a budget and precept level for 2018/19 in line with statutory requirements;
- b. approve a Medium-Term Revenue Plan for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22;
- c. approve a Medium-Term Capital Programme for the period 2018/19 to 2021/22;
- d. approve a Medium-Term Financial Strategy which provides the strategic context for each of the above, linking them to the Authority's corporate aims, objectives and strategic priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Fire and Rescue Authority consider this report and determine for 2018/19 that:
 - a. A Revenue Budget requirement is set at £29.416m, met as indicated in paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - b. In meeting this budget requirement, the Authority's Precept be set at £19.972m and that as a consequence, a council tax increase of 2.99% up to £95.59 per Band D equivalent property, calculated as shown in Paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - c. In order to meet the Precept requirement, the Head of Finance/Treasurer be authorised to issue Precepts in the necessary form to each of the Unitary Councils and for the amounts indicated in Paragraph 3.11 of this report.
2. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Revenue Plan attached at Appendix 1 to this report, in doing so, to also approve the 2018/19 savings and efficiencies detailed at Appendix 2
3. That the 2017/18 in-year underspend is allocated to the Transformation Reserve.
4. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Capital Programme attached at Appendix 3 to this report.
5. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy attached at Appendix 4 to this report, which also contains the reserves strategy.
6. That in considering the above recommendations, the FRA note the Treasurer's statement on the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides, attached at Appendix 5 to this report.
7. That the FRA delegate any budget amendments, following receipt of the final settlement figures, to the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Authority is proposing a budget for 2018/19 that takes into account the aims and objectives of the Service and prioritises the resources available for frontline services.

- 1.2 It does this by:
- a. Proposing a council tax increase of 2.99%.
 - b. Proposing significant efficiency savings.
- 1.3 There has been a considerable amount of work towards the 2018/19 budget setting over the past year. This has included a robust review and scrutiny of service wide budgets by the Head of Finance/Treasurer and the Principal Officers, review and challenge meetings by the Corporate Management Team and two Fire and Rescue Authority Members budget workshops. This work has covered both the revenue budget and the Capital Programme.
- 1.4 The draft budget was approved by the Authority on 14 December 2017 for consultation. Feedback on the consultation is summarised in this report at para 6.
- 1.5 The Authority's council tax precept leaflets have been electronic since 2013/14. There will therefore be a web link address on the council tax bills to the websites detailing the precept information for the Unitary Authorities, Police and Fire.

2. Government Settlement for 2018/19

- 2.1 The provisional settlement for 2018/19 was announced on 19 December 2017. The final settlement figures for 2018/19 are yet to be confirmed. It is anticipated that there will not be any material impact on the figures used in this report. Any minor changes will be met to/from the Transformational earmarked reserve.

Table 1 below shows a split of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 revenue grant funding and the Government's forecast total business rates funding. A further detailed breakdown of this is included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Table 1: Government Grant Revenue Funding

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	% change
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	3.509	2.856	(18.6%)
Business Rates baseline funding	5.549	5.716	3.0%
Settlement Funding Assessment	9.058	8.572	(5.37%)

- 2.2 Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in 2013/14, the Authority has been subject to fluctuations of the Business Rates collected in Bedfordshire. If business rates income increases, the Authority will receive a

share of this, if it decreases again the Authority will be impacted by this. There are mechanisms in place within the funding scheme that offer protection, called safety nets, should an authority be considerably adversely impacted. From 2020 or beyond, it is expected that the Business Rates will be fully funding local authorities and the RSG will cease. The detail on this is yet to be announced as it is being developed.

- 2.3 The Authority's Business Rates baseline funding level has been assessed at £5.716m by the DCLG for 2018/19 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.023m (the Government's estimate of the Authority's 1% share of locally collected business rates). As our business rate baseline is lower than the baseline funding level, we are therefore a 'top up' authority and will receive the payment of £3.694m from central government (to get back to the £5.716m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The total funding of £8.572m shown above for 2018/19 will be split between £2.856m Revenue Support Grant funding and £5.716m Business Rates.
- 2.4 Fire grants will be treated outside of the above funding mechanisms and it is estimated that the Authority will receive £200k in 2018/19 for Firelink and New Dimensions.
- 2.5 The council tax referendum cap was also confirmed on 19 December 2017, with an additional 1% being allowed for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The proposed council tax figure of £95.59 is a 2.99% increase, therefore under the new 3% capping limit.

Local Authorities have also had their cap increased by 1% for both general council tax and the social care local tax charge. Police and Crime Commissioners have the option to increase their council tax charge by up to £12 per annum.

3. Proposed Budget and Precept for 2018/19 and Medium-Term Revenue Plan

- 3.1 In setting a budget for 2018/19, the Authority must take into account the implications for the following years' financial strategy, namely 2019/20 to 2021/22. There are significant efficiency savings over the coming years, which will require action in the short-term if they are to be secured within the planned timescales.
- 3.2 As well as providing the settlement figures for 2018/19, the Government has reconfirmed the grant figures previously announced as part of the four year funding agreement. The Revenue Support Grant figures for the years 2018/19 to 2019/20 have remained unchanged. In accordance with the agreement in accepting the four year funding offer, the Authority will again publish the savings and efficiency plan for 2018/19 onwards.

- 3.3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the budget projections for 2018/19 to 2021/22 and the key features of the projections, including assumptions of the level of Government funding and council tax funding.
- 3.4 The Medium-Term Revenue Plan (MTRP) assumes that the Authority will achieve year-on-year cashable efficiencies. The MTRP is attached at Appendix 1, with the detail of the planned savings and efficiencies at Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Based on the assumptions and proposals within this report and appendices, Table 2 below details the key budget information. The budget requirement for 2018/19 is recommended to be set at £29.416m. Key assumptions include no change to the Firefighters employer pension contributions in 2018/19 and pay award assumptions. The Firefighters pension revaluation is likely to lead to increases in the employer contribution rate. The budget has built in estimated increases from April 2019. The Firefighters pay award is also likely to be a key budget pressure, with anticipated increases of up to 4%.
- 3.6 Following the draft budget report that was presented to the FRA on 14 December 2017, the three Unitary Authorities have confirmed their taxbases for 2018/19. There has been an increase at each local authority from the 2018/19 taxbase figures that were estimated in 2017/18. This revised taxbase figure will increase the council tax income to the Authority.
The forecast Collection Fund figures as included on line 56 in the income section of the MTRP.
- 3.7 The 2011/12 freeze grant that the Authority did receive has been built into the formula funding baseline and is no longer visible.
- 3.8 Appendix 1 presents Government funding reductions of RSG at 19% in 2018/19 and a further 35% forecast for years 2019/20 to 2021/22. This appendix shows council tax at 2.99% in 2018/19 and 2019/20, with 1.99% thereafter. The freeze grant previously available as an option when setting a nil council tax increase ceased from 2016/17. The council tax increase of 2.99% in the first two years is based on need, as even with these council tax increases in each year, there is still a base budget gap going forward into 2022/23 of circa £1m.

Table 2: Key Budget Information

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Change £m
Budget Requirement (£m)	28.716	29.416	0.700
<u>Funded by:</u>			
Precept Requirement (£m)	18.994	19.972	0.978
Central and Local Gov Funding (£m)	9.120	8.709	(0.411)
Section 31 Business Rates grant	0.224	0.174	(0.050)
Collection Fund surplus/(deficit)	0.378	0.291	(0.087)
Use of Reserve (Collection Fund)	0	0.270	0.270
Funding Total (£m)	28.716	29.416	0.700
Tax Base (Band D equiv. properties)	204,653	208,933	4,280
Band 'D' Council Tax	£92.81	£95.59	£2.78

- 3.9 The Authority's Officers and Treasurer recommend that the Council Tax increase of 2.99% should be implemented. This is based on need, as the current MTRP shows that there will be an ongoing base budget gap at the end of 2021/22, rolling forward into 2022/23.

The results of the 2018/19 budget consultation support this increase, please see para 6 below.

There is planning time between now and 2021/22 to implement additional savings and efficiencies. However, these do need to be researched, planned and implemented, so there is a significant lead time for large scale savings and efficiency options that will be required to close a base revenue budget gap estimated at £1m in 2022/23. The Transformational Efficiency Reserve will be continued in the medium-term to assist in future year's budget setting.

The 2020/21 financial year may see changes in Government funding to local authorities, or in the years following. Local Authorities may be able to keep their business rate income, subject to the redistribution via tariffs and top ups. The RSG may cease and additional responsibilities will be passed to councils. What these are is yet to be confirmed. The Authority could either therefore be funded from April 2020 by business rates with RSG ceasing or alternatively it could be funded by direct grant and no business rates, like Police Authorities are.

- 3.10 Table 3 below details the council tax per band. As there is a 2.99% increase from the 2017/18 level, there is a change across all the valuation bands. The

council tax of £95.59 equates to, for a Band D equivalent property, 26 pence per day for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Table 3: Council Tax Per Band:

Valuation Band	Tax Payable Compared to Band D (Expressed in Fractions)	Council Tax for Band £
A	6/9	63.73
B	7/9	74.35
C	8/9	84.97
D	1	95.59
E	11/9	116.83
F	13/9	138.07
G	15/9	159.32
H	2	191.18

In summary, the taxbase of 208,933 Band D equivalents, multiplied by the Band D council tax of £95.59 equals the precept of £19.972m.

- 3.11 Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Finance Acts 1992 and 1999 and all other relevant statutory powers, it is recommended that the Head of Finance/Treasurer issues Precepts in the necessary form to each of the Unitary Councils indicated in Table 4 below, Column 1, requiring those Authorities to make payments of the sum indicated in Column 2 in eleven equal instalments, and payments for the Authority's share of the estimated surplus or deficits on the council tax and business rate Collection Funds for 2017/18, in ten equal instalments on the agreed dates, of the sum indicated in Column 3. Column 4 details for the amounts that the local authorities will pay the Authority from their collection of Business Rates. This is 1% of their estimated net rates yield for 2018/19.

Table 4: Precepts

Unitary Councils (1)	£ (2) Council Tax	£ (3) Deficit/(surplus)	£ (4) Business Rates
Bedford Borough	5,594,022.39	(105,180)	614,877
Luton Borough	4,823,576.55	(201,914)	660,369
Central Bedfordshire (estimated)	9,554,316.09	16,000	861,008
Total	19,971,915.03	291,094	2,136,254

- 3.12 At the time of writing this report, the NNDR1 return from Central Bedfordshire Council has not been received by the Authority. The above figures are based on the most recent information received. Any change will not be material and will be amended via the contribution from reserve.

- 3.13 In addition to the Authority's own council tax, there are separate council taxes for the Police, the local authorities of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Luton and where applicable their town/parish councils.

4 **Use of Balances:**

- 4.1 A prudent level of reserves, along with appropriate contributions to and from reserves, should be part of the overall budget. This risk assessment undertaken, and referred to in the MTFs, suggests that the minimum level of balances, taking all known risks into account along with the gross expenditure requirement, should be in the order of at least £2.6m for 2018/19. This equates to 9% of the Authority's budget requirement, which is less than the average for all Combined Fire Authorities. This is after a comprehensive review and setting up of specific ear-marked reserves of £2.375m (not including some specific reserves such as the Transformational reserve and Capital Contingency Reserve). It is proposed that the 2017/18 estimated year end underspend, that is currently forecast to be circa £0.470m, is earmarked to the Transformational Reserve.

The Transformational reserve will be £4.408m at the 2017/18 year end, prior to any in year underspend allocation. It is currently considered adequate enough based on projections to balance the 2021/22 budget gap. This is detailed at the foot of the MTRP in Appendix 1.

- 4.2 The reserves strategy is included in the attached MTFs. In summary, the strategy in recent years has been to increase the Transformational ear-marked reserve with underspends and budgeted contributions to enable this to be used in future years' budget setting processes. The 2015/16 and 2016/17 revenue underspend was allocated to a Collaboration Reserve, with a view that revenue and/or capital expenditure is likely in the medium term. It is recommended that the 2017/18 underspend is allocated to the Transformation reserve.

As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that the Transformational earmarked reserve will be significantly used over the medium term to close the budget gaps in the financial years 2018/19 to 2021/22. This strategy will ensure that additional savings and efficiencies are introduced in a planned and effective manner over the years to close the budget gap.

5. Proposed Medium-Term Capital Programme

- 5.1 The Authority's Capital Programme to date has been mainly funded by Government Grant and loans.
- 5.2 In the 2012/13 financial year, the Authority received £1.058m of Fire Capital Grant. The 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years were subject to a bidding round. The Authority did not receive any funding for bids but did receive an allocation from the residual monies post successful bids, which was £0.832m in each year.

- 5.3 For 2015/16, there was again a bidding round for £75m revenue and capital. The prior capital funding of £70m per annum was reduced to £40m and £35m was top sliced from revenue funding to create the £75m funding pot.

The Authority was successful in one individual bid for a Retained Duty System review including new communications hardware £308k and two joint bids. The joint bids were with eight other Fire and Rescue Services to set up a Mutual Company to provide a protection programme at £220k in total and £1.4m with two other Fire and Rescue Services for IT Service Transformational Efficiency Programme (STEP) developments.

As anticipated, there is no Government funding or bidding round for capital in the 2018/19 budget. This was the position for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years too.

The Authority's base budget revenue contributions to fund capital commenced in 2012/13 to support capital expenditure funding in future years. There is now a budgeted base budget revenue contribution of £1.3m per annum from 2018/19 onwards towards capital expenditure. This is with the assumption that capital grants are not forthcoming in future years. If capital funding becomes available, there will be a direct reduction in revenue contributions.

- 5.4 The Capital Programme, as per the approved timetable, has followed the same robust challenge/scrutiny route as the revenue budget. The Capital Strategy Team has also reviewed and assessed the bids made, approving the schemes that are attached at Appendix 3 as the 2018/19 Capital Programme.

- 5.5 Key items of note in the proposed 2018/19 Capital Programme of £1.253m are:

- Investment in our vehicle fleet, to maintain efficient, economic and effective appliances.
- Investment in IT.
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings.

6 Budget Consultation

- 6.1 The consultation on the 2018/19 budget took place between 20 December 2017 and 22 January 2018. A survey was sent to the 14,387 people registered on the BedsFireAlert Community messaging system willing to take part in consultations. It was also made available via the Authority's website and publicised through the local press and several social media campaigns on the Service's Facebook and Twitter channels. It was also promoted to BFRS staff.

6.2 There were a total of 2,563 responses with 85% supporting the 1.99% council tax increase and 78% supporting an increase of between £2.50 and £5.00. In response to the question of whether respondents thought there were efficiency areas that could be considered we received 1,322 comments, with the majority advising “no” or “don’t know”. Of the 348 that did provide comments, 18% said that the Fire Service should not make any more savings. 9% advised that they did not have enough information to comment and 4% said that the FRA were best placed to make decisions. 13% of comments related to a variety of suggestions for saving money or generating income, such as charging for some services.

Other comments can be categorised into the following main areas to be considered for savings/efficiencies:

- Collaborating, sharing services and co-responding with Police and Ambulance Service;
- Reducing the numbers of senior officers/managers and their salaries;
- Charging for services (such as false alarms, pet rescues);
- Merging or working more closely with neighbouring or other FRS, such as support services.

As a response to the themes above, paras 6.3 to 6.5 below provide a summary of what efficiencies are already being undertaken.

- 6.3 The FRA is aware of the collaboration work underway with the Police Service, Ambulance Service and other organisations. These initiatives are increasing with the sharing of premises and operational service areas, such as Forced Entry, Missing Persons Search and Co-responding.
- 6.4 The senior structure has already been reduced by one Assistant Chief Fire Officer and one Area Commander. In addition there is a budget reduction planned in 2019/20 of another Area Commander, therefore reducing from five to three. We also have the Shared ICT Service in operation with numerous other shared work areas with local authorities such as Democratic Services support, legal, cleaning contracts, joint procurement, shared mobilising system and the Authority is a member of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company providing an alternative to traditional insurance.
- 6.5 The Service is informing callers where charges will be levied on services provided such as lock outs and flood clearance from basements, where not deemed emergencies and suggesting seeking alternative suppliers to these incidents.

7. Proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
 - 7.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy, attached at Appendix 4, is a document that sets out the Authority's financial strategy for the next four years. It focuses on the 2018/19 revenue budget and capital programme, but also sets the scene for future years.
 - 7.2 The MTFS details the reserves policy, planning assumptions behind the budget figures and other considerations that must be taken into account when setting the strategy, such as the taxbase, efficiencies and shared services.
8. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves
 - 8.1 The Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Section 112/151 Officer (Treasurer) to comment on 'the robustness of the estimates' included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. The Treasurer's statement is attached at Appendix 5.
9. Implications
 - 9.1 **Financial:**
 - 9.1.1 The resource implications are detailed throughout this report and appendices, particularly in the MTFS.
 - 9.1.2 The Treasurer's statement comments on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of the Authority's reserves with reference to risks identified.
 - 9.2 **Legal:**
 - 9.2.1 The Authority must set a balanced budget by midnight on 1 March 2018.
 - 9.2.2 The Authority has specific legal duties in relation to equalities and financial decision-making.
 - 9.2.3 There are no further specific legal issues arising from this report.
 - 9.3 **Equality, Human Resources, Environmental, Policy, Other:**
 - 9.3.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (set out in the Equality Act 2010), public authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The law requires that public authorities demonstrate that they have had 'due regard' to the aims of the equality duty in their decision-making. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed

changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have 'due regard'.

- 9.3.2 It is also important to note that public authorities subject to the equality duty are also likely to be subject to the Human Rights Act 1998. It is therefore recommended that public authorities consider the potential impact their decisions could have on human rights.
- 9.3.3 Decisions should include a consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any impacts on particular protected characteristics. Decisions should be based on evidence, be transparent, comply with the law and it is important that a record is kept.
- 9.3.4 Due regard has been and will be considered as part of the budget build process.

**PAUL M FULLER CBE QFSM DL
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**GAVIN CHAMBERS
TREASURER**

Final Budget 2.99% Council Tax 2018/19 and 2019/20 and up to 4% Firefighter pay award forecast July 2018					Appendix 1				
MEDIUM TERM REVENUE PLAN 2018/19 TO 2021/22					Original	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22			
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s			
Base Budget	29,125	29,284	29,284	29,676	31,415	31,083			
1 Full-Year effect of previous budget decisions & FMS 3 bids	-34	-9	-37	0	0	0			
2 Additional Bank Holidays	4	-37	-37	25	4	8			
3 Firelink grant reduction / (Increase)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
4 FF Pensions 2015 changes	-16	-21	-21	-23	-23	-23			
5 FF Overtime uplift	18	0	0	0	0	0			
6 Increase in Non-Domestic Rates on Properties	115	0	0	0	0	0			
7 Budget Realignment	22	0	8	135	-3	0			
8 CFOA subscription / LGA Pension Support / NFCC	5	5	15	0	0	0			
9 Apprenticeship Levy	67	1	1	2	2	2			
10 SCAPE (FF Pensions Scheme) Costs from 01/04/2019 (assumes a 4% increase)	0	0	0	450	0	0			
11 LGPS Increase (from 14% to 17.3%)	153	0	0	0	0	0			
12 Local Government Superannuation Revaluation Lump Sum	-88	46	46	48	32	0			
13 Total Base Budget Adjustments	246	-15	-25	637	12	-13			
15 Forecast Variations									
16 Investment Interest Decrease/(Increase)	24	0	-15	-5	0	0			
17 Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	366	-171	-65	118	67			
18 Revenue Implications of Capital Programme	0	26	26	12	0	0			
19 Non-Uniform Incremental Drift	14	4	4	2	0	0			
20 Transformational Savings/Efficiencies	-529	-241	-178	-150	-244	-375			
21 Scrutiny Panel Decisions	-108	0	-211	50	50	0			
22 Service Control - Mobilisation System	0	0	0	750	-750	0			
23 Total Forecast Variations	-599	155	-545	594	-826	-308			
25 Inflation									
26 Fire-fighters pay (1st April to 30th June) 2% (4% April '19 to June '19)	31	31	63	128	65	66			
27 Fire-fighters pay (1st July to 31st March) 2% (4% July '18 to March '19)	110	188	376	192	195	200			
28 Retained Pay (As per Fire-Fighters)	18	33	38	39	40	41			
29 Control pay (As per Fire-Fighters)	9	16	18	18	19	20			
30 Non Uniformed pay (2% effective from 01/04/2018)	45	47	96	97	98	99			
31 Member Allowances	1	1	1	1	1	1			
32 Gas, Electricity, Water and Derv Inflation	27	28	29	32	33	34			
33 Prices Inflation at 2% 2018/19 - 2021/22	91	81	81	81	81	81			
34 Total Inflation	332	425	702	588	532	542			
36 Budget Pressures									
37 FMS3' bids (Current Year MTFP process)	243	-133	326	-2	-50	0			
38 FMS3' bids (Previous Years MTFP process)	-63	178	-66	-78	0	0			
40 Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure	29,284	29,894	29,676	31,415	31,083	31,304			
41 Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	-568	-1,442	-260	-1,837	-902	-390			
43 Estimated Budget Requirement	28,716	28,452	29,416	29,578	30,182	30,914			
45 Budget Requirement Increase Year on Year	-269.3	-264.0	699.7	162.4	603.5	732.0			
46 % Budget Increase	-0.9%	-0.9%	2.4%	0.6%	2.0%	2.4%			
48 Financed by:									
50 Revenue Support Grant (RSG):	3,509	2,856	2,856	2,474	2,142	1,855			
51 Business Rate Baseline	2,048	2,109	2,136	2,249	2,335	2,407			
52 Business Rate Top Up	3,563	3,678	3,694	3,776	3,860	4,013			
53 Adjusted 2017/18 Business Rates Top Up following revised VOA list	0	0	23	0	0	0			
54 Business Rates & Transparency Grant	157	157	174	174	174	174			
55 Transition Grant (RSG)	67	0	0	0	0	0			
56 Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	378	0	291	0	0	0			
57 Council Tax (the remainder)	18,994	19,652	19,972	20,906	21,671	22,465			
58 Utilisation of Collection Fund Surplus Reserve	0	0	270	0	0	0			
60	28,716	28,452	29,416	29,578	30,182	30,914			
62 Band D equivalent Tax base	204,653	207,604	208,933	212,353	215,830	219,366			
63 % change on Band D's	2.30%	1.44%	2.09%	1.64%	1.64%	1.64%			
64 Leading to an average council tax (Band D) of	92.81	94.66	95.59	98.45	100.41	102.41			
66 % increase	1.99%	1.99%	2.99%	2.99%	1.99%	1.99%			
69 Use of Transformational Reserves Summary	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed			
70	2017/18	2018/19	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22			
71	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s			
72 Transformational Earmark Reserve for Budget Setting	4,976	4,408	4,408	4,148	2,311	1,409			
73 Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	-568	-1,442	-260	-1,837	-902	-390			
74									
75 Net Balance Transformational Earmark Reserves	4,408	2,966	4,148	2,311	1,409	1,019			

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Budget Setting 8th February 2018**Medium Term Savings and Efficiencies 2018/19 to 2021/22**

Ref	Savings/Efficiencies	£'000s 2018/19	£'000s 2019/20	£'000s 2020/21	£'000s 2021/22
1	Reduction of One Area Commander post and a Service Operational Commander (SOC) allowance (main financial impact was in 2017/18).	35			
2	Income from Property Rents & Collaboration	15		5	
3	Control Income generation	15			
4	Management Information System (MIS) - Wholetime Rota/Availability System, Human Resources, Technical Equipment			89	
	New Savings as part of the 2018/19 budget setting process				
5	Saving following Procurement of new Fire Fighter PPE Contract	50			
6	Air Bags (operational use for lifting)	35			
7	Re-tender of service wide waste contract	20			
8	Refreshments reduction at Committees and meetings	1			
9	Change of 4th Area Commander post to Green Book Head of Service (subject to natural turnover)		10		
10	Printers/Photocopiers leasing renegotiation	7			
11	Draw down apprenticeship levy (therefore reduction in training budget)		50		
12	Collaboration Savings		20		
13	2019/20 Zero Base Budget Exercise (forecast reduction)		70		
14	Planned Review of Service Delivery			150	375
		178	150	244	375

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018-19 to 2021-22

	BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME	Capital Budgets 2018/19	Capital Budgets 2019/20	Capital Budgets 2020/21	Capital Budgets 2021/22
	Scheme	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
	<u>Fleet:</u>				
1	Vehicles/associated equipment	404	861	470	0
	<u>ICT Projects:</u>				
	IT Developments				
2	Server hardware renewal (deferred from 2015/16)	320	0	0	0
	IT & Communications				
3	Renewal of Risk Information Mobile Data Terminals (GPS, premises information)	211	0	0	0
4	Primary Network Switch replacement	0	100	0	0
5	Network Structured Cabling replacement	0	60	0	0
6	Local Area Network (LAN) replacement	0	50	0	0
7	Secondary Network Switch replacement	0	0	35	0
8	Renewal of Mobilising System Mobile Data Terminals (who, where, resources available)	0	276	0	0
9	Xen Desktop (VDI phase 2) (to review, may be reallocated to revenue)	104	0	0	0
10	Sharepoint upgrade (to review, may be reallocated to revenue)	77	0	0	0
11	Asset Management System	0	0	300	0
	12 General:				
13	Smoke House Renovation and upgrade	0	20	20	0
14	Capital Works - Service Wide (roofs, drill grounds, etc)	80	80	80	80
15	Fitness Equipment Expenditure	15	8	8	0
16	Workshop vehicle lifting equipment	42	0	0	0
17	Future Capital Programme Schemes (yet to be finalised, reviewed and approved)	0	0	300	1,200
	TOTAL	1,253	1,455	1,213	1,280

Capital Financing Summary

RCCO = Revenue Contribution to Capital		1,119	1,055	1,173	1,240
Capital Receipts & Reserve Utilisation	Page 75	134	400	40	40
Total		1,253	1,455	1,213	1,280

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Bedfordshire

Fire and Rescue Service

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Medium-Term Financial Strategy

2018/19 – 2021/22

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1. Introduction

This is Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority's (BFRA) Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It is a four year strategy which covers the financial years 2018/19 to 2021/22 and seeks to build upon the work undertaken in developing previous MTFS. It contains the Authority's agreed plans for both revenue and capital expenditure and the planned sources of funding to support that expenditure. It also explains the Authority's supporting strategies for matters such as council tax levels, efficiency savings, the use of reserves/reserves strategy and capital funding.

In addition, the plan also seeks to provide the strategic context for these financial plans, linking them to the national and local context and the Authority's corporate objectives and medium-term strategic priorities.

BFRA has been a precepting body since 2004/05 and is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government Act 2003, to set a budget requirement and levy a tax on local council taxpayers each year. The Authority is also required to maintain adequate reserves to cope with unforeseen commitments.

In common with many other authorities, each year since becoming a precepting authority, BFRA has experienced a pressurised financial situation which has necessitated robust and effective medium-term financial planning and the taking of some difficult decisions, in order to present acceptable and affordable budgets.

This year has seen the continuation of the harsh economic climate. However, BFRA continues to rise to the economic challenges that it faces, whilst at the same time endeavouring to continue to improve the quality of the service it provides to the communities it serves.

The Authority has a planning process which aligns its financial planning with its strategic and integrated risk management planning processes, the key outcomes of which are captured in the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The financial implications of the CRMP are thus fully integrated into the annual budget plan and MTFS. Both the CRMP and MTFS cover a rolling four year timescale and are revised on an annual basis. This MTFS has therefore been developed to ensure that resources are adequate and appropriately directed to deliver the aims, objectives and key priorities of the Authority.

The Authority's corporate risk management process, which identifies key organisational risks and puts into place controls to manage these risks, also plays a major role in determining the outcomes of the planning process. This includes an annual assessment of the potential financial impact of such risks, which in turn is used in determining the most appropriate level of financial reserves for the Authority.

2. National Context

Service planning, and therefore financial planning, must take place with due regard to the national policy context for the fire and rescue service and economic and public expenditure plans.

Emergency services play an essential part in serving our communities and keeping them safe. Whilst the police, fire and rescue and NHS ambulance services all have distinct frontline roles, it is clear that close collaboration between them can provide real benefits for the public and help each service better meet the demands and challenges they face.

The Prime Minister's announcement on 5 January 2016 that responsibility for fire and rescue policy had transferred from the Department for Communities and Local Government to the Home Office again demonstrates the Government's commitment to closer collaboration between police and fire and rescue services.

In a number of Fire and Rescue Authorities, moves are being taken for the Police and Crime Commissioner to take on the governance responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service. This has already taken place in Essex and we are due to hear the outcome of the six business cases that are having an independent assessment.

There has also been a newly created National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The NFCC and the role of Chair commenced in April 2017. The NFCC is made up of senior representatives from all fire and rescue services across the UK. The new Council will provide clear, professional advice to government (including devolved administrations) and the wider sector on matters such as professional standards, operational guidance, research and sharing best practice, while supporting the whole of the UK FRS.

As part of the reform agenda, a Fire and Rescue inspectorate has been created, with the Authority's review due in the first tranche of inspections in summer 2018.

The Authority is implementing where appropriate, the recommendations from the Thomas Review.

The following sections cover in broad outline the national context within which the budget and other aspects of MTFS have been framed.

2.1. **National Statutory and Policy Context:**

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 represented the most comprehensive reform of the statutory framework for the service for more than fifty years and brought about far reaching changes to the way in which individual fire and rescue authorities plan and deliver their services. Amongst the most fundamental of these was the replacement of the previous prescriptive standards of fire cover with a framework for local integrated risk management planning, a duty to engage in preventative community safety work and the provision for a National Framework (revised in July 2012) to provide clarity for Fire and Rescue Services on the

Government's expectations. There is currently a consultation being held on the revised National Framework, with a closing date of 14th February 2018.

In addition, a range of Statutory Instruments have been introduced over recent years, which between them impose new duties on the Service, including the requirement to respond to emergencies other than fire, such as road traffic collisions, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents, serious flooding and major search and rescue incidents. The new responsibilities are not limited to response, but also extend to the need for the fire and rescue service to play a key role in civil contingency planning.

The Government's policy direction and approach towards localism, transparency, accountability and the Big Society agendas have already led to some far-reaching changes for the fire and rescue service nationally. These changes have included:

- Cessation of the Comprehensive Area Assessment regime.
- Abolition of the Audit Commission.
- Closure of Regional Government Offices.
- Abolition of Fire and Rescue Regional Management Boards.
- Cessation of the national Regional Fire Control Centres project.
- Abolition of the fire and rescue national procurement agency, Firebuy.
- Direction, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2011/12 onwards, that Fire and Rescue Authorities should focus their measures to achieve the savings required over this period upon:
 - Flexible staffing arrangements;
 - Improved sickness management;
 - Pay restraint and recruitment freezes;
 - Shared services/back office functions;
 - Improved procurement;
 - Sharing Chief Officers and other senior staff;
 - Voluntary amalgamations between fire and rescue authorities.
- The passing of the Localism Act 2011 which included a power of general competence for fire authorities, power for fire authorities to charge for attendance at false alarms caused by defective automatic fire alarm systems and a range of other provisions concerning transparency, accountability and community empowerment which also impacted on fire authorities.

Sir Ken Knight conducted a review of the Fire and Rescue Service that was published in May 2013. In summary the report details a number of key recommendations around efficiency, deployment, collaboration, shared governance models and thinking about the future. Areas for further consideration include reconfiguration of Services to better match the response to the risk and demand, development and sharing of innovative crewing and staffing models, increasing the use of on-call firefighters, greater collaboration between blue light services and challenging the inconsistent expenditure patterns between services.

Reform

The previous Home Secretary (now Prime Minister) outlined her visions for fire and rescue services in May 2016. This was a “radical ambitious” package of reforms. This approach was then supported by the new Home Secretary and the then Minister for Policing and Fire, Brandon Lewis.

The reform agenda is made up of three distinct pillars. These are:

1. Efficiency and Collaboration

The aim is to drive deeper collaboration between fire and rescue and other local services – including through the statutory duty in the Policing and Crime Act – and support CFA/NFCC and the sector deliver commercial transformation, including procuring more collaboratively, efficiently and effectively.

2. Accountability and Transparency

The aim to enable the public to fully hold their service to account by replacing opaque governance and inspection arrangements and publishing more comparable performance indicators.

3. Workforce Reform

The recommendations are the sector and Government to deliver and are based around five broad themes:

- The working environment including diversity of workforce
- Documented conditions of service
- Industrial relations
- Retained duty system and
- Management

On a more local level; the Service continues to work with a range of statutory and non statutory partners in pursuit of joint initiatives that will make our communities safer and healthier. Of particular interest is the appointment of Police and Crime Commissioners and the impact that this will have on our joint working with the Police and others within the criminal justice system. With shrinking budgets and a Government desire to ‘do more for less’ the expectations of all partner organisations on each other will increase. As a Service we must ensure we remain best placed to meet this challenge. The Authority actively seeks joint working arrangements to best meet the need of the community. It is likely that following Parliamentary approval, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire will become a voting member of the FRA. The Authority awaits the guidance on this process from the Home Office.

2.2 National Financial Context:

The provisional local government finance settlement was announced by the Secretary of State Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid MP, in an oral statement to the House of Commons on Tuesday 19th December 2017.

The headlines below provide a brief summary of the key points:

Headlines

- Increased council tax referendum principle from 2% to 3% for 2018-19 and **2019-20** for all Fire Authorities, Shire Counties, Single Tier Unitaries, Metropolitan Districts and London Boroughs. The maximum £5 increase was maintained for district councils
- Announcement of the Government's 'aim' to **localise 75% of business rates** from 2020-21 and implementation of the **new needs assessment (the FRA receives 1%)**
- **Consultation** in the Spring on 'fair and affordable options' to **tackle negative RSG** in 2019-20 (applies to some counties with fire responsibility but no stand-alone fire authorities)
- In addition to those already announced; **ten new 100% business rates retention pilots** have been accepted for 2018-19
- **No Transition Grant in 2018-19**
- **A national increase in the 2018-19 core spending power of 1.5%** compared to 2017-18. NFCC members (including counties and unitaries with fire) see an increase in Spending Power of 2.5%, with stand-alone fire authorities seeing an average increase of 3.2%
- **RSG no longer a comparable measure of funding:** those authorities taking part in 100% Business Rates Retention pilots will not receive RSG as the funding will be reflected in an increased baseline funding level
- Increase in the **Rural Service Delivery Grant for 2018-19 to £65M** in line with 2017-18 and 2019-20. However, piloting authorities forgo this grant
- **£946M** paid in **New Homes Bonus**. Further **reduction in the number of payment years** from 5 years in 2017-18 to 4 years in 2018-19. NHB will continue to be paid on housing growth above 0.4% (0.4% in 2017-18). (Applicable to counties and unitaries with fire responsibility)
- Continuation of capital receipts flexibilities for a further 3 years

Council Tax Referendum Principles

- **3% council tax referendum trigger for fire authorities, counties, unitaries, London Boroughs and GLA (up from 2%)**
- **Continuation of the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept at 2%** with the flexibility to increase the precept by 1% to 3% in 2018-19 provided that increases do not exceed 6% between 2017-18 and 2019-20
- For shire districts 3% council tax referendum trigger or £5, whichever is higher (up from 2%)
- Police precepts can be increased by up to £12. This equates to between 5.34% and 12.20% for English PCCs. This compares to allowing a £5 increase for those in the lowest quartile of PCCs and a 2% threshold otherwise in 2017-18.

3. Local Context

3.1 **The Authority's Area:**

Bedfordshire occupies a geographically central position within the UK. It has exceptional links to London with the presence of key transport infrastructure including the M1 and A1 roads, three major rail routes and London Luton Airport. Bedfordshire has a population of over 640,000¹ people, with a workforce of over 250,000². It has one of the most diverse populations in the country, over a relatively small geographical area.

The county is, in land use terms, largely rural and agricultural, including major areas of outstanding natural beauty. Most people (over 70%) live in its larger towns including the two major towns of Luton and Bedford but also in a number of smaller market towns. These towns lie within often picturesque rural settings which also includes many villages that add to the area's diversity of places to live, work and play.

Over recent years the local economy, like many throughout the UK, has moved from traditional manufacturing and heavy industry to one based more upon the service industry. These industries include logistics and air transport, higher education, research and development, tourism and hospitality, creative and cultural businesses, construction, and business services.

Bedfordshire has two successful universities; the post-graduate Cranfield University, and the under-graduate University of Bedfordshire, together with strongly performing further education colleges based in Bedford, Luton and Dunstable. There are a number of significant and internationally linked research locations at these universities and also at Colworth Science Park, Cranfield Technology Park and the Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground.

¹ Source: ONS Mid-Year estimates July 2014.

² Business Register & Employment Survey, Office for national Statistics Full & Part Time Employment

There are on-going major transport infrastructure improvements and developments to the road system within the county and continued growth at London Luton Airport; a key deliverer in the business passenger market and handling circa 10 million passengers a year in total.

Town centre redevelopment is underway in many of the county's towns, and in particular in Luton and Bedford.

There are also iconic visitor attractions in the county, such as Woburn Safari Park, Whipsnade Zoo and Center Parc's fifth UK village at Woburn.

From April 2009 local government within the county has been through three unitary authorities - Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council. The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (BFRA) comprises elected Members from each of these unitary authorities, whose numbers are proportional to the populations they represent: 3 Members from Bedford Borough Council, 5 Members from Central Bedfordshire Council and 4 Members from Luton Borough Council.

3.2. The Authority's Strategic Priorities Objectives:

The achievement of the Authority's objectives and targets within a rapidly changing and complex environment requires a robust strategic and business planning process which must in turn guide the development of the medium-term revenue and capital expenditure plans, targeting financial resources to support day-to-day activities as well as planned investment.

Such effective business planning is also essential in order to embed a Service-wide culture of providing the best quality service through the most efficient means and ensure that efficiency measures can be used to free up existing resources, enabling them to be redirected to new and emerging priorities.

BFRA continues to rise to the economic challenges that it faces, whilst at the same time endeavouring to continue to improve the quality of the service it provides to the communities it serves. In the recent years the Authority has:

- Changed the shift system at all of our wholetime fire stations.
- Changed the shift system at 1 of our 2 day crewed fire stations.
- Restructured our management teams and reduced the number officers.

In accordance with its corporate planning policies and procedures, the Service undertakes a strategic assessment twice per year that assists in identifying the strategic issues facing the Service both in the short and longer term and to ensure that the Service is best positioned to continue to achieve its strategic objectives. The production of the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is facilitated by the Strategic Assessment and considers a wide range of factors and issues, many of which are complex and played out over a longer timeframe, whilst others are less complex but more volatile requiring close monitoring.

The outcomes of the strategic assessment also guide the development of more detailed plans across the Service and in particular the programme of strategic improvement projects for the forthcoming year and medium-term beyond and play a vital role in guiding and prioritising proposals for expenditure in the annual budget setting and medium-term financial planning process.

The Service planning processes and current medium-term strategic assessment has led to the development of three key strategic objectives and associated priorities that we will pursue in order to achieve these objectives (Note: these are not ranked in order of importance) and our Vision that is *'To provide an excellent service for the communities of Bedfordshire'*.

Our Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: To respond effectively, manage risks and reduce the number of emergency incidents that we attend.

We will provide 'Civic Leadership' in delivering our services by:

- Matching operational response resources to risk;
- Responding to medical emergencies in the community, delivering life-saving support working alongside the Ambulance Service; Focussing on policy, procedures and processes that underpin Fire-fighter and community safety;
- A continued focus on operational excellence and safety through the provision of high quality procedures and equipment;
- Demonstrating proactive leadership within the community and amongst our partners in delivering a wide but risk-focused portfolio of services, where our brand and capabilities make us best placed to act (such as young people, sport focused initiatives, the elderly, social cohesion etc); and,
- Enhanced strategic partnerships with other Services and agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors in pursuit of achieving shared local priorities.

And:

We will enhance our customer focus through:

- Use of customer insight techniques (customer segmentation, customer journey mapping etc);
- Enhanced consultation with and involvement of communities;
- Improved use of risk and socio-demographic data to identify our 'at risk' groups and emerging issues such as an ageing population and the impact of mental health/dementia etc;
- Use of social marketing techniques, including the effective use of social media, to change behaviours in regard to staying safe; and
- Using an 'embedded' approach to diversity in relation to our customers and the community.

Strategic Objective 2: To ensure high standards of corporate governance and continued service improvement.

We will ensure a rigorous, business-like approach through:

- Robust financial scenario planning to meet the continued programme of austerity measures;
- Improved strategic planning and quality control systems including robust business cases for strategic expenditure;
- Improved performance measurement, reporting and management and enhanced audit and developed Quality Assurance processes;
- Maximise opportunities from external challenges and influences to deliver improvements across the Service;
- Continuous review of structures to meet the needs of the community to deliver efficient and effective services;
- Rigorous evaluation of outcomes;
- Process improvements to achieve efficiencies;
- Collaboration and where appropriate shared services to achieve resilience and efficiencies; and
- A focus on sustainability in all our business processes.

And:

Using Transformational Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by:

- Further enhancement and development of ICT systems to support our service delivery functions;
- Improved Management Information System applications;
- Continuing to develop ICT systems to share data and information with partners and make such data and information more accessible whilst ensuring the continued security of our systems; and
- Utilising technology to maximise business outcomes.

Strategic Objective 3: To develop our employees and create a safe, fair and caring workplace for our staff.

We will have the right people with the right skills by:

- Having a continued focus on operational excellence through safety and training;
- Reviewing our approach to leadership to determine the critical capabilities required of leaders to deliver the Service's future strategies;
- Having a continuing ethical and moral leadership approach;
- Developing an expanded skills-base and flexible workforce that will provide public value and a wider range of service delivery outcomes;
- Continue delivering a programme of investment in training and equipment across the Service;
- The use of effective change management processes.
- Using an 'embedded' approach to diversity in relation to our staff;
- Maintaining robust individual performance management systems aligned to service strategy;

- Utilising knowledge, skills and competence;
- Succession planning;
- Supporting innovation.

3.3. Government Funding Settlement:

The Government's provisional settlement was announced on 14 December 2017. The Authority is yet to receive the final settlement figures at the time of writing this report which is due to be published in time for circulation prior to the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 8 February 2018. The final funding announcement was in early February in 2017 for the Authority's 2017/18 settlement. This provisional settlement figures are detailed below in Table 1.

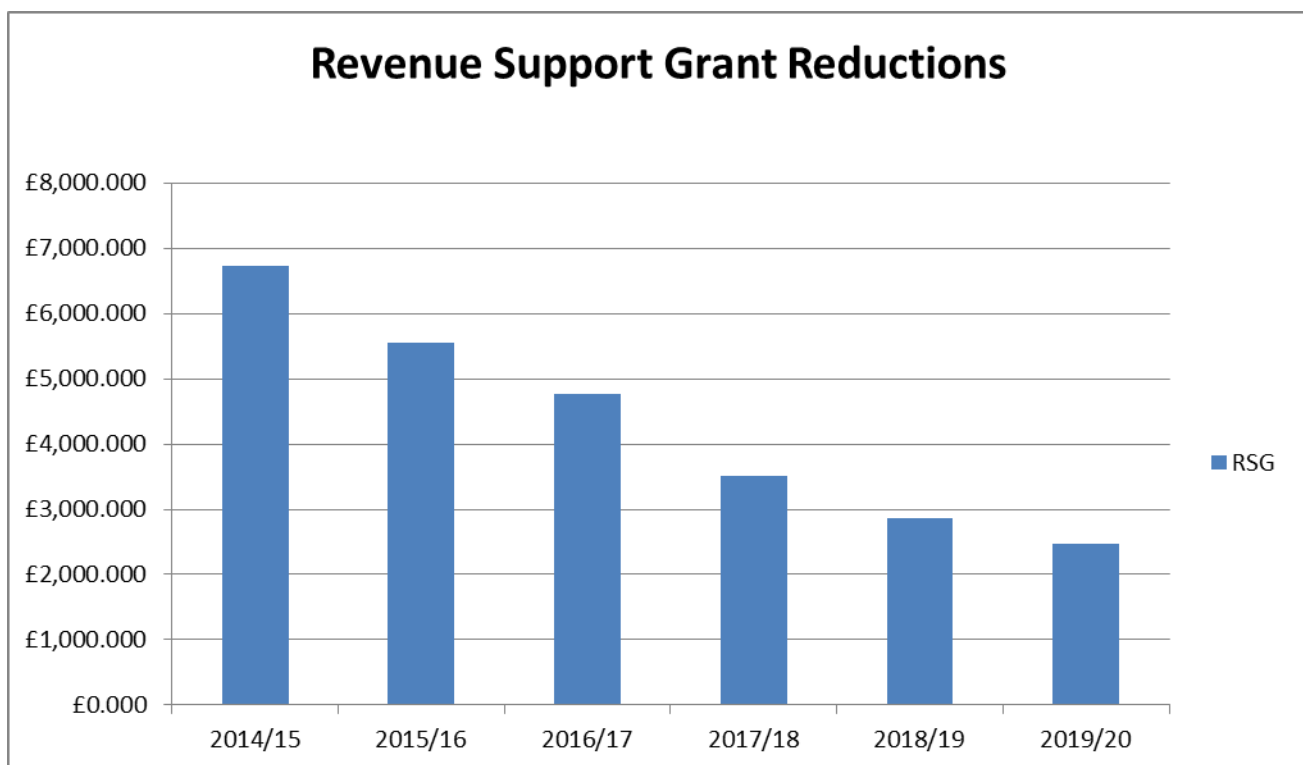
Table 1: Government Grant Revenue Funding

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	% change
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	3.509	2.856	(18.6%)
Business Rates baseline funding	5.549	5.716	3.0%
Settlement Funding Assessment	9.058	8.572	(5.37%)

As detailed above, the funding reduction between 2017/18 and 2018/19 is 5.37% over both grant and business rates income.

The chart below details the Revenue Support Grant income reductions since 2014/15. These reductions have been visible in the Medium Term Revenue Plan and have course led to increased savings and efficiencies.

Chart 1: Revenue Support Grant reductions from 2014/15 to 2019/20



The Authority's Business Rates baseline funding level has been assessed at £5.716m by the DCLG for 2018/19 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.022m (the Government's estimate of the Authority's 1% share of locally collected business rates). As our business rate baseline is lower than the baseline funding level, we are therefore a 'top up' authority and will receive the payment of £3.694m from central government (to get back to the £5.716m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The total funding of £8.572m shown above for 2018/19 will be split between £2.856m Revenue Support Grant funding and £5.716m Business Rates. The £2.022m was the estimate by the DCLG, this has now been confirmed by the local authorities at £2.136m, therefore £114k more than the Government had assumed. The split of this between local authorities is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Business Rates income.

Authority	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Bedford	615	641	654	667
Luton	660	674	687	701
Central Beds	861	934	994	1,039
Total	2,136	2,249	2,335	2,407

The above figures are fed into the MTRP. As are the Section 31 Business Rates Grants of £166,000 in total from the three Unitary Authorities.

As previously reported, the Authority in future years will be subject to fluctuations of the Business Rates collected in Bedfordshire. If business rates income increases, the Authority will receive a share of this, if it decreases the Authority will be impacted by this. There are mechanisms in place within the funding scheme that offer

protection, called safety nets, should an authority be considerably adversely impacted.

The Chancellor has previously announced that by 2020, authorities will be funded by Business Rates and Council Tax, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will cease. Authorities are yet to be advised how this will work and when it will be eventually implemented. We are yet to see if Fire and Rescue Authorities will have a change in funding to grant and council tax only, which would be in line with Police Authority funding.

The detailed split of the Authority's total funding and local council tax is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Detailed income split

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	Change £m
Budget Requirement (£m)	28.716	29.416	0.700
<u>Funded by:</u>			
Precept Requirement (£m)	18.994	19.972	0.978
Central and Local Gov Funding (£m)	9.120	8.709	(0.411)
Section 31 Business Rates grant	0.224	0.174	(0.050)
Collection Fund surplus/(deficit)	0.378	0.291	(0.087)
Use of reserve (Collection Fund)	0	0.270	0.270
Funding Total (£m)	28.716	29.416	0.700
Tax Base (Band D equiv. properties)	204,653	208,933	4,280
Band 'D' Council Tax	£92.81	£95.59	£2.78

The above income lines are further explained below:

- The Government Grant funding for 2018/19 is as per the provisional settlement figures provided by the DCLG, with the exception of the local business rates. For business rates, as noted below, the more up to date local authority information is used.
- The Precept Requirement is the total of council tax income to the Authority.
- The local business rates for 2018/19 are the figures provided by the three local authorities, as reported in their NNDR 1 returns which were due to be submitted to the DCLG by 31 January 2017. The years 2018/19 to 2021/22 have been increased by using the DCLG's figures for the top up grant and the unitary authority figures for the local share. The Section 31 grant included in the table

above are for the following reliefs; Multiplier Cap, Small Business Rate Relief and financially minor reliefs.

- The Business Rate top up is the figure calculated and provided by the DCLG. This is fixed until the next revaluation. A revaluation has just taken place with new impacts for the 2018/19 budget, due from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) recalculations.
- Council Tax Taxbase, is the Band D equivalent number of properties. For the fifth year there is a lower figure than in 2012/13 and prior years due to the changes in the benefits system, which has reduced the taxbases. This reduced council tax income was offset by the Council Tax Support funding that was separately identifiable in 2013/14 but from 2014/15 has been included in the general Government funding calculations.

3.4 Damping:

In allocating grant, the Government utilises a device known as 'floor damping' to ensure that no fire and rescue authority receives below a prescribed minimum adjustment to the level of grant in comparison to the previous year (the 'floor'). To achieve this, the grant for some other authorities is reduced ('damping') and the money used to increase the grant to those authorities needing it to ensure that they receive the 'floor'.

This Authority has been adversely affected by the 'floor damping' process, with 'damping' reductions of £227,222 in 2012/13 and £332,745 in 2013/14 incorporated into its grant settlements. For 2014/15 onwards the impact of damping is not as visible as it has previously been and is now included with the RSG figures.

3.5 Other Revenue Grants:

In addition to the formula funding, the Government provides specific revenue grants. For the two grants listed below, these are forecast to total £200,000 in 2018/19.

- *Firelink* - This is for the wide area radio system in England, Wales and Scotland for the fire and rescue service.
- *New Dimensions* - This is a grant to cover local costs associated with hosting and maintaining skills associated with national resilience vehicles. As recently reported to the FRA, this grant has reduced from 2017/18.

The total and split of the 2018/19 funding is yet to be received from the DCLG.

As well as the above, a grant is also received on an ad hoc for the Firearms team.

3.6 Fire Capital Grant Allocation:

The Authority's Capital Programme to date has been mainly funded by Government Grant and loans.

In the 2012/13 financial year, the Authority received £1.058m of Fire Capital Grant. The 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years were subject to a bidding round. The Authority did not receive any funding for bids but, did receive an allocation from the residual monies post successful bids, which was £0.832m in each year.

For 2015/16, there was again a bidding round for £75m revenue and capital. The prior capital funding of £70m per annum was reduced to £40m and £35m was top sliced from revenue funding to create the £75m funding pot.

The Authority was successful in one individual bid for a Retained Duty System review including new communications hardware £308,000 and two joint bids. The joint bids are with eight other Fire and Rescue Services to set up a Mutual Company to cover a protection programme (instead of traditional insurance) at £220,000 in total and £1.4m with two other Fire and Rescue Services for IT Service Transformational Efficiency Programme (STEP) developments.

The Authority's base budget revenue contributions to fund capital commenced in 2012/13 to support capital expenditure funding in future years. From 2018/19 there will be a base budget revenue contribution of £1.3m per annum. This is with the assumption that capital grants are not forthcoming. It has been confirmed that there will not be a capital funding bidding round for 2018/19, which is consistent from 2016/17 and 2017/18 too.

The Capital Programme, as per the approved timetable, has followed the same robust challenge/scrutiny route as the revenue budget. The Capital Strategy Team has also reviewed and assessed the bids made, approving the schemes that are attached at Appendix 3 as the 2018/19 Capital Programme.

Key items of note in the proposed 2018/19 Capital Programme of £1.253m are:

- Investment in our vehicle fleet, to maintain efficient, economic and effective appliances.
- Investment in IT.
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings.

4. The Medium-Term Revenue Plan

4.1. Overview and Key Features of the Revenue Budget Strategy:

The Medium-Term Revenue Plan (MTRP), attached at Appendix 1 of the 2018/19 budget report, sets out the Authority's revenue budget strategy for the next four years and the predicted impact on council tax. It captures all of the revenue budget implications of the forecasts and assumptions set out throughout this document, including the impact of the capital budget on revenue.

A key feature of the Authority's overall revenue budget strategy is the decision to set a budget for 2018/19 which involves a 2.99% increase in council tax on 2017/18 levels. This 2.99% council tax increase is combined with strategies for council tax, efficiency savings and the use of reserves, which together are aimed at delivering significant and sustainable savings over the four year period and beyond, whilst

supporting continuing improvements in the quality of service in line with the Authority's strategic priorities.

The council tax strategy, based on current assumptions and estimates, involves increases at 2.99% for 2018/19 and 2019/20, with 1.99% for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The 2.99% increases are currently built into the MTRP based on need. This is supported by a strategy for efficiency savings and the utilisation of the 'transformational reserve' in 2018/19 onwards. The support provided to the revenue budget by the planned use of the reserves in the years 2018/19 to 2021/22 is aimed at smoothing the impact of formula grant reductions.

4.2 Components of the Medium-Term Revenue Plan:

The following sections give a brief explanation of each of the main components of the MTRP:

4.2.1 Base Budget

The net revenue budget for running the Service in 2017/18 was £29.284m. After adjusting for an amount of £568,000, which was a contribution from reserves to balance the budget, this decreased the budget requirement to £28.716m.

For the 2018/19 budget, the net revenue budget is £29.676m, with a budgeted use of £277,000 from the Transformational reserve decreasing the budget requirement to £29.416m.

4.2.2 Impact of Pensions Funding Changes

From 2006/07 arrangements were introduced which saw the majority of firefighters pension costs being paid for from the pension account (that is separate from the BFRA's budget), which is funded by a combination of employers' and employees' contributions with Government paying the balance. The level of the employers' contributions is set by the Government Actuary Department and applies uniformly across all Authorities. The BFRA is still responsible for injury retirements and the initial contribution towards ill-health retirements.

The employer pension contributions percentage will increase for non operational employee from April 2017, however, in the initial years this is offset by a reduction to the lump sum contribution. The employer firefighter contributions are forecast to increase from April 2019.

4.2.3 Forecast Variations

This component of the budget includes a variety of estimated or predicted impacts. The items for increases on insurance premiums and investment interest decrease/increase are self-explanatory and the figures given represent estimates based on information currently available. The Revenue Implications of the Capital Programme represent the cost of capital borrowing (minimum revenue provision, loan, interest repayments, running costs) on the revenue budget.

The item on non-uniform incremental drift relates to increases in pay for non-uniformed staff as a result of increased 'time served' which results in their moving up the 'spinal column points' within their salary scales.

Of particular importance are the items on efficiency savings. As noted at the start of this Section, the Authority's efficiency savings strategy is a core component of the MTRP. The efficiency savings for each of the four years are shown as two types: Transformational Efficiencies/Savings which relate to far-reaching organisational changes, normally associated with significant strategic projects; and Budget Manager Process Efficiency Savings which relate to incremental cost reductions and improvements in ways of working for which all senior managers are set annual targets across all non pay-related budgets. Further details of the Authority's efficiency savings strategy are given in Section 4.3 below.

Of course it is important to remember that actual spending will be under significant pressure. Already we are already aware of the increase in National insurance contributions for employers from April 2016 and the new apprenticeship levy from April 2017.

4.2.4 *Inflation*

Staff Pay: Direct employee costs amount to circa £23.4m or 80% of the revenue budget and as a result the annual pay awards in the latter years of this current budget setting process have a significant impact on future expenditure levels. Specifically for 2018/19, there is an increase in pay forecast at 2% for non-uniformed officers and an estimated 4% for uniformed officers from July 2018 until July 2019 and 2% from July 2019. For uniformed officers, this pay award may be linked with a review on conditions of service.

This budget will fund wholtime and retained operational staff, emergency fire control operators and full-time and part-time support staff pay awards. All of the Authority's pay awards are determined by national negotiating bodies and, other than through the Employers' representatives on the negotiating team, the BFRA has no direct influence on the outcome and, therefore, the use of estimates for budget projections is required. There will be significant pressure around pay awards.

Prices Inflation: This includes all non-pay items, from indirect employee costs such as recruitment, insurance, occupational health and health and safety related provision and operational training, through to premises, transport, supplies and services. Non-pay inflation of 2% for general supplies and services has been incorporated into the MTRP for 2018/19. This is lower than current RPI and CPI, but deemed manageable. There is a separate line for an inflation provision for gas, electricity, water and diesel.

4.2.5 *Budget Pressures*

This line of the MTRP refers to proposed items of new or additional expenditure brought forward by managers during the process of budget setting, which have been approved for taking forward into the budget. These are known as 'FMS 3' projects (after the number of the business case template used for submission) and all have been subject to rigorous scrutiny. Within the process for 2018/19, these pressures

have also been kept to a minimum through the extensive efforts of managers to identify efficiency savings in order to meet the costs of many of the service improvements to be implemented over the coming year.

4.2.6 Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure

This line of the plan shows the sum total of each of the above expenditure elements and thus represents the total budgeted revenue spending on the Service.

4.2.7 Contributions to/from General Reserves

As a precepting authority there is a requirement under the Local Government Act 1992 for BFRA to hold reserves in order to meet any unforeseen emergencies and manage uneven cash flows. The Authority undertakes a thorough risk assessment in order to identify the required level of reserves each year. Details of the amounts and nature of Reserves which the Authority has decided to hold are given in Section 4.4.

4.2.8 General and Earmarked Reserves, below

This line of the MTRP shows how the Authority plans to use the Transformational Reserves, as per the strategy, in years 2018/19 to 2021/22. This strategy is supported by the Authority's efficiency savings plans and the proposed council tax strategy over the four years of the MTRP and is aimed at smoothing the impact of the estimated reductions in formula grant in 2018/19 to 2021/22, thereby allowing adequate time for longer-term efficiency savings measures to deliver sustained reductions to base budget requirements, whilst maintaining levels of service delivery.

4.2.9 Collection Fund

For 2012/13 and the years before, a collection fund deficit arose for a local authority (a billing authority) when the actual amount of council tax collected by the Authority is less than the amount calculated based upon the number of properties (tax base) and level of council tax set. This can arise due to a number of reasons including an over-estimation of the tax base and non-payment by householders. Conversely, a collection fund surplus can arise when the amount of council tax collected exceeds the calculated amount due to an under-estimation of the council tax base. From 2013/14, there is also now a surplus or deficit on the business rates collected too.

For 2018/19, the respective estimated Collection Fund position of each of its constituent authorities (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton) has resulted in a net collection fund surplus of £291,000 for this Authority. This means that the Authority's net funding from council tax for this year only is effectively increased by that amount. This is detailed on an individual authority basis in Table 4 below.

Table 4: 2017/18 Collection Fund estimated outturn

Authority	Council Tax £'000 (surplus)/deficit	Business Rates £'000 (surplus)/deficit	Net £'000 (surplus)/deficit
Bedford	(122)	17	(105)
Luton	(214)	12	(202)
Central Beds	(3)	19	16
Total	(339)	48	(291)

For a combined fire authority, any collection fund deficit or surplus will represent the combined 'net' result of its share of each of its constituent authorities' estimated year-end Collection Fund position.

To cater for such variations, Authorities maintain a Collection Fund Reserve to or from which contributions from/to the revenue budget are made in the year following the variation. Should there be an overall deficit in a future year, the Fire and Rescue Authority has allocated a reserve to support this.

4.2.10 Budget Requirement and Increase

This element shows the estimated net revenue budget requirement for each of the years of the Plan, together with net and percentage increase on previous years. It is the result of adjusting the total estimated net revenue expenditure figure to take account of the contributions to/from the General and Collection Fund Reserves.

It is helpful to break down the budget requirement by service function (as defined within the Service Reporting Code of Practice) since this illustrates relative change in resourcing of separate areas to reflect the Authority's strategic priorities and plans. This breakdown is provided in Table 5 below which shows the net revenue expenditure by Service function for each year of the medium-term strategy.

Further detail on the nature of these Transformational Efficiencies is given under Section 4.3 Efficiency Savings Strategy, below.

Table 5: Revenue Budget Expenditure 2018/19 – 2021/22 by Service Function

	Strategic Objective	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000
Community Safety	1	1,400	1,380	1,380	1,380
Firefighting and Rescue	1 & 2	14,640	15,423	15,797	15,877
Emergency Response Support	1 & 2	2,686	3,359	2,609	2,609
Training and Development	2	1,569	1,537	1,537	1,537
Human Resources	2 & 3	1,169	1,169	1,169	1,169
Corporate Support	2 & 3	5,842	5,990	6,178	6,450
IT and Communications	2 & 3	1,692	1,754	1,704	1,704
Strategic Management	3	857	953	953	953
Transformational Efficiency Savings		(178)	(150)	(244)	(375)
Net Revenue Expenditure		29,676	31,415	31,083	31,304
Contribution to/(from) Reserves		(260)	(1,837)	(902)	(390)
Budget Requirement		29,416	29,578	30,182	30,914

4.2.11 *Financed By*

This element of the Plan shows the detail of the separate sources of revenue funding required to meet the estimated budget requirement for each year of the Plan, ie from where the Authority's revenue income comes.

The detailed split of funding is shown earlier in the MTFs in Table 3.

4.2.12 *Calculation of Band D Council Tax and Percentage Increase*

The tax base used in the MTRP projections represents the number of Band D equivalent properties in the three constituent local authorities that BFRA precepts upon (ie Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton). The tax base for 2018/19 has been set at 208,933 Band D equivalent properties, based on the information that has been supplied by these authorities. The split per authority is shown in Table 6 below. This is an increase of 2.09% compared to the 204,653 taxbase in 2017/18. The increase is due to various factors including the levelling out of benefits, exemptions and discounts and incentivised new housing developments.

The estimated increases of future years council taxbases are included within the MTRP.

Also shown is the percentage increase in council tax projected for each year of the MTRP. As explained previously, these equate to 2.99% for 2018/19 and 2019/20, with 1.99% then to 2021/22.

Table 6: Taxbase – Band D Equivalent

Authority/Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Bedford	58,521	59,691	60,885	62,103
Luton	50,461	50,861	51,261	51,661
Central Beds	99,951	101,801	103,684	105,602
Totals	208,933	212,353	215,830	219,366

4.3 Efficiency Savings Strategy

An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity is reduced, but its quality and effectiveness remains the same or improves. BFRA continues to focus on becoming more efficient - finding new ways to deliver highest quality services at lowest possible cost.

The Authority's MTRP for 2018/19 to 2021/22 shows the level of budgeted efficiency/savings planned for each of the four years, which form an integral part of the overall revenue budget strategy. In addition, the Authority's efficiency savings/initiatives during 2017/18 are on track to deliver an underspend which will be used, subject to the approval of the FRA, to contribute to the Transformation Reserve.

Significant areas where the Authority is already achieving such efficiency savings as a result of initiatives previously implemented include:

- Staffing costs:
 - ❖ following restructures and reviews of working systems across several departments,
 - ❖ through better matching levels of cover provided to station needs.
- Costs of overtime and temporary appointments, through reduced sickness levels and improved absence management.
- Managing sustained reductions in the number of ill-health retirements.
- Costs of goods and services through collaborating with other authorities and re-negotiating contracts with suppliers.
- The running costs of our vehicle fleet through redesign of operational and support vehicles.
- Costs of premises hire for large events, through making use of our community fire station facilities.

As well as making further savings in many of the above areas, the Authority's plans for 2018/19 and beyond include making significant efficiency savings through:

- Further operational cover reviews
- Removal of the Management Information System (MIS)
- Procurement savings from new contracts for PPE, Waste and printers/copiers
- Collaboration savings
- Income generation

4.4. **General and Earmarked Reserves:**

As a precepting authority there is a requirement under the Local Government Act 1992 for BFRA to hold reserves in order to meet any unforeseen emergencies and manage uneven cash flows. The Authority undertakes a thorough risk assessment in order to identify the required level of reserves each year. The Treasurer has the duty to report on the adequacy of reserves (under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003), particularly when the authority is considering setting its budget requirement.

The required level of reserves for the period 2018/19 is consistent with previous years. The external auditors have also commented favourably on the current financial position of the authority, in terms of reserves and financial strategy.

General Reserves are a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary borrowing and as a contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies. The Authority's General Reserves are detailed in Appendix 1, the Reserves Strategy.

Earmarked Reserves, in accordance with the Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) Bulletin 77, can be set up where there are known or predicted requirements. As is common with most other Fire and Rescue Authorities and public sector bodies, BFRA has set up a number of earmarked reserves which have been separated out from General Reserves. These are also detailed in Appendix 1, the Reserves Strategy.

At the time of writing, the forecast year end underspend for 2017/18 is circa £0.470m. The General Reserve of £2.6m, at 9% of net revenue expenditure, is in line with the current overall average Combined Fire Authority average amount at 9%. This is based on reserves figures at 1st April 2017 available via CIPFA Statistics. As the S151 Officer I am comfortable with the level of reserves and do not deem it too low or high.

In addition, the Authority has separate ear-marked reserves for the Collection Fund and a separate Capital Receipts Reserve. Project carry forwards are also classed as ear-marked reserves at the year end stage.

The Transformational Earmarked Reserve that was specifically set up for budget setting purposes is estimated to total £4.408m at 31 March 2018. As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that this will be allocated to offset the budget gap in the years 2018/19 to 2021/22.

5. The Medium-Term Capital Programme

5.1 **The Capital Programme**

Maintaining and improving the BFRA's infrastructure requires considerable resources and, for asset management purposes, this is broken down into three categories of investment, for each of which a comprehensive Asset Management Plan is produced; namely:

- Land and Buildings
- Fleet and Operational Equipment
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

For each category of investment a separate programme of projects exists which spans a four year period. Because of the nature of the types of projects included in the programmes it has been the practice for some time to phase plans over a medium-term timeframe in order to show the way some schemes run over several years.

In line with best practice the land and buildings programme is developed so as to meet ongoing maintenance demands as well as to support the development of land and buildings investment and its subsequent management.

The fleet and operational equipment programme reflects the need to maintain a comprehensive fleet of vehicles with acceptable asset lives, equipped to the correct standard to meet current and planned service delivery requirements.

The ICT programme contains projects designed to develop and maintain the communications and technological infrastructure, to support both operational and organisational needs.

Traditionally IT, vehicles and operational equipment have either been leased or funded from revenue and hence did not feature in the Capital Programme, but are the subject of revenue bids for funding. Following the introduction of the Prudential Code, work was undertaken to review the cost effectiveness of leasing compared with long-term borrowing and a number of previously leased items are now being included as part of the four year Capital Programme. Discussions regularly take place with our treasury and leasing advisers, Capita Treasury Solutions, to ascertain for our specific Authority at that point in time, what the optimal funding options are.

All proposed schemes are assessed against set criteria to establish the extent to which they support the strategic objectives and Authority's priorities.

The Authority has implemented an asset management process that ensures all its assets are procured, maintained and disposed of in an efficient and effective way to provide value for money to the council tax payer.

The buildings programme for 2018/19 onwards has been developed on the basis that at present there are no further plans to change the type or location of fire stations and therefore the bulk of investment in premises is directed towards enhancement and the provision of new facilities for training and enhanced national resilience. However, it is an area that may change due to joint working/collaboration.

Historically, vehicles and equipment for frontline response and community fire safety have followed certain levels of specification and requirements. Following a comprehensive review of the emergency response fleet, a number of innovative changes are being made to the current fleet. These changes will deliver a fleet of

vehicles aligned to the emergency response required to be mobilised to the identified risk profile of Bedfordshire.

The Capital Programme for 2018/19 is fully funded by revenue contributions, with a contribution from the vehicles reserve of £134k.

The DCLG introduced a new bidding round for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 budget periods. This was agreed repeated for 2015/16 but not for 2017/18 onwards. This is detailed earlier in this MTFS.

It is unknown how fire and rescue authorities will be funded for capital expenditure in the next CSR period. It is hoped that the bidding process will cease and that a system like the previous one, where an allocated amount for the service will be distributed on a fixed and distributable amount per head of population. The Head of Finance/Treasurer was part of the Capital Working Group working with the DCLG on reviewing the future funding methods and to evidence to the Treasury what the requirements for the fire and rescue service as a whole is. It is hoped that this group will commence meeting again to discuss the future funding of capital requirements.

6. Other Considerations

6.1. **Key Budget Assumptions and Uncertainties:**

2018/19 Budget Process- Assumptions/Uncertainties

Current Assumptions:

- Green Book pay award 2% April 2018 onwards
- Grey Book up to 4% July 2018 onwards
- That the additional 1% to council tax will not continue after the two years announced (2018/19 and 2019/20).
- Taxbase in line with previous indications (amended where info supplied)
- Business rates in line with previous indications (amended where info supplied)
- No Capital Funding (bidding round not announced)
- That the CPSN contract is awarded to the current provider, if not, there is likely to be an additional £100k of expenditure.
- Fire Grant/Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) funded (see below) – ***Potential large funding risk here***
- Fire Fighters Pension Scheme Revaluation from 2016, that comes into effect from April 2019, has an estimated increase of 4% (current assumptions within the sector range between 2% and 4%)
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) grant reductions in line with four year funding deal and continuing at this rate for RSG in 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Estimated Collection Fund surplus of £348k in 18/19, none thereafter (final confirmation in January 2018)
- New Dimensions Grant will continue
- No new funding for national resilience vehicles (planned purchases 2020/21)
- Marauding Terrorist Firearms Team (MTFA) funding continuing

- No additional posts following Business Improvement Team review
- No material impact from Job Evaluations following ICT Restructure

Uncertainties:

- Recruitment profile/establishment/retirements – associated recruitment/training costs
- New savings/efficiencies in the medium term to address the budget shortfall, subject to work and approval by FRA
- Collaboration (PCC, Ambulance, Police etc) – and associated costs/savings
- Medium term property strategy (One Public Estate bid, sharing etc)
- Contingent Liabilities/Assets included in the Statement of Accounts
- EU directives/legislative changes/Brexit impacts
- Fully funded by local business rates (no Revenue Support Grant) by 2020, or direct grant with no business rates (like the Police)
- Implications arising from Fire Brigades Union (FBU) discriminatory claims relating to transitional pension protection
- Strike expenditure potential
- Outcomes of review of Cloud options
- General Data Protection Requirements (GDPR)
- Pay Scale review – Green book (Hay review pay line)
- Interest and inflation rate fluctuations

6.2 Equality Impact:

The challenging economic environment in which the Service is operating means that it is sometimes necessary to make difficult and unpopular decisions. A number of the major changes included within the Authority's strategic priorities for the medium-term and thus supported by financial provision within this MTFs, particularly those associated with transformational efficiency savings, will be of this type. The Authority recognises that equality legislation does not prevent it from making these decisions but gives an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to equality and diversity and to ensure such decisions are based on robust evidence and taken in accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Authority, therefore, ensures that robust equality analysis is carried out, paying due regard to the impact on our community and staff, where policies, procedures and practices are changing. Decisions, where appropriate, will also be informed by the wider context to ensure particular groups are not unduly affected by the cumulative effects of different decisions. All decisions will be documented through equality impact assessment ensuring fairness, transparency and accountability. This information will be published in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.3. Data Quality:

The Authority is committed to achieving and maintaining fit for purpose, quality data enabling sound decision making and informed planning. This is vitally important with key documents, such as this MTFs and the Authority seeks to continually improve

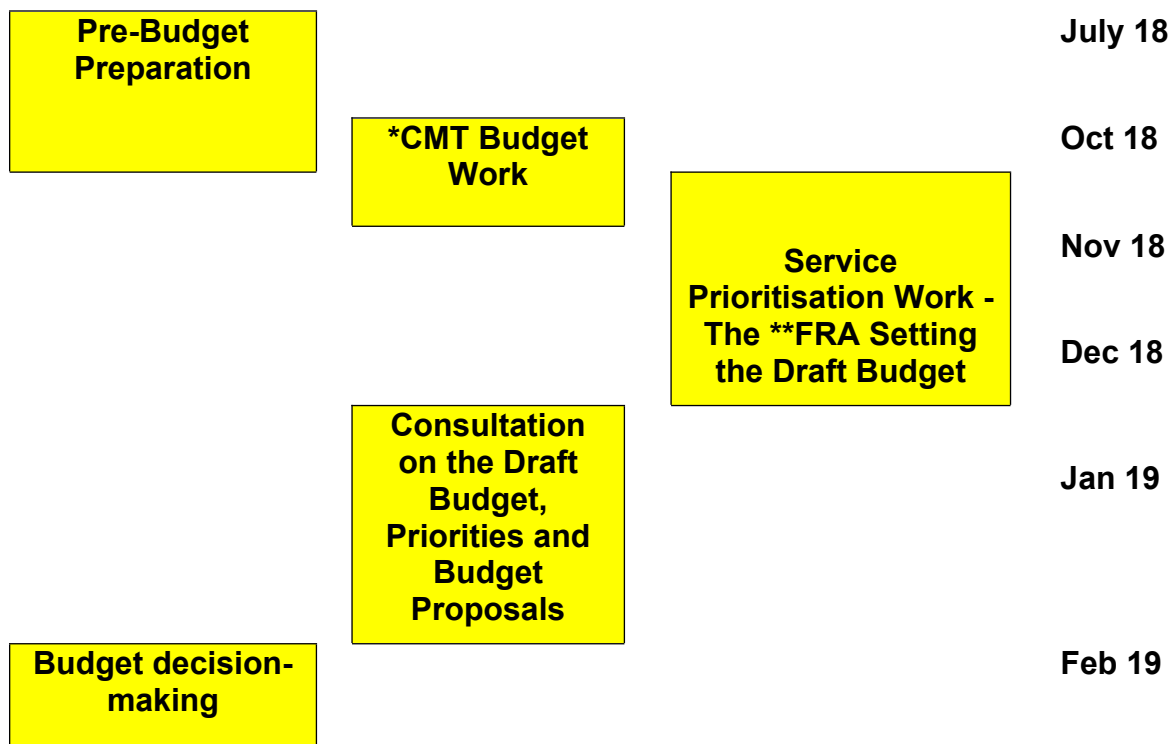
the quality characteristics of such data with particular emphasis on accuracy, validity, reliability, timeliness, relevance and completeness.

Systems for assurance and validation of our data are in place, for example Performance Indicators are supported by data proformas which include descriptors, data sources, and change control. A data issues log is maintained that considers severity, impact and mitigation. The Authority’s Business Improvement Programme incorporates process re-engineering to assure our data at the point of entry following the ‘record once and use many times’ principle, delivering new ways of working and business systems where appropriate.

6.4. Budget Setting Process for Future Years:

The summary diagram below shows the key stages that will be followed by the Authority in setting future year’s budgets. In order to ensure proper process and timescales, it incorporates budget planning from July, setting a draft budget in December for consultation, followed by a final budget set in February.

Diagram 1: The budget setting timetable



*CMT= Corporate Management Team

**FRA= Fire and Rescue Authority

Reserves Strategy – Budget 2018/19 & MTFS 2018/19 to 2021/22

1 Background

- 1.1 Reserves are an essential part of good financial management. They help the Authority to cope with unpredictable financial pressures and plan for future spending commitments. The level, purpose and planned use of reserves are important factors for the Authority to consider in developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and setting the annual budget.
- 1.2 In setting the budget, the Authority decides what it will spend and how much income it needs from limited fees/charges and the council tax to supplement government funding. The Authority may choose to fund some of its spending from its reserves, or set aside some of its income to increase reserves for future spending.
- 1.3 Having the right level of reserves is important. If reserves are too low, there may be little resilience to financial shocks and sustained financial challenges.
- 1.4 Authorities are free to determine the reserves they hold. Members are responsible for ensuring that the Authority's reserves are part of the MTFS and need to be appropriate for circumstances. The Chief Finance Officer has a duty to provide members with advice on the level of reserves.
- 1.5 Fire and Rescue Authorities face significant challenges. The unprecedented reduction in government funding since 2010/11, rising costs and growing demand for many services are all testing the Authority's financial management and resilience. The position is set to become tougher with continuous grant reductions.
- 1.6 Current and future financial challenges pose significant, and increasing, risks for the Authority. The Authority may consider using reserves to balance competing pressures, for example:
- Using reserves to offset funding reductions and protect services – although this can only be a short-term strategy as reserves are a one-off funding resource – or invest in making changes that reduce the cost of providing services in the longer term.
 - Increasing reserves to strengthen resilience against future, uncertain cost pressures. A feature of the previous budget strategy and MTFS, was that reserves were built up to be used to support the budget and fund investment in delivering savings through transformation and improving services. The Transformational Budget Reserve is now being utilised to offset the budget gap as strategically planned.

2. The approach to setting the Reserves Strategy

- 2.1 The Reserves Strategy is integral to the MTFS and the annual budget setting process. Therefore the MTFS includes:
- Information showing the current level of reserves
 - Consideration of the forward strategy for reserves needed to support the Authority's MTFS
 - A summary of the financial risks facing the Authority in conjunction with
 - An explanation of the purpose and level of any earmarked reserves
 - Details of the plans for reserves within the published budget
- 2.2 Reserves will be monitored throughout the year and the level of reserves reported as part of the year end accounting processes.

3 Why the Authority holds reserves

- 3.1 We use different terms to refer to the reserves depending on why they are held. Terms we use in this report have the following meanings:
- General – the main balance that the Authority wishes to set aside. This is the £2.6m and is compared annually to other Combined Fire Authorities.
 - Available earmarked reserves – funds we hold set aside to meet known or predicted future spending or ring-fenced by previous Authority decisions (such as the Collaboration Reserve)
 - Other reserves the Authority holds but which are not available to fund their general spending; some reserves with statutory restrictions on how they can be spent, such as capital receipts or specific revenue grants
 - Total reserves – the sum of earmarked, other and General
- 3.2 Available earmarked reserves include funds for contingent spending that is hard to predict (risk-based reserves) – for example property or vehicle damage, or reserves to cover shortfalls in investment income, pay award projections and so on.
- 3.3 Reserves are distinct from provisions. Provisions are funds set aside for probable future liabilities where the timing and amounts are uncertain

Delivering a balanced budget

- 3.4 The Authority, in common with other organisations, needs financial reserves to help manage unforeseen circumstances and to smooth the impact of known spending requirements over time. The Authority will use reserves for such purposes to enable it to manage variations between its planned and actual budgets that result from unpredictable spending and funding. Reserves will also be used by the Authority to plan its finances strategically to support activities over the medium and long term

- 3.5 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Authority to calculate its expected outgoings and income for the year – including any additions to or use of reserves. Where expected outgoings exceed expected income, the difference is the Authority's tax requirement for that year.
- 3.6 If unplanned costs are incurred during the year that are not funded externally – for example, by a grant from government or an insurance policy – or the Authority experiences a shortfall in expected income/funding, there will be few options if it is to deliver to budget. Raising extra income or making in-year savings may have an unacceptable impact on service users. Therefore the Authority may want to consider using reserves to balance spending and income.
- 3.7 The 2018/19 to 2021/22 MTFs assumes that there will be utilisation of the Transformation Reserve and that on current projections, this will be fully used in 2022/23.

4 Reserves and the management of risks

- 4.1 With regard to the Authority's financial stability, reserves are used to manage risks. There are certain earmarked reserves that have been set aside for specific risks, for example: insurance, ill health and early retirement, grant loss, the collection fund (in the past) and budget pressures. These reserves and the potential pressures that need to be managed are reviewed as part of the budget setting process. The latest review recommends that the Collection Fund reserve of £270k is used as part to the 2018/19 budget process. This has not been required over recent years and each year sees a Collection Fund surplus for council tax from the Unitary Authorities negating the requirement for this reserve. This position may change in the future and it may be deemed appropriate to reinstate this reserve.
- 4.2 The Authority also manages unforeseen financial shocks by maintaining a General Fund/Working Balance. The Authority's agreed policy is to maintain working balance at £2.6m. Some Authorities set a minimum desired percentage and although the Authority has not done this, the policy would maintain general balances at approximately 9% of the net budget. This level of working balance is kept under review and the Chief Finance Officer has expressed a view that the level is reasonable as part of the budget setting process.

Increasing Financial Risks

- 4.3 The risk environment for local government has significantly increased. This strategy identifies the following issues that have increased risk:
- Continued reductions in Government funding as indicated in the four year settlement offer
 - Further changes in the grant funding methodology ahead of the 2020 planned reset (or thereafter)

- Significant movement and growth in resident population numbers brings pressures to a range of services and requires more investment in infrastructure – could have impacts on hydrant and operational provision
- Localisation of business rates presents a collection rate risk, an economic downturn risk and a risk in respect of backdated appeals
- Welfare reforms including the benefits cap and the impact of Housing Benefit as part of the introduction of Universal Credit which could impact on rent collection for local authorities and potentially increase the level of homeless people seeking accommodation

On-going risks in the current strategy

4.4 In addition to the new risks there are still the risks that are usually managed within the MTFs and the Corporate Risk Register.

5 Budgeted Reserves

5.1 The forecast Earmarked Reserves usage assumed as part of the budget strategy are included in the Medium Term Revenue Plan.

5.2 The forecast value of General Fund Reserves as at 31 March 2017 is £2.6m as detailed in Table 1 below.

5.3 The earmarked reserves are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Risk Assessed General Reserves

Description	Likelihood	Impact	£'000	Risk Register Ref CRR
Large scale failure of Personal Protective Equipment or other safety critical equipment	Possible	Significant	300	10
Major incident within the County/Region	Likely	Significant	650	1, 17, 34
Failure of operational vehicle prior to planned replacement in Capital Programme/unforeseen inability to provide service requirements	Possible	Significant	300	05
Failure of a major supplier	Likely	Significant	300	08
Failure/corruption/security breach of ICT System	Possible	Significant	200	23,38,39
Non specific General Reserves to meet any other unforeseen service requirements			850	
Total General Reserves			2,600	

5.4 The reserves below have been set aside for foreseen circumstances that may necessitate usage. They are annually reviewed and if not deemed necessary, released to support the revenue budget. Some have been set up as a result of base revenue budget scrutiny, where budgets in the past were held for just in case events necessitated their use. Where this was so, these have been removed from base revenue budget and an earmarked reserve created. The large items, such as ESMCP, Hydrants and the Replacement mobilising system, are where the spend is unknown so these amounts have indicatively been set aside to avoid budget pressure in the medium term and to assist with the Medium Term budget setting. The items listed below are not contractually or legally committed, at this point in time. All are clearly linked to supporting the Authority's service delivery plans.

Table 2: Earmarked Reserves

Description	£'000	Risk Register Ref CRR
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) reserve – Emergency Services Network (ESN)	200	24, 35
Replacement Mobilising Project	300	24
Contingency for doubtful debts	10	11
Pay increases for operational and/or support staff in excess of assumptions (1%) and / or costs of external appointments in excess of budget provision	150	27
Hydrant installation (taken out of revenue budget due to uncertainty)	225	
Goods and services, contractual inflation in excess of assumptions (1%)	80	27, 30
Potential liability as a result of legal/disciplinary action in relation to Personnel and/or Health and Safety issues	300	6, 25, 32, 33, 35
Adverse weather conditions resulting in higher than average numbers of emergency incidents (excludes Bellwin incidents)	250	22
Sudden absenteeism of a large number of personnel across the whole of the Service due to pandemic or similar	150	4
Ill-health retirements in excess of budget provision/injury pension	150	27
Unplanned urgent property works (eg roof repairs)	100	27
Contingency for insufficient Insurance cover (additional contribution)	100	27
Interruption to Business Continuity (including Industrial Action)	250	4
Unplanned urgent maintenance/replacement of particular item of equipment (eg engine or gearbox wearing out/failing earlier than anticipated)	50	5, 10
Invest to Save/Innovation Fund (these have been taken out of annual revenue budgets)	60	27
Total Requirement	2,375	

5.5 Other Reserves for noting:

- Collaboration Reserve £1.906m (includes year end additional contribution of £498k from Home Office Pensions refund)
- Capital Receipts Reserve £507k

The following reserves held at year end 2016/17 have been used as part of this budget process:

- Vehicle sales £134k (£48k used for 2017/18 capital programme)
- Collection Fund £270k

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TREASURER'S STATEMENT

Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Treasurer to report to the Fire and Rescue Authority when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its council tax and the Authority is required to take that report into account when making the calculations. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides.

Dealing firstly with the robustness of the estimates; an improved budget scrutiny process was introduced some years ago and, as reported to Members throughout the budget process, this has been followed again this year. Members have also been briefed on and involved in debating the more important aspects of the budget at two Members' Budget Workshops. Feedback from the budget consultation has also been reported back to Members. Therefore, both Officers and Members have arrived at this budget setting meeting fully informed on all the major issues. Given this background, I can confirm my satisfaction as to the robustness of the estimates presented to you in this report.

Members will also be aware from previous years' discussions and at the two Budget Workshops of the need to make adequate provision for Reserves and Working Balances. The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in Statute and Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, requiring precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

CIPFA has published a Guidance Note on Local Authority Reserves and Balances. It details that it is the responsibility of the Treasurer to advise the Authority concerning the level of reserves and the protocols for their establishment and use.

The importance of sound working balances, reserves and provisions cannot be over emphasised. It is critical, particularly where an emergency service is involved, to have adequate working capital. A working balance is needed to even out the peaks and troughs of cash flow. It guards against the need (and cost) of regular short-term borrowing. Apart from the day to day fluctuations in cash flow, the working balance will be made up principally by the level of reserves and provisions.

There are three main purposes for the establishment and maintenance of reserves:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing.
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies.
- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities.

It has been recognised previously by Members that this latter purpose is crucial at the present time as Government support funding is decreasing and will continue to be so over the next few years.

A full review of the level of reserves, which involved both myself and Councillor Headley, has been undertaken in recent years when we were able to report on and endorse the adequacy of the Earmarked Reserves. They were also discussed with the Authority at the Members Budget Workshop in November 2017. These are currently £2.375m and there is a risk assessed General Reserve of £2.600m. No changes are currently proposed to these reserves. The level of general reserves was compared with those of other fire authorities and compared favourably with the average percentage. The Transformational earmarked reserve, used for budget setting purposes, is forecast to be £4.131m at the 2018/19 year end in line with the Authority's financial strategy.

The reserves are fully detailed within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Authority has also created a new Collaboration Reserve that was funded from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 underspends.

**GAVIN CHAMBERS CPFA
TREASURER TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 10**

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: LOCALISM ACT 2011 – PAY STATEMENT FOR 2018

For further information on this Report contact: Mrs Z Evans
Assistant Chief Officer (Human Resources and Organisational Development)
Tel: 01234 845069

Background Papers:

- Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector March 2011 (available on request)
- DCLG Openness and accountability in local pay: Draft guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act November 2011 (available on request)
- Localism Act 2011 Chapter 20 Part 1 Local Government, Chapter 8 Pay Accountability (available on request)
- Localism Act Pay Policy Statements guidance for Local Authority Chief Executives November 2011 (available on request)
- Policy on Principal Officer Salary reviews – March 2009 (available on request)
- 2017 Pay Policy Statement (available on request)
- Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement FRA paper February 2017 (available on request)
- Local Government Association Pay Policy and Practice in local authorities 2013 (available on request)
- Principal Officer Salary Review – March 2015 (available on request)
- Principal Officer Salary Review – June 2015 (available on request)
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015
- National Joint Council Pay Awards Paper – October 2017 (available on request)

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	✓
HUMAN RESOURCES	✓	EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To advise the Fire Authority of the requirement to agree and publish an annual pay policy statement and its constituent parts for the financial year 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted proposed pay policy statement for 2018/19 be approved.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a pay policy statement for 2012/13 and for each financial year thereafter. This is Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's seventh annual Pay Policy Statement.
- 1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Guidance on Section 40 of the Localism Act clarified that each local authority is an individual employer in its own right and has the autonomy to make decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances. The provisions in the Act do not seek to change this, determine what decisions on pay should be taken, or what policies individual authorities should have in place. Rather, they require that authorities are more open about their local policies and how decisions are made.
- 1.3 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority's proposed pay policy statement is derived from the 'model' pay policy statement contained in the Local Government Association Document 'Pay Policy and Practice in Local Authorities' which was recommended to Fire and Rescue Authorities by the Head of Workforce at the Local Government Association via the principal negotiating officer of the National Joint Council for Fire and Rescue Authorities in November 2013.

2. Pay Policy Statement Content

- 2.1 Matters that must be included in the statutory pay policy statement are:
 - Information on the approach to Chief Officer remuneration at recruitment, salary, bonus/performance related pay, charges, fees allowances, benefits in kind, enhancement to pension at termination. The definition of chief officer is not limited to heads of paid service or statutory chief officers; it includes those who report directly to them;
 - Local authority's policy on the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
 - Local authority's policy on the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of 'lowest-paid employees' and its reasons for adopting that definition); and
 - A local authority's policy on the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers.

- 2.2 The Act does not require the pay policy statement to include numerical data on pay; the statement is about policy and not the actual pay of individuals.
- 2.3 Information that has changed since the last Annual Pay Policy Statement is highlighted in bold.
3. Process for Annual Adoption of a Pay Policy Statement
- 3.1 The Localism Act also prescribes that the pay policy statement must be approved formally by a meeting of Members. In the case of a Fire and Rescue Authority, it cannot be delegated to any sub committee and must be approved by the end of March each year, and can be amended in-year. It must also be published on the Authority's website (and in any other way the Authority chooses) and must be complied with when the Authority sets the terms and conditions for a Chief Officer.
4. Information
- 4.1 Nationally negotiated pay increases for employees covered by the Green Book (National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions), are applied as advised by the National Joint Council. **In May 2016 the NJC announced a 1% pay award for financial years 2016 and 2017.**
- 4.2 Nationally negotiated pay increases for employees covered by the Grey Book (National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services) are applied as advised by the National Joint Council. A 1% pay award was made in July 2016. **The Fire and Rescue Authority will be aware that negotiations on the annual pay settlement continued during 2017 and that as at November 2017 no offer had been agreed. However the Employers side of the NJC advised Fire and Rescue Authorities on 7 December 2017 to apply 1% backdated to July 2017 whilst negotiations continue.**
- 4.3 In accordance with nationally negotiated pay awards advised by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. **A 1% pay award was made to Gold Book employees (the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer) in October 2017, backdated to January 2017.**
- 4.4 The Fire Authority is asked to consider and approve the proposed pay policy statement at Appendix 1.

**PAUL M FULLER CBE QFSM DL
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**ANNUAL PAY STATEMENT OF
BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

1. Introduction and Purpose

This is the Pay Statement of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service covering the period April 2018 to March 2019.

This Pay Statement (the 'statement') sets out Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's (the Service) approach to pay policy in accordance with the requirements of Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

This pay statement has been approved by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and is effective from 1 April 2018. It will be reviewed annually and in accordance with new or proposed legislation to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

2. Accountability and Decision Making

Decision making in relation to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements in relation to employees of the Service is determined by the Fire Authority and Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group.

3. Responsibility and Scale

The Service is directly responsible for a budget of **£30.108m** and for the employment of **561** staff.

4. The Service Pay Strategy

In determining the pay and remuneration of its employees the Service will comply with all relevant employment legislation this includes the Equality Act 2010, the Part Time Employment (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 and The Agency Workers Regulations 2010.

The Service takes the following approach to determining overall pay levels.

4.1 Firefighting Roles - Salary and Remuneration

This relates to the following roles within Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service:

Firefighter, Crew Manager, Watch Manager, Station Manager, Group Manager and Area Manager, regardless of duty system (eg wholetime, day duty, retained or flexible duty) and Control specific roles. The pay structure for employees conditioned to the Scheme of Conditions of Service for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (Grey Book) provides a three point pay structure at Firefighter level and a two point pay structure for all other roles. Rates of pay are based on defined stages of development such as training, development and competent pay levels. After all the applicable functions have been assessed as having been achieved, and a quality assured process is in place, competence is deemed to have been demonstrated and competent salary rate applied.

Pay awards applied to the salary scales are as agreed through the national joint council and notified to Authorities.

4.2 Support Roles - Salary and Remuneration

Salary and remuneration levels for support staff roles are determined in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Green Book).

The pay structure is aligned to the National spinal column point system. In 2005 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service applied the Hay analytical job evaluation process that systematically ranked each job objectively and fairly. The Hay Group evaluation system is a recognised best practice non-discriminatory method of ranking jobs against a pre-determined scale. The system is used in over ninety countries and within the public and private sector.

Spinal column points are configured into groups to provide incremental pay points. The incremental rises occur on 1 April, subject to National pay bargaining. Starting salary may be uplifted along the incremental structure if experience and knowledge warrant this approach.

4.3 Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer - Salary and Remuneration

The National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Authorities will publish annually recommended minimum levels of salary applicable to Chief Fire Officers/Chief Executives employed by local authority fire and rescue authorities. The Fire Authority recognises that there is a two-track approach for determining levels of pay for Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executives and Director roles.

- i. At national level, the NJC shall review annually the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by the Gold Book. Any increase agreed by the NJC will be communicated to fire authorities by circular.
- ii. Pay increases will be considered for local negotiation on an annual basis. All decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer roles will be taken by the Fire Authority paying due regard to the information circulated by the NJC.

Data on senior salaries is published in the annual statement of accounts and the most recently produced are available on the internet at <https://www.bedsfire.com/CorporateGovernance/FinBudget/Documents/Accounts%202016%202017%20FINAL%20signed%20version.pdf>

5. All Roles - Allowances, Expenses, Bonuses and Performance Related Pay

The Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officers are employees of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and are not self-employed. The Fire Authority (the Authority) will not award bonuses or Performance Related Pay (PRP) additional to base salary, as the Authority expects excellent performance of its Principal Officers at all times in line with the Authorities objectives. Individual performance will be reviewed via the performance management framework.

When legitimately incurred in the performance of their duties all employees are able to claim a restricted range of legitimate expenses. These are reimbursed in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions specified in the Gold, Grey or Green Book. All expenses have the usual audit requirements with the requirement to produce receipts, authorisation of all expenditure and the requirement to retain records. Eligible employees have access to the car leasing scheme. Operational officers can utilise pool cars to undertake their operational duties and responsibilities. Use of a pool car for non-official purposes will require reimbursement to the Service.

A range of allowances are payable subject to employees meeting relevant criteria. These include:

- Shift allowances for support staff working unsocial hours.
- Flexible Duty System supplement for fire officers conditioned to the flexible duty system.
- Overtime allowances for employees required to work additional hours.
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments for Grey Book employees who meet the qualifying length of service criteria and are able to demonstrate and provide evidence of continuous professional development in four key areas prescribed by the NJC.
- Essential user car allowance or access to a lease car scheme for employees required to use their own vehicle on official business.

- Honoraria payments to recognise employees acting up to a higher role, special projects involving work outside the job role and outstanding contribution.
- Additional Responsibility Allowance to reward additional skills and responsibilities outside of the requirements of Grey Book job roles.
- Acting up and temporary promotion allowances for employees performing the duties of a higher role.

Area Managers (Strategic Operational Commanders) are paid an Additional Responsibility Allowance. This is to reflect the additional responsibility they undertake in the performance of Service operational command cover and for working a locally agreed rota that provides the Service with additional managerial hours.

6. Severance Arrangements

Provision for severance arrangements exist in the Local Government Pension Scheme applicable to Green Book and Control employees. The Fire Authority has previously agreed policy in relation to The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Regulation 7 states that employing authorities must formulate, publish and keep under review discretionary powers that they apply in the exercise of their discretionary powers under regulations 5 and 6. They provide the discretions that local authorities can use in awarding compensation to employees whose employment is terminated early as the result of redundancy, early retirement on the grounds of efficiency.

There is currently no provision for enhanced redundancy payments in the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992, New Firefighter Pension Scheme 2006, or the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 for Grey Book/operational employees.

7. Pension Schemes

The Service operates five pension schemes, the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992, the New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006, the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, the Retained Modified Pension Scheme 2015 and the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014. New employees are automatically enrolled to the relevant occupational pension scheme as defined by their terms and conditions of employment on appointment and qualifying employees are automatically re-enrolled during their employment.

Employer contribution rates for each scheme are set by Actuaries and subject to regular review. As at 1 April 2017 the employer contribution rates are 21.7% for 1992 Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 11.9% for the 2006 New Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 14.3 % for the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, 21.7% for the Retained Modified Pension Scheme and 14% for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Employee contribution rates are defined by statute and vary across the different pension schemes. Current employee contribution rates as at 1 April 2017 for the 1992 Firefighters pension scheme range from 11% –17%, contribution rates for the 2006 New Firefighter Pension Scheme are 8.5% - 12.5%, Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 contribution rates range from 10% - 14.5%, contribution rates for the Retained Modified Pension Scheme are between 11% - 17%. The employee contribution rates for the Local Government Pension Scheme are presently 5.5% to 12.5%.

8. Abatement and Re-engagement

The Service will consider re-employment of retired employees in accordance with the relevant pension scheme orders and governance arrangements. There is no automatic right to be re-employed; the decision will be strictly based on organisational needs and will usually follow an advertising and selection process. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service apply re-engagement and abatement rules for Grey Book employees in line with the requirements of the relevant pension scheme.

Abatement and re-engagement is a provision within the Firefighters' Pension Schemes that enables a retired member of the pension scheme to be re-employed. This means that the pensioner receives their commutation (lump sum) upon retirement. Pensioners who are re-engaged following their retirement are subject to the Abatement Rules under the terms of the relevant pension scheme. This requires that the current pension plus current pay cannot be more than pay on retirement, so any excess is abated (reduced). The Chief Fire Officer was re-employed under the abatement and re-engagement rules of the 1992 Fire Fighters Pension Scheme in February 2010 under these rules.

9. Low Pay Definition

The lowest paid employees of the Service are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum scale point in use within the Service grading structure. As at 1 January 2018, this is Grade 6, spinal column point 16 £8.89 per hour, £17,169 per annum. The Service believe that this is the most easily understood definition of low pay as it is the lowest pay point routinely used for substantive roles.

10. Pay Multiples

The Service uses an established process to determine job size and salary levels. This process determines the relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid employee and the highest paid Chief Officer, described as a pay multiple.

The current pay multiple between the lowest paid employee and the highest paid Chief Officer is 8.48:1. This ratio can be measured as being **at the lower end of the range** of the public sector averages of 8:1 to 12:1 identified by Lord Hutton in March 2011.

BFRS pay multiple for the lowest earner has been calculated using all taxable earnings for the given year, including base salary, allowances, overtime and the cash value of any benefits-in-kind; pro rated to a full time equivalent, **compared to the unabated Chief Fire Officer full time equivalent** .

11. Part-Time Employees

The salary and remuneration of part-time employees is the same as those of full-time employees (pro-rata where appropriate) unless otherwise stated.

12. Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to the three principles enshrined in the Code:

- Responding to public demand;
- Releasing data in open formats available for re-use; and
- Releasing data in a timely way.

Data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce are available on the internet as published in the annual statement of accounts and the most recently produced are available on the internet at:

<https://www.bedsfire.com/CorporateGovernance/FinBudget/Documents/Accounts%202016%202017%20FINAL%20signed%20version.pdf>

The approved Pay Policy Statement will also be available from www.bedsfire.com as well as the intranet site. In addition a range of information relating to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Services responsibilities under the local Government Transparency Code can be found on <http://www.bedsfire.com/CombinedFireAuthority/Transparency/Pages/default.aspx>

13. Risk Management Implications

The Fire Authority needs to attract, retain and motivate staff to support excellent performance. Extensive research shows that individuals are attracted, retained and engaged by a range of both financial and non-financial rewards so a coherent link between reward, people management and attraction is essential.

14. Financial Implications

The financial implications are set out in the paper and contained within the Service's Medium-Term Financial Plan.

15. Legal Implications

The legal implications are set out in the paper.

16. Environmental Implications

The Pay Policy Statement will be published on the Service website.

17. Equality Implications

The requirements of the Equality Act are considered as part of the recruitment, selection and pay structure processes.

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 11**

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: HMICFRS CONSULTATION

For further information on this Report contact: Strategic Operational Commander A Peckham
Head of Special Projects
Tel No: 01234 84 5129

Background Papers: Proposed Fire and Rescue Services Inspection Programme and Framework 2018/19

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	✓
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the public consultation for the Fire and Rescue Services inspection programme and framework presented by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the FRA:

1. Receive the Service considerations for a response to the public consultation.
2. Agree if the FRA wish to respond to the public consultation and, if so, to delegate completion of the response to the Chair due to the timescales.

1. Background

1.1 In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) extended its remit to include inspections of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England.

1.2 These inspections will assess and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). This includes how well FRSs

prevent, protect against and respond to fires and other emergencies and how well they look after the people who work for the Service.

- 1.3 An inspection programme is being developed with the sector through Reference Groups. Over 50 members of Fire and Rescue Service staff will be seconded to be sector experts to support the inspection programme.
- 1.4 Three FRSs have been chosen to pilot the inspection process: Staffordshire, West Yorkshire and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services. The pilots are expected to have taken place by April 2018.
- 1.5 Following the pilots, the inspections will take place within 2018/19 across three tranches; Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) have been programmed within tranche one, with an inspection within summer 2018, with specific dates to be confirmed.
- 1.6 The significance of the HMICFRS inspection programme has already been recognised within BFRS. The temporary restructure of Principal Officers and corporate managers within this Service from September 2017 included a responsibility for inspection with one of our Strategic Operational Commanders. From experience of previous inspection programmes and dialogue with colleagues within the Police, there is likely to be considerable resource implications to deliver and support this inspection process.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 A national public consultation opened on 19 December 2017 and will continue to 19 February 2018. The aim of this consultation is to receive considered views of the proposed inspection programme.
- 2.2 The consultation document is provided with this paper, together with the draft inspection questions as **Appendix A**. These documents can also be found on the HMICFRS website: <https://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>

3. Response

- 3.1 There are seven questions presented within the public consultation document. **Appendix B** provides Members with detail on the questions and the Service considerations for a response to them.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the FRA:
 1. Receive the Service considerations for a response to the public consultation.
 2. Agree if the FRA wish to respond to the public consultation and, if so, to delegate completion of the response to the Chair due to the timescales.

PAUL M FULLER CBE QFSM DL
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



Proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework 2018/19

For consultation

December 2017

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www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs

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Foreword

In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) remit was extended to include inspections of fire and rescue services in England. It is now called Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

This is the first inspection programme and framework for fire and rescue service inspections. We will assess and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the 45 fire and rescue services in England. This includes how well fire and rescue services prevent, protect against and respond to fires and other emergencies and how well they look after the people who work for the service. This consultation document seeks responses to seven questions about how the inspection of fire and rescue services should be carried out. We will use the consultation responses to develop a programme and framework, and methodology for our inspections.

We have given prominence to the following principal themes: how effective each fire and rescue service is at preventing and responding to incidents; whether the service provides value for money; whether the service understands where future risks lie; and the ability of the service to train staff, embrace diversity, and develop a positive working culture. As part of our inspection reports, we will provide graded judgments, which will help the public to see how well their fire and rescue service is performing.

The inspection programme will be developed with the fire and rescue service by recruiting experts from the sector to carry out the inspections, and by taking advice from senior service representatives who are members of the external reference group. The inspection programme will be designed to promote improvement in all aspects of the work undertaken by fire and rescue services.

This public consultation will be open from 19 December 2017 to 19 February 2018. I hope that you will offer your considered views, to help us design an inspection programme that leads to continued improvements across fire and rescue services.

(Sgd.) Thomas P Winsor

Sir Thomas Winsor WS
HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Consultation introduction

This document provides details of HMICFRS' proposed fire and rescue services inspection programme for 2018/19, and asks for your views on whether the right areas of fire and rescue services activity are covered. In particular, we are seeking your responses to the following questions:

1. What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?
2. Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?
3. Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?
4. Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?
5. How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?
6. What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?
7. What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?

These questions are repeated in the body of this document. At the end of the document there is an explanation of how you can let us have your views.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services – in the public interest.

We ask the questions which we believe the public wishes to have answered, and publish our findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence. We provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their police force or fire and rescue service against others, and to determine whether performance has improved or deteriorated over time. Our recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.

Introduction

This document provides details of HMICFRS' proposed inspection programme and framework for fire and rescue services for 2018/19.

Types of inspection HMICFRS will conduct in 2018/19

HMICFRS may conduct several different types of inspection each year. To provide context for the proposed fire and rescue services' inspection framework for 2018/19, each type of inspection is summarised here.

Fire and rescue services inspection programme

The fire and rescue services inspection programme enables HMICFRS to draw together evidence from inspections of all 45 fire and rescue services in England. This rounded assessment of all fire and rescue services will cover the effectiveness and efficiency of each service and how it looks after its people. This will include an assessment of:

- the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, resilience, and response);
- the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with the police and ambulance services); and
- the organisational effectiveness of the service (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability).

The resulting assessments will include graded judgments of performance.

HMICFRS' assessments are designed to enable the public to see how each fire and rescue service's performance changes over time and in relation to the performance of other services.

The fire and rescue services inspections will not include an assessment of corporate governance or the accountability structures provided by the fire and rescue authority, police, fire and crime commissioner, locally elected mayors and, in London, the Mayor's Office.

Inspecting governance arrangements

The fire and rescue service inspections will focus on the service provided to the public rather than on the accountability structures that govern fire and rescue services. During inspections, HMICFRS inspectors will meet representatives from fire and rescue authorities, police, fire and crime commissioners, locally elected mayors and, in London, the Mayor's Office.

If during an inspection we identify evidence that the decisions and activities of those within the fire and rescue authority, police, fire and crime commissioner, locally elected mayors and, in London, the Mayor's Office inhibit the efficiency and effectiveness of the chief fire officer, we may carry out a separate corporate governance inspection.

Statutory requirements

This inspection programme and framework requires the approval of the Home Secretary before the inspectors act in accordance with it¹.

The Home Secretary may, at any time, require HMICFRS to carry out an inspection of a fire and rescue authority in England, all fire and rescue authorities in England, or all fire and rescue authorities in England of a particular type².

Such a requirement may limit the inspection to a particular matter³. HMICFRS may also carry out an inspection of a fire and rescue authority in England even though that inspection has not been set out in an inspection programme and has not been required by the Home Secretary⁴. Before doing so, the chief inspector must consult the Home Secretary⁵.

Consultation questions

1. What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?
2. Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?

¹ Section 28A(2), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

² Section 28A(3), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Available at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents

³ Section 28A(4), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

⁴ Section 28A(5), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

⁵ Section 28A(6), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

An overview of HMICFRS' proposed inspection programme for fire and rescue services 2018/19

Fire and rescue inspection programme

In May 2016, the Home Secretary established a wide-ranging reform programme for the fire and rescue services in England. This included a proposal to establish a rigorous and independent inspection regime for fire and rescue authorities.

In July 2017, the Home Office confirmed that HMIC would take on the role of inspecting fire and rescue services in England, and of assessing and reporting on the effectiveness and efficiency of each service. To reflect these new responsibilities, HMIC's name changed to HMICFRS.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017, which amended the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, contains provisions to strengthen existing powers to inspect fire and rescue authorities⁶.

HMICFRS will inspect the fire and rescue services that carry out the principal functions of a fire and rescue authority: fire safety, firefighting, road traffic accidents and other emergencies⁷. We will inspect all 45 fire and rescue services in England, in three sets of 15 services, beginning in summer 2018. We will consult the fire and rescue sector on the criteria for judgment. Each inspection will result in a rounded assessment and graded judgments for each fire and rescue service. We will publish a report of our findings.

The principal questions which the fire and rescue services inspection programme is designed to answer are set out below, along with the corresponding inspection focus. The detailed draft FRS inspection methodology is provided at annex A. We ask for your views on the proposed methodology.

⁶ Section 11, Policing and Crime Act 2017

⁷ Sections 6-9, Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

Principal question	Inspection focus
How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How well the fire and rescue service understands its current and future risks, works to prevent fires and other risks, protects the public through the regulation of fire safety, responds to fires and other emergencies, and responds to national risks.
How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	How well the fire and rescue service uses its resources to manage risk, and secures an affordable way of providing its service, now and in the future.
How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?	How well the fire and rescue service promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures that they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for its workforce, and develops leaders.

Our assessment of effectiveness will consider how well the fire and rescue service is performing its principal functions in relation to fire safety, fire-fighting and road traffic collisions. The inspection will give prominence to the principal themes of how effective each service is at preventing, protecting against and responding to incidents; whether the service provides value for money; and whether the service understands its current demands and where future risks lie.

Our assessment of efficiency will consider whether the way in which each fire and rescue service operates represents value for money, and how well it is matching resources to the risks faced by the public.

Our assessment of how each fire and rescue service looks after its people will consider leadership at all levels in the organisation, including training, diversity, values and culture.

This will be the first full assessment of all 45 fire and rescue services for some years. At the end of each set of inspections, HMICFRS intends to publish a report of its assessment of each fire and rescue service inspected in that set, as well as a summary of themes emerging from the inspections. HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services for England is required to report each year on the carrying out of inspections, including an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the fire and rescue authorities in England⁸.

⁸ Section 28B, Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

National thematic inspections

National thematic inspections are in-depth examinations of specific fire and rescue service matters, which will usually be identified through HMICFRS' monitoring processes or as a result of a commission from the Home Secretary. These inspections will identify areas of strong and weak practice in specific fire and rescue services, but will result also in recommendations that are relevant to the fire and rescue service as a whole. The Home Office can commission thematic inspections on individual issues if needed. HMICFRS is not funded to carry out thematic inspections.

Consultation questions

3. Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?
4. Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?

HMICFRS' inspection framework

Inspection framework for fire and rescue services

We will gather information to inform our assessments using a range of methods that include: analysis of documents and data; reviews of operational incidents; surveys of the public, and of fire and rescue services staff; interviews; focus groups; and observations of fire and rescue practice.

Following the first round of full inspections, HMICFRS intends to move to a risk-based inspection programme, which will be developed and consulted on separately. This allows inspection activity and resources to take account of known risks to public safety and to reflect the assessed performance of each fire and rescue service.

Graded judgments

Fire and rescue services will be assessed and given graded judgments for the three principal questions in the inspection methodology (efficiency, effectiveness and people). We may give a single overall judgment for each service. We will test this during the pilot inspections and make a final decision as to our approach when the pilots have concluded. The categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how efficient and effective fire and rescue services are, and how well they look after their people.

Good is based on policy, practice or performance that meets pre-defined grading criteria that are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

If the policy, practice or performance exceeds what is expected for good, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of outstanding.

If there are shortcomings in the policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of requires improvement. If there are serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

Fire and rescue service authorities' priorities

Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England in carrying out their functions⁹. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England¹⁰ states that each fire and rescue authority must produce an integrated risk management plan that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community.

HMICFRS inspectors will consider the content of the fire and rescue authority's integrated risk management plan and how this translates into the operational practice of the fire and rescue service. The plan will be used as a source of information about the assessment of risk and vulnerability in respect of each service, the factors which affect considerations of public safety, and how each fire and rescue service will use prevention, protection and response activities to mitigate the risk to communities.

Professional standards body

Part of the Home Office reform programme for fire and rescue services is the formation of a professional standards body. It is currently in development. HMICFRS will take account of all existing and new professional standards for fire and rescue services, including national operational guidance.

Consultation questions

5. How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?
6. What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?
7. What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?

⁹ Section 21(7), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

¹⁰ The Framework is prepared by the Home Secretary. It must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions; it may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and it may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions as the Home Secretary considers appropriate. (Section 21, Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004) Available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england

Methodology, monitoring, assurance and analysis

Advisory and reference groups

This inspection programme is being developed with fire and rescue services. It has been designed to promote improvements across fire and rescue services.

HMICFRS has established a fire and rescue service external reference group. Its members include those who have specific skills and experience in the areas that will be inspected such as representatives from fire and rescue services, the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Home Office, the Local Government Association and police, fire and crime commissioners. We are using their knowledge and advice to establish a sound methodology for inspections.

The HMICFRS Fire Technical Advisory Group considers how to develop appropriate methods of data collection and analysis to support the inspection methodology. The members of the Fire Technical Advisory Group include representatives of the National Fire Chiefs Council co-ordinating committees, the Home Office, representative bodies, fire and rescue services and others. It will also include representatives from the professional standards body, when it has been established.

HMICFRS' monitoring process

HM inspectors of fire and rescue services (HMIs) will regularly monitor all services in order to promote improvements. If an HMI identifies a cause of concern about practice in a particular fire and rescue service, it will be raised with the relevant chief fire officer/chief executive/commissioner and the fire authority/police fire and crime commissioner, so that they can take action.

Follow-up from previous inspections

HMICFRS conducts a number of follow-up activities throughout the year. They range from formal revisits to offering support to services in responding to our findings. Also, we track the progress that services have made against our recommendations.

Consultation questions

1. What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?
2. Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?
3. Are there any other areas of fire and rescue services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?
4. Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?
5. How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of fire and rescue services and of risks to public safety?
6. What, if any, new or emerging problems for fire and rescue services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?
7. What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its fire and rescue service assessments as fair as they can be?

How to respond to this consultation

Please submit your answers to these questions, together with any other comments, by email to: HMICFRSfireinspectionprogramme@hmic.gsi.gov.uk, no later than 1700 on 19 February 2018.

If you prefer, you can post responses to the Chief Operating Officer, HMICFRS, 6th floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PN.

If you have a complaint or comment about HMICFRS' approach to consultation, you can email this to: HMICFRSfireinspectionprogramme@hmic.gsi.gov.uk

How consultation responses will be reviewed

HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services will consider respondents' views and, if he determines it appropriate to do so, change the proposed inspection programme and framework before putting it to the Home Secretary for approval. In accordance with section 28A(2), Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, HM Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services must obtain the approval of the Secretary of State for an inspection programme or inspection framework before the inspectors act in accordance with it.

The final document, which will be appropriately revised to reflect the results of the consultation, will be made available on HMICFRS' website at: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/about-us/what-we-do/inspection-programmes/

You should note that HMICFRS may publish consultation responses, or summaries of them, except where they have been provided in confidence. Please indicate in your response if you do not wish it to be published.

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Annex A - HMICFRS Fire and rescue service inspection methodology

How effective and efficient are the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS)?	Sub-diagnostic	Sub-diagnostic
Core	Diagnostic	Sub-diagnostic
1. How effective is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	<p>1.1 How well does the FRS understand the risk of fire and other emergencies?</p> <p>1.2 How effective is the FRS at preventing fires and other risks?</p> <p>1.3 How effective is the FRS at protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety?</p> <p>1.4 How effective is the FRS at responding to fires and other emergencies?</p> <p>1.5 How effective is the FRS at responding to national risks?</p>	<p>1.1.1 How well does the FRS engage with the local community to build up a comprehensive risk profile?</p> <p>1.1.2 To what extent does the FRS use information from other sources (e.g. health and social care data, population and demographic data) to build the risk profile?</p> <p>1.1.3 How well does the FRS define the level of community risk, including those communities most at risk, hard to reach, hidden (e.g. unscrupulous landlords, overcrowded dwellings) or affecting the most vulnerable people?</p> <p>1.1.4 To what extent does the FRS undertake regular liaison with relevant bodies to ensure a common understanding of risk, including fire standards and requirements?</p> <p>1.1.5 To what extent are the results of preventative or protective activity used to ensure a common understanding of risk?</p> <p>1.1.6 How well does the FRS identify and assess current, emerging or future changes in the risk of fire and other risks?</p> <p>1.2.1 To what extent is preventative activity, such as the Home Fire Safety Check programme, focused on those most at risk?</p> <p>1.2.2 How well does the FRS raise awareness and campaign to prevent fires and promote community safety?</p> <p>1.2.3 What progress has the FRS, with partners, achieved in preventing fires and keeping people safe?</p> <p>1.2.4 How well does the FRS work with partner organisations to promote road safety and reduce the numbers killed and seriously injured on the roads?</p> <p>1.2.5 How well does the FRS work with partners to tackle fire setting behaviour and support the prosecution of arsonists?</p> <p>1.3.1 To what extent is enforcement and inspection based on risk?</p> <p>1.3.2 To what extent is a systematic, consistent and robust Fire Safety Audit undertaken by FRS staff?</p> <p>1.3.3 How well is information on risk communicated throughout the FRS?</p> <p>1.3.4 How well does the FRS take enforcement action against those who fail to comply with fire safety regulations?</p> <p>1.3.5 How well does the FRS work with other enforcement agencies to share information on risk and take joint enforcement action (e.g. local authority licensing, building control and trading standards officers)?</p> <p>1.3.6 To what extent is the FRS working in partnership to reduce the burden of unwanted fire signals?</p> <p>1.3.7 To what extent does the FRS engage with local business or large organisations to share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations?</p> <p>1.4.1 To what extent does the FRS provide a proportionate response to incidents on the basis of risk and vulnerability?</p> <p>1.4.2 How well does the FRS communicate information about risk and vulnerability?</p> <p>1.4.3 How well does the FRS command fire service assets at incidents?</p> <p>1.4.4 How well does the FRS identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people at incidents?</p> <p>1.4.5 How well does the FRS communicate information about incidents to the public?</p> <p>1.4.6 To what extent are consistent, rigorous and open systems in place to evaluate operational performance and make operational improvements?</p> <p>1.4.7 How well does the FRS exchange learning with other FRSs, including learning from national incidents?</p> <p>1.5.1 To what extent has the FRS established arrangements to be able to supplement resources in the event of extraordinary need, such as a flood, or a major incident?</p> <p>1.5.2 How well has the FRS established site specific response plans for high risk premises?</p> <p>1.5.3 To what extent has the FRS demonstrated it is interoperable with other FRSs to ensure an effective and efficient cross-border response?</p> <p>1.5.4 To what extent does joint training and joint exercising help the FRS to plan for and test arrangements for dealing with major multi-agency incidents?</p> <p>1.5.5 How well prepared is the FRS to form part of a multi-agency response to a community risk identified by the local resilience forum, including a marauding terrorist attack?</p>
2. How efficient is the FRS at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?	2.1 How well does the FRS use resources to manage risk?	<p>2.1.1 To what extent do FRS plans address the risks identified in the IRMP (integrated risk management plan)?</p> <p>2.1.2 To what extent are the FRS plans built on sound planning assumptions, subject to informed challenge and meet financial requirements?</p> <p>2.1.3 How well does the FRS allocate resources to preventative, protective and response activity?</p> <p>2.1.4 To what extent has the FRS considered national requirements?</p> <p>2.1.5 How well does the FRS ensure that the workforce's time is productive, making use of a flexible workforce and flexible working patterns?</p> <p>2.1.6 To what extent is the FRS actively exploring all opportunities for collaboration within and beyond the fire sector?</p> <p>2.1.7 How well does the FRS ensure there are mechanisms in place for monitoring, evaluation and review of collaborations (including benefits realisation and outcomes)?</p> <p>2.1.8 To what extent are business continuity arrangements in place and how often are these tested?</p> <p>2.2.1 To what extent does the FRS understand and is taking action to mitigate the main/ significant financial risks?</p> <p>2.2.2 To what extent does the FRS have a track record for achieving savings and closing any residual future budget gaps?</p> <p>2.2.3 To what extent can the FRS demonstrate sound financial management of principal non-pay costs (inc fleet and equipment) through benchmarking, contract renegotiation, and joint procurement?</p> <p>2.2.4 How well do FRS plans make the best use of the opportunities, and respond to the risks, presented by changes in technology?</p> <p>2.2.5 To what extent does the FRS estate/fleet strategy, and changes to estate/fleet, support current and future service provision?</p> <p>2.2.6 To what extent is the FRS continuing to make savings to invest for future innovation?</p> <p>2.2.7 How well does the FRS use reserves to improve efficiency, enable innovation and new ways of working?</p> <p>2.2.8 To what extent is the FRS influencing how it can work with others in the future in order to improve efficiency?</p> <p>2.2.9 To what extent has the FRS considered and exploited external funding opportunities, or options for generating income?</p> <p>3.1.1 How well does the FRS understand the wellbeing needs of its workforce?</p> <p>3.1.2 How well does the FRS take early action to improve the wellbeing of the workforce?</p> <p>3.1.3 How well do leaders demonstrate they model and maintain the values the FRS expects of them?</p> <p>3.1.4 To what extent is a culture of promoting health, safety and wellbeing evident at all levels in the FRS?</p> <p>3.1.5 To what extent has the FRS established a culture of learning and improvement?</p> <p>3.2.1 How well does the FRS understand the skills and capabilities of its workforce (including the use of technology)?</p> <p>3.2.2 How well does the FRS ensure it has the right workforce mix of skills and capabilities?</p> <p>3.2.3 To what extent does the FRS have the capacity and capability it needs to both achieve change and operational performance?</p> <p>3.3.1 How well do leaders seek feedback and challenge from all parts of the workforce?</p> <p>3.3.2 How well does the FRS identify and resolve workforce concerns?</p> <p>3.3.3 How well does the FRS identify and address potential disproportionality in recruitment, retention and progression for fire-fighters and staff with protected characteristics?</p> <p>3.4.1 How well does the FRS manage and develop the individual performance of its fire-fighters and staff?</p> <p>3.4.2 How fairly does the FRS identify high potential members of the workforce to become senior leaders?</p> <p>3.4.3 How fairly does the FRS select for leadership roles at all levels?</p>
3. How well does the FRS look after its people?	<p>3.1 How well does the FRS promote its values and culture?</p> <p>3.2 How well trained and skilled are FRS staff?</p> <p>3.3 How well does the FRS ensure fairness and diversity?</p> <p>3.4 How does the FRS develop leadership and capability?</p>	

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Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Considerations for a response Public Consultation—Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Prepared by: SOC A C Peckham andy.peckham@bedsfire.com

1. Q1: What do you think of the proposed approach to FRS inspection that HMICFRS proposes to conduct in 2018/19? How could this be improved?

- 1.1 The proposed approach follows a similar format to recent inspection programmes within the Police. Whilst a common approach provides clarity and consistency, it is welcome that HMICFRS have previously acknowledged the differences between the two Services and are engaging with the sector to develop a methodology specific to Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs).
- 1.2 It is reasonable to expect that the public would want to know about the effectiveness and the efficiency of their emergency services. The three, core focus areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people offer opportunity to demonstrate performance.
- 1.3 Capacity to be able to meet the demands of the inspection programme is an important area of consideration.

2. Q2: Do you agree that an integrated inspection of fire and rescue services' effectiveness and efficiency, and how they look after their people, is better than separate thematic inspections?

- 2.1 It is a reasonable expectation that the initial inspections would look to cover all elements of the proposed programme.
- 2.2 The breadth of the inspection and reporting process requirements are likely to have direct relationship with the amount of resourcing required by an FRS.

3. Q3: Are there any other areas of Fire and Rescue Services' activity that should be included in the integrated inspections?

- 3.1 There are no specific areas of activity identified for inclusion above those already detailed within the consultation document.

4. Q4: Does the draft inspection methodology (annex A) include the right questions to gather evidence for a rounded assessment of fire and rescue services? How could this be improved?

- 4.1 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) has been engaged with colleagues from HMICFRS, where invitation was made to consider the question areas and how FRSs might be able to support evidence toward

these. This has been welcomed and supports the engagement with the sector mentioned in the Foreword of the consultation document.

4.2 It is understood that a separate data request process will be required which has not been provided within the consultation process.

5. Q5: How else could HMICFRS adapt the way in which it acquires information to take full account of the circumstances of Fire and Rescue Services and of risks to public safety?

5.1 The range of methods proposed to gather information to support the inspection is welcomed. The use of data that has already been submitted by an FRS in advance of an inspection would likely reduce the impact.

5.2 It is important that the public perception of their FRS forms part of the overall assessment.

6. Q6: What, if any, new or emerging problems for Fire and Rescue Services should HMICFRS take into account in its inspections?

6.1 At this time BFRS has not identified any specific new or emerging problems that HMICFRS should take into account.

7. Q7: What else should HMICFRS consider doing to make its Fire and Rescue Service assessments as fair as they can be?

7.1 The resources available to develop and deliver a response to an inspection programme will differ between FRSs. The length of time given to prepare effectively will be important.

7.2 HMICFRS should continue to engage with FRSs to develop inspection processes and to provide clarity and notice on their involvement within the process.

7.3 The Technical Advisory Group is seen as positive as it includes key stakeholders and will be used to develop the appropriate methods of data collection.

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 12**

REPORT AUTHOR(S): CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: HOME OFFICE FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLAND GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

For further information on this Report contact: Area Commander Darren Cook
Tel No: 01234 845061

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
ORGANISATIONAL RISK	✓	OTHER (please specify)	

Any implications affecting this report are noted within the report.

PURPOSE:

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), of the Government consultation on the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England document.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Fire and Rescue Authority elected members acknowledge the draft National Framework document and the changes from the 2012 version and the 2014 addendum.
2. Elected members consider any response to the question areas that they would want to submit and for any response to be delegated to the Chair of the Authority to meet the required timescales.

1 Background

- 1.1 The National Framework sets out the government's expectations and requirements for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.
- 1.2 The government has a duty under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to produce the framework and keep it current. The Home Secretary reports every 2 years on Fire and Rescue Authorities' compliance with the framework.

- 1.1 The Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework which:
 - a) Must set out priorities and objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
 - b) May contain guidance to Fire and Rescue Authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and
 - c) May contain any other matter relating to Fire and Rescue Authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.
- 1.2 Every Fire and Rescue Authority must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions. Every authority must publish a statement of assurance of compliance with the Framework.
- 1.3 The National Framework was last published in 2012 and changes are required to embed the fire reform programme and provisions in the [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#).

2 Consultation

- 2.1 An open consultation will start from 27 December 2017 to 14 February 2018 to receive views of the proposed Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.
- 2.2 The consultation is aimed at the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and their staff, as well as fire and rescue representative bodies.
- 2.3 The document can also be found on the following hyperlink <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-revised-fire-and-rescue-national-framework-for-england>
- 2.4 The consultation welcomes comments on the following sections:
 - Delivery of Core Functions
 - Inspection, Accountability and Assurance
 - Governance
 - Achieving Value for Money
 - Workforce
 - National Resilience
 - Intervention Protocol (Annex A)
 - Other general comments not covered in the above sections.
- 2.5 The previous national Framework was released in 2012 with an addendum in 2014 that relates to the Firefighter fitness assessment.
- 2.6 The key differences between the 2012, 2014 addendum and the draft National Framework are detailed in 2.7 to 2.23.
- 2.7 Section 1 Introduction page 7 - Change to the priorities in the Framework for the Fire and Rescue Authorities.

2012 Framework:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face, make provision for prevention and protection activities and respond to incidents appropriately.
- Work in partnership with their communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.

Draft National Framework 2017:

It is proposed the priorities and objectives for the Fire and Rescue Authorities as set by the Framework are to be:

- Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.
- Make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents.
- Collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision.
- Be accountable to communities for the service they provide.
- Develop and maintain a workforce that is resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse.

- 2.8 Section 2 Delivery of Core Functions pages 9 – In paragraph 2.1 every fire and rescue authority must assess all risks that affect their communities. The draft document now includes ‘Terror Attacks’. This was previously omitted in the 2012 document.
- 2.9 Paragraph 2.7 expands further on the widening role that fire and rescue service personnel undertake, which includes complex needs and vulnerabilities. The FRA will need to ensure all public facing staff has the necessary skills and training to meet the Service demands. The FRA must also evaluate the impact of prevention activities to demonstrate effectively and cost efficiently on risk reduction.
- 2.10 Section 3 Inspection, Accountability and Assurance, page 11; Inspection - This allows Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to have the power of inspection given to them by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017 (PCA 2017).
- 2.11 Section 3 – Assurance and Scrutiny, page 13, introduces PCC Fire and Rescue Authorities and the scrutiny function of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on exercising their functions, acting as a critical friend.
- 2.12 Section 4 Governance, page 14 and 15 explains the model for Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners.
- 2.13 Page 15 paragraph 4.12 to 4.15 explains the role of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and how they represent the sector nationally to develop strategies and policies.

- 2.14 Section 5 Achieving Value for Money, page 16. Paragraph 5.3 - The Framework specifically mentions that Fire and Rescue Authorities should publish a Medium Term Financial Strategy including funding and spending plans for both revenue and capital.
- 2.17 Page 16 paragraphs 5.5 to 5.9 explains the role of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, such as a policy on reserves held by the Authority should be established and any reserves held should be managed to balance spending and funding priorities. Fire and Rescue Authorities should ensure that management of their finances is undertaken with regard to published guidance, including those set out in Annex B of the document.
- 2.18 Commercial Transformation, page 17, 5.10 to 5.12 explains the need to demonstrate value for money in goods and services that the Service receives; exploring aggregation in their procurement with other FRS's and agencies such as the Police to achieve efficiencies.
- 2.19 Collaboration, page 17 paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 highlights the changes to the Police and Crime Act 2017 and creating the statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities, Police forces and Ambulance trust to collaborate for efficiencies and effectiveness.
- 2.20 Section 6 Workforce, page 20 states that Fire and Rescue Authorities have a role in ensuring their firefighters remain fit and are supported in remaining in their employment. This was part of the 2014 addendum and is now included as part of the main body of the Framework.
- 2.21 Within the Workforce chapter (chapter 6) of the draft National Framework, the section on 're-engagement of senior officer's post-retirement' has been the subject of an earlier, separate consultation. The Government's response to that consultation is published separately. The draft National Framework includes the proposed wording following that consultation and no more changes to that section are planned following this consultation process. The proposed wording is contained on Page 20 and 21, paragraph 6.6 to 6.10.
- 2.22 Section 7 National Resilience, Response to Terrorist Attacks or Marauding Terrorist Attacks, page 23 states that Fire and Rescue Services must be able to respond to heightened threats of terrorism. The FRA are responsible for maintaining the robustness of the capability and, where they have an MTFA capability, must put in place arrangements to ensure their teams are fully available at all times.
- 2.23 Annex A of the draft Framework contains a revised 'Protocol on Central Government Intervention Action for Fire and Rescue Authorities'. Revisions of the protocol are required to be consulted on and so comments are welcomed as part of the draft Framework consultation process.

3 Summary

- 3.1 The draft Framework seeks to embed the reform programme that was announced in 2016 by the Home Office:

- 3.1.1 Transforming local governance of fire and rescue by enabling Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners to take on responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services where a local case is made.
- 3.1.2 Establishing Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as an independent inspection regime for Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- 3.1.3 Developing a comprehensive set of professional standards to drive sector improvement.
- 3.1.4 Supporting services to transform commercially with more efficient procurement and collaboration.
- 3.1.5 Increasing the transparency of services with the publication of greater performance data and the creation of a new national fire website.
- 3.1.6 Driving forward an ambitious programme for workforce reform including through enhancing:
 - Professionalism
 - Management and leadership
 - Training and development
 - Equality and diversity
 - Improved culture
 - Options for flexible working
- 3.2 The Government intends for the new Framework to come into effect in April 2018 to coincide with the commencement for the fire inspection.

4 Implications

- 4.1 The legal and Organisational issues affecting this matter are detailed within this report.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 Fire and Rescue Authority elected members acknowledge the draft National Framework document and the changes from the 2012 version and the 2014 addendum.
- 5.2 Elected members consider any response to the question areas that they would want to submit and for any response to be delegated to the Chair of the Authority to meet the required timescales.

**ZOE EVANS
ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER (HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT)**

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For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 13**

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION

For further information on this Report contact: Strategic Operational Commander A Peckham
Head of Special Projects
Tel No: 01234 84 5129

Background Papers: Blue Light Workstream update Document

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL	✓	FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the current status of 'Blue Light' collaboration workstreams.

RECOMMENDATION

That the FRA acknowledges the content of the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 provides a mandate for Blue Light services to achieve closer working, collaboration and integration where appropriate in the interests of greater transparency, efficiency gains and provide improved value to the community. This report provides an update on the workstreams currently in progress and being delivered jointly and primarily between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Bedfordshire Police. East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust is also a partner in one of the operational initiatives and in estate co-location.

1.2 The Project is managed through a Project Board which benefits from joint Chair arrangements between the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Constable and delivery is supported locally by the Partnership Development Manager.

2. **Project Management**

2.1 The Project Management Group continues to meet and is jointly Chaired by ACFO Ian Evans and DCC Garry Forsyth. The meetings alternate between respective Headquarters and will now take place at two month intervals.

2.2 The Project governance arrangements are being strengthened following the recommendations of the RSM audit on Blue Light Collaboration in July 2017. The final report was submitted in November 2017.

2.3 The outcomes identified by the RSM audit were submitted to Blue Light Collaboration Board on 23 November 2017 and the Board has been briefed on progress and targets with all actions due for completion by 31 March 2018.

2.4 Following recent guidance from the Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group which is under the auspices of The Minister's Office, the Project has been redefined as a Programme which progresses a range of individual projects. This requires a minor change to the Governance arrangements and will not impact on progress or reporting.

2.5 Work in progress is ahead of schedule.

3. **Estates**

3.1 **Joint Headquarters:**

- Bedfordshire Borough Council (BBC) is waiting for release of the loan from the One Public Estate Office to enable the scoping project for a joint headquarters prior to conveying to Bedfordshire Police.
- BBC requires BFRS and Bedfordshire Police to form an agreement for submission to "One Public Estate" Transforming Bedfordshire Partnership Board, which agrees mutual obligations, commitments, loan repayment arrangements and spending profiles which are proportionate to estate values. A brief for the Consultant will also need to be mutually drafted and agreed.
- Arrangements for joint governance through a Project Management group are being developed.

3.2 **Co-Location Sites:**

- Amptill Community Fire Station is operational with three Police staff and one volunteer being based there. An evaluation of the working arrangements will be undertaken in early 2018. A joint evaluation process is in progress and due to be completed by mid-February.

- Bedford Community Fire Station, Barkers Lane, is fully operational with six Police staff based there and the shared office operating as a 'drop-in' for members of other community policing teams. A joint evaluation process is in progress and due to be completed by mid-February.
- Shefford Community Fire Station opportunity is being reviewed by Police.
- Leighton Buzzard Community Fire Station is fully operational. Attention is required to address issues that have arisen as part of establishing the shared facility. Bedfordshire Police are taking responsibility for installing a lightning conductor and earthing rod to protect the new gymnasium. Exploratory work is being undertaken to increase the number of female toilet units on site as the existing provision does not support the gender profile of staff now that Police requirements are known.
- Two dates, either 28 March or 5 April 2018 have been identified by the PCC Office for an official launch of Leighton Buzzard co-location subject to diary commitments of invitees.
- Luton Community Fire Station has been removed from the list of potential co-locations for the time being as there is no current business requirement. The accommodation which was intended for this is going to be used for a different BFRS service.
- Use of Dunstable Community Fire Station has been explored by East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) as a possible base for two vehicles and three staff, however EEAST have decided not to go ahead at this time and so an alternative but collaborative use of the space is being sought with the voluntary sector.
- Harrold Community Fire Station is now being used as a 'drop-in' venue by front line Police response vehicles.
- Bury Park Community Centre office is now available for Police and BFRS. Two dates for the official launch by the PCC have been identified as either 28 March or 5 April 2018 subject to the invitees' diary commitments.
- An internal room user guide has been produced and will be lodged on the Service Intranet.
- The Service is working with the centre and community leaders to identify key invitees from the community.

4. **Response**

4.1 **Missing Vulnerable Person Searches:**

- The current arrangements for BFRS being mobilised to support Police in searches for vulnerable persons are under review after a period of response and following a joint meeting on 18 December 2017 the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been rewritten.
- An evaluation report on the first year of operation will go to the next Project Board. The revised MoU takes account of the learning from the evaluation.

4.2 **Effecting Entry:**

- An evaluation report on the first 15 months of operation will go to the next Project Board.
- The evaluation concludes that BFRS is achieving increased public safety through provision of a faster response time than can be achieved by EEAST or Bedfordshire Police. This is particularly so in those “Risk to Life” situations reported at time of call. Work is in progress to consider alternative contractor arrangements for making premises secure following forced entry.
- This workstream is proving effective and is likely to continue as part of response arrangements.

4.3 **Co-Responding:**

- Currently on hold due to on-going national negotiations linked to pay and conditions.

5. **Operations**

5.1 **Body Worn Cameras:**

- It is intended to amalgamate the policies for all video data capture equipment including building mounted cameras, vehicle mounted cameras, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV, or Drone) and those Body worn cameras to be trialled this year.

5.2 **Vulnerable People:**

- BFRS working in Partnership with Police in taking forward ‘Herbert Protocol’ referrals.
- A three-way data-share agreement is in development between partners.

5.3 **Drone (UAV):**

- The procurement of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV, or Drone) has been through a tender process however there has been an inadequate tender response both in terms of the number of responses and the financial impact. Wider collaboration options for Police and FRS UAV operational capability across the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire area are now being explored.

5.4 **Fire Service Control:**

- Station Commander (Control) has been security cleared and trained to access Police STORM system for ‘real time’ incident monitoring and risk management. This is now operational and subject to an assessment of benefit and value to the operation, access will be extended to all Control watch personnel.

- This provides improved communications, risk awareness and demand monitoring.
- Work is in progress to explore the viability of Control assuming the responsibility for the Services security job management system. This is seen as reducing a potential security risk given the increased movements at our sites by providing 24/7 cover through our mobilising officers.

5.5 **Motorcycle Deployment and Training:**

- A scoping exercise has commenced to explore opportunities for deployment of BFRS motorcycles for transporting Blood and Organs.
- A further element of the scoping exercise is development of a training provision to other Blue Light services. The first “Train the trainer” course will be in April 2018 with the course resources and programme currently being written. This will then enable training courses to be provided routinely to external organisations on a full cost recovery basis.

6. **Resource Sharing**

6.1 **Joint Chaplaincy**

DCC Garry Forsyth will contact the Bishop to explore the opportunity for joint chaplaincy.

6.2 **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

There is an exploration being undertaken of the potential for BFRS and Bedfordshire Police to collaborate on the Governance structure for this new legislation. The purpose is to seek economies of joint scale which potentially remove the need for BFRS to create an additional management role to meet the requirements of the Act Regulations.

6.3 **Datashare Agreement**

Work is in progress to explore whether a single Data Share Agreement can be created which is able to provide an overarching authority to share information. It would replace all individually established agreements.

- 6.4 Investigations continue into whether BFRS Community Safety team could benefit from having shared access to Police STORM Incident reporting system. Focus is on whether the reporting system may reduce personal risk and provide access to owner occupier details.

**PAUL M FULLER CBE QFSM DL
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
8 February 2018
Item No. 14



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Information Bulletin

Personnel

Statistics Covering Period 1 October – 31 December 2017

Wholetime Uniformed Staff:

Strength as at 31 December 2017 303

Firefighters on the Retained Duty System:

Strength 143
(includes wholetime retained)

Appointments:

Wholetime Duty System	0
Retained Duty System	17
Support Staff	4

Leavers:

Wholetime	6
Retained	9
Support Staff	5

Appointments:

Retained:

Firefighters B Morton, J Luff, S McKenna, T Blight, N Lusardi, R Johnson, V Bieron, P Stansfield, M Del Carmen Casado Rodriguez, D Carpenter, N Sinnott, A Payea, J Whittemore, E Fender, A Pickering with effect from 30 October 2017.

Firefighter J Calvey (Shefford) with effect from 1 November 2017.

Firefighter M Garrett (Kempston) with effect from 7 November 2017.

Support:

A Meader (Payroll Manager) with effect from 2 October 2017.

K Elsander (Human Resources Administrator) with effect from 24 October 2017.

J Evans (Administrative Assistant [Operations] Du/Wo) with effect from 27 November 2017.

S White (Motor Transport Vehicle Technician) with effect from 18 December 2017.

Retirements:

Wholetime:

Station Commander A Gayter (Station Commander Biggleswade/Potton/Sandy/Shefford) with effect from 8 October 2017 after 30 years' service.

Station Commander (Control) C Alexander (Temporary Replacement Mobilising System Project Delivery Manager) after 36 years and 2 months service.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer G Ranger after 28 years and 9 months service.

Group Commander J Clayton (Training and Development Manager) with effect from 26 December 2017 after 24 years and 9 months service.

Support Staff:

A Nixon (Site Assistant) with effect from 19 November 2017 after 4 years and 4 months Service.

F McClements (Human Resources Administrator [RDS]) with effect from 17 December 2017 after 22 years and 4 months service.

Leavers:

Wholetime:

Station Commander A Robertson (Station Commander Luton/Toddington) left on 3 December 2017 after 17 years and 1 month's service.

Crew Commander M Seymour (Dunstable) left on 3 December 2017 after 15 years and 8 months service.

Retained:

Firefighter A Summerfield (Toddington) left on 1 October 2017 after 6 years and 8 months service.

Firefighter I Kemp (Harrold) left on 13 October 2017 after 4 years and 10 months service.

Firefighter J Lempel (Bedford) left on 22 October 2017 after 10 months service.

Firefighter T Maguire (Harrold) left on 25 October 2017 after 10 months service.

Firefighter J Tear (Shefford) left on 26 October 2017 after 6 years and 7 months service.

Firefighter A Payea (Training and Development Centre) left on 10 November 2017.

Firefighter M Bettsworth (Shefford) left on 5 December 2017 after 1 year and 1 month's service.

Firefighter L Pryor (Biggleswade) left on 8 December 2017 after 2 years' service.

Firefighter J Bull (Shefford) left on 9 December 2017 after 1 year and 10 months service.

Support Staff:

M Palmer (Site Assistant) left on 1 October 2017 after 1 year and 7 months service.

F Renouf (Business Information Manager) left on 22 October 2017 after 2 years and 3 months service.

T Littley (Home Safety Adviser [South]) left on 31 December 2017 after 12 years and 10 months service.

(Contact Mrs S Green, HR Operations Manager, Tel 01234 845152)

Operations

Statistics for the Period 1 October– 31 December 2017

Incident Statistics	2017/18 Q3
Total Incidents attended (Fires, Special Services and Fire Alarms)	1461
Total Fires Attended*	419
Primary Fires	254
Accidental Dwelling Fires	110
Non Domestic Property Fires	26
Chimney Fires	11
Fire Fatalities	0
Fire Injuries	5
Total Special Service Attended	413
Road Traffic Incidents	140
Road Traffic Accident – Number of Extrications	32
Total Fire Alarms Attended	596
Malicious False Alarm	28
False Alarm Good Intent	186
Alarm caused by Apparatus	379
OTB Mobilised To	29

*Note: Total fires attended is not a total of the sub fire categories listed.

(Contact Mr A Turner, Service Performance Officer, Headquarters, Tel 01234 845022)

Incidents of Note

RESCUES

ASSIST SERVICE/POLICE AMBULANCE

Special Service Assist Ambulance Church Street, Luton

1 November 2017 - 1821 hours

The Trauma Response Unit from Dunstable with a Rescue Pump from Luton attended a male adult who was rescued from the embankment and placed in the care of the Ambulance Service.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

Special Service Assist Ambulance Church Road, Harlington

3 December 2017 - 0438 hours

A Rescue Pump from Luton, with the Trauma Response Unit from Dunstable, attended to assist paramedics with the removal of a critical male adult from the 1st floor of a two-storey house.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

Water Rescue Assist Police Missing Person

Church Lane, Oakley

9 December 2017 - 1507 hours

The Rescue Boat from Bedford attended a male fatality retrieved from the river.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

RTC Persons Trapped

Barkers Lane, Bedford

3 November 2017 - 1457 hours

Rescue Pumps from Bedford and Kempston, with the Specialist Rescue Unit from Kempston, attended a RTC involving two cars, one of which was on its roof. One casualty was removed from the vehicle and left in the care of paramedics.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

RTC Persons Trapped

A421 Eastbound Renhold Turn to Black Cat Roundabout

10 November 2017 - 1441 hours

Rescue Pumps from Kempston, Bedford and Sandy, with the Special Rescue Unit from Kempston, attended a RTC involving three LGVs. One male casualty was extracted by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander D Hobbs, Kempston and Ampthill Fire Stations, Tel 01234 845024)

RTC Persons Trapped**Hatters Way, Luton****11 November 2017 - 0046 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Luton and Stopsley, with the Response Support Unit from Stopsley, attended a RTC involving one car and a van. Two casualties were released by the Fire Service. One casualty was stabilised by a doctor at the scene and then conveyed to hospital by ambulance. Scene safety was implemented by the Police and Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

RTC Persons Trapped**M1 North Bound Junction 10 to 11****14 November 2017 - 1439 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Bedford, Luton, Dunstable and Stopsley, with the Response Support Unit from Stopsley, released one person and placed in the care of paramedics. Scene safety was implemented by the Fire Service and Highways Agency.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

RTC Persons Trapped**Sundon Road, Streatley****20 November 2017 - 1342 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Luton and Stopsley, with the Response Support Unit from Stopsley, attended a RTC involving one private car and a tractor with a trailer on the carriageway. Three casualties - one male and one critical female were relayed to hospital by air ambulance and another walking wounded female was taken to hospital by ambulance.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

RTC Persons Trapped**A5120 Westoning to Toddington****21 December 2017 - 0408 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Toddington, Dunstable and Stopsley, with the Response Support Unit from Stopsley, attended a RTC involving a 38 tonne articulated lorry and one private car. Two adult males were released prior to arrival of the Fire Service and another male adult was extracted by the Fire Service and taken to Addenbrookes hospital by ambulance. The scene and vehicles were made safe by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

Car Fire Following RTC**A5120 Westoning to Toddington****26 December 2017 - 0026 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Ampthill, Dunstable and Luton attended a RTC involving two cars, comprising four casualties. Three self-extracted and one was removed with assistance from the Fire Service. Stabilisation and glass management were put in place.

(Contact Station Commander D Hobbs, Kempston and Ampthill Fire Stations, Tel 01234 845024)

FIRES**Roof Fire****Bramhanger Acre, Luton****5 November 2017 - 1313 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Luton and Stopsley, with the Aerial Platform from Luton and the Operational Support Unit from Potton, attended a fire in the roof space of a two-storey terraced property, approximately 6 x 10 m. 50% of the roof was damaged by fire and 100% of the 1st floor bathroom was damaged by fire.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

Building Fire**Peaches Close, Harrold****9 November 2017 – 0226 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Bedford and Kempston attended a fire in the ground floor of a two-storey mid-terrace property. One cat was treated with oxygen for smoke inhalation and the neighbouring property was ventilated. A fire investigation was carried out.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

Fire High Rise Residential**Wenlock Court, Jubille Hall, Manor Road, Luton****18 November 2017 - 1933 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Stopsley and Dunstable, with the Aerial Platform from Luton, attended a fire in the kitchen on the 2nd floor of a high rise building consisting of six floors. 20% of the kitchen was damaged by fire and 20% of the kitchen was damaged by smoke.

(Contact Station Commander S Auger, Stopsley and Leighton Buzzard Fire Stations, Tel 01582 459177)

House Fire**Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable****3 December 2017 - 0316 hours**

Two Rescue Pumps from Dunstable attended a fire in a one bedroom semi-detached bungalow, measuring approximately 8 x 10 m. 100% of the building was damaged by fire and smoke. One elderly female adult was treated for smoke inhalation and placed in the care of the Ambulance Service.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

Alarm Domestic House**Halleys Way, Houghton Regis****16 December 2017 - 2111 hours**

Two Rescue Pumps from Dunstable attended a 84 year old female who was suffering from severe burns to her legs and feet. She was treated by the Fire Service and paramedics.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

RESCUES**Pony Stuck in Window Frame****Wrestlingworth Road, Potton****14 November 2017 - 1346 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Potton and Kempston, with the Special Rescue Unit from Kempston, attended a horse which was released by the Fire Service and placed in the care of the owner and vet.

(Contact Station Commander S Duffy, Biggleswade/Potton/Sandy/Shefford Fire Stations, Tel 07717 274302)

Car in Flood Water**Green End, Pertenhall****27 December 2017 - 0723 hours**

The Multi-Role Vehicle from Bedford attended a car in flood water approximately 12 inches deep. One male driver was rescued from the vehicle by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

AIRCRAFT INCIDENT

Aircraft incident - Airship Cardington Airfield, Shortstown 18 November 2017 - 0958 hours

Rescue Pumps from Bedford, Kempston and Shefford, with the Specialist Rescue Unit from Kempston, attended an airship which had broken from its mooring. The envelope was ventilated by the airship owners under Fire Service supervision. One female was conveyed to hospital by ambulance due to injuries sustained in the accident. Approximately 4,500 litres of aviation fuel was isolated in the fuel tanks.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

Letters of Appreciation or Complaint

Complaint:

No complaints (past Stage I) have been received for this period.

Appreciation:

We continue to receive letters of appreciation from members of the public, schools and organisations that we visit and/or assist with charitable events.

The following is a selection:

Thanks from **a member of the public** via Facebook:

.....'To all at Fire and Rescue, I would like to thank the crew from Kempston who came out to rescue my injured cat from under a car on Denmark Street. I felt bad calling them out for a cat but they treated it like no job is too small and took every care to get him out.

I rushed him to the vet and didn't say thank you properly. I can report Nemo was treated for shock and then had an operation on a ruptured diaphragm and is expected to recover well. So thanks again for your quick and sympathetic response.'.....

The following letter has been received from the **Lord-Lieutenant Helen Nellis** addressed to the Lord Lieutenant's Cadets and Parents:

.....'May I thank you sincerely for your great support at the Remembrance Services of this weekend and last.

The Cadets who attended me were outstanding and a fine example of the great contribution our young people make in Bedfordshire.

I have heard from my colleagues, that those of you who supported my Deputy Lieutenant colleagues were equally impressive and that the people who attended the ceremonies were heartened to see the way in which you conducted yourselves.

This was the first of your duties and I am reassured that each of you will achieve the high standards required of LL Cadets. Remembrance is a key event in the Lieutenancy year and I very much appreciate the part you played in ensuring we showed appropriate respect and honour for the Fallen.

My sincere thanks also to Major Sadler for making the arrangements which went so smoothly.'.....

A couple from Kempston sent thanks to Kempston White Watch:

.....'We were visited by members of your team who advised my wife and I about smoke alarms. Devices were installed and we wanted to say thank you to the firefighters for their polite and pleasant manner. Please find enclosed our cheque made payable to The Fire Fighters Charity as a gesture of our appreciation.'

Thanks from **Pavenham Park Residents Association:**

.....'Thank you for enabling and part funding of our on-site defibrillator. The Association are especially grateful as we foresaw a long fund raising battle to achieve our aim in this respect.'.....

Thank you from **Devon and Somerset FRS:**

Following the devastation caused by hurricane Irma, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has been coordinating an appeal for assistance to Fire and Rescue Services, suppliers and charities.

.....'I wanted to say thank you to BFRS for the very generous donation of two light portable pumps. In particular I wanted to extend our thanks to Chris Ball and Andy Draper who worked so hard to secure service and transport the pumps for us.'.....

Glenn Askew, CFO

Thank you from **St Johns School:**

.....'Thank you so much for arranging the visit of a crew to our school last Thursday. The crew were incredibly considerate of our pupils' needs and interacted with them superbly. The pupils really enjoyed the experience.'.....

Forthcoming Events

- 12 March 2018, 10.00 am
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
- 15 March 2018, 10.00 am
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
- 28 March 2018, 10.00 am
Audit and Standards Committee, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

- 29 March 2018, 10.00 am
Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
- 24 April 2018, 10.00 am
Fire and Rescue Authority Briefing, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
- 26 April 2018, 10.00 am
Fire and Rescue Authority meeting, Dunstable Community Fire Station

(Contact Mrs N Upton, Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor, Headquarters, Tel 01234 845149)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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