



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

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

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: J Chatterley, R Berry, P Duckett, D McVicar and I Shingler

Luton Borough Councillors: J Burnett, K Choudhry, D Franks 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 / MS Teams** [Click here to join the meeting](#) on **Thursday, 10 February 2022** starting at **10.00 am**.

John Atkinson
Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
1.	Apologies	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 (see note below).
3.	Communications	Chair	

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
4.	Minutes	Chair	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2022 (Pages 5 - 10)
5.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme
6.	Executive Committee meeting 20 January 2022	Chair	To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 20 January 2022 (Pages 11 - 14)
7.	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-23 Action Plan and Budget Consultation Update	HSSA	To consider a report (Pages 15 - 34)
8.	The 2022/23 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax setting	CFO/Treasurer	To receive a report (Pages 35 - 102)
9.	HMICFRS Inspection Update	HSSA	To consider a report (Pages 103 - 108)
10.	Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement 2022	ACFO	To consider a report (Pages 109 - 122)
11.	Members' Allowances Scheme	Monitoring Officer	To consider a report (Pages 123 - 126)
12.	Grenfell Tower Action Plan Update	ACFO	To consider a report (Pages 127 - 134)
13.	Information Bulletin (Q3 Oct-Dec)	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 135 - 162)
14.	Work Programme	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 163 - 168)

Next Meeting

10.00 am on 24 March 2022 at Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA

Item

Subject

Lead

Purpose of Discussion

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.

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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BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

held on 11 January 2022 at 10.00am

PRESENT

Councillors J Chatterley (Chair), J Burnett, M Headley, D McVicar and I Shingler

Chief Fire Officer A Hopkinson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer C Bigland, Assistant Chief Fire Officer A Kibblewhite, Assistant Chief Officer Chambers and Mr J Atkinson were also present

Councillors C Atkins, R Berry, K Choudhury, P Duckett, D Franks and J Gambold observed the meeting via Teams

21-22/fa/078 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Waheed.

21-22/fa/079 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests.

21-22/fa/080 COMMUNICATIONS

Government Announcement on Cladding

The Chair referred to the recent announcement made by the Secretary of State advising that leaseholders of medium rise buildings (11-18 meters in height) would not be responsible for any costs relating to dangerous cladding, with developers responsible for the cost of replacement.

The Chief Fire Officer added that developers would be asked to contribute to a national remediation fund of £4 billion to cover these costs.

The Fire Safety Act 2021 was expected to come into force in mid-February and the Service had been developing communications around this which could be shared with Members.

As this type of building would not necessarily have been included in the normal inspection regime, the National Fire Chiefs Council had been asked to develop a business case setting out the financial implications of including medium-rise buildings in the inspection regime and determining the role of fire and rescue services and other partners in this process. Additional information and guidance was expected and would be shared with Members when it was made available.

The Chief Fire Officer had requested information on the number of medium-rise buildings in Bedfordshire earlier in the day and would circulate this figure to Members as soon as possible.

Efficacy of Breathing Apparatus

Following reports of firefighters in New York City using their own oxygen supplies to assist residents of a fire suffering from the effects of smoke inhalation at a recent fire in the Bronx, Councillor McVicar queried whether, in the opinion of the Chief Fire Officer, the amount of oxygen available for the Service's firefighters was sufficient.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that, in addition to the self-contained BA sets used by firefighters, the robust procedures and guidance in place and additional equipment such as smoke hoods to assist casualties out of burning buildings, firefighters had access to additional oxygen canisters for the express use of casualties and an investment to increase the capacity of these had recently been made.

21-22/fa/081 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 be confirmed as a true record.

21-22/fa/082 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).

21-22/fa/083 AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM 2 DECEMBER

Councillor Atkins introduced the Minutes of the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 2 December 2021. She drew the Authority's attention to the recommendation of the Committee that the full Authority accept the invitation from Public Sector Audit Appointments to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

Participation in this scheme was advantageous to the Authority and had already resulted in savings of approximately £20,000 following a dispute over the fee increase proposed by the Authority's current external auditors.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be agreed that the Authority accept the invitation from Public Sector Audit Appointments to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.
2. That the Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 2 December 2021 be received and the decisions made by the Committee informally be ratified.

21-22/fa/084 DRAFT 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL TAX

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer presented his report on a draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2022/23.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer highlighted the following:

- The proposed revenue budget requirement was £32.876 million, which equated to a 1.99% Council Tax increase, just below the referendum cap of 2%. The increase in the Band D precept would be £2.04, from £102.41 to £104.45.

- A one-year settlement had been announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, making medium term financial planning more difficult. There had been an increase in the amount of Revenue Support Grant received by £72,000 from 2021/22; however, this was in the context of the RSG being reduced by almost 50% over a number of years.
- There were no capital grants in the budget, with all capital projects being funded through revenue contributions. At present, there were no new additional items to include in the Capital Programme, but this was subject to change as there were a number of reviews ongoing.
- In 2022/23, a reduction in business rate income was forecast.
- The forecast 2022/23 taxbase figures estimated when setting the 2021/22 budget had increased by 5,169 Band D equivalent properties and would result in additional council tax revenues for the Authority of £540,000 in 2022/23 above the income previously forecast. Final figures would be included in the budget submitted to the next meeting of the Authority.
- The Authority would be receiving a grant of £410,000 to cover increased National Insurance contributions. The cost of this increase was estimated as £170,000, with the remainder of the funding being un-ringfenced grant.
- There had been a surplus on the Collection Fund as not as many individuals had applied for Council Tax support as had been forecast. The overall amount due back to the Authority, taking into account both the surplus on the Collection Fund and the business rate deficit, was £380,000.
- The proposed Capital Programme of £1.371 million for 2022/23 included investment in front line operational equipment, ICT and software and the modernisation of the Service's buildings.
- The consultation was ongoing and results would be presented to Members at the next Budget Workshop.

In relation to Appendix 3 which set out the savings and efficiencies, the Assistant Chief Executive assured the Authority that he was confident that all savings forecast for 2022/23 were achievable.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that, in relation to the increased needs that may result in additional costs, a greater emphasis had been placed upon productivity and efficiency and that he welcomed Member challenge as the Service moved towards new ways of working.

In response to questions, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the £35,000 saving associated with the Apprenticeship residential element removal was the result of the Service bringing the training in house so it could provide a more family friendly option for new staff as well as saving on the costs of accommodation. Savings associated with the cleaning contract related to the option to bring this service in-house.

The Service was exploring income generation options relating to the use of the drone, such as providing aerial photos to assist in the assessment of the condition of roofs and other parts of buildings that would be inaccessible without the hire of costly equipment such as ladders or scaffolding.

In discussing Appendix 2 to the report, which set out the assumptions and uncertainties, Members were advised that the fire fighter pension grant was likely to form part of the overall funding settlement in future years, a 2% pay award had been budgeted for but this may need to be increased, and an environmental impact budget had been introduced.

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported on the differences between the Local Government Pension Scheme, which was a funded scheme, and the Fire Fighter's Pension Scheme, for which the cost of the deficit fell to the Government. The valuation of the Fire Fighter Pension Fund was currently ongoing and challenges had been made in relation to how the age discrimination payments should be considered as part of this process.

In response to a question about the large variation between spending in year 3 on equipment as set out in Appendix 4, it was noted that further discussions would be required as to whether to prioritise achieving economies of scale or benefitting from ongoing innovation when purchasing fleet vehicles and other large equipment. There was no major variation to ICT and IT developments. Members were assured that, when investing in the Service estate, consideration would be given as to the future use and retention of the building in question before improvements were made. The Service had also made a bid for a decarbonisation grant so that boilers and other equipment could be replaced with more environmentally friendly solutions.

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer provided a detailed overview of Appendix 1, which set out the Medium Term Revenue Plan for 2022/23 – 2025/26. Line 22 set out the proposed level of revenue contributions to capital, which was currently set at £663,000 for 2022/23 and increased to over £2 million in Year 3 as set out in the Capital Programme. Line 29 related to the assumption of a 2% pay award. The £368,000 of new budget pressures was highlighted in line 43. Funding sources were detailed in lines 56 onwards, with line 64 illustrating the Council Tax increase.

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer confirmed that the Council Tax income was as forecast by the constituent authorities and used in their own budget setting processes.

In response to a question about the financial impact of the additional Bank Holidays, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer advised that he would provide a written response to Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the budget proposals set out in the report and recommendations below be refined and taken forward for approval by the Authority at the budget meeting on 10 February 2022:

1. A revenue budget requirement of £32.876 million, as per Appendix 1 of the report, with a council tax increase of 1.99%; and
2. A Capital Programme of £1.371 million as per Appendix 4 of the report.

21-22/fa/085 WORK PROGRAMME

Members received the updated Work Programme.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that work was ongoing to identify additional items for the full Authority and Executive work programmes and encouraged Members to request additional items for consideration at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be received.

The meeting closed at 11.14 am.

**MINUTES OF AN INFORMAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
HELD VIA MS TEAM ON 20 JANUARY 2022 AT 10AM**

Present: Councillors J Chatterley (Chair), K Choudhry and M Headley

CFO A Hopkinson, ACFO A Kibblewhite, Mr J Atkinson, Ms S Fecondi and Mrs S Green were also present

21-22/EC/34 Apologies

- 34.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor McVicar.
34.2 DCFO C Bigland and ACO Chambers were unable to attend the meeting.

21-22/EC/35 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 35.1 There were no declarations of interests.

21-22/EC/36 Communications

- 36.1 The Chair reported that the Chief Fire Officer had been invited by the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council, Mark Hardingham, to attend the International Metro Fire Chiefs Conference in May this year and that the Chief Fire Officer had submitted a list of the costs involved, the largest of which was the airfare. This was recognised as an important networking and professional development opportunity. The previous CFO, Paul Fuller, had attended the conference on several previous occasions.
- 36.2 The Chief Fire Officer added that discussions about him attending had arisen after learning that Paul Fuller has been nominated for a lifetime achievement award so would be able to receive it on behalf of the Service and his family. In addition, he may also have the opportunity to speak at the conference, which would raise the international profile of work being undertaken in Bedfordshire. If his attendance was supported by the full Authority, the Chief would provide feedback and learning points from the conference to Members.

36.3 The Chair advised that he had been sent a copy of the National Fire Chiefs Council letter regarding the White Paper on Fire Reform and that this would be circulated to Members for information.

36.4 The Chief Fire Officer commented that the White Paper was in the final stages of departmental sign-off with an anticipated publication date in February 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the Authority be recommended to support the Chief Fire Officer's attendance at the International Association of Fire Chiefs Conference.

21-22/EC/37 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 be confirmed as a true record.

21-22/EC/38 Public Participation

38.1 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).

21-22/EC/39 Work Programme

39.1 The Executive received its updated work programme, noting that there were currently no items on the Work Programme. The Chair reported that a review of the scheme of delegation was ongoing and would be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive. He requested that an informal briefing meeting be held with Members to discuss the way forward before a formal report was prepared.

39.2 The Chief Fire Officer outlined new arrangements for the Chair to be briefed prior to meetings of the Executive and the Full Authority so that there was more Member involvement in the agenda setting process. He was meeting with other Officers to identify appropriate items to put forward for consideration at future meetings of the Executive.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be received and the cyclical agenda items be noted.

21-22/EC/40 Home Office Immediate Detriment Guidance Update

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Sections 100A(2) and 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the discussion of the following items on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 4 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item

- 40. Home Office Immediate Detriment Guidance Update
- 41. Abatement Issue

The meeting ended at 10.36 am

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REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE, STEVE FRANK

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) 2022-23 ACTION PLAN AND BUDGET CONSULTATION UPDATE

For further information on this report contact: Val Cumberland
Communications and Engagement Manager
Tel No: 07468 359773

Background Papers: See [BFRS Website CRMP and Budget Consultation-and-Engagement](#)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) with an update of our Fire and Rescue Authority report on Consultation on the 2022-23 Budget and Community Risk Management Plan Annual Action Plan from 14th December 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper.

1. Summary

- 1.1 We have had our most successful Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and budget consultation yet.
- 1.2 Our results are due to more effective use of social media, maximising internal and external staff networks, and encouraging our partners to share our consultation.
- 1.3 We received overwhelming support for our proposals and have a rich baseline of comment and intelligence which we can draw on over the next 12 months in line with our Service Value 'Every Contact Counts'.
- 1.4 The consultation on the 2022-23 CRMP action plan, budget and council tax proposals took place between 28 December 2021 and 31 January 2022. Last year the decision was made to join up the two aspects of consultation; the budget and the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). A total of 746 responses have been received to date.
- 1.5 At 9am on 1 February 2022 results include:
- 741 online consultation responses and five handwritten responses. This adds up to 746 consultation response.
 - This tops 2021-22 when we received 471 consultation responses;
 - 22 targeted personal interviews with organisations we have not systematically engaged with previously including representatives of gypsies and travellers, faith groups, parish and town councils, and young people;
 - 86% of those responding said yes to the 1.99% increase of Council Tax;
 - 78% of those responding said yes to the £5 increase;
 - 214 respondents gave us a wealth of comments and suggestions for further collaborations and in making efficiencies.
 - A variety of comments related to suggestions for saving money or generating income, such as charging for some services, collaboration with other services including more site sharing and in boosting organisational productivity.
 - 627 (85%) said that they support us prioritising investment in our property based on changes to housing, economic and social change, and the impact of Covid-19 on how we work;
 - 92% support us in innovating our fleet and testing different ideas;
 - 376 responded on What should our investment priorities should include, and we are mining this information further
 - 71% completed the EDI section and we can demonstrate we received a much more diverse range of responses including more from young people. We have more to do to encourage people to be more open about their sexuality.
- 1.6 Appendix 1 provides more detailed analysis.

1.7 The charts in Appendix 1 show an overwhelmingly positive response. Compared to last year we have received proportionately more responses from younger people, from people with disabilities, from people with more diverse backgrounds, and more women.

2. Background

2.1 Feedback from last year was that the consultation was too long and complicated. This year we simplified the survey splitting it into two parts the budget and the proposed CRMP 2022/23 action plan. This seemed to work much better with an increase in responses. The average time taken to complete the survey was eight minutes and two seconds, this will have helped encourage the high number of responses.

2.2 Our report to the Fire and Rescue Authority committee meeting on 14th December 2021 entitled Consultation on the 2022-23 Budget and Community Risk Management Plan 2022-23 Annual Action Plan sets out our approach, consideration of national guidance, our review of what others are doing, and consultation action plan.

2.3 We are currently on target to complete our 2022-23 CRMP and budget consultation action plan.

2.4 We gave Members a commitment to target our consultation and listen to voices we may not have heard before. Our approach includes:

- Working with colleagues internally to encourage them to forward the link to our consultation and for our staff to distribute to their networks;
- Offering a choice of paper based or online consultation, we received five handwritten surveys on paper;
- Sending out to all our Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners and the LRF sending out to wider groups;
- Emailing to the Chamber of Commerce to send to their members;
- Sending a personalised email to every clerk of all 111 town and parish councils in Bedfordshire;
- Writing to 52 community groups and key stakeholders including faith groups, community groups, youth groups, business groups including Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce, sport and leisure organisations including Luton Town Football Club and the two championship rugby teams, infrastructure organisations including Luton Airport, universities and colleges, heritage and arts organisations.
- This resulted in several parish councils adding the link to our consultation on their social media pages and website;
- Conducting personal interviews with representatives from community and faith groups;

- Maximising our social media reach including boosting our social posts.
- Encouraging our colleagues in local authorities to share our consultation; and
- Using BedsFireAlert to send out our consultation to 15,411 recipients (this has been sent out twice and was re-sent on the 24 January as a final reminder).

- 2.5 A survey was sent to the 15,411 people registered on the BedsFireAlert Community messaging system, who are willing to take part in consultations. This was sent out on two additional occasions as a reminder. It was also made available via the Authority's website and publicised through the local press and several organic and paid for social media campaigns on the Service's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter channels. It was promoted to BFRS staff through the weekly editions of Blue Bulletin and a supporting briefing note sent to all managers.
- 2.6 A letter was sent to a number of key partners in the emergency services and local government inviting their views. We also asked a number of organisations including the three unitary authorities, the Police, East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) and the Chamber of Commerce and community groups to put the link on their websites and to promote the consultation to their members. We communicated to the press via press releases and a number of them included the link on their websites and shared our social media content.
- 2.7 We received surveys from all three local councils, local universities and colleges, Luton Airport, three neighboring fire and rescue services, local faith groups, charity and Gypsy and Travelers groups, cultural groups, Visit Bedford and Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce. We carried out interviews with eleven town and parish councils
- 2.8 The improvements to our reach and overall approach to engagement is important because the first of the thirteen Areas for Improvement (AFI) in our recent Effectiveness, efficiency and people inspection report for 2021/22 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue HMICFRS finds: *The service needs to improve how it engages with its local community.*
- 2.9 This consultation forms part of the response to this AFI. We are currently working through survey responses to pick out any new risks or areas we need to do more to resolve.

3. Consultation Timeline

W/C 20.12.21	W/C 27.12.21	W/C 4.1.22	W/C 10.1.22	W/C 17.1.22	W/C 24.1.22
Finalise consultation doc and content	Send to partners	ZZ to all staff	Re-send to Beds Alert reminder	ZZ to all staff reminder	Re-send to Beds Alert reminder
Update website & Web banner	Send out first socials	FB pages all 14 updated	Paid for social media	Support stories on socials	Feedback any facts and figures
Send out press release	Send to 120 community groups	Send out socials	Send out socials reminder	Send out socials reminder	Send out socials final reminder
Develop social media banners	Develop a flier to go out via ops	Fliers out in the community	Partners to share on social platforms	Partners to share on social platforms	Partners to share on social platforms
In BB	In BB	In BB	In BB	In BB	In BB
Send to Beds Alert mailing list (19609)	Out to Chamber of Commerce 700+ members	Send to FRA & CMT to share with external partners	Send out press release reminder	Virtual meetings	With community groups / leaders
Brief CMT on plans	Partners to share on social platforms	Review numbers of responses	Review numbers of responses	Review numbers of responses	Summary document for CMT / FRA

4. So What? How are we responding to consultation

- 4.1 We have revealed a significant public interest in improving our focus on community engagement, environmental management and demonstrating ethical governance credentials. These issues will take a stronger focus in 2022-23 and in developing our next CRMP from 2023-24 onwards.
- 4.2 As a response to the themes contained in the consultation, the paras below provide a summary of what efficiencies are already being undertaken.

- 4.3 We have the Shared Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Service in operation with numerous other shared work areas with local authorities such as Democratic Services support, legal, cleaning contracts, joint procurements, data privacy work and the Authority is a founding member of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), providing an alternative to traditional insurance.
- 4.4 Members will be aware of the collaboration work underway with the Police, 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 the Falls Team. We are now servicing Ambulance vehicles and there is also a new joint fire Investigation post, with costs shared between three Services, for a two year period included within the 2022/23 budget.
- 4.5 The Service has also significantly contributed to supporting the community over the pandemic. This has been fully documented elsewhere and includes driving ambulances, mortuary support, delivering food parcels, co-responding, supporting the Local Resilience Forum etc.
- 4.8 The Service now shares its estate with the police at four locations (Bedford, Leighton Buzzard, Ampthill and Toddington), the Ambulance at five (Luton, Sandy, Stopsley, Shefford and Dunstable) with discussions taking place for Bedford station and others in the north of the county. Other partner organisations also rent some space at our stations.
- 4.9 The Service informs telephone callers where charges will be levied on services provided such as lock outs and flood clearance from basements, where not deemed emergencies and suggesting that they seek alternative suppliers for these incidents.
5. Next Steps
- 5.1 We are mapping results against actions in our 2022-23 CRMP action plan. For example, environmental, community engagement and ethical issues will take a much stronger focus. More capacity may be needed in the Communications and Engagement team to understand and then deliver the consultation results.
- 5.2 We will share the results of our consultation on our website and show what is changing as a result in line with our Service Value 'We Are Accountable'.

6. Recommendations

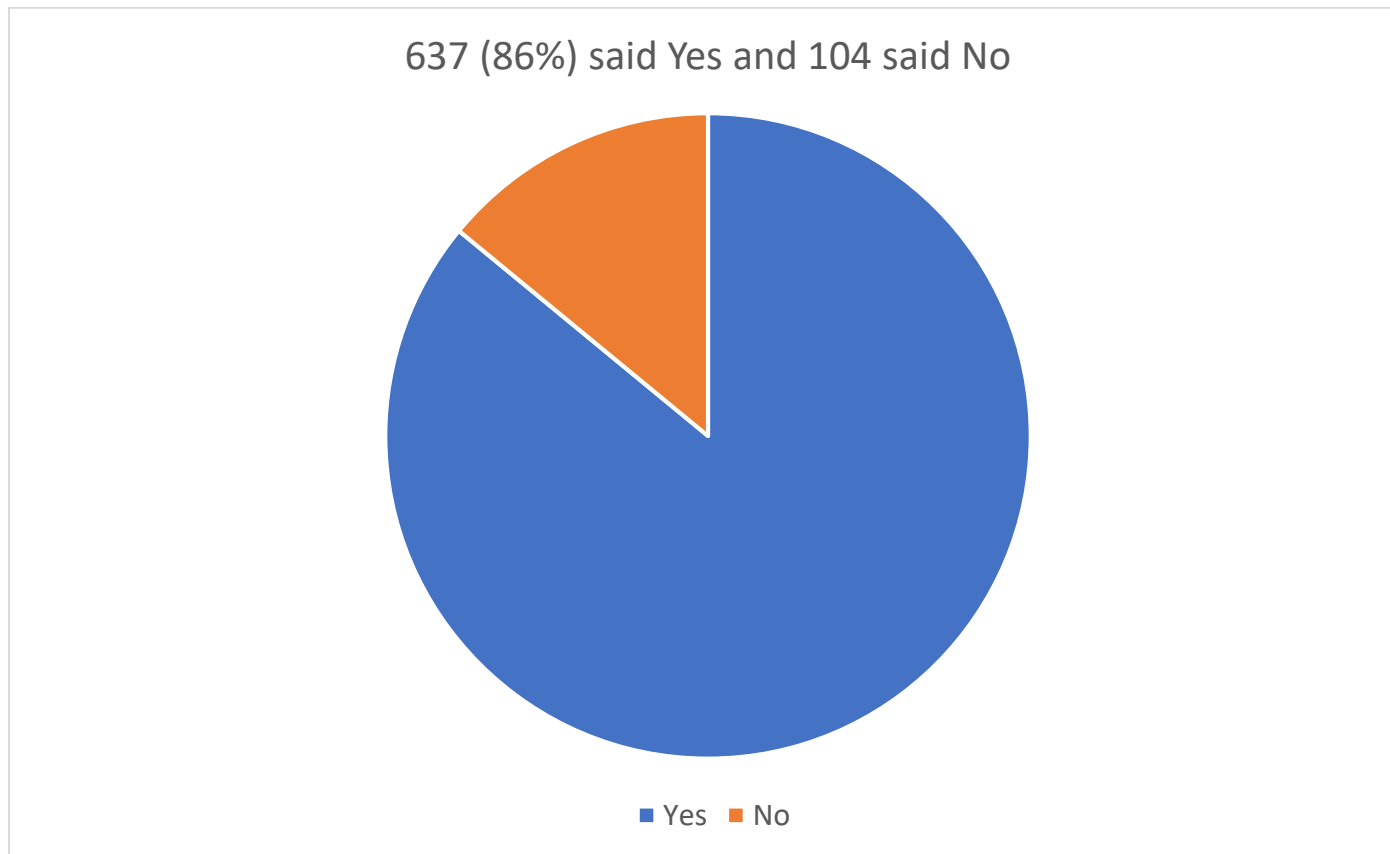
6.1 Members acknowledge the contents of this report.

**STEVEN FRANK
HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE**

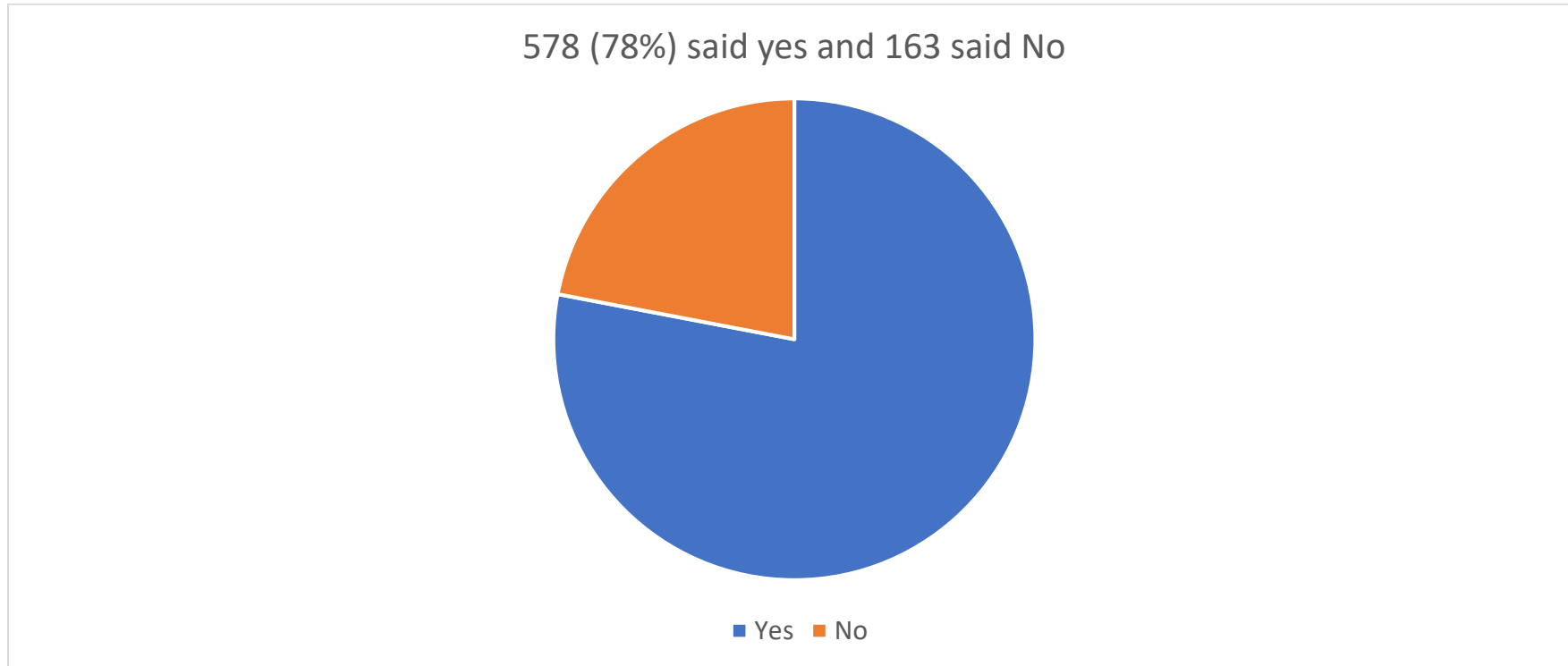
Appendix 1

We will now reexamine responses to each survey question in detail.

The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority is currently considering a council tax increase of 1.99% for a Band D house. Do you support an increase of below 2%? This would increase the Band D charge for the Fire & Rescue Service from £102.41 to £104.45.



If in another year the council tax referendum cap is increased above the current 2%, or we are permitted to have up to a £5 increase, would you support an increase of up to £5 for a Band D property to protect and invest in your local Fire & Rescue Service?



Typical comments on the above included:

- *“It’s a small price to pay for peace of mind that in our hour of need there are professionals to help us.”*
- *“I fully support and appreciate your position. I have nothing but good things to say about the emergency services. You all run into danger when everyone else is running away!”*
- We find 47 other very positive and supportive comments

Are there any other savings, efficiencies or areas of collaboration that you would suggest should be investigated further?

In order of frequency, comments on collaboration include:

- Further collaboration with Local authorities, particularly with social and housing services received 34 comments;
- More collaboration with the Police was made by 26 respondents;
- Ambulance and EEAST received 24 comments;
- Collaboration with parish and town councils on data sharing, prevention activity and volunteering received 22 comments;
- Working closer with the voluntary and third sector on identifying vulnerable people received 11 comments;
- More Regional collaboration was suggested in 9 comments;
- Working with faith groups on identifying vulnerable people received 7 comments.

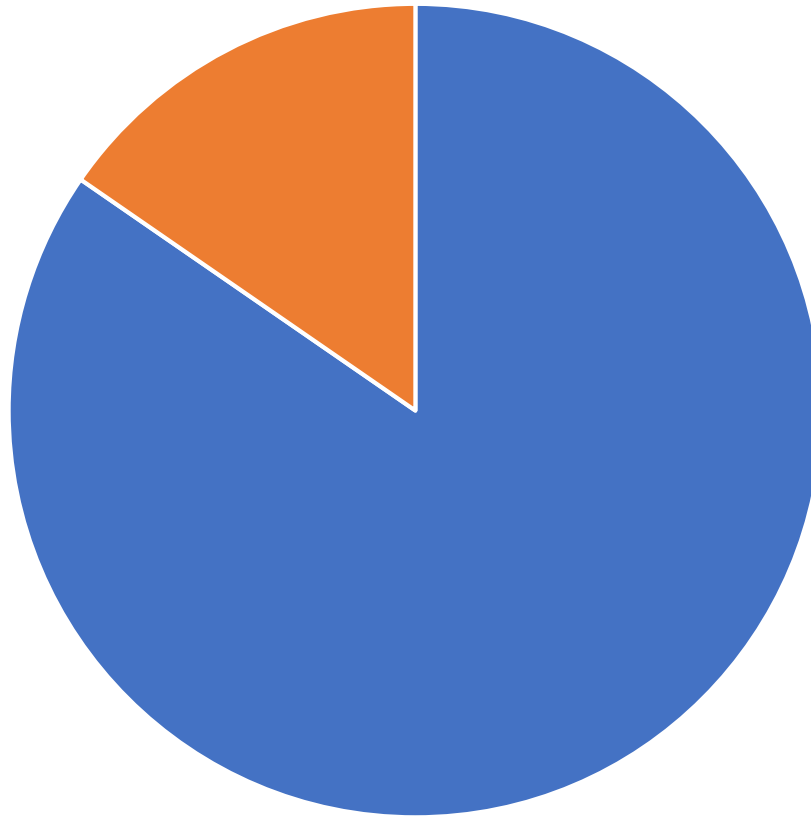
Increasing fees, charges and commercial income received 36 comments.

In order of frequency, comments on savings and efficiency include:

- Effective Information and Communication Technology received 29 comments;
- Integrating corporate, support and back office functions with partners received 26 comments;
- Digital service delivery received 22 comments;
- More effective Fleet procurement received 19 comments;
- Sharing estates and property received 18 comments;
- Reducing senior management and democratic services costs received 16 comments;
- Improving staff and station productivity received 14 comments
- Reducing automatic fire alarms as false alarms received 13 comments; and
- Removing red tape and bureaucracy received 12 comments.

Do you support us prioritising investment in our property based on changes to housing, economic and social change, and the impact of Covid-19 on how we work?

627 (85%) said Yes and 114 said No

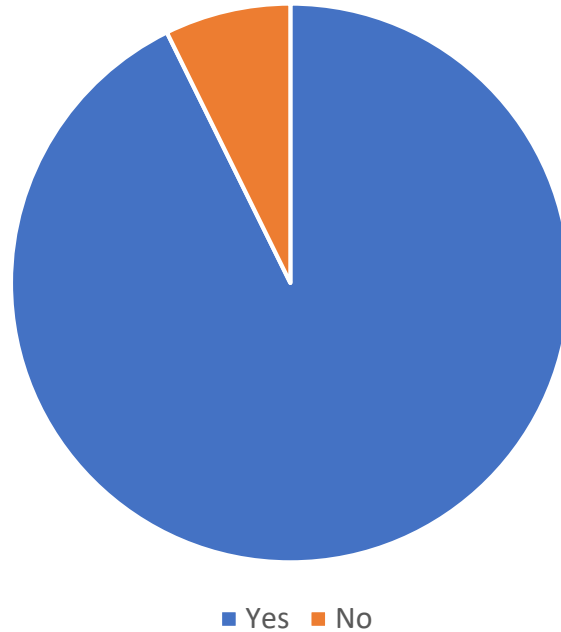


■ Yes ■ No

Do you support us in innovating our fleet and testing different ideas? Some of the responses included;

- *“Bedfordshire as a County has changed a great deal over the past 30-40 years yet whilst there has been much change in BFRS also, our locations and resourcing of pumps hasn't really changed for a great many years.*
- *Keep us informed please, it sounds fascinating*
- *It's always good to reflect on what we are doing and if we can make things better, more environmentally friendly and cost efficient.*
- *testing and piloting is so important. Good luck with it. We would suggest avoiding confirmation bias and setting too many narrow objectives. The learning journey is best started without too many restrictions*
- *We think it is vitally important to trial, pilot and test new ideas otherwise you will be left behind.”*

687 (92%) said Yes and 54 said No



What should our investment priorities include?

In order of frequency, comments include:

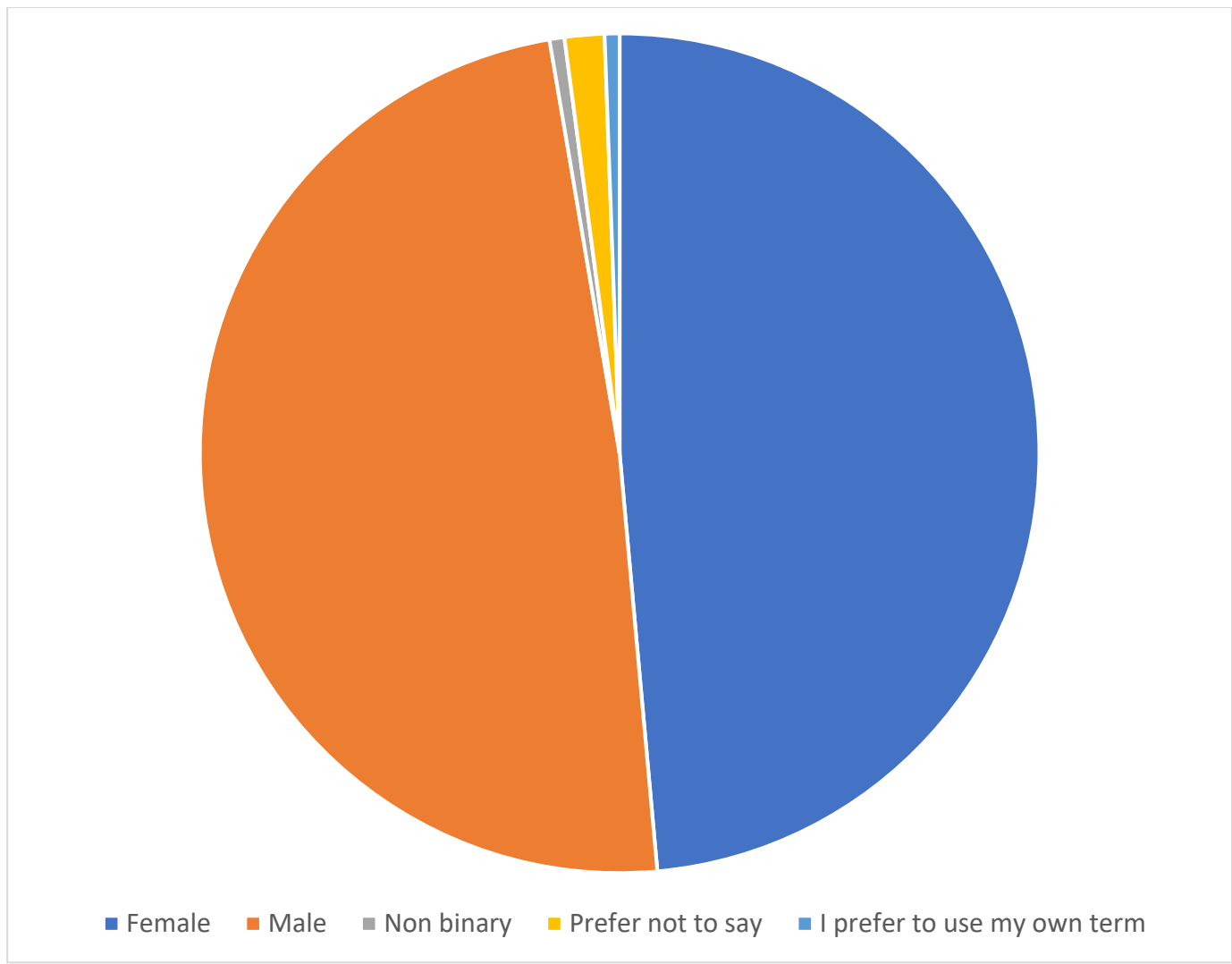
- Supporting communities and community engagement received 74 comments;
- Safe systems of work received 68 comments;
- Environment, carbon reduction and green criteria received 67 comments;
- ICT received 63 comments;
- staff training and development received 57 comments;
- ethical investment received 55 comments;
- value for money criteria received 52 comments;
- More prevention activity including road safety received 39 comments.
- equality, diversity and inclusion received 22 comments; and
- Clear links to corporate priorities received 21 comments.

What should Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service look like in 2050?

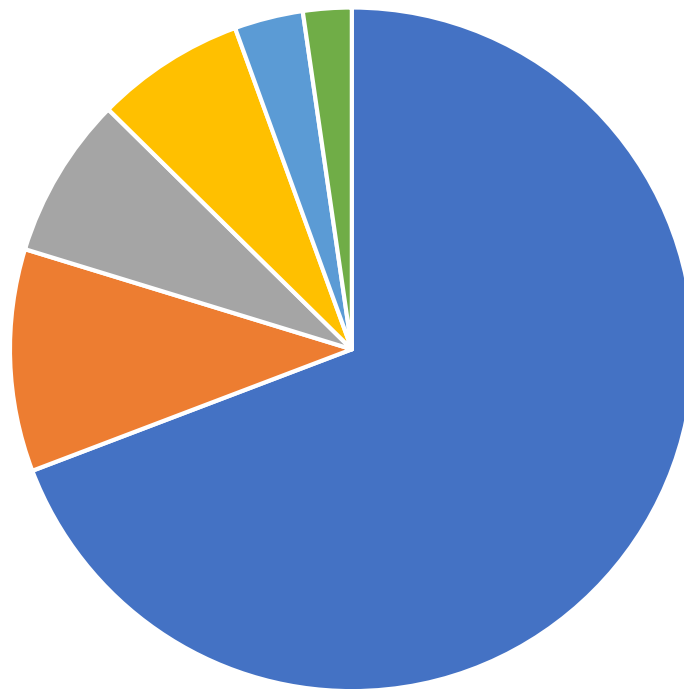
- Community focused received 139 comments;
- integrated into the wider public service family received 68 comments;
- long term focused received 52 comments;
- Environmentally friendly and greener received 49 comments;
- More collaborative received 48 comments;
- More technologically advanced received 45 comments; and
- A more inclusive service on staffing received 22 comments.

Age – we will need to do some more work on this as it is difficult to draw it out from the chart. Ages range from 14 to over 90. A rapid review of feedback shows we have received more surveys from younger people.

Gender – we received nearly 50/50 male and female responses



Ethnicity



■ 362 said White British

■ 55 said mixed multiple ethnic groups

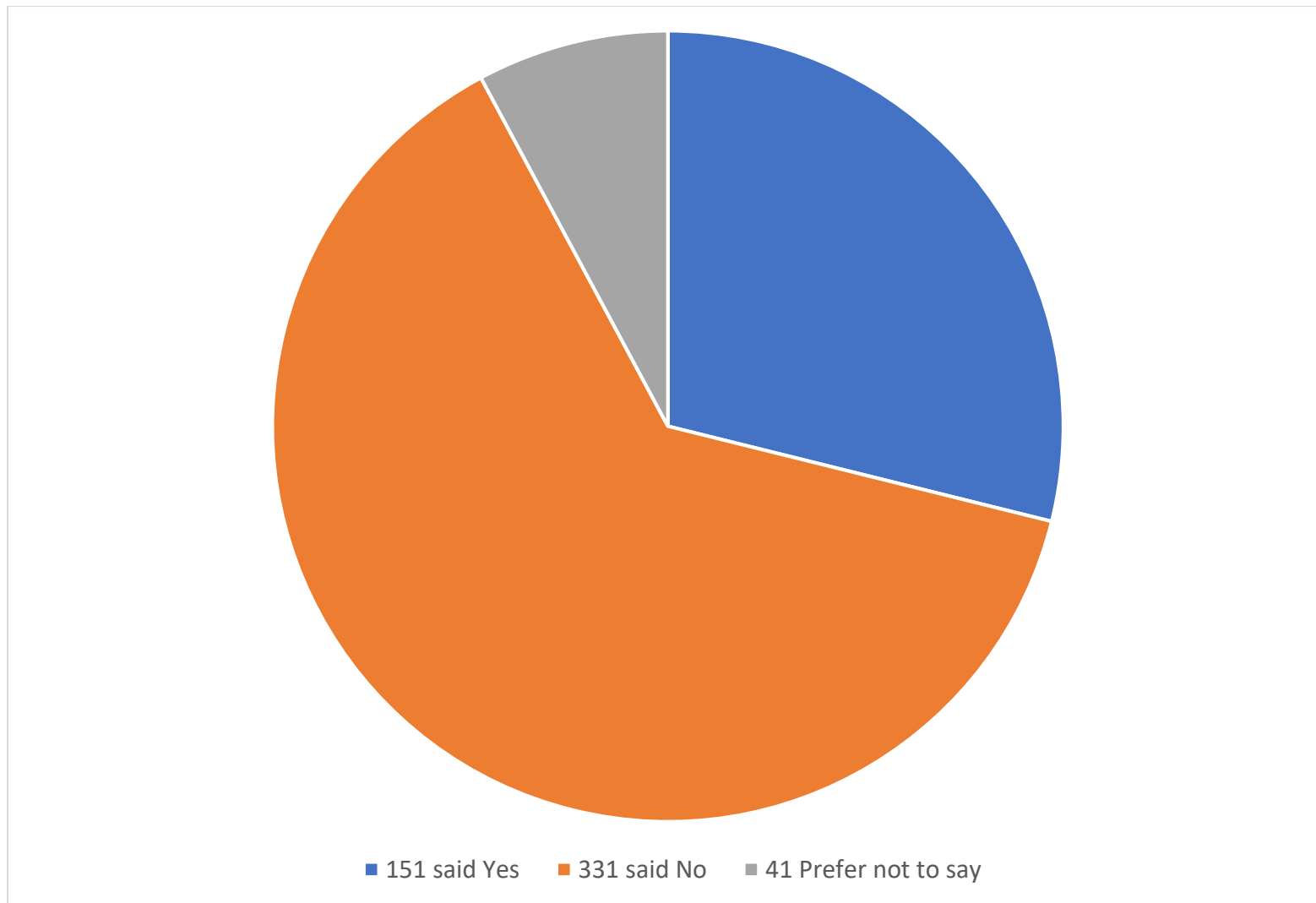
■ 40 said Asian/Asian British

■ 37 said Black/Caribbean British

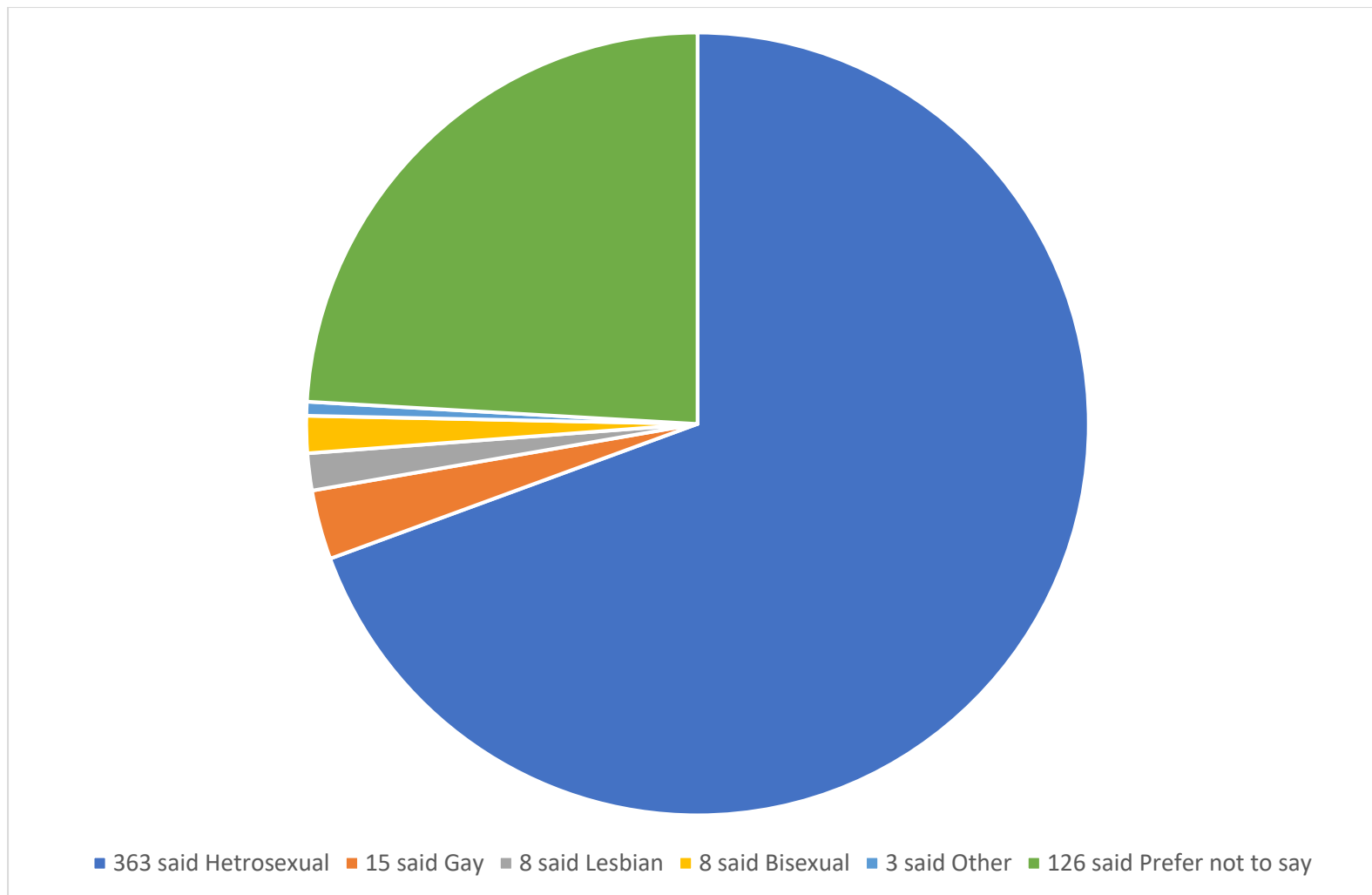
■ 17 Preferred not to say

■ 12 said other with 9 saying Irish Gypsy

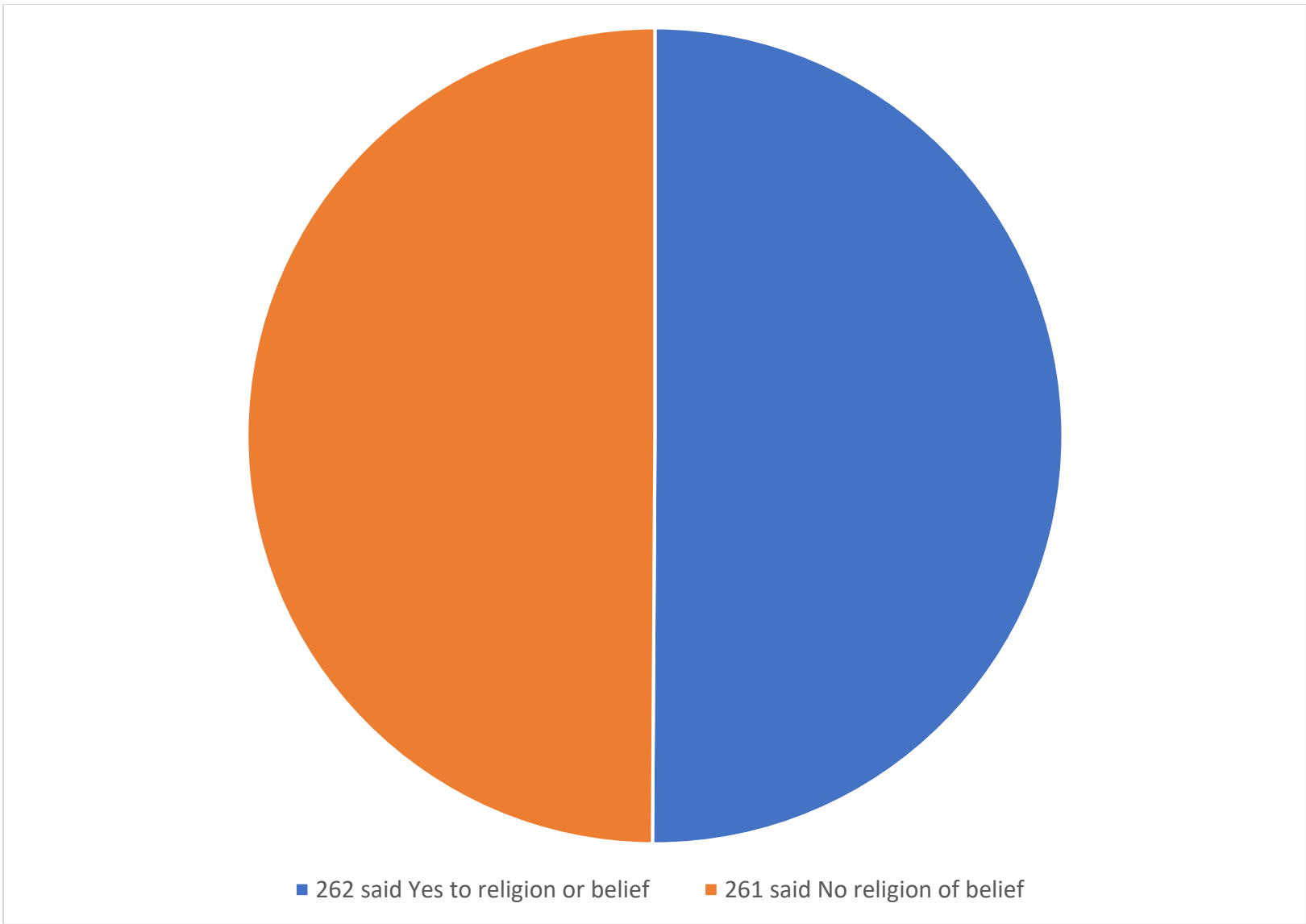
Disability or health condition

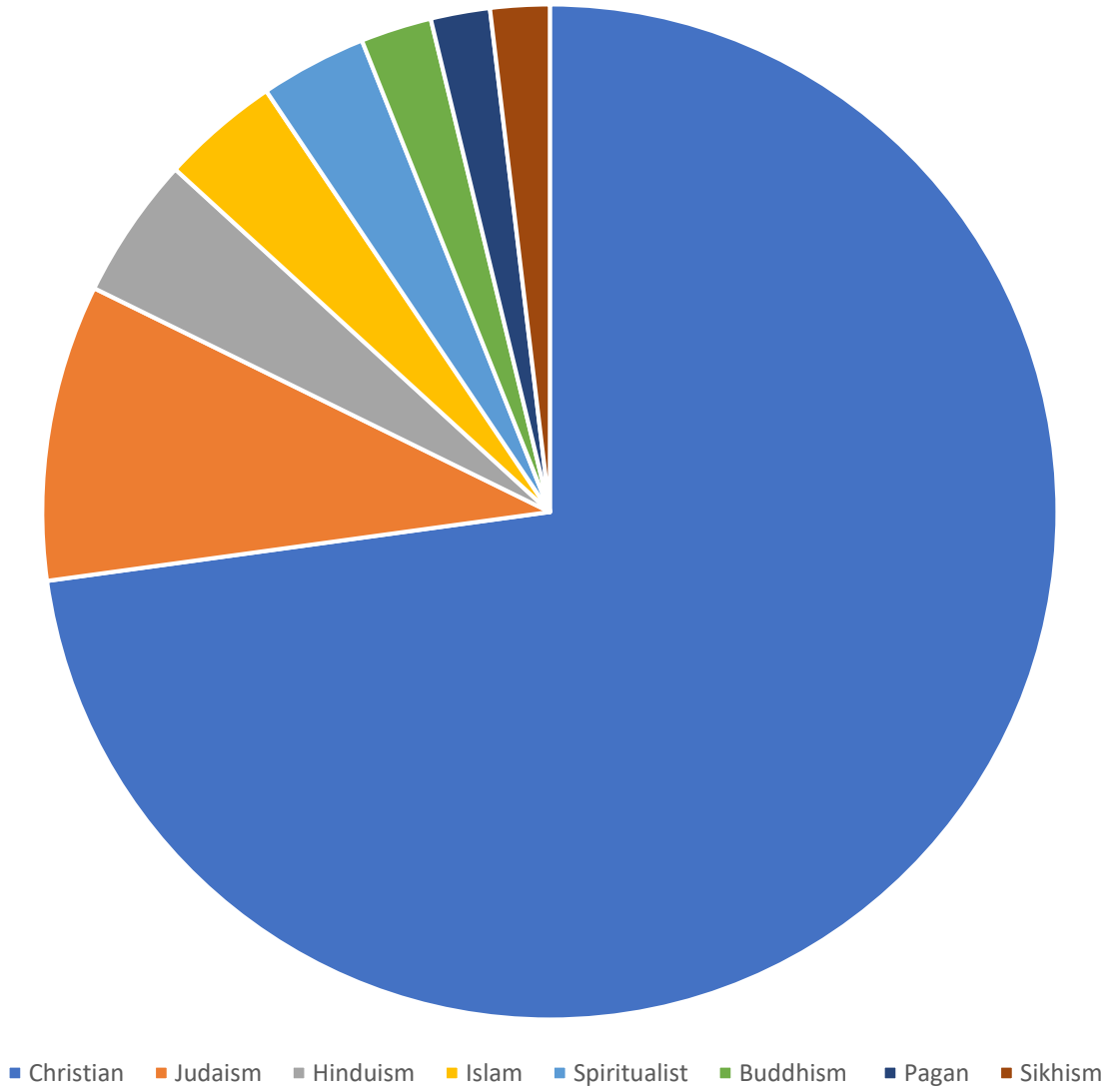


Sexual orientation



Religion, belief or spirituality





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REPORT AUTHORS: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

SUBJECT: THE 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

For further information on this Report contact: G Chambers
Assistant Chief Officer/Treasurer
Tel No: 01234 845000

Background Papers:

2022/23 Draft Revenue Budget Report to the FRA meeting on 11th January 2022.

PURPOSE:

To present information to allow the Authority to:

- a. Set a budget and precept level for 2022/23 in line with statutory requirements;
- b. Approve a Medium-Term Revenue Plan for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26;
- c. Approve a Medium-Term Capital Programme for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26;
- 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 2022/23 that:
 - a. A Revenue Budget requirement is set at £33.819m, met as indicated in paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - b. In meeting this budget requirement, the Authority's Precept be set at £23.401m and that consequently, a council tax increase of 1.99% up to £104.45 per Band D equivalent property, calculated as shown in Paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - c. In order to meet the Precept requirement, the 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 one of the Medium-Term Revenue Plans attached at Appendix 1 and 1a to this report, in doing so, to also approve the 2022/23 savings and efficiencies detailed at Appendix 2
 3. That the 2021/22 year-end underspend is allocated to the Pay/Pensions 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 and the Reserves Strategy at Appendix 5.
 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 6 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 2022/23 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 1.99%.
 - b. Proposing significant efficiency savings.
- 1.3 There has been a considerable amount of work towards the 2022/23 budget setting over the past year. This has included a robust review and scrutiny of service wide budgets by the Assistant Chief Officer/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 budget consultation questions were approved by the Authority on 14 December 2021 for consultation. The responses to the budget and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) consultation are covered under another agenda item at this meeting.

The budget includes the funding required to address the actions within the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and also to address any recommendations agreed to be implemented from the HMICFRS tranche 2 inspection.

- 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 2022/23

- 2.1 The provisional settlement for 2022/23 was announced on 17 December 2021. The final settlement figures for 2022/23 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 2021/22 and 2022/23 revenue grant funding and the Government's forecast total business rates funding. This is the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). A further detailed breakdown of this is included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Table 1: Settlement Funding Assessment split

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	£m Variance
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	2.333	2.405	0.072
Business Rates baseline funding	5.942	5.942	0
Settlement Funding Assessment	8.275	8.347	0.072

- 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 2023 or beyond, it is anticipated that the Business Rates funding will increase and the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will cease. The RSG has still been identified in Appendix 1 in years 2023/24 onwards for transparency, albeit this funding may be included within other lines such as business rates from this year.
- 2.3 The Authority's Business Rates Baseline Funding Level (BFL) has been assessed at £5.942m by the MHCLG for 2022/23 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.102m (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 £3.840m from central government (to get back to the £5.942m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The RSG and business rates funding of £8.747m shown in Appendix 1 for 2022/23 is split between £2.405m RSG funding and £6.342m Business Rates (with the local share of business rates at £2.502m).
- 2.4 Fire grants will be treated outside of the above funding mechanisms and it is estimated that the Authority will receive £220k in 2022/23 for Firelink and New Dimensions. The final figures are yet to be confirmed.

- 2.5 The council tax referendum cap was confirmed in December 2021 as part of the provisional settlement. The proposed council tax figure of £104.45 is a 1.99% increase, therefore under the new 2% capping limit.

As previously reported, eight Fire & Rescues Services were permitted to raise their council tax by up to £5. Police and Crime Commissioners have the option to increase their council tax charge by up to £10 per annum for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

3. Proposed Budget and Precept for 2022/23 and Medium-Term Revenue Plan

- 3.1 In setting a budget for 2022/23, the Authority must take into account the implications for the following years' financial strategy, namely 2023/24 to 2025/26. There are material 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 The settlement figures for 2022/23 were the third single year settlement. A three-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was carried out over 2021, however a single year's funding information has again provided by to Local Government. It is hoped that figures will be released for 2023/24 and 2024/25 at this time next year.
- 3.3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the budget projections for 2022/23 to 2025/26 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 and 1a, 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 2022/23 is recommended to be set as detailed in Appendices 1 and 1a, depending on which pay award assumption the FRA agrees to adopt for 2022/23. Key assumptions include the continuation of the Government funding the Firefighters employer pension contributions increase, funding the National insurance increase and Firefighters and non-operational staff pay awards. Assumptions and Uncertainties are detailed in the MTFS.

- 3.6 Following the draft budget report that was presented to the FRA on 11 January 2022, the three Unitary Authorities have reconfirmed their taxbases for 2022/23. This revised taxbase figure, when compared to the 2022/23 taxabse forecast at the time of setting the 2021/22 budget, will increase the council tax income to the Authority by £0.540m. The forecast Collection Fund figures as included on line 60 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 details the Government funding of RSG. It should be noted that from 2023/24 it is anticipated that RSG will cease and the equivalent funding, or potentially at a revised level, will be included within business rates. For transparency, it is currently still shown separately, although the narrative in Appendix 1 line 55 notes this. The RSG for 2022/23 increases by £72k when compared to the 2021/22 figure.

Table 2: Key Budget Information

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	Change £m
Budget Requirement (£m)	31.713	33.819	2.106
Funded by:			
Precept Requirement (£m)	22.193	23.401	1.208
Central and Local Government Funding (£m)	8.578	8.747	0.169
Section 31 Business Rates grant	0.310	0.382	0.072
S31 Multiplier Cap grant	0.293	0.488	0.195
Collection Fund surplus/(deficit)	(1.196)	0.345	1.541
Forecast 75% Coll Fund support	0.037	0	(0.037)
New Council Tax Support Grant	0.399	0	(0.399)
New Business Rates Grant (retail discount relief)	0.845	0	(0.845)
Use of Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	0.254	0.046	(0.208)
New Revenue Grant 2022/23	0	0.410	0.410
Funding Total (£m)	£31.713	£33.819	£2.106
Tax Base (Band D equiv. properties)	216,704	224,040	7,336
Band 'D' Council Tax	£102.41	£104.45	£2.04

- 3.9 The Authority's Officers and Treasurer recommend that the Council Tax increase of 1.99% should be implemented. This is based on need, as the current MTRP shows that there will be a future funding need with material savings and efficiencies to deliver too. The results of the 2022/23 budget consultation support this increase, please see the Consultation Report also being presented to this meeting of the FRA.

There is planning time between now and 2025/26 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. Even with the utilisation of reserves for investment in transformational efficiencies and also budget balancing, there is no budget gap forecast over the medium term up to and including 2024/25 (the current CSR period).

The 2023/24 financial year is likely to see changes in Government funding to local authorities. Local Authorities will potentially be able to keep more of their business rate income, subject to the redistribution via tariffs and top ups. The RSG is anticipated to cease and additional responsibilities may be passed to councils too. What these are is yet to be confirmed.

- 3.10 Table 3 below details the council tax per band. As there is a 1.99% increase from the 2021/22 level, there is a change across all the valuation bands. The council tax of £104.45 equates to, for a Band D equivalent property, 29 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	69.63
B	7/9	81.24
C	8/9	92.84
D	1	104.45
E	11/9	127.66
F	13/9	150.87
G	15/9	174.08
H	2	208.90

In summary, the taxbase of 224,040 Band D equivalents, multiplied by the Band D council tax of £104.45 equals the precept of £23.401m.

- 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 Assistant Chief Officer/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. Column 3 details 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 2022/23. These figures are before adjustments of the prior years deficit spreading.

Table 4: Precepts (before Collection Fund prior year spreading adjustments)

Unitary Councils (1)	£ (2) Council Tax £'000	£ (3) Business Rates £'000
Bedford Borough	6,470	649
Luton Borough	5,508	653
Central Bedfordshire	11,423	1,200
Total	23,401	2,502

- 3.12 At the time of writing this report, not all of the NNDR1 returns from the Unitary Authorities have been received. The above figures are based on the most recent information received. It is anticipated that any updates will not be material and will be amended via the contribution to/from the Transformation Reserve. Therefore, confirmation of the Section 31 grants are outstanding too.
- 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 £2.4m for 2022/23. This equates to 7.1% of the Authority's budget requirement, which is circa the average for all Combined Fire Authorities. This is after a comprehensive review and setting up of specific ear-marked reserves of £2.605m (not including some specific reserves such as the Transformational reserve and Capital Contingency Reserve). It is proposed that the 2021/22 year end underspend, that is currently forecast to be circa £171k, is allocated to a Pay and Pensions Reserve, following this being utilised in year for the unbudgeted pay awards.

The Transformational reserve is planned to be £2.861m at the 2021/22 year end. It is currently considered adequate enough based on projections to fund transformational initiatives and balance the forecast 2022/23 to 2024/25 budgets and beyond. This is detailed at the foot of the MTRP in Appendix 1.

- 4.2 The reserves strategy is attached at Appendix 5. 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 for transformation initiatives and future years' budget setting processes.

As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that the Transformational earmarked reserve will be used over the medium term to close any budget gaps in the financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26 and to invest in transformational efficiencies and the environmental agenda. This strategy will ensure that additional savings and efficiencies are introduced in a planned and effective manner over the years.

For 2022/23, the Capital Reserves have been reduced by £0.488m. This is following a detailed review of the capital items that the reserves were allocated to and the rescheduling of these over the forthcoming years that have new budgets allocated to them. This therefore releases previously allocated capital monies to support the capital programme and therefore less revenue contributions in 2022/23.

5. Proposed Medium-Term Capital Programme

- 5.1 As anticipated, there is no Government funding or bidding round for capital in the 2022/23 budget. This was the position for the 2016/17 to 2021/22 financial years too. The Authority, in 2012/13 and before, used to receive an annual capital grant of £1m.

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 circa £1m per annum (with fluctuations) from 2022/23 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.

- 5.2 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 2022/23 Capital Programme.

- 5.3 Key items of note in the proposed 2022/23 Capital Programme of £1.357m are:

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

6. Proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 6.1 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 2022/23 revenue budget and capital programme, but also sets the scene for future years.

- 6.2 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.

7. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

- 7.1 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 6.

8. Implications

8.1 **Financial:**

- 8.1.1 The resource implications are detailed throughout this report and appendices, particularly in the MTFS.
- 8.1.2 The Treasurer’s statement comments on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of the Authority’s reserves with reference to risks identified.

8.2 **Legal:**

- 8.2.1 The Authority must set a balanced budget by midnight on 1 March 2022.
- 8.2.2 The Authority has specific legal duties in relation to equalities and financial decision-making.
- 8.2.3 There are no further specific legal issues arising from this report.

8.3 **Equality, Human Resources, Environmental, Policy, Other:**

8.3.1 Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is a modern, single and streamlined legal framework to effectively tackle disadvantage and discrimination. The protected characteristics covered under the Act are: Age, Race, Sex, Gender reassignment, Disability, Religion or belief, Sexual orientation, Marriage or civil partnership and Pregnancy and maternity.

The general equality duty is set out under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and aims to help public bodies meet the specific duties. The aim of the general equality duty is to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Public bodies must take into consideration the advancement of equality into their day-to-day business and must exercise their functions, having due regard to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Organisations must have adequate and accurate equality evidence, properly understood and analysed, to provide the root of effective compliance with the general duty. Evidence of compliance must be recorded and stored.

8.3.2 Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Human Rights Commission has the power to enforce the duty, if a public authority does not comply with the general duty. Failure to comply can be challenged by means of a compliance notice to the High Court.

8.3.3 Human Rights Act 1998

Public sector organisations are also subject to the Human Rights Act 1998. The purpose of the Act is to support a culture of respect for everyone's human rights by embedding the principles of dignity, equality, respect, fairness and autonomy through improved public services, and for public service providers to use the tool to improve the quality of services.

8.3.4 BFRS will undertake the 'Due regard' of the budget building process to mitigate any adverse impact on protected groups, and beyond.

**ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**GAVIN CHAMBERS
TREASURER**

Final Budget Meeting 10th February 2022

		Original	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
MEDIUM TERM REVENUE PLAN 2022/23 TO 2025/26 with 3% Pay Increase in 2022/23	32,035	31,104	31,104	33,103	34,836	35,001
Base Budget	32,035	31,104	31,104	33,103	34,836	35,001
1 Removal of 3% Fire Fighter Pay increase 2020/21 from Base Budget (will review pay award EMR)	-575	0	0	0	0	0
2 Increase to LGPS pay 2020/21 2% budgeted but 2.75% agreed	42	0	0	0	0	0
3 Firefighter Salaries differences between pensions and scales due to retirements and recruitment	0	0	-90	0	0	0
4 Unbudgeted 2021/22 Green Book pay award (1.75% estimated)	0	0	108	0	0	0
5 Unbudgeted 2021/22 Grey Book pay award (1.5% July 2021 - March 2022)	0	0	194	0	0	0
6 Increase in Green Book CMT Post	0	0	107	0	0	0
7 Reduction in Grey Book Area Manager post (see above)	0	0	-122	0	0	0
8 Additional Bank Holidays	3	3	13	-13	0	0
9 FF Pensions changes	-23	0	0	0	0	0
10 To capture additional FF employer costs	1,700	0	1,700	0	0	0
11 Offset by grant	-1,700	0	-1,700	0	0	0
12 Reduction in Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) relating to borrowing costs on previous years vehicles	-140	-11	-11	0	0	0
13 Budget Realignment	308	-51	27	-53	-80	0
14 Apprenticeship Levy	2	2	2	2	2	2
15 SCAPE (FF Pensions Scheme) Costs from 01/04/2019. Grant from 21/22	0	0	0	0	0	0
16 Local Government Superannuation Revaluation Lump Sum	10	9	9	20	20	20
17 Increase in Employer National Insurance (NI) Contributions (1.25% from April 2022 - offset by new grant see line 63 below)	0	0	170	0	0	0
Total Base Budget Adjustments	-373	-48	407	-44	-58	22
19						
Forecast Variations						
21 Investment Interest Decrease/(Increase)	50	0	0	0	0	0
22 Revenue Contribution to Capital	138	663	411	1,193	-220	1,232
23 Creation of New Corporate Reserve for future Pensions contributions, then removal	-1,000	0	0	0	0	0
24 Non-Uniform Incremental Drift	75	41	88	57	33	14
25 Transformational Savings/Efficiencies	-181	-239	-203	-92	-114	-150
26 Scrutiny Panel Decisions	-10	0	-8	0	0	0
Total Forecast Variations	-928	465	288	1,158	-301	1,096
28						
Inflation						
30 Fire-fighters pay - 1.5% 1 April to 30 June 2022, then 3% July 2022 till June 2023, followed by 2% following years	71	0	79	113	79	79
31 Fire-fighters pay - 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023 (3% 2022, then 2% each following year)	0	220	325	226	231	235
32 Retained Pay (As per Fire-Fighters) April to June	22	0	15	10	11	12
33 July to March	0	30	53	42	37	37
34 Control pay (As per Fire-Fighters) April to June	14	0	4	5	5	5
35 July to March	0	20	23	19	15	16
36 Non Uniformed pay (3% effective from 01/04/2022, then 2% thereafter)	0	121	206	144	147	150
37 Member Allowances	0	2	2	2	2	2
38 Gas, Electricity, Water and Derv Inflation (as below but 0% Gas & Electric in 2022/23 the 30% Gas & 25% Elec in 2023/24)	27	28	24	24	21	21
39 Prices/Contract Inflation (4% in 2022/23 followed by 2% 2023/24 - 2025/26)	76	78	135	68	70	71
Total Inflation	210	499	866	653	618	628
41						
Budget Pressures						
43 FMS3' bids (Current Year MTFP process)	480	167	381	-202	-39	0
44 FMS3' bids (Previous Years MTFP process)	-320	-199	57	168	-55	-7
45						
Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure	31,104	31,988	33,103	34,836	35,001	36,740
Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	609	116	716	-1,164	-189	-1,003
48						
Estimated Budget Requirement	31,713	32,104	33,819	33,672	34,812	35,737
50						
Budget Requirement Increase Year on Year	650.9	307.4	2,105.9	1,568.0	992.9	2,065.2
% Budget Increase	2.1%	1.0%	6.6%	4.9%	2.9%	6.1%
53						
Financed by:						
55						
56 Revenue Support Grant (RSG): expected to cease in 2022/23 and be included within increased business rates funding	2,333	2,333	2,405	2,479	2,555	2,634
57 Business Rate Baseline	2,405	2,429	2,502	2,502	2,502	2,502
58 Business Rate Top Up	3,840	3,878	3,840	3,840	3,840	3,840
59 S31 from Multiplier cap and Small Business Rate Relief	293	293	382	382	382	382
60 Business Rates Grant (under indexing the multiplier compensation)	310	310	488	488	488	488
61 Collection Fund Surplus (2021/22 used in 2022/23 budget) - net Business Rates and Council Tax	0	0	391	0	0	0
62 Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	-1,196	-83	-46	-46	0	0
63 Use of Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	254	83	46	46	0	0
64 Council Tax (the remainder)	22,193	22,860	23,401	24,221	25,045	25,891
65 New Local Council Tax Support Grant (to compensate for taxbase reductions)	399	0	0	0	0	0
66 Estimate of new 75% Collection Fund relief	37	0	0	0	0	0
67 Business Rates retail, nursery relief (NNDR 1 and 3 timings)	845	0	0	0	0	0
68 New Grant 2022/23 only (expected to be baselined thereafter, covering employer NI increase and other)	0	0	410	-240	0	0
69						
70	31,713	32,104	33,819	33,672	34,812	35,737
71						
72 Band D equivalent Tax base	216,704	218,871	224,040	227,362	230,513	233,647
73 % change on Band D's	-0.55%	1.00%	3.39%	1.48%	1.39%	1.36%
74 Leading to an average council tax (Band D) of	102.41	104.45	104.45	106.53	108.65	110.81
75						
76 % increase	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
78						
Use of Transformational Reserves Summary	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
80	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
81	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
82 Transformational Earmark Reserve for Budget Setting	2,502	2,861	2,861	3,127	1,513	1,274
Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	609	116	716	-1,164	-189	-1,003
Annual use of Transformational Reserve for Strategic Projects and Improvements	-250	-250	-250	-250	-250	-250
85 Use of Transformation Reserve for Green/Environmental agenda	0	0	-200	-200	0	0
86 Reduction of General Reserve from £2.6m to £2.4m in 20/21, with potential to reduce to £2.1m	0	0	0	0	200	0
87 Net Balance Transformational Earmark Reserves	2,861	2,727	3,127	1,513	1,274	21

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Final Budget Meeting 10th February 2022

		Original	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
MEDIUM TERM REVENUE PLAN 2022/23 TO 2025/26 with 4% Pay Increase in 2022/23	32,035	31,104	31,104	33,306	35,090	35,260
Base Budget	32,035	31,104	31,104	33,306	35,090	35,260
1 Removal of 3% Fire Fighter Pay increase 2020/21 from Base Budget (will review pay award EMR)	-575	0	0	0	0	0
2 Increase to LGPS pay 2020/21 2% budgeted but 2.75% agreed	42	0	0	0	0	0
3 Firefighter Salaries differences between pensions and scales due to retirements and recruitment	0	0	-90	0	0	0
4 Unbudgeted 2021/22 Green Book pay award (1.75% estimated)	0	0	108	0	0	0
5 Unbudgeted 2021/22 Grey Book pay award (1.5% July 2021 - March 2022)	0	0	194	0	0	0
6 Increase in Green Book CMT Post	0	0	107	0	0	0
7 Reduction in Grey Book Area Manager post (see above)	0	0	-122	0	0	0
8 Additional Bank Holidays	3	3	13	-13	0	0
9 FF Pensions changes	-23	0	0	0	0	0
10 To capture additional FF employer costs	1,700	0	1,700	0	0	0
11 Offset by grant	-1,700	0	-1,700	0	0	0
12 Reduction in Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) relating to borrowing costs on previous years vehicles	-140	-11	-11	0	0	0
13 Budget Realignment	308	-51	27	-53	-80	0
14 Apprenticeship Levy	2	2	2	2	2	2
15 Local Government Superannuation Revaluation Lump Sum	10	9	9	20	20	20
16 Increase in Employer National Insurance (NI) Contributions (1.25% from April 2022 - offset by new grant see line 63 below)	0	0	170	0	0	0
17 Total Base Budget Adjustments	-373	-48	407	-44	-58	22
19 Forecast Variations						
20 Investment Interest Decrease/(Increase)	50	0	0	0	0	0
21 Revenue Contribution to Capital	138	663	411	1,193	-220	1,232
22 Creation of New Corporate Reserve for future Pensions contributions, then removal	-1,000	0	0	0	0	0
23 Non-Uniform Incremental Drift	75	41	88	57	33	14
24 Transformational Savings/Efficiencies	-181	-239	-203	-92	-114	-150
25 Scrutiny Panel Decisions	-10	0	-8	0	0	0
26 Total Forecast Variations	-928	465	288	1,158	-301	1,096
28 Inflation						
29 Fire-fighters pay - 1.5% 1 April to 30 June 2022, then 4% July 2022 till June 2023, followed by 2% following years	71	0	79	152	80	81
30 Fire-fighters pay - 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023 (4% 2022, then 2% each following year)	0	220	438	228	232	237
31 Retained Pay (As per Fire-Fighters) April to June	22	0	21	12	11	12
32 July to March	0	30	69	47	37	37
33 Control pay (As per Fire-Fighters) April to June	14	0	5	7	6	5
34 July to March	0	20	30	18	15	16
35 Non Uniformed pay (4% effective from 01/04/2022, then 2% thereafter)	0	121	274	146	149	151
36 Member Allowances	0	2	2	2	2	2
37 Gas, Electricity, Water and Derv Inflation (as below but 0% Gas & Electric in 2022/23 the 30% Gas & 25% Elec in 2023/24)	27	28	24	24	21	21
38 Prices/Contract Inflation (4% in 2022/23 followed by 2% 2023/24 - 2025/26)	76	78	135	68	70	71
39 Total Inflation	210	499	1,077	704	623	633
41 Budget Pressures						
42 FMS3' bids (Current Year MTFP process)	480	167	373	-202	-39	0
43 FMS3' bids (Previous Years MTFP process)	-320	-199	57	168	-55	-7
45 Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure	31,104	31,988	33,306	35,090	35,260	37,004
46 Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	609	116	513	-1,418	-448	-1,267
48 Estimated Budget Requirement	31,713	32,104	33,819	33,672	34,812	35,737
50 Budget Requirement Increase Year on Year	650.9	307.4	2,105.9	1,568.0	992.9	2,065.2
51 % Budget Increase	2.1%	1.0%	6.6%	4.9%	2.9%	6.1%
53 Financed by:						
55 Revenue Support Grant (RSG): expected to cease in 2022/23 and be included within increased business rates funding	2,333	2,333	2,405	2,479	2,555	2,634
56 Business Rate Baseline	2,405	2,429	2,502	2,502	2,502	2,502
57 Business Rate Top Up	3,840	3,878	3,840	3,840	3,840	3,840
58 S31 from Multiplier cap and Small Business Rate Relief	293	293	382	382	382	382
59 Business Rates Grant (under indexing the multiplier compensation)	310	310	488	488	488	488
60 Collection Fund Surplus (2021/22 used in 2022/23 budget) - net Business Rates and Council Tax	0	0	391	0	0	0
61 Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit)	-1,196	-83	-46	-46	0	0
62 Use of Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	254	83	46	46	0	0
63 Council Tax (the remainder)	22,193	22,860	23,401	24,221	25,045	25,891
64 New Local Council Tax Support Grant (to compensate for taxbase reductions)	399	0	0	0	0	0
65 Estimate of new 75% Collection Fund relief	37	0	0	0	0	0
66 Business Rates retail, nursery relief (NNDR 1 and 3 timings)	845	0	0	0	0	0
67 New Grant 2022/23 only (expected to be baselined thereafter, covering employer NI increase and other)	0	0	410	-240	0	0
68	31,713	32,104	33,819	33,672	34,812	35,737
71 Band D equivalent Tax base	216,704	218,871	224,040	227,362	230,513	233,647
72 % change on Band D's	-0.55%	1.00%	3.39%	1.48%	1.39%	1.36%
73 Leading to an average council tax (Band D) of	102.41	104.45	104.45	106.53	108.65	110.81
75 % increase	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%	1.99%
78 Use of Transformational Reserves Summary	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
81 Transformational Earmark Reserve for Budget Setting	2,502	2,861	2,861	2,924	1,056	558
82 Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves	609	116	513	-1,418	-448	-1,267
83 Annual use of Transformational Reserve for Strategic Projects and Improvements	-250	-250	-250	-250	-250	-250
84 Use of Transformation Reserve for Green/Environmental agenda	0	0	-200	-200	0	0
85 Reduction of General Reserve from £2.6m to £2.4m in 20/21, with potential to reduce to £2.1m	0	0	0	0	200	0
86 Net Balance Transformational Earmark Reserves	2,861	2,727	2,924	1,056	558	-959

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Medium Term Savings and Efficiencies 2022/23 to 2025/26

£'000s 2021/22	Ref	Savings/Efficiencies	£'000s 2022/23	£'000s 2023/24	£'000s 2024/25	£'000s 2025/26
5	1	Income from Property Rents & Collaboration				
15	2	Change of 4th Area Commander post to Green Book Head of Service (subject to natural turnover)				
5	3	Energy Management Savings (Insulation & works following bid for grant)	5			
13	4	Team review/restructure				
64	5	Efficiencies from Operational Review (Linked to ongoing CRMP work)		50	100	150
6	6	Freedom of Information and Customer Complaints software				
20	7	Corporate Telephony				
25	8	Income from Workshops Non business Activity	5	5		
	9	Post sharing - work on Fire Investigation ISO17020 project (part time post shared with Cambs & Herts FRS)		10		
18	10	Saving from cessation of software, linked with new purchase of GIS and Data modelling solution				
		<u>New for Budget Setting 2022/23</u>				
	11	Combine 3 existing BA courses (CFBT, BAR and TVT) into a new Tactical Firefighting Course negating the use of outside venue and instruction.	20			
	12	ASPIRE Leadership Programme		2		
	13	FF Apprenticeship residential element removal		35		
	14	Drone Income	2			
	15	Collaboration Income - Partner at Bedford station	4			
	16	Team Structure and Staffing review	5			
	17	Occupation Health system review	2			
	18	Cleaning Contract	0	26	14	
	19	Business Rates Reductions	66			
	20	Collaboration - vehicle servicing income	50			
	21	Cessation Wholetime Recruitment system	4	4		
	22	Surplus redistribution from the Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) (estimate for 2022/23 only)	40	(40)		
171			203	92	114	150

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-23 to 2025-26

Ref	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Capital Programme	Capital Budgets 2022/23	Capital Budgets 2023/24	Capital Budgets 2024/25	Capital Budgets 2025/26
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
	Scheme				
	Fleet:				
1	Revised - Vehicles/associated equipment	290	1,157	1,000	1,130
	ICT Projects:				
	IT Developments				
2	a. Endpoint Refresh with Desktop & Laptop Deployment			220	
	b. Renewal of Mobilising System Mobile Data Terminal & Risk Information MDTs		310		
	c. Server & Storage Hardware Renewal		75		
	d. Additional SAN storage	85			
	e. Equipment refresh (tablets and phones)	116			156
	General: Property Works service wide ref 3 to 10 below				
	Various: Lighting replacements, CCTV, fire protection, doors & windows, security gates, elec infrastructure, EV charging	86	308	222	386
3	Major Roofing Replacements	323	56	386	0
4	Drill yard resurfacing	32	12	20	30
5	WC/Shower facility refurbishments	158	22	50	42
6	Heating - boiler replacements	66	26	45	0
7	Bay Floor replacements	65	80	0	20
8	Dormitory refurbishment	30	20	20	0
9	Station Kitchen Refurbishments	21	7	7	10
10					
11	Fitness Equipment Expenditure	5	15	0	
	Other New for 2022/23				
12	Drone (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle capability and enhancements)	30	0	0	0
13	Future Capital Schemes yet to be identified	0	0	0	1,000
14	Electronic Fuel (Diesel) Monitoring system	50	0	0	0
	TOTAL	1,357	2,088	1,970	2,774
	Capital Financing Summary				
	RCCO = Revenue Contribution to Capital	869	2,062	1,842	2,774
	Capital Receipts & Reserve Utilisation	488	26	128	0
	Total	1,357	2,088	1,970	2,774

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Bedfordshire

Fire and Rescue Service

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Medium-Term Financial Strategy

2022/23 – 2025/26

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Annex 1 Medium-Term Revenue Plan with 3% salary increase
(not attached to this version, see Appendix 1 of the 2022/23 budget report)

Annex 1a Medium-Term Revenue Plan with 4% salary increase
(not attached to this version, see Appendix 1a of the 2022/23 budget report)

Annex 2 Medium-Term Capital Programme
(not attached to this version, see Appendix 3 of the 2022/23 budget report)

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 2022/23 to 2025/26 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 as one example and more are likely to follow. The much anticipated White Paper may shed some light on the future direction of PFCCs.

In April 2017 the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) was formed. The NFCC is made up of senior representatives from all fire and rescue services across the UK.

The new Council provides 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 (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, HMICFRS) has been created. The Authority's review took place in the first tranche of inspections in 2021. The results of

this can be found at <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/fire-and-rescue-service-inspections-2021-22-tranche-1/>

A Covid-19 HMICFRS pandemic review took place in late 2020 and the Service/Authority had its second full inspection in 2021. The links for these can be found at:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/the-fire-and-rescue-services-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-2020/>

and

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/frs-assessment-2021-22-bedfordshire/>

The Authority has implemented 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 June 2018) to provide clarity for Fire and Rescue Services on the Government's expectations.

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.

Reform

When the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, outlined her vision 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 (2017 to 2019), then Nick Hurd, followed by Kit Malthouse and since September 2021 Lord Greenhalgh.

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 the 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 accounts 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. 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.

2.2 National Financial Context:

The public sector received a three-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in December 2021, following three years of annual budget allocations from Government.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, presented the outcome of the 2021 CSR on 27th October 2021. The highlights of this have been presented to the Authority at its January meeting, these included that the council tax referendum cap for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authorities would be 2%.

Following the announcement of the CSR, the provisional financial settlement was announced on 17th December 2021, but only for one year 2022/23.

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 growing and ageing population of over 682,311¹ 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

¹ 2020 mid-year population estimates

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.

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 16 million passengers a year in total.

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 of officers.
- Significant ICT investment to enable working from home across the service in response to the Covid Pandemic
- Introduction of a new Mobilising system

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 annual CRMP process enable the development of more detailed plans across the Service and in particular the programme of strategic improvement projects / actions 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 CRMP led to the development of six aims (see below). Our Mission is *to provide an outstanding Fire and Rescue Services that help make Bedfordshire safer.*

For us, delivering on our mission means focusing on the following six aims:

- 1 **Preventing** fires and other emergencies happening
- 2 **Protecting** people and property when fires happen
- 3 **Responding** to fires and other emergencies promptly and effectively
- 4 **Empowering** our people as we work together to make Bedfordshire safer
- 5 **Utilising** our assets and resources efficiently and effectively
- 6 **Maximising** use of data and digital solutions to drive improvements

Please refer to the CRMP for further detail.

The budget also financially and strategically supports the Service's Values, including new 2022/23 budget bids. The Values are:

- We've got your back – striving to keep us all safe, while being supportive and inclusive.
- We are to be different – we are bold in our approach, we welcome challenge and are open to innovative ideas
- Every contact counts – making a positive difference each and every time, with respect and professionalism.
- We are accountable – we are transparent, trustworthy and responsible for our actions.

3.3. Government Funding Settlement:

The Government's provisional settlement was announced on 17 December 2021, with the final settlement figures to be confirmed in early February 2022. The settlement figures are detailed below in Table 1.

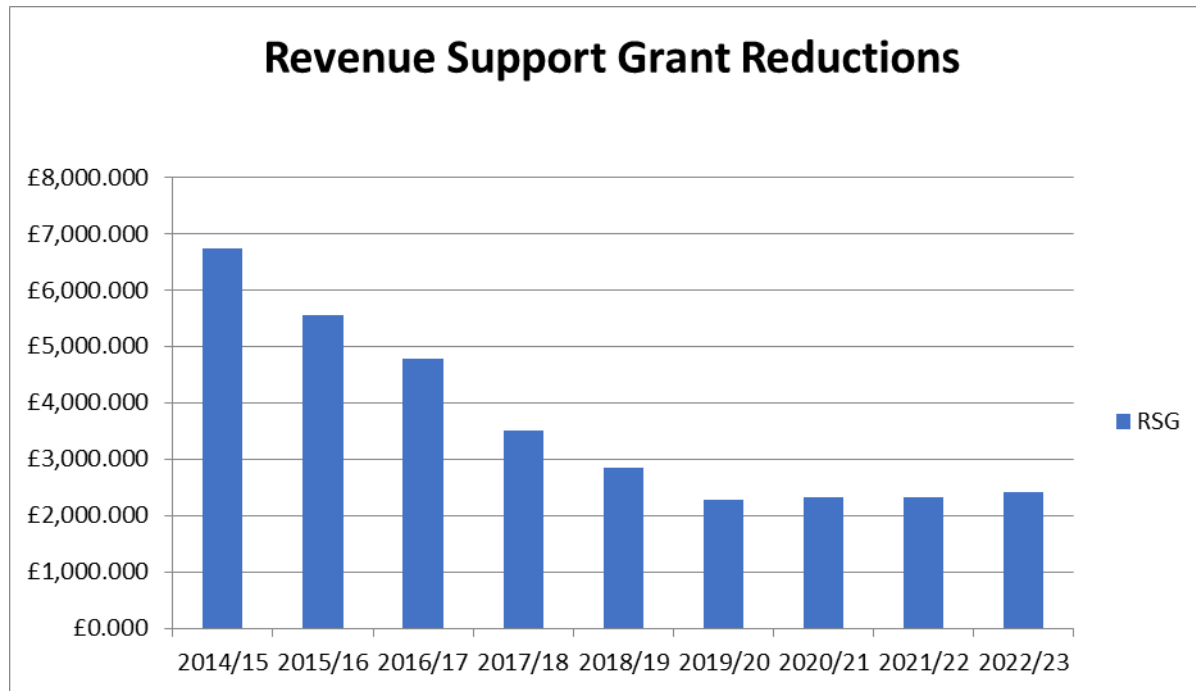
Table 1: Government Grant Revenue Funding

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	£m Variance
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	2.333	2.405	0.072
Business Rates baseline funding	5.942	5.942	0.000
Settlement Funding Assessment	8.275	8.347	0.072

As detailed above, the funding increase between 2021/22 and 2022/23 is £0.072m 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 from 2014/15 to 2022/23



The Authority's Business Rates Baseline Funding Level (BFL) has been assessed at £5.942m by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHC) for 2022/23 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.102m (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 £3.840m from central government (to get back to the

£5.942m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The RSG and business rates funding of £8.747m shown in Appendix 1 for 2022/23 is split between £2.405m RSG funding and £6.342m Business Rates (with the local share of business rates at £2.502m).

The split of this between local authorities is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Business Rates income.

Authority	2022/23 £
Bedford	649,338
Luton	652,871
Central Beds	1,200,000
Total	2,502,209

The above figures are fed into the MTRP. As are the Section 31 Business Rates Grants currently forecast at £382,000 in total from the three Unitary Authorities for 2022/23 (subject to final update). In addition there is annual Government S31 funding (multiplier compensation), £488k for 2022/23 and a new revenue grant of £410k.

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

Table 3: Detailed income split

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	Change £m
Budget Requirement (£m)	31.713	33.819	2.106
<u>Funded by:</u>			
Precept Requirement (£m)	22.193	23.401	1.208
Central and Local Government Funding (£m)	8.578	8.747	0.169
Section 31 Business Rates grant	0.310	0.382	0.072
S31 Multiplier Cap grant	0.293	0.488	0.195
Collection Fund surplus/(deficit)	(1.196)	0.345	1.541
Business Rates Levy redistribution	0	0	0
Forecast 75% Coll Fund support	0.037	0	(0.037)
New Council Tax Support Grant	0.399	0	(0.399)
New Business Rates Grant (retail discount relief)	0.845	0	(0.845)
Use of Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	0.254	0.046	(0.208)
New Revenue Grant 2022/23	0	0.410	0.410
Funding Total (£m)	31.713	33.819	2.106
Tax Base (Band D equiv. properties)	216,704	224,040	7,336
Band 'D' Council Tax	£102.41	£104.45	£2.04

The above income lines are further explained below:

- The Government Grant funding for 2022/23 is as per the provisional settlement figures provided by the DLHC, 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 2022/23 are the figures provided by the three local authorities, that are being finalised and reported in their NNDR 1 returns.
- Council Tax Taxbase, is the Band D equivalent number of properties. For six years there was 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. The taxbase in 2020/21 was higher for the first time than the 2012/13 levels.
- The S31 grants have been updated, for both the locally collected and the Government S31 grant where known/confirmed.

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 be circa £220,000 in 2022/23.

- *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. This grant was reduced from 2017/18.

The total and split of the 2022/23 funding is yet to be received from the DLHC.

As well as the above, a grant is also received for the Special Response Team (MTA). This is currently circa £54k per annum.

3.6. Fire Capital Grant Allocation:

As anticipated, there is no Government funding or bidding round for capital in the 2022/23 budget. This was the position for the 2016/17 to 2020/21 financial years too. The Authority, in 2012/13 and before, used to receive an annual capital grant of £1m.

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 circa £1.0m per annum (with fluctuations) from 2022/23 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.

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 2022/23 Capital Programme.

Key items of note in the proposed 2022/23 Capital Programme of £1.357m are:

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

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 1/1a of the 2022/23 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 2022/23 which involves a 1.99% increase in council tax on 2021/22 levels. This 1.99% 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 1.99% for 2022/23 and for the following 3 years until 2025/26. The 1.99% 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 2023/24 onwards. The support provided to the revenue budget by the planned use of the reserves in the years 2023/24 to 2025/26 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 2021/22 was £31.104m. After adjusting for an amount of £973k, which was a contribution from reserves to balance the budget, this decreased the budget requirement to £31.063m.

For the 2022/32 budget, the net revenue budget is £33.306m, with a budgeted contribution of £0.513m to the Transformational reserve decreasing the budget requirement to £33.819m.

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 have increased for non-operational employees from April 2020. The employer firefighter contributions have also seen recent significant increases, with some grant funding support that may or may not continue in full beyond 2023/24.

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. Other recent increases/pressures include the 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 82% 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 2022/23, with pay forecasts at 3% and 4% for non-uniformed officers and uniformed officers from 2022 for members to consider. For uniformed officers, their pay award may be linked with a review on conditions of service, so some funding uncertainty here.

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. It should be noted however that a local pay award is being discussed. 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 4% for general supplies and services has been incorporated into the MTRP for 2022/23. 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.

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 2023/24 to 2025/26. 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 uncertainty in formula grant in 2023/24 to 2025/26, 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 (taxbase) and level of council tax set. This can arise due to a number of reasons including an over-estimation of the taxbase 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 taxbase. From 2013/14, there is also now a surplus or deficit on the business rates collected too.

For 2022/23, 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 £345k for this Authority, with a further £46k deficit spread from 2022/21 in 2022/23 and 2023/24. 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: 2022/23 Collection Fund estimated outturn after the impact of 2020/21 deficit spreading

Authority	Council Tax £ surplus/(deficit)	Business Rates £ surplus/(deficit)	Net £ surplus/(deficit)
Bedford	217,229	(86,284)	130,945
Luton	217,723	(13,912)	203,811
Central Beds	27,995	(17,684)	10,311
Total	462,947	(117,880)	345,067

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.

A Collection Fund deficit reserve was approved by at the FRA meeting in October 2020, with the 2020/21 in year underspend contributing to this.

4.2.10 *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.

4.2.11 Calculation of Band D Council Tax and Percentage Increase

The taxbase 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 taxbase for 2022/23 has been set at 224,040 Band D equivalent properties, based on the information that has been supplied by these authorities. This is 5,556 Band D equivalents higher than 2021/22. The split per authority is shown in Table 5 below. This is an increase of 3.3% compared to the 216,704 taxbase in 2021/22.

The estimated increases of future years' council taxbases are included within the MTRP, currently at c.1.4% each year.

Also shown is the percentage increase in council tax projected for each year of the MTRP. As explained previously, these equate to 1.99% for 2022/23 and each year until 2025/26.

Table 5: Taxbase – Band D Equivalents

Authority	2022/23
Bedford	61,942
Luton	52,738
Central Bedfordshire	109,360
Total	224,040

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 2022/23 to 2025/26 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

2020/21 are mainly on track to deliver an underspend which will be used, subject to the approval of the FRA, to contribute to the Collection Fund deficit Reserve.

As well as making significant savings in previous years, from 2010/11 to 2021/22 £7.037m has been reduced from budgets through budget scrutiny and savings/efficiencies, the Authority's plans for 2022/23 and beyond include making additional significant efficiency savings through:

- Further operational and non-operational reviews
- Efficiency improvements from investments in ICT
- Procurement savings from new contracts
- 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 2022/23 is outlined within the Reserves Strategy 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 the Reserves Strategy at Appendix 5 to the 2023/23 Budget Report.

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 5, the Reserves Strategy.

At the time of writing, the forecast year end underspend for 2021/22 is circa £0.171m. The General Reserve of £2.4m, at c.7% of net revenue expenditure, is in line with the current overall average Combined Fire Authority average. 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 reserve for the 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 £2.861m at 31 March 2022. As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that this will be allocated to offset the budget gap in the years 2022/23 to 2025/26 and to invest in transformation initiatives.

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 2022/23 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 2022/23 is fully funded by revenue contributions of £869k, with a contribution from the Capital reserves of £488k.

It is unknown how fire and rescue authorities will be funded for capital expenditure in the next Spending Review period.

6. Other Considerations

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

2022/23 Budget Process- Assumptions/Uncertainties

Current Assumptions:

- One year settlement for 2022/23 (Final settlement February 2022)
- The FF Employer Pensions Grant will be received for 2022/23 at £1.7m again as a grant, likely to be part of settlement 2023/24 onwards
- The 1.25% employer National Insurance increase will be part of Government Funding (part of new Grant £409,624)
- Current assumption is that this is a one off grant where in excess of the NI impact (estimated at circa £170k, so this grant is reduced from 2023/24 onwards)
- Collection Fund positions as per early indications – so all surpluses for Council Tax and deficits for Business Rates
- All longstanding grants received in 2021/22 will continue in 2022/23. This includes, New Dimensions, Fire link, MTA
- Green Book pay award 3% April 2022 onwards (1.75% April 2021 yet to be finalised). Modelling 4% too 2022/23.
- Grey Book pay award 3% July 2022 onwards. Modelling other 4% too in 2022/23.
- Council Tax referendum limit remains at 2% as announced by the Chancellor (£5 increase for lowest 8 council tax authorities).
- Taxbase increasing post the reduction due to the pandemic (final taxbase figures due from unitaries in January 2022 at the latest)
- Business rates increasing not decreasing
- No Capital Funding (bidding round not announced)
- Fire Grant/Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) funded – *Potential large funding risk here.* MAIT funding
- Utilities and fuel costs increase will continue to increase, therefore 30% gas and 25% electricity increases built into the budget

Other – the Authority wants to build in an Environmental Impact budget, to invest in reducing greenhouse gasses and becoming more green.

Uncertainties:

- What, if any, allocation will be given to Authorities to deliver efficiencies/savings
- How much Prevention and Protection Grant we will receive
- As above, how much of the Employer Pension Grant at £1.7m will be included as part of the settlement/CSR from 2023/24 onwards. It could be subject to reduction in the following years.
- If the new grant of £409k will continue at this level and therefore be more than just NI grant in future years (as above, prudent approach taken here)
- FF pensions – impact from the Remedy and associated costs (internal resourcing, payment to Administrators), immediate detriment costs and other pension related matters.
- Impact from Business Rates Retention (no Revenue Support Grant) potentially a future year in the MTRP
- Impact from recent CSR and funding for 2023/24 to 2024/25 and Spending Review for 2025/26 (year 4)
- Impact from delayed formula funding review (year unknown)
- Recruitment profile/establishment/retirements – associated recruitment/training costs
- New savings/efficiencies in the medium term
- Collaboration (PCC – including awaited White Paper and potential impacts on governance, Ambulance (servicing, co-responding, falls, bariatric funding?), Police etc) – and associated costs/savings/investments
- Medium term property strategy (Emergency Cover Review, One Public Estate, HQ, workshops, sharing etc)
- Contingent Liabilities/Assets included in the Statement of Accounts
- EU directives/legislative changes/post Brexit impacts such as supply chain and cost increases
- Implications arising from the Day Crewing and Retained pensions
- Strike expenditure potential over the course of the four year MTRP
- Interest and inflation rate fluctuations
- Outcomes of Retained Duty System project (budget increase/decrease)
- Outcome of Grey book pay review – broadening the role, pay award
- Outcome of Emergency Cover Review Project (now at stage two, looking forward)
- Outcome of contaminants work both locally and nationally and potential additional expenditure here.

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, diversity and inclusion 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:

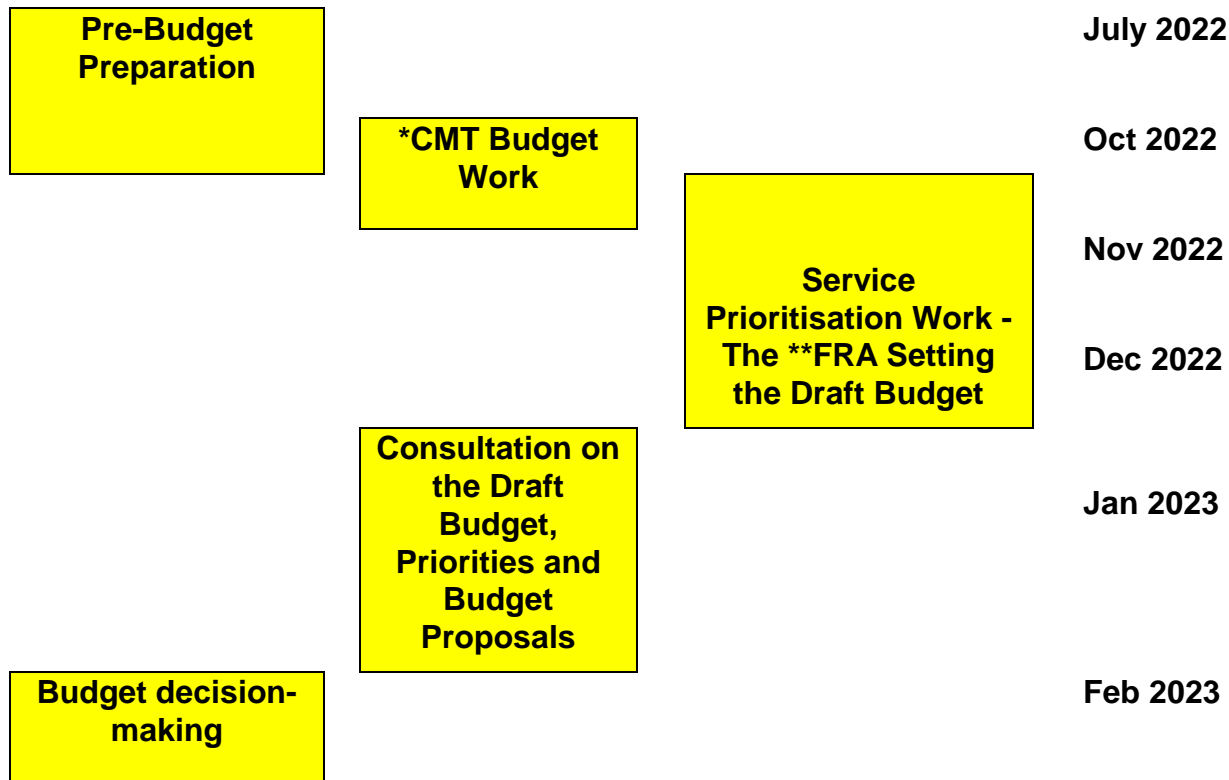
The Authority is committed to achieving and maintaining fit for purpose, quality data enabling sound decision making and informed planning. This is vitally important with key documents, such as this MTFs and the Authority seeks to continually improve the quality characteristics of such data with particular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

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Appendix 5

Reserves Strategy – Budget 2022/23 to 2025/26

1 Introduction and 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 Section 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires that, when setting the budget for the forthcoming year, precepting authorities should have regard to the level of reserves needed to provide sufficient resources to finance estimated future expenditure, plus any appropriate allowances that should be made for contingencies.

Best practice on the use and management of reserves and balances is provided by CIPFA and the Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) guidance, specifically LAAP Bulletin 99 - 'Local Authority Reserves and Balances'. This was issued in July 2014, but since then many references have been made to the scale of public sector reserves by various parties.

In May 2018 the Government published the New Fire and Rescue Services Framework which introduces a requirement for Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish a Reserve Strategy on their website and outlined the detail which should be included. The relevant paragraphs are detailed in Annex 1 attached.

- 1.3 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.

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.

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- 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 potentially to become tougher with again only a one year settlement for 2022/23 despite there being a three year Comprehensive Spending Review, and potential Funding Formula and Business Rates Retention reviews to take place. There are also continuing pressures from the pandemic.
- 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 – and/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 and importantly invest in service transformation and environmental initiatives.
2. **The approach to setting the Reserves Strategy**
- 2.1 The Reserves Strategy is integral to the MTFS and the annual budget setting process. This strategy 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.

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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 £2.4m and is compared annually to other Combined Fire Authorities. This has reduced, as planned, from the previous £2.6m.
- 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 There are a number of reasons why a Fire and Rescue Authority or Local Authority might hold reserves, these include to:-

- (a) Mitigate potential future risks such as increased demand and costs;
- (b) Help absorb the costs of future liabilities;
- (c) Temporarily plug a funding gap should resources be reduced suddenly;
- (d) Enable the Authority to resource one-off policy developments and initiatives without causing an unduly disruptive impact on Council Tax;
- (e) Spread the cost of large scale projects which span a number of years.

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Reserves only provide one-off funding so the Authority aims to avoid using reserves to meet regular and ongoing financial commitments, other than as part of a sustainable medium-term budget plan.

Long-Term Sustainability - Reserves are an essential tool to ensure long term budget stability particularly at a time when the Authority is facing significant year on year reductions in grant funding over the medium term. Due to the fact that funding for future Capital Projects is held as an Earmarked Reserve, the overall level of reserves held by the Authority is currently still high, but will reduce significantly as the Capital programme progresses.

Reserve balances have been identified as a key indicator of financial health and the Authority continues to have an appropriate level of reserves to deal with identified risks. As a minimum, there are sufficient balances to support the budget requirements and provide an adequate contingency for budget risks.

- 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 2022/23 to 2025/26 MTFS assumes that there will be utilisation of the Transformation Reserve for budgeting and transformation/innovation/environmental purposes. It forecasts that this reserve will be usable to balance future years budgets. The MTRP details the utilisation of General Reserve (line 86).

4 Reserves and the management of risks – Annual Review

- 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/protection, ill health and early retirement, HR matters, Health and Safety matters, grant loss, Pensions/Pay uncertainties, budget pressures and one that was new for 2021/22 a Collection Fund deficit reserve. These reserves and the potential pressures that need to be managed are reviewed as part

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of the budget setting process. The review of reserves in year and the forecast of a forecast large Collection Fund deficit, led to the FRA in October 2020 establishing an earmarked reserve for this from the 2020/21 year end underspend.

- 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 £2.4m. Some Authorities set a minimum desired percentage and although the Authority has not done this, the policy would maintain general balances at approximately 7% 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 with now three years of only annual settlements, although there was a three year CSR for 2022/23, only the police sector had indicative high level funding figures given beyond 2022/23.
 - Potential changes in the grant funding methodology from 2023/24 onwards – Formula Funding Review, Business Rates review and Spending Review
 - 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 – From 2023/24, potentially, Business Rates Retention Scheme and no RSG
 - A key new uncertainty is the outcome of the Remedy for the age discrimination case (McCloud) and the impact that this may have financially on Fire and Rescue Services. A new £1m earmarked reserve has been set up to cover this and the unknown cost of employer contributions and Administrator payments (as well as pay awards).
 - Any impacts from Brexit and supplies still could have a financial impact.
 - Collection Fund deficits and the volatility of the taxbase during and post the pandemic.

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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 – Risk Assessment

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 1st April 2022 is £2.4m as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Risk Assessed General Reserves

Description	Likelihood	Impact	£'000
Large scale failure of Personal Protective Equipment or other safety critical equipment	Possible	Significant	300
Major incident within the County/Region	Likely	Significant	650
Failure of operational vehicle prior to planned replacement in Capital Programme/unforeseen inability to provide service requirements	Possible	Significant	300
Failure of a major supplier	Likely	Significant	300
Failure/corruption/security breach of ICT System	Possible	Significant	200

Appendix 5

Non-specific General Reserves to meet any other unforeseen service requirements			650
Total General Reserves			2,400

- 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.
- 5.5 The earmarked reserves are detailed in Table 2 below.

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Table 2: Earmarked Reserves

Description	£'000
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) reserve – Emergency Services Network (ESN)	180
Replacement Mobilising Project	100
Contingency for doubtful debts	10
Hydrant installation (taken out of revenue budget due to uncertainty)	225
Goods and services, contractual inflation in excess of assumptions (1%)	80
Potential liability as a result of legal/disciplinary action in relation to Personnel and/or Health and Safety issues (includes expected contaminant works at initially £100k)	200
Adverse weather conditions resulting in higher than average numbers of emergency incidents (excludes Bellwin incidents)	150
Sudden absenteeism of a large number of personnel across the whole of the Service due to pandemic or similar	125
Ill-health retirements in excess of budget provision/injury pension	125
Unplanned urgent property works (eg roof repairs)	100
Contingency for insufficient Insurance cover (additional contribution)	25
Interruption to Business Continuity (including Industrial Action)	100
Unplanned urgent maintenance/replacement of particular item of equipment (eg engine or gearbox wearing out/failing earlier than anticipated)	50
Invest to Save/Innovation Fund (these have been taken out of annual revenue budgets)	60
ICT Innovation/Application Development	75
Pensions/Pay reserve (£1m set as part of the 2020/21 budget)	1,000
Total Requirement	2,605

Appendix 5

5.5 Other Reserves for noting:

- Collaboration Reserve £2.378m (includes 2017/18 year end additional contribution of £498k from Home Office Pensions refund)
- Capital Receipts Reserve £507k

There is also a Capital Reserve that holds the approved funding where schemes run over the financial year end, this includes vehicles, property works and ICT projects.

Appendix 5

Annex 1 – Extract from National Framework reference reserves

Reserves

1.1

Sections 31A, 32, 42A and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.

1.2

Fire and rescue authorities should establish a policy on reserves and provisions in consultation with their chief finance officer. General reserves should be held by the fire and rescue authority and managed to balance funding and spending priorities and to manage risks. This should be established as part of the medium-term financial planning process.

1.3

Each fire and rescue authority should publish their reserves strategy on their website, either as part of their medium term financial plan or in a separate reserves strategy document. The reserves strategy should include details of current and future planned reserve levels, setting out a total amount of reserves and the amount of each specific reserve that is held for each year. The reserves strategy should cover resource and capital reserves and provide information for the period of the medium term financial plan (and at least two years ahead).

1.4

Sufficient information should be provided to enable understanding of the purpose(s) for which each reserve is held and how holding each reserve supports the fire and rescue authority's medium term financial plan. The strategy should be set out in a way that is clear and understandable for members of the public, and should include:

- how the level of the general reserve has been set;
- justification for holding a general reserve larger than five percent of budget; and
- details of the activities or items to be funded from each earmarked reserve, and how these support the FRA's strategy to deliver a good quality service to the public. Where an earmarked reserve is intended to fund a number of projects or programmes (for example, a change or transformation reserve), details of each programme or project to be funded should be set out.

Appendix 5

1.5

The information on each reserve should make clear how much of the funding falls into the following three categories:

- a. Funding for planned expenditure on projects and programmes over the period of the current medium term financial plan.
- b. Funding for specific projects and programmes beyond the current planning period.
- c. As a general contingency or resource to meet other expenditure needs held in accordance with sound principles of good financial management (e.g. insurance)

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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 is expected to continue to do so over the next few years.

There is an annual review of the level of reserves. The detail on the level and strategy for both General and Earmarked Reserves is included within the Reserves Strategy. The level of the risk assessed General Reserve is £2.400m, reduced from £2.6m as part of the 2020/21 budget. The main earmarked reserves remain at £2.605m and were added to in 2020/21 for Pensions/Pay at £1m. This was due to significant uncertainties of financial impacts for these two areas. Following the Chancellor's announcement of a pay award freeze for 2021/22, a 1.5% pay increase was awarded to Firefighters and potentially 1.75% for non-operational staff, so this earmarked reserve was partly used in its first year of set up for the unbudgeted pay awards.

The capital reserve, as noted below, is reducing over 2021/22, with spend such as on the new Mobilising System. As detailed in the Strategy and MTRP, from 2022/23 onwards further reductions are proposed to the General Reserve and Capital Reserve. 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 transformation, environmental and budget setting purposes, is forecast to be £2.861m at the 2021/22 year end in line with the Authority's financial strategy. This excludes the 2021/22 year-end underspend, that has recommended to the FRA as part of the 2022/23 budget setting report to put back into the Pay/Pensions reserve following its part use during the 2021/22 year.

The reserves are fully detailed in the Reserves Strategy.

The Authority created a Collaboration Reserve that was predominantly funded from the 2015/16 and 2016/17 underspends and a pensions reimbursement.

For the 2021/22 year, a new earmarked reserve was been set up to offset the unitary authorities apportionment of the council tax and business rates Collection Fund deficits. For 2022/23, this position has reversed with Collection Fund surpluses forecast (for council

tax, for business rates there are deficits). There has also been a thorough review of capital reserves, resulting in the un-earmarking £488k that will be funding the 2022/23 capital programme and relieving the revenue budget of this funding pressure in 2022/23.

Gavin Chambers CPFA
Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority

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REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE, STEVE FRANK

SUBJECT: HMICFRS INSPECTION UPDATE

For further information
on this report contact: Thomas Warner
Service Improvement Manager
Tel No: 07768 560479

Background Papers: See [HMICFRS Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 – Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) with an update and comparative analysis of our 2020-21 inspection by Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue (HMICFRS) and the subsequent next stages of improvement planning.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper.

1. Background

- 1.1 HMICFRS have judged us to be 'Good' at effectively delivering services to local communities and also judged to be 'Good' at 'looking after our people', an improvement on our 2018 inspection. This despite a much higher bar being set in their 2021 inspection than in 2018.
- 1.2 HMICFRS's focus was on the service we provide to the public, and the way we use the resources available. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. They also assess how well we look after our people.
- 1.3 HMICFRS asked three main questions:
 - How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?
- 1.4 HMICFRS has inspected 13 fire and rescue services as part of this first tranche. These services are:
 1. Avon
 2. Buckinghamshire
 3. Bedfordshire
 4. Cambridgeshire
 5. Cheshire
 6. Cornwall
 7. Greater Manchester
 8. Hereford & Worcester
 9. Lincolnshire
 10. Merseyside
 11. Northumberland
 12. Surrey
 13. Warwickshire

1.5 Inspection results were shared with staff and discussed in detail by Principal Officers, in Corporate Management Team (CMT) and various functional groups such as the Health and Safety Steering Group.

2. Comparative Analysis

2.1 We examined all Tranche 1 services and compiled the graded judgements for the 11 sub- questions to create a league table. Bedfordshire ranks as 4th best of the 13 Services in tranche 1.

2.2 With reference to all 13 reports and the table below, our analysis shows:

- We have the best score equal with Cambridgeshire for the People criteria.
- Only one service (Warwickshire) received an 'inadequate' for a sub criteria judgment which was for 'Preventing fires and other emergencies.'
- Merseyside was the only Service to receive any 'Outstanding' grades they achieved this in 3 sub questions.
- HMICFRS are publishing five cause of concern letters (38% of the Tranche 1 Services) for Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Hereford and Worcester, Lincolnshire and Warwickshire.

Rank	Service	Points
1st	Merseyside	35
2nd	Cambridgeshire	32
2nd	Cheshire	32
4th	Bedfordshire	30
5th	Greater Manchester	28
6th	Surry	27
7th	Avon	26
7th	Lincolnshire	26
9th	Buckinghamshire	24
9th	Cornwall	24
9th	Hereford & Worcester	24
9th	Northumberland	24
13th	Warwickshire	22

3. Noteworthy Practice

3.1 Across the 13 Services HMICFRS identified 9 noteworthy practices two of which were from the BFRS report:

- **Understanding fires and other risks.** Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service has developed an app to display operational flashcards on both mobile data terminals and officers' mobile phones. This allows instant access to standard operating procedures;
- **Preventing fires and other risks.** Cornwall FRS and its partners have developed the tri-service safety officer (TSSO) scheme. This combines aspects of fire, police and ambulance prevention roles into a single officer. The initiative achieves financial efficiencies and community safety benefits for the community and the services involved;
- **Responding to fires and other emergencies.** Bedfordshire Fire Control staff make good use of technology to improve information gathering. Fire control staff use technology effectively to pinpoint accurate location of callers and access live imagery from incidents to inform assessment of risk and appropriate response. With permission but minimal interaction from the caller, the service is able to access a live video feed from their mobile device, which can be shared with incident commanders and emergency service partners;
- **Responding to major and multi-agency incidents.** Merseyside's preparedness team has developed a Sunday Six training programme to address six local and national risks: flooding, high-rise buildings, marine, wildfire, terrorism, and recycling and waste incident types. Topics are rotated every eight weeks to ensure that every watch (team) receives the training, which was adapted and provided virtually during the pandemic;
- **Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future.** Avon FRS actively considers and exploits opportunities for generating extra income. For example, it is the only fire and rescue service in England to secure a public sector decarbonisation grant of £823,670;
- **Cambridgeshire has effective and efficient asset management systems.** Staff use scanners and information tablets for undertaking equipment and appliance checks and inventories, automating the recording of defects, and alerting fleet and estates to action, significantly reducing administration;
- **Promoting the right values and culture.** Cambridgeshire FRS commissioned the British Safety Council to undertake an assurance assessment of its response to keeping its staff safe from COVID-19;
- **Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.** Greater Manchester introduced a Freedom to Speak Guardian – an initiative used by the NHS – for staff to have an informal way to give feedback to the service; and,

- **Managing performance and developing leaders.** Bedfordshire improved the way it manages succession planning for senior leadership roles. The service has signed a regional concordat to allow opportunities for secondment of senior manager(s) between service to fill gaps while a full and open recruitment process takes place. The secondees gain from the experience of working as a principal officer and the services benefit from the mutual exchange of knowledge and development

3.2 We examined in detail what makes Merseyside Outstanding. Highlights include:

- The service's prevention strategy is clearly linked to the risks identified in its integrated risk management plan (IRMP). It is based on comprehensive internal and external data and intelligence;
- Prevention work doesn't take place in isolation, with risk information sent to other relevant teams across the service. Risk information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions;
- In September 2018, academics from Liverpool John Moores University worked with Merseyside and Public Health England to review the content of safe and well visits;
- HMICFRS were impressed with Merseyside's approach to maintaining staff skills and competency in responding to major and multi-agency incidents. Its Sunday Six training plan covers six subjects: flooding, high-rise, marine, wildfire, terrorism, and recycling and waste. Subjects are rotated every eight weeks to ensure that every watch (team) receives the training, which was adapted and provided virtually during the pandemic;
- Performance management arrangements in departmental and station plans clearly link to the strategic priorities in the integrated risk management plan;
- Merseyside has a long-standing commitment to partnership working and can clearly define the benefits of its joint ventures; and,
- A combination of the re-design of the operating model, modernising contracts and cumulative savings have led to a £1m investment in additional firefighters.

3.3 In contrast to this we also examined Warwickshire's report. HMICFRS identified three causes of concern and a commentary on their approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

- the service hasn't got better at detecting who are the people most at risk from fire and doing prevention work with them to reduce the risk posed to them;
- the service hasn't done enough since 2018 to identify high-risk premises;
- ICT systems were unreliable, and the service hasn't invested in them or improved them, and this is hindering its work; and
- although the service has tried to improve diversity and inclusion since our 2018 inspection, its approach to this has made its staff disengage. In particular HMICFRS commented that the Service's approach was forceful and overzealous rather than educational and this was having a negative impact on the workforce.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Arrangements for monitoring the progress of the areas for improvement have been integrated into the 2022-23 CRMP Action Plan within the new Business Management Information System (BMIS).
- 4.2 We have recently been sharing our experiences of inspection with Fire and Rescue Services in Humberside and Hertfordshire.
- 4.3 We have conducted a gap analysis against the current HMICFRS criteria for Outstanding and will integrate this into BMIS in the new financial year. This analysis shows we are in a reasonable position to improve our scores next time.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Members acknowledge the contents of this report.

STEVEN FRANK
HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE

REPORT AUTHOR: ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: LOCALISM ACT 2011 – PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2022

For further information on this Report contact: Sarah Fecondi
Head of Human Resources
Tel: 01234 845000

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)
 - 2021 Pay Policy Statement (available on request)
 - Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement FRA paper February 2021 (available on request)
 - Local Government Association Pay Policy and Practice in local authorities 2013 (available on request)
 - Local Government Transparency Code 2015
-

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 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted proposed pay policy statement for 2022/23 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 eleventh 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 and 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 It is a requirement of the Localism Act that the data from the preceding year must be used to calculate the pay multiple, therefore this annual pay policy statement is based on the data from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

2.4 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 **October 2021** the NJC announced **its' members had rejected the employers' final pay offer of 1.75%, effective from 1 April 2021, and confirmed that they would undertake industrial action ballots. Two of the ballots had a majority vote in favour of strike action but did not achieve the legal threshold turnout requirement. They continue to seek an improved pay offer from the Employer. Unite's ballot will close on 25 February 2022.**

- 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. In **August 2021** the NJC announced a pay award of **1.5%** backdated to 1 July **2021** for grey book employees on pay and CPD payments whilst negotiations continue to put in place a longer-term deal. Any longer-term deal is contingent upon a successful conclusion to negotiations regarding broadening the role of the fire and rescue service and securing additional funding from government.
- 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 in **June 2021** a **1.5%** increase was awarded to Gold Book employees (the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer) **and backdated to January 2021**.
- 4.4 **As requested by the FRA, we have sought to obtain comparative pay multiple information from across our Fire region and the 3 local authorities that make up the county of Bedfordshire. This has been collated using information published for 2020/21 on each authority's website.**

The Annual Pay Statement and Pay Multiple data for BRFS is easily accessible on the BFRS Website. However, it was not as readily accessible for some of the other authorities due to the way in which they report and in one case, it was not possible to find current information at all.

In order to be as accurate and transparent as possible, the BFRS pay multiple is calculated using the actual salary of the lowest paid employee and the salary of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive. Other authorities choose to calculate and publish the pay multiple using either the median salary (the middle value of all salaries in the organisation) or mean salary (the average of all salaries paid in the organisation) of paid employees at the authority, against the salary of the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer. This makes comparing like for like data difficult. In order to be able to compare the pay multiples, where an authority has calculated using the mean or median salary, further salary data has been obtained from the authority's website or published annual accounts and the pay multiple re-calculated using the lowest and highest salaries.

Pay Multiples for Fire Services across our region

<u>Authority</u>	<u>Pay Multiple</u>	<u>Figures used for calculating pay ratio</u>
Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	1:7.82	Actual lowest salary & highest salary (CFO)
Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service	1:7.69	Actual lowest salary & highest salary (CFO)
Norfolk County Council	1:7.36	CFO salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade
Essex County Fire & Rescue Service	1:8.07	CFO salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade
Hertfordshire County Council	1:7.64	Director, Community Protection (CFO) salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade

Pay Multiples for local authority councils in the region. Whilst not comparing like for like they represent the local area.

Luton Borough Council	1:10.6	Chief Executive salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade
Central Bedfordshire Council	1:9.8	Chief Executive salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade
Bedford Borough Council	1:10.39	Chief Executive salary & Lowest salary point on NJC Pay Grade

Based on the above data, the average Pay Multiple of the local authorities above is 1:8.67. The average pay multiple of the Fire authorities in the region listed above is 1:7.72. The BFRS Pay Multiple is slightly above the average of the region's Fire authorities but remains lower than the public sector averages of 8:1 to 12:1 identified by Lord Hutton in 2011.

4.5 The Fire Authority is asked to consider and approve the proposed pay policy statement at Appendix 1.

ALISON KIBBLEWHITE
ASSISTANT 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 **2022** to March **2023**.

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 **2022**. 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 who have delegated some powers to the Chief Fire Officer through a scheme of delegation.

3. Responsibility and Scale

The Service is directly responsible for a budget of **£32.811m** and for the employment of **569** 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 (e.g. 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 Korn Ferry (formerly Hay) analytical job evaluation process that systematically ranked each job objectively and fairly. This 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. In 2018 Korn Ferry were commissioned to quality assure the job evaluation scheme and reviewed the ranking of all Green Book roles against the pre-determined scale to ensure the job evaluation scheme was being applied correctly.

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.

In 2019 Green Book employers were required to implement a new National pay spine, which entirely replaced the existing pay spine. The Service assimilated employees from their existing spinal column point to their new spinal column point on 1 April 2019. For some time, the Service has experienced recruitment difficulties in certain Green Book posts, this has primarily been 'professional' posts in areas like HR, Finance and Property and there were concerns at Corporate Management Team level that salaries were no longer competitive in the local labour market. Therefore, as part of the assimilation exercise the Service took the opportunity to compare the pay line to other organisations that also use the Korn Ferry Job Evaluation Scheme, by undertaking a salary benchmarking exercise. This resulted in the application of the 2% NJC pay award to employees at Grade 12 and below, whilst Grades 13-17 were aligned to the 60th percentile of the Industrial and Service Sector.

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.

Details of senior salaries is published on the Transparency pages of our website and can be accessed on the internet at <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Governance/Salary-Details-as-at-31.03.21-FINAL-v2.pdf>

Alternatively, at page 63 of the Annual Statement of Accounts <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Finance-and-budget/Monthly-Financial-Reports/Pre-Audited-Statement-of-Accounts-2020-21.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 Operational officers can utilise pool cars to undertake their operational duties and responsibilities or can access the car leasing scheme. 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 Green Book employees 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 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 (Grey Book only) 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.
- Mileage, travel expenses, subsistence and other expenses (e.g. Professional expenses) reimbursed when appropriate and in accordance with service procedure on expenses.
- Additional Holiday Payment for employees working overtime or additional hours paid on a monthly basis when eligible.

(Strategic Operational Commanders, Area Manager B) 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 **2021** the employer contribution rates are 37.30% for 1992 Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 27.4% for the 2006 New Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 28.8 % for the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, 37.30% for the Retained Modified Pension Scheme and **20.5%** 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 **2021** 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 11% - 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 and in line with all Government guidance.

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 **former** 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. **In 2019 the Fire and Rescue Authority determined that** the Service will not reappoint Principal Officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited.

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 April **2021**, this is Grade 6, spinal column point 6 **£10.21** per hour, **£19,698** per annum (**no pay award has been agreed since 1 April 2020**). The Service believe that this is the most easily understood definition of low pay as it is the lowest pay grade 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.

It is a requirement of the Localism Act that the current pay multiple to be applied for this annual pay policy statement must use data from the preceding year, therefore data from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. At this point in time the pay multiple between the lowest paid employee and the highest paid Chief Officer (previous Chief Fire Officer) was 7.82:1. The pay multiple between the lowest paid employee and the current highest paid Chief Officer (current Chief Fire Officer) is 7.94:1. The increase in the current pay multiple is as a result of the Gold Book pay increase being awarded in June 2021 and the Green Book pay award for 2021 remaining unsettled. This ratio can be measured as being lower than the public sector averages of 8:1 to 12:1 identified by Lord Hutton in March 2011. This is as a result of the Green Book pay award for 2018 and 2019 which resulted in a salary uplift equivalent to 5.06% to the lowest paid spinal column point.

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 is published in the annual statement of accounts and the most recently produced can be accessed on the internet at page 64 of the Annual Statement of Accounts

<https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Finance-and-budget/Monthly-Financial-Reports/Pre-Audited-Statement-of-Accounts-2020-21.pdf>

The approved Pay Policy Statement will also be available from

<https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Governance/Transparency.aspx> 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 <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Governance/Transparency.aspx>

REPORT AUTHOR: MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23

For further information on this Report contact: Nicky Upton
Service Assurance Manager
Tel No: 01234 845149

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

To review the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Members' Allowances Scheme be updated from 1 June 2022 in accordance with the proposals set out in this report and that the Scheme be adopted for the financial year 2022/23.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fire Authority's Members' Allowances Scheme (the Scheme) was introduced on 1 January 2004 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. The Fire Authority (FRA) reviews the Scheme annually.
- 1.2 The Scheme was fully reviewed by Members at their meeting on 9 February 2007, when it was agreed that in future Member allowances would be based on a daily rate of mean weekly earnings advised by the Local Government Association (LGA) multiplied by an assessment of days required to perform each Member's tasks.

- 1.3 At its meeting on 11 December 2013, the FRA agreed that in the absence of LGA Member rates information, the Local Annual Government Pay Settlement would be applied to Members' allowances effective from April 2013 and each year since then the allowances have been updated in the same way.
- 1.4 At its meeting on 18 July 2019, the Fire Authority reviewed the Special Responsibility Allowances payable under the Scheme in the light of the Governance Review that had taken place and reduced the allowances payable to the Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Members.

2. Current Scheme – Summary

- 2.1 The current Scheme is detailed in the Members' Handbook and included on the Authority's website.
- 2.2 The current daily rate is £171.92; last year's Local Government settlement has yet to be agreed, so the figures quoted in this report are current but do not include an increase for 2021/22 which may follow. In accordance with previous practice this rate will be adjusted in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement in April 2022.
- 2.3 The following assessment of days applies to each Member's tasks:
- 2.3.1 *Basic Allowance:*

In addition to the agendas, reports and attendance relating to scheduled meetings of the Fire Authority (FRA), Members are required to attend budget workshops, station visits, training and official functions.

All Members (12)	20 days
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2.3.2 *Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs):*

The FRA may pay SRAs to FRA members who carry out responsibilities specified in the Regulations. The Scheme provides for the following members to receive a special responsibility allowance based on an assessment (shown below) of the number of days they will need to spend during the year carrying out their special responsibilities:

FRA Chair	80 days
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FRA Vice Chair	30 days
FRA Executive Member	6 days
Chair of Audit and Standards Committee	6 days

In addition to the duties of a basic Member, the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Members undertake additional responsibilities including: attending regional meetings, LGA meetings, audit meetings etc, together with ad-hoc Appointment Panels, Statement of Accounts signing etc, and taking decisions in between meetings of the FRA.

On 16 July 2020 the FRA agreed that each member of the Executive should take responsibility for a specific area of activity or portfolio. The current portfolios are as follows:

Prevention and Protection;
 Operational Response and Resilience;
 Workforce and Organisational Development;
 Assets and Collaboration;
 Data and Digital Transformation;

The Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee presides at meetings of the Audit and Standards Committee and acts as a substitute Member with regard to ad hoc Appointment Panels, etc, and consultation on decision making between meetings of the FRA.

On 4 September 2019, the Fire Authority considered whether a Member should be able to receive more than one SRA. Although there was no provision in the Regulations covering this question, it was general practice for local authorities to include a provision in their Schemes providing that members can receive no more than one SRA and the Fire Authority agreed to include this restriction in its Scheme.

3. Standards Provision

- 3.1 Since 1 July 2012, the Audit and Standards Committee has been responsible for ethical standards.
- 3.2 The FRA is required to appoint at least one independent person who must be consulted when the FRA investigates complaints made against its members. The FRA has agreed to collaborate with neighbouring authorities in the appointment of a joint panel of independent persons. Each independent person receives a nominal annual retainer of £300 and a flat payment of £75 for each

case the independent person handles. The cost of the retainers are shared with the other partner authorities, but the case fees are met by the relevant authority.

4. Updating the Scheme for 2022/23

- 4.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.3, it has been the FRAs policy in recent years to increase allowances in line with the Local Government Pay Settlement.
- 4.2 The 2022/23 the Members basic allowance will be paid from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 with Special Responsibility Allowances being paid from the date of the June 2022 Annual General Meeting.
- 4.3 Members are also requested to agree that subsistence and carers' allowances remain unchanged, and that the mileage rate payable to Members continues to be the same rate that is payable to employees covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The payment of allowances to Members of the FRA is governed by The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 and the FRA's Scheme of Allowances complies with those regulations.

6. Recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels

- 6.1 When making or amending its Scheme of Members Allowances the FRA is required to have regard to any relevant recommendations made by to the constituent local authorities by their Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs). At the time of writing there have been no recent recommendations submitted to the constituent local authorities.

JOHN ATKINSON
MONITORING OFFICER

REPORT AUTHOR: ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ALISON KIBBLEWHITE

SUBJECT: GRENFELL ACTION PLAN UPDATE

For further information on this report contact: Jason Tai
Head of Training and Asset Management
Tel No: 07900 221208

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) with an update of the Service progress against the Grenfell recommendations action plan and the subsequent next stages for moving forward to assist with completion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper and update.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 14th June 2017 London Fire Brigade (LFB) responded to calls of a fire in Grenfell Tower located in North Kensington, West London. The fire started as a result of a faulty freezer located on the fourth floor of the tower. The fire spread rapidly externally due to a combination of the buildings cladding and poor maintenance, as a result 72 people perished in the fire and more than 70 other individuals were injured. The fire was the deadliest structure fire since the Piper Alpha disaster in 1988 and burned for over 60 hours and required 250 firefighters and 70 appliances to resolve.

2. Inquiry

- 2.1 As a result of the incident a public inquiry commenced on 14th September 2017 led by *Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick* aimed at investigating the causes of the fire and other related issues. The first part of the inquiry was released in October 2019 and focused on the events of the night and affirmed that the building's exterior did not comply with the required regulations and was a key reason for the fire spreading so quickly. The second phase of the inquiry began in June 2020 and focused on the wider context, nature and application of building regulations and local and central government response to the fire.

There have been several other reviews/ reports / NFCC updates released in relation to the incident including – Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) *Inspection of the London Fire Brigade progress to implement the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry's Phase 1 report*.

3. Building & Fire Safety Legislation

- 3.1 Following the independent review and subsequent recommendations several changes within legislative law have been consulted on and are in the process of passing through Parliament and then coming into force.

The Fire Safety Act 2021 (FSA 21) received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. The FSA 21 amends the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to clarify that it applies to the structure of certain domestic buildings including the external walls and the doors between domestic premises and common parts

The passage of the Building Safety Bill is intended for Q1 2022 but is not planned to come into force until 2023. The resulting Building Safety Act apply to designated higher risk buildings and is intended to introduce; the new Building Safety

Regulator, staged gateways for design, construction and occupation, requirement for an Accountable Person responsible for fire and structural safety, Building Assurance Certificate requirements, a new Homes Ombudsman and stronger enforcement and sanctions.

4. Phase 1 Recommendations

- 4.1 Following the release of the Grenfell inquiry phase 1 report Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore – Bick concluded with a series of recommendations that Fire and Rescue Service’s needed to address.

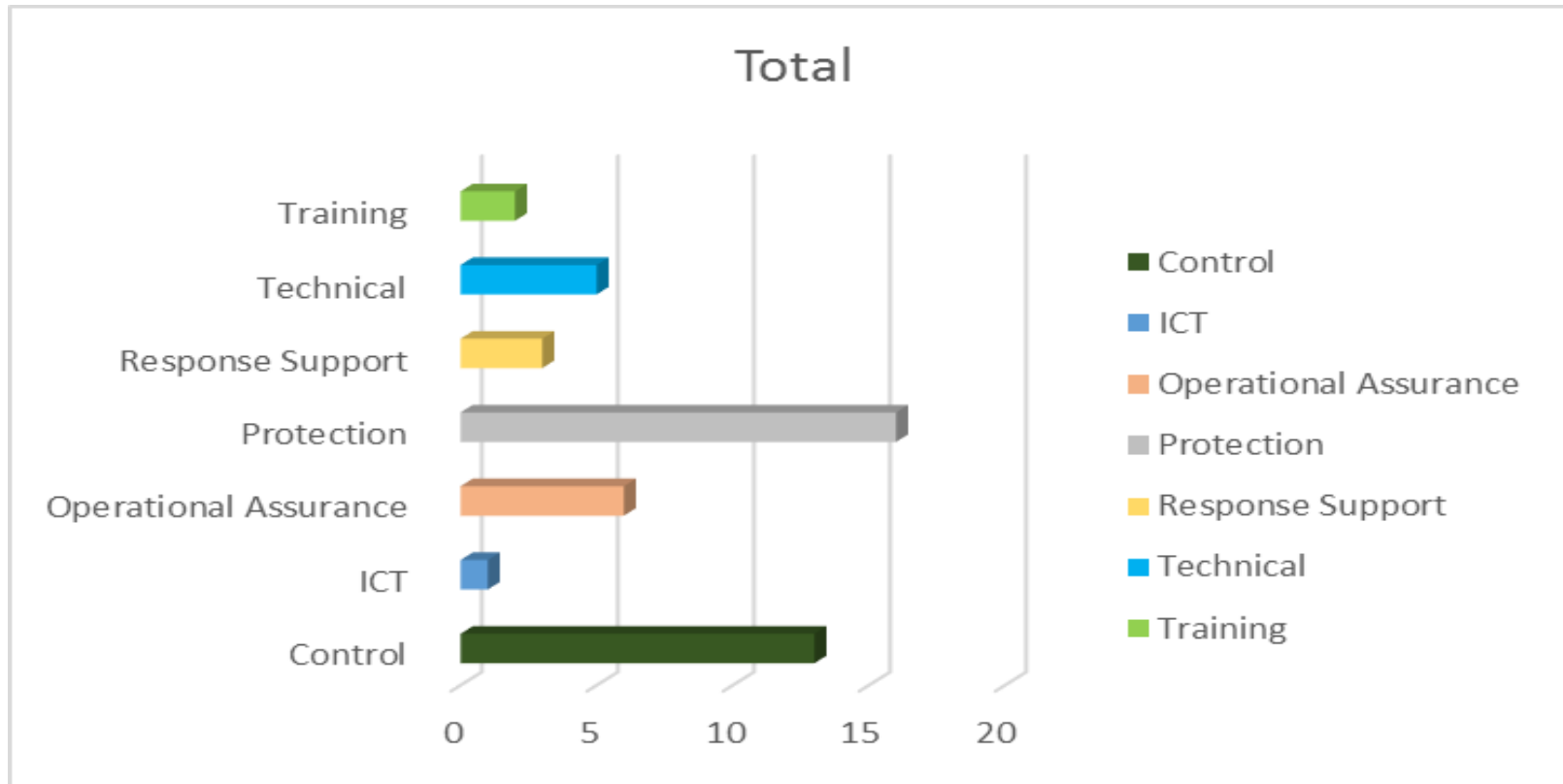
In summary the report had

- 17 key areas of the investigation that resulted in a total **46** recommendations.
- 14 of the recommendations were directed at LFB
- 13 of the recommendations were aimed at other FRS and emergency services
- 19 were aimed primarily at Government / owners and managers of residential buildings.
- 11 of the recommendations focused on a change in the law (see above)

5. Service Action Plan

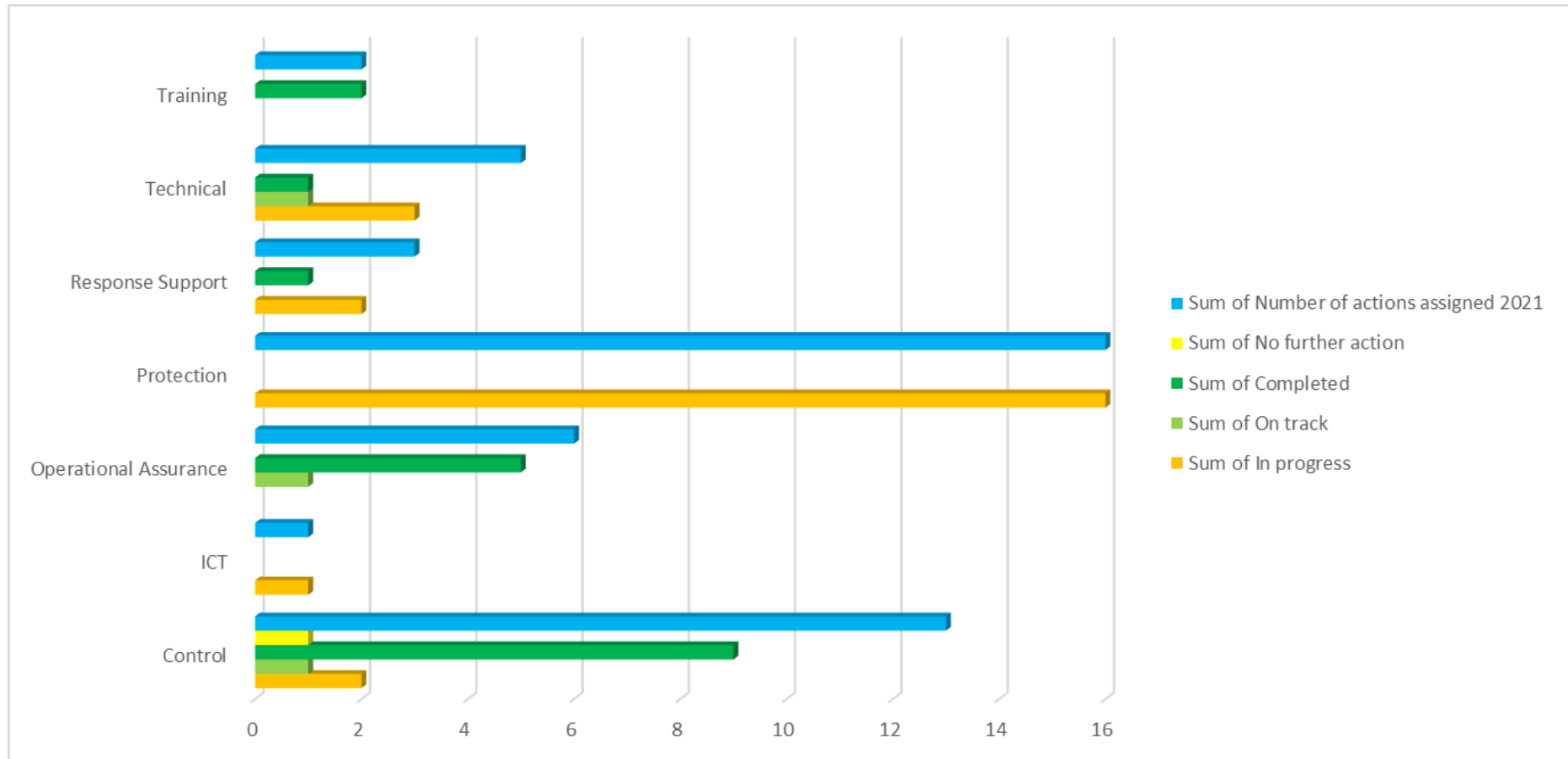
- 5.1 Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service (BFRS) included all the 46 recommendations within our action plan, including the 14 that were directed solely towards LFB to ensure that there were no potential gaps. The action plan is fully audited and records the progress of each area identified with a timeline of progress and completion. The action plan is managed internally by the Head of Training and Asset Management.

The action plan tasks identified from the report were allocated to the following departments



5.2 Each department lead, provides regular updates of progress against the listed actions, and this is fully audited on the SharePoint site. Progress against the plan is monitored via the Operational Assurance Team (OAT) and is an agenda item at the Assurance Working Group (AWG); a quarterly update is also provided at the Service Delivery Leadership Team (SDLT).

The progress of the actions from the plan can be summarised as follows for each of the departments. The chart provides progress in the form of a RAG rating with amber being used to show the number of actions that are still in progress and require completing.



5.3 Chart Summary – Completed actions.

The Service has completed a total of **18** actions and identified **1** that required no further action as this was not applicable for BFRS. The actions that have been completed are focused primarily around communications between the Control Room and

the Incident Commander, Fire Survival Guidance procedures (FSG), equipment and exercising and inspections of high rise buildings.

The Service has provided training on FSG to all Service Control personnel and learn pro modules have been amended to reflect this. Secondary communications in the form of mobile phones for appliances are now standard at all high-rise incidents and appropriate cases were purchased using grant funding.

Smoke hoods/Smoke curtains and floor below branches have been procured and placed on appliances utilising grant funding.

All Supervisory Officers have received input relating directly to Grenfell as part of the Breathing Apparatus Incident Command Refresher (BAICR).

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) now the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities provided all FRS's with a list of potential high-rise residential buildings (HRRB), that were thought to be over 18 metres in height or consisting of 7 or more floors. This list identified 72 potential premises within Bedfordshire that required a Building Risk Review (BRR) inspection by a Fire Safety Inspector within the Protection Team. Further premises in addition to those on the list were identified by the Protection Team as requiring a review during the inspection process. The action of completing a BRR inspection at all premises identified on the list from MHCLG was due to be completed by December 2021, however these were all completed in June 2021 and the additional premises identified were completed July/Aug 2021 with a total of 90 premises reviewed. This list has now been reduced to 65 premises following clarification as some were multiple buildings with common staircases on the same site.

5.4 Chart Summary – In progress

The action plans show that there is a total of **23** actions that are in progress and **3** actions that are on track to be completed within the set time frame.

Most of the actions in progress relate to recommendations that require changes in building and Fire Safety Legislation. The Service has been unable to fully implement the recommendations having received guidance from the NFCC highlighting the need to consider the impact that changes initiated may have on the responsible persons.

6. Next Stages

6.1 Arrangements for monitoring the progress of the action plan, are constantly reviewed and responsible leads update the plan with new information as and when required.

6.2 Closure - Due to the nature of the description of actions, some of the recommendations may remain open indefinitely and are difficult to close completely as they will be continually applicable. To assist with this the OAT are in the process of reviewing all actions and where it is deemed that an action has been implemented but is ongoing this will be updated to being closed and business as usual.

6.3 Benchmarking - The OAT has requested via the Regional Assurance Group a copy of the actions plans from our regional colleagues in order to conduct a benchmarking exercise and to seek a regional approach to closure of recommendations.

6.4 The OAT is also in the process of arranging a peer to peer review from one of our regional partners in order to gain a critical friend and feedback on the action plans and progress from both services. Initial investigation has led to contact being made with Essex FRS who appear based on their action plan available on their website to have completed the majority of these.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Members acknowledge the contents of this report.

**ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ALISON KIBBLEWHITE
TRAINING, HUMAN RESOURCES & ASSET MANAGMENT**

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REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: INFORMATION BULLETIN – REVISED FORMAT

For further information on this report contact: Andrew Hopkinson
Chief Fire Officer
01234 845017

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present Members with a revised format Information Bulletin (Appendix A) for Quarter 3 and seek their feedback as officers seek to improve the quality and content of the bulletin, noting the desire to improve the visibility of the work of the Service amongst the constituent Authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Members note the report and comment on the revised format and content.

ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

INFORMATION BULLETIN

Q3 OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021



- 1 Incident Activity**
- 2 People Update**
- 3 Compliments & Complaints**
- 4 Communications & Media Highlights**
- 5 Blue Bulletin Highlights**
- 6 Red Bulletin Highlights**

**C
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INCIDENT ACTIVITY

TOTAL INCIDENTS = 1398



Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

% = Q3 2021 v Q2 2021

Fires

Q3 = 239

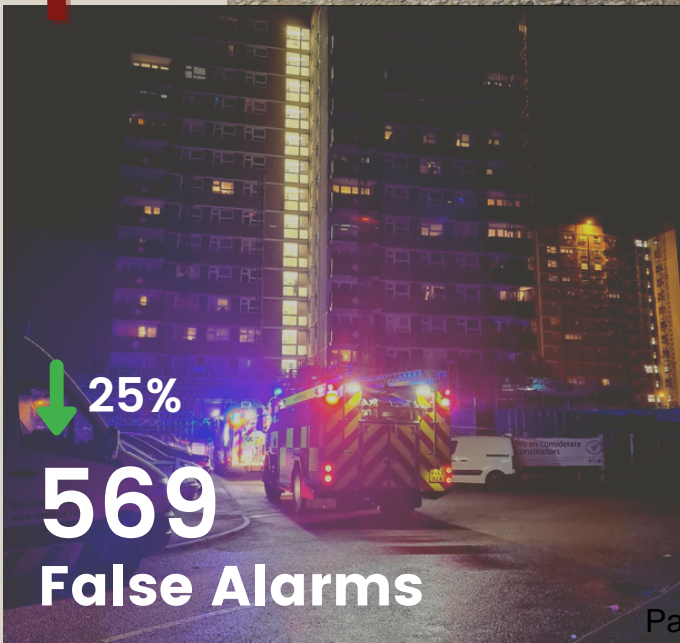
↓ 5%



RTC

Q3 = 95

↑ 28%



↓ 25%

569

False Alarms



↓ 12%

495

Special Service



INTRODUCING OUR NEW CMT



ACFO
Alison Kibblewhite



DCFO
Chris Bigland



Chief Fire Officer
Andrew Hopkinson



ACO
Gavin Chambers



Head of Training & Asset Management
AC JASON TAI



Head of Human Resources
SARAH FECONDI



Head of Prevention & Protection
AC IAN EVANS



Head of Response
AC STUART AUGER



Head of Strategic Support & Assurance
Steve Frank



Head of ICT & Programmes
PAUL HUGHES

PEOPLE UPDATE

STAFF NUMBERS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

275 Wholetime Uniformed
153 Retained Fire Fighters
170 Support Staff
24 Control Staff

Appointments	Leavers
2 Wholetime	19 Wholetime
27 Retained	12 Retained
17 Support	16 Support
2 Control	1 Control





Total compliments received: 12
Total complaints received: 5

The School's fire alarm activated last Saturday afternoon and was attended by a most professional and helpful crew. Please can our thanks be passed to all those who were instrumental with the callout and attendance, and for their helpfulness and advice whilst on-site.

Thank you letter received from The Bedford Hospital Charity - Dear Friends, On behalf of the Charity I would like to thank all the Crew of Bedford Fire Station for so quickly coming to our help to put the star on Connie's Tree. For the past two years we have been collecting money for the Hospital with the aid of the lit tree. The money this year will go to our £1m Appeal for a Children's A & E also a C T Scanner at Bedford Hospital. Thank you for all you have done and what you are doing. We hope you will have a quiet but Merry Christmas. Best wishes, Bedford Hospital Charity & Friends.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your actions and involvement within this incident, because of you this person is alive today. With the ever-increasing demand upon our service for a broadening range of problems it can sometimes be easy to overlook the reason for the ambulance services' existence. Without you and your colleagues completing their roles so effectively I am positive that this outcome would not have been so favourable for the individual concerned.

Social Media



Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

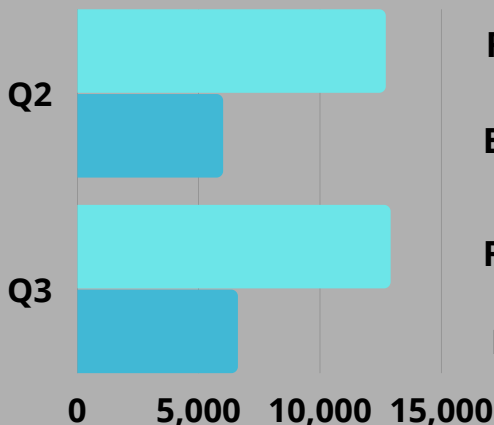
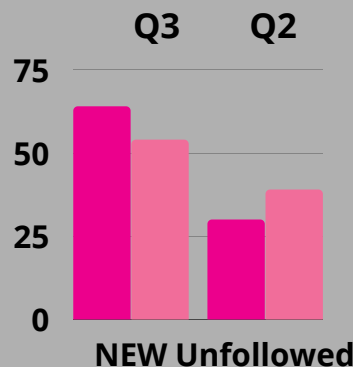
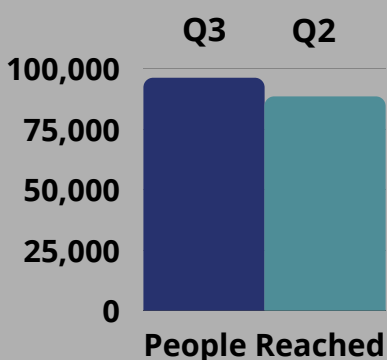


114 Posts

98 Posts



169 Tweets



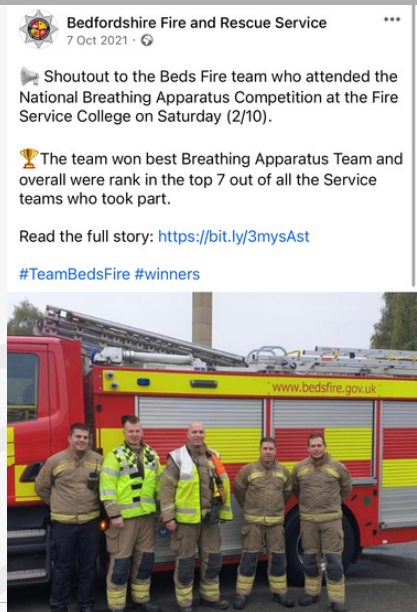
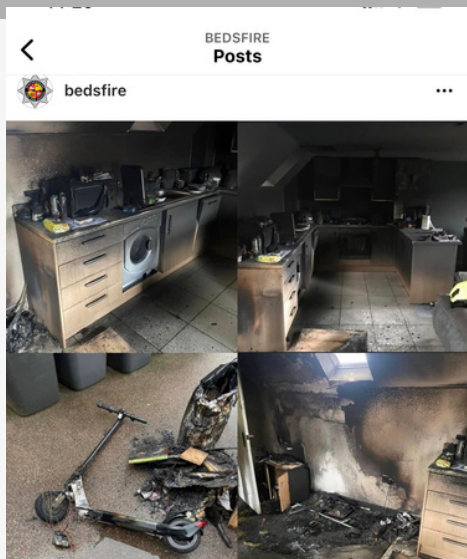
Followers

Engagement

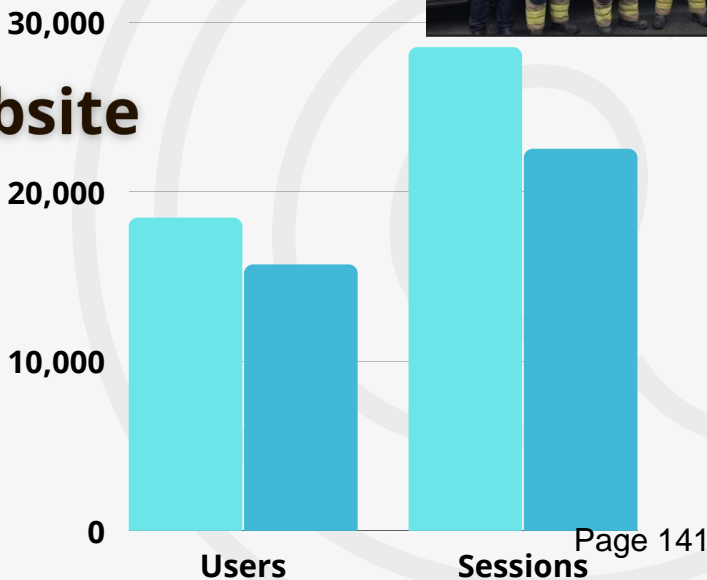
Followers

Engagement

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA

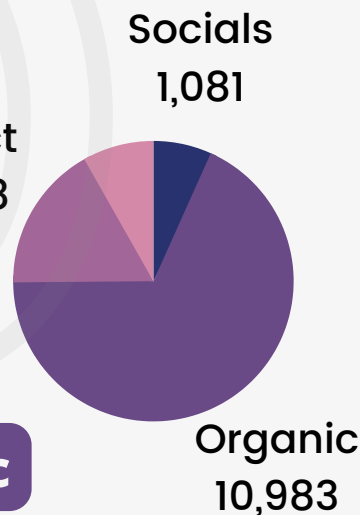


Website



Traffic

Direct
2,728





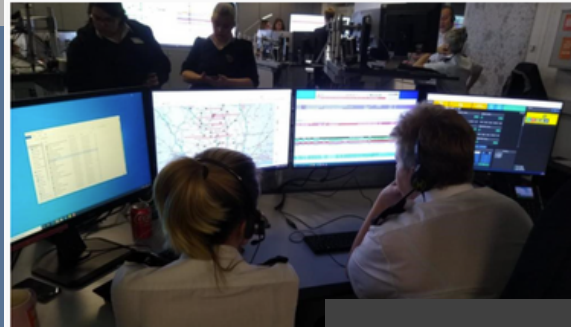
BLUE BULLETIN

Chief Fuller's Memorial Service 28 October 2021



Replacement Mobilising Project Update

On the 1st November, BFRS went live with our new cloud hosted Motorola Co... This is a really significant development both for BFRS and our technology par... 3TC. The new system is cloud hosted and is the first example of its kind in the... numerous benefits of this early adoption philosophy and vision of the project t... being that the new system is already fully ESN (Emergency Services Network... Therefore when the current Airwaves migrates to ESN, BFRS will be again be a... FRS's and able to further utilise this technology with integrated ESN devices.



Oct

Nov

Long Service Awards



BFRS Wins More Awards

Fire & Emergency Awards

Paul Maurice Fuller, formerly Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Dec



Vaccinator Volunteers Needed

COVID-19

this issue...

HOARDING HAZARDS

RED bulletin

Multi-Agency Hoarding Protocol Launched Nov' 21

plus House Fire Leighton/Linslade, DART transport at London Luton Airport, Risk Cover Overview, Cutting Equipment, Meet Your Protection and Fire Investigation Teams & more...



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Contribute to the next edition!

Is there any operational learning you would like to share with colleagues? Is there change happening to the Service that operational teams need to know about?

Email
redbulletin@bedsfire.gov.uk



Introduction

by Stuart Auger

This is the second edition of the Red Bulletin which I have been involved in since starting as Head of Response in the Summer of 21. It has been a busy period for us in Response with a brand-new senior management team for us to get to know. I firstly would like to mention the arrival of our new DCFO Chris Bigland, I am looking forwards to working with him this year to really move forward with our risk cover review. I am sure you will all be keen to welcome him to Bedfordshire and will see him in the coming weeks as CMT embark on station visits (pandemic allowing).

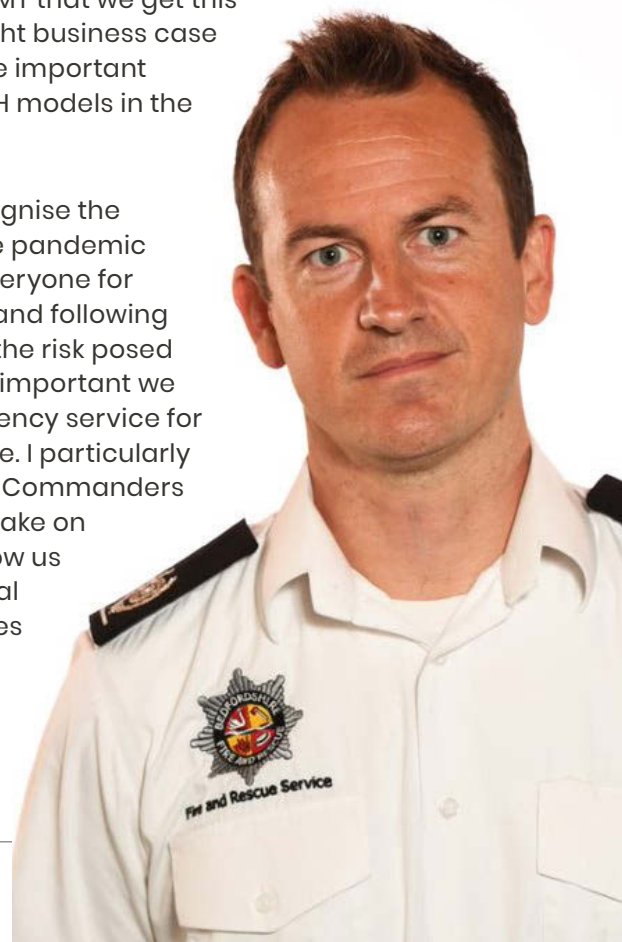
Response have seen some interim changes to help us respond to challenges posed by the pandemic and maintaining progress on several projects. We have reverted to a North and South Command structure to simplify reporting lines. This will be reviewed in January 22.

Some of the work being explored in 2022 includes the pilots of different response options in Luton and the Eastern part of the County, further work to support Eeast (East of England Ambulance Service Trust) during this global pandemic and of course the On-Call improvement project.

In this edition I will provide an overview of the preparation work the Service completed with a company called ORH, the results of this have enabled us to really tie in work around our estates, special appliances, and crewing models to place us in a great position to look forward for the range of futures we may face.

It is important you are all involved in this journey; these may lead to some of the biggest changes delivered in Bedfordshire for several years. It is important to CMT that we get this right, so if we build the right business case you all contribute to these important trials for us to test the ORH models in the real world.

Finally, I would like to recognise the continued pressure of the pandemic and offer my thanks to everyone for continuing to be vigilant and following precautions to minimise the risk posed to all of us. It is extremely important we maintain this vital emergency service for the people of Bedfordshire. I particularly want to thank the Station Commanders who have stepped up to take on extra responsibility to allow us to release capacity to deal with the ongoing pressures and everyone who continues to support the running of LRF meetings.



Risk Cover Review

ORH Preparation Work December 21

ORH helps emergency services around the world to optimise resource use and respond in the most effective and efficient way. ORH worked with BFRS to develop a 'risk and response' analysis methodology that enables:



- ▶ A review of incident, response and availability data
- ▶ Analysis of response times and utilisation rates
- ▶ Trend analysis and incident projections
- ▶ Understanding of response times and risk profiles

After completing this ORH worked with BFRS to develop the methodology to enable future demand scenario planning with simulation modelling:

- ▶ Station and appliance locations
- ▶ Appliance configuration options
- ▶ Incident projections and resilience

Focused analysis on the east of Bedfordshire covered by Shefford, Biggleswade, Sandy and Potton shows us;

- ▶ Largest concentration of over the border responses are in this area and all stations are on-call
- ▶ Areas around Shefford have long response times and are in the 30% most deprived areas in the country
- ▶ There are pockets of the county e.g. Shefford where there are long response times and high-risk levels – These should be focus areas for prevention and protection work which is key to the trial

The service-wide optimisation modelling also identified an optimal location in Leagrave, 3km north west of Luton fire station. Good locations have quick access to either the M1, A505, Grange Avenue or Oakley Road. Luton and Dunstable Hospital meets these criteria.

To explore the site's potential impact on response, ORH modelled options for redistributing existing pumps to include the Leagrave site, this site consistently appeared as a site of interest, driven by the existing station locations and the distances between Luton, Stopsley and Dunstable:

- ▶ Dunstable
- ▶ Luton
- ▶ Stopsley
- ▶ Toddington

Based on a paper taken by the DCFO, The FRA are supporting Response to build a business case to carry out two pilots;

1. Base a fire appliance in the Luton Borough Council area to an alternative temporary location in the northern part of Luton at key times to test how this affects response times and response standards – including all incident types and first and second appliance performance; and

2. Position an additional appliance within the Eastern part of the county during specific time periods to examine the impact of mobilising from different locations on response times and response standards. This may inform both crewing requirements and an optimum location for a new community fire station.

The principles of these pilots are:

- ▶ Maintain or improve public and firefighter safety;
- ▶ Improve 1st pump operational attendance standard attainment;
- ▶ Work within our service values;
- ▶ Provide operational crews with mobile information and communication technology (ICT) such as tablets so they can remain productive during non-emergency response times, increasing other prevention and protection activity;
- ▶ Reduce costs of 'over the border' calls where we request support from our Neighbours;
- ▶ Compare like with like and compare performance accurately; and
- ▶ Involve operational crews in evaluating the pilots.



During the 999 call the resident could be heard in the background and sounded confused. Fire Control did an excellent job with fire survival guidance until the arrival of the first pump in just over 8 minutes. Fire Control were able to pass on valuable information about the location of the fire to CC Derbyshire whilst he was en-route which helped with him building a mental picture of what was happening.

Fire Control used good decision making to add roof fire PDA and requested EEA (East of England Ambulance Service) to attend. Leighton Buzzard also 'made pumps 3' due to the size of the fire and spread on their arrival.

In total 4 Breathing Apparatus under Stage 1 extinguished the fire. Luton's Aerial Ladder Platform was used to extinguish the roof fire.

SC Jamie Clarke was in attendance as a FDS and Police requested Fire Investigator, as there may have been some suspicious circumstances, which may have needed further investigation.

Following discussion with Scenes of Crime Officers, information on the status of occupant and other police commitments within the county, the decision was made to look at completing Fire Investigation on the following day. Fire Control were able to

gain support from Herts FRS to support SC Jamie Clarke with the FI as he is still in development, they provided a competent FI and FI dog. This was a great example of joint working and is something we can expect to see develop further as we work with Herts and Cambs towards a joint FI team.

A safeguarding referral was sent to CBC adult safeguarding on return to the station by the CC Derbyshire from Leighton Buzzard, which was considered good practice in the circumstances. The occupant was hospitalised because of her smoke inhalation. The FI was completed jointly with the outcome recorded sadly as a deliberate ignition by the occupant.

House Fire Leighton/ Linslade

October 21

Leighton Buzzard were first in attendance to a well-developed fire in a domestic property. Leighton and Dunstable were mobilised together at the time of call. The caller was a passer-by who advised all windows were involved in fire, they were able to rescue a lady from the window and were talked to safety away from the property by Fire Control.



HOARDING HAZARDS

Multi-Agency Hoarding Protocol Launched
November 21



Multi-Agency Hoarding Protocol Launched Nov '21

What is hoarding?

The NHS describes a hoarding disorder as; 'Where someone acquires an excessive number of items that can be stored in a chaotic manner, usually resulting in unmanageable amounts of clutter. The items can be of little or no monetary value.'

Why do people do it?

The reasons for collecting items are unique and personal but they might be due to:

- ▶ A history of hoarding in the family;
- ▶ A mental health condition; for example PTSD or anxiety;
- ▶ Bereavement or loss;
- ▶ A persons' physical or learning disability;
- ▶ A change in circumstance such as moving to a smaller house

Hoarding is considered a significant problem if:

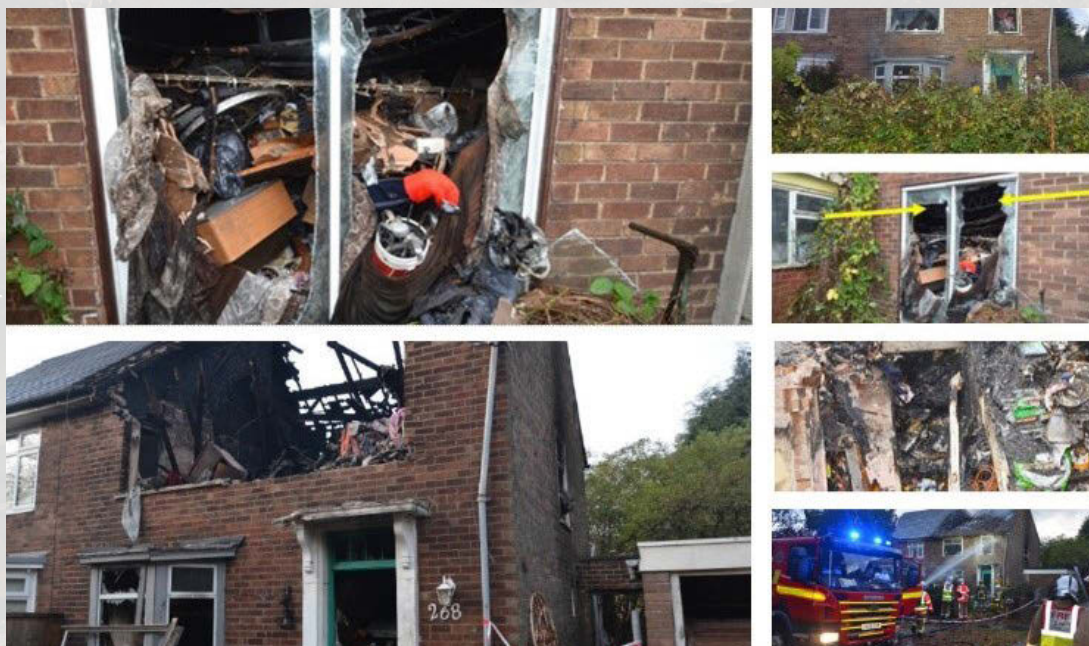
- ▶ Rooms cannot be used in the way they were intended
- ▶ The amount of clutter interferes with everyday living, for example, the person is unable to use their kitchen or bathroom and rooms are not accessible
- ▶ The clutter is causing significant distress or negatively affecting the quality of life of the person or their family – for example, they become upset if someone tries to clear the clutter and their relationship suffers

Photos from Home Safety centre, Luton Fire Station 2015



Why do we get involved?

What can we do about it?



Safe and Well visit – We can offer a Safe and Well visit, provide smoke alarms and relevant advice and guidance. Adding notes to the database of will allow us to build a picture of the support we have provided and how the person has responded.

Safeguarding referral – noting the category as Self Neglect, include what you saw, the impact of the hoarding, the persons' behaviour and if there were to be

Photos courtesy of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. Fatal fire 2016, elderly couple were found in the downstairs living room two days post fire. Most likely cause of fire 'Accidental ignition of combustible materials which ignited due to radiated heat issued from a fan heater'.

The fire most likely developed rapidly due to the high fire loading in all rooms and reduced free space allowing the fire to rapidly progress throughout the property.

Whilst we may not have any legislative powers to force the occupier to make changes we are able to provide practical advice and guidance on how they may make their home safer in turn reducing the risk of fire.

a fire what the outcome may be e.g. the occupier smokes, walks with a walking stick due to mobility problems and is no longer able to use the cooker in the kitchen. As such the person has started to cook in the living room using a portable stove which is in close proximity to flammable items. If there were to be a fire due to the person's mobility and the level of clutter it is unlikely they would be able to escape from the fire unaided.

CFSops – Make a note of the risks within the property including and not limited to; the level of clutter, what the combustible materials are, where the person spends most of their time.

Hoarding Guidance Document – As hoarding is a very complex disorder; to provide the best support for people a multi-agency response is required. Partner organisations recognise the important role that BFRS has in this area and invited us to be part of the process. We have worked closely with partner organisations across the county and have contributed to the Pan Bedfordshire Hoarding Guidance document which includes a simple pathway outlining the steps that can be followed when a person requires additional support.



Luton Airport DART

Transport System

WC Alex Russell on Stopsley Blue watch has been liaising with the team at London Luton Airport as the new passenger link from the mainline Thameslink station to the airport has been developed. WC Russell is arranging for the SSRI and exercises to be completed in early 2022 so BFRS are prepared as it goes into operation.

DART is a transit system formed of two automated shuttles, which will cut the 2.1km journey between airport and railway station to under 4 minutes. It is a major feat of engineering ingenuity. The DART must rise 30m over its 2.1km journey – this is too steep for a regular train. In effect what has been built is a giant, extremely fast cable car. The Luton Dart will speed travellers from Luton Airport Parkway station to the terminal of London Luton Airport in under four minutes and allow passengers to travel between St Pancras and the airport in just half an hour.

There is a dedicated terminal building next to the station, and it is connected directly to platforms with a brand-new footbridge, two new lifts and three new escalators on the platform with more within the terminal building itself. This means

improved step-free access to all platforms, benefiting every station user.

London Luton Airport is already one of our special and major risks, this will be added to the risk register and expected to be exercised on and covered as part of a 72d program. WC Russell will work with Response Support to capture plans for the MDT to include, Alex will update further operational focused information in a future Red Bulletin;

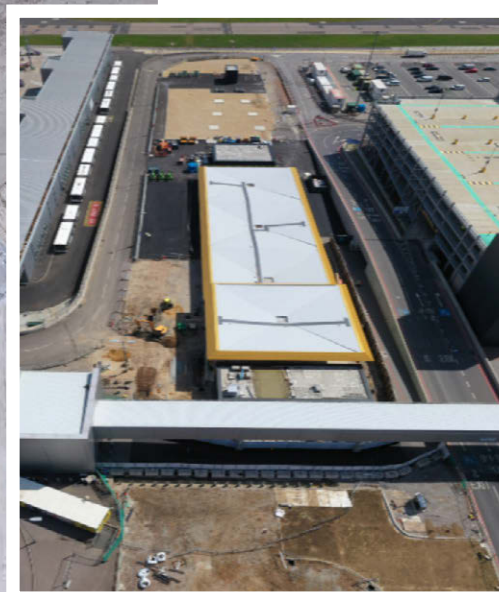
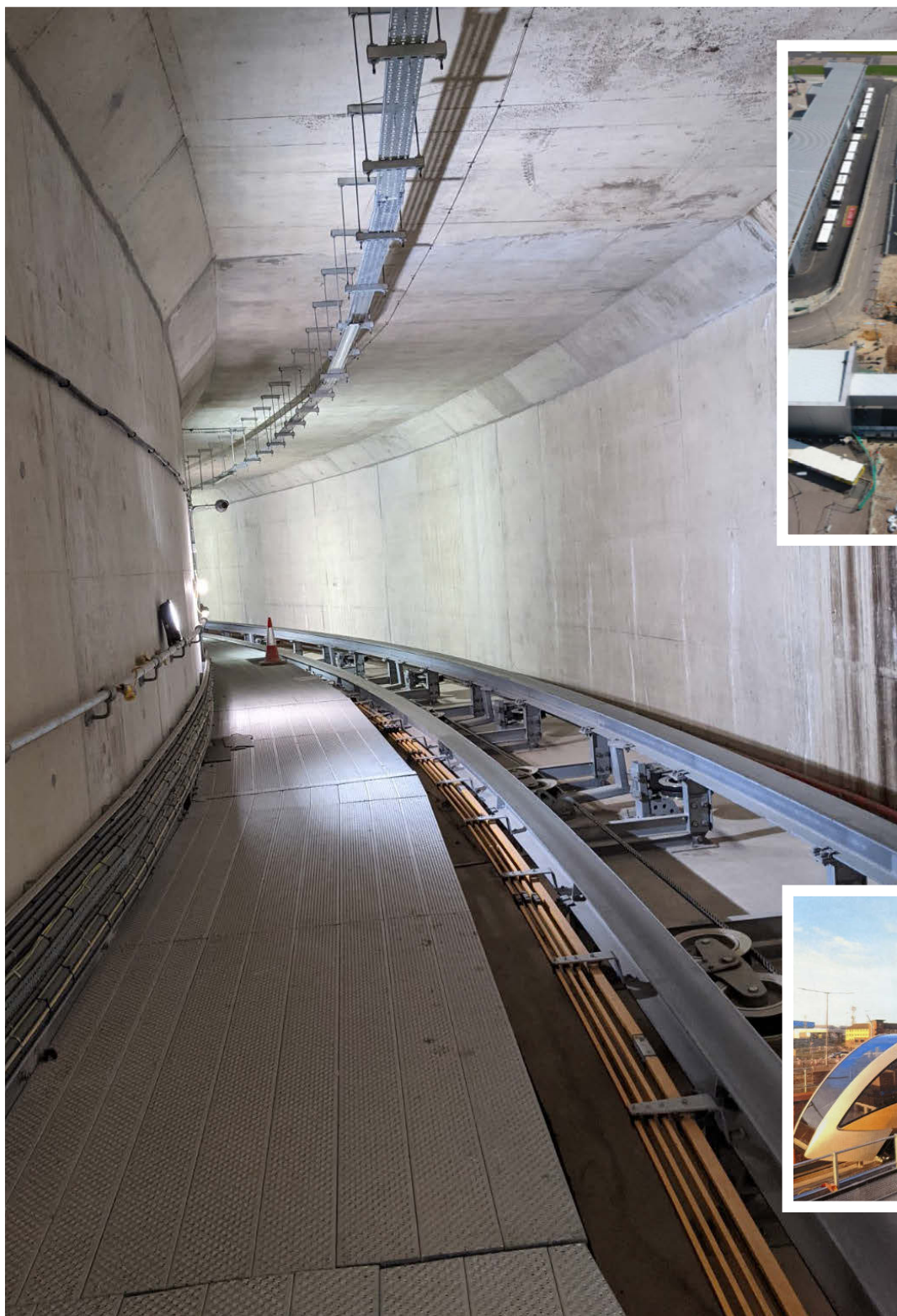
- ▶ DART Parkway and Central Terminal stations (new SSRI required for both);
- ▶ The Gateway Bridge (working at height);
- ▶ The Viaduct (working at height);
- ▶ Running Slab (moving shuttles);
- ▶ The Tunnel and approaches (tunnels and underground structures);
- ▶ Maintenance area (machinery)

The new Dart railway runs from Luton Airport Parkway train station to Luton airport terminal. The track is 2000 metres long and runs above all the major roads into the airport and then through a 330-metre tunnel which runs under the airport.

There are two tracks with one train running along each that are propelled by cable.

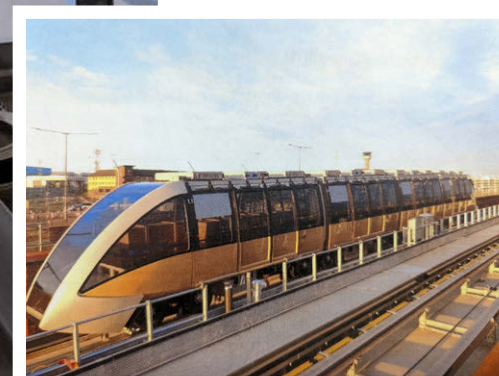
Each train can hold up to 170 passengers, running at 30mph and takes just 3 minutes for the journey.

The terminal station is underground. This new rail line is the only one of its kind in the country and it cost £220 million pounds to build.



[Caption picture above: LLA Terminal end from above]

[Caption picture left: Tunnel and track. Train sits on the rails and the cable pulls the train.]



[Caption picture above: A visual of the Dart concept]

About The Protection Team

Making A Difference Working With Partners

The past three months have been an incredibly busy time for the Protection Team with formal Notices being issued on several occasions.

We have served 8 formal Notices over the past quarter (Q3) this includes 7 Prohibition Notices (PN's) and 1 formal Enforcement Notice (EN). The uses of these premises do vary and includes house in multiple occupation (HMO), licensed premises and shops.

The issues have been identified in several ways from direct Protection involvement, information from Operational crews when completing fire safety checks and working closely with partner agencies.

Two of the most recent Prohibition Notices issued whilst working with partners are provided below. These involved key work being performed by the Fire Safety Advisors.

38 Downs Rd, Luton



[Caption pictures on left: Front Aspect Kitchen, not fire separated from common area.]

This involved the issuing of a Prohibition Notice (PN) at an unlicensed, licensable house in multiple occupation (HMO) following a joint visit on the 19th October 2021 with Luton Borough Council Private Sector Housing and Building Control.

An inspection of the site was carried out by a Fire Safety Advisor and an Area Fire Safety Manager. Dangerous conditions were found. Issues relating to insufficient fire alarm system, unprotected escape route and insufficient primary and emergency lighting.



On this occasion the responsible person (RP) completed remedial works which allowed the PN to be withdrawn on the 14th December 2021.

This is a great example of joint working to maintain the safety of residents within an HMO. The joint approach enabled the use of the premises to be restricted with immediate effect and resulted in the RP improving the fire safety measures within this premises, increasing the safety of approx 6 residents.



[Caption above picture: Front Aspect]

This involved the issuing of a Prohibition Notice (PN) at a two storey premises following a “Day of Action” with Luton Borough Council’s Neighbouring Enforcement Team, Licensing, Environmental Health Agency, H & M Revenue & Customs, DVLA, Arson Task Force & Fire Safety 2021.

After a number of complaints from residents about the number of cars being parked illegally and the amount of tyres being stored from local businesses within the area of Wingate Rd & Selbourne Rd, Luton, a joint visit was carried out with all agencies on the same day. BFRS were represented by a Fire Safety Advisor (FSA).

Having made entry to the premises the FSA found dangerous conditions throughout. Sleeping or resting appeared to be on the first floor, combustibles throughout, no smoke or fire detection installed, no safe escape route from the first floor, exits locked and blocked, fire doors not maintained and no emergency lighting. The risk was increased by the process of hot works (welding) being carried out in the ground floor workshop.

The FSA was then able to contact a Fire Safety Inspector (FSI) for support and the Authority to issue the Prohibition Notice (PN).

BFRS are continuing to work together with the Responsible Person to assess both the requirements and timescales for the subsequent remedial actions required before the PN can be withdrawn.

The joint approach enabled the use of the premises to be restricted with immediate effect and resulted in the RP needing to improve the fire safety measures within this premises, and to look at other areas of improvement if sleeping was to be provided in the future.



Replacement RTC Cutting Equipment

by T Gradwell-Smith - Technical
Manager

Extensive practical evaluations of RTC cutting equipment took place over two days on the 14th and 15th December with BRE (battery powered rescue equipment).

A set of BRE tools, Dedicated Cutters, Spreaders and Ram were provided by three of the leading market suppliers:

- ▶ Weber
- ▶ Holmatro
- ▶ Lukas

Transition to BRE will bring many benefits to the Service including maximising firefighter safety, due to the reduction of hydraulic risks and noise on the incident ground. All of which will provide significant benefits for casualty safety.

Changing to Battery power will also provide significant benefits environmentally.

Key benefits include:

- ▶ Increased safety and operational needs.
- ▶ There is no risk of injury from high pressure hose oil injection
- ▶ There is no manual handling/trip hazard risk arising from hose management
- ▶ Operators are not restricted to the 15m length of hose
- ▶ There is significant noise reduction at incidents.
- ▶ Elimination of fuel degradation and fuel storage problems
- ▶ Reduction in whole life cost maintenance i.e. hoses
- ▶ Much reduced storage requirements
- ▶ Frees up a firefighter on the incident ground who would otherwise be operating/monitoring the hydraulic pump

Thanks to...

Many thanks to the following personnel who formed the evaluation group: WC Andy Shrehane, WC Luke Stanbridge, WC Lee Murphy, CC Nick Clements, CC Martin Chalkley, CC Andrew Towle, CC Dominic Cook, FF Stephanie Chandler.

It was also pleasing to see FBU rep bodies FF Mark Cook and Rebecca Lewington.

Further thanks to media team Lara Lewis who braved the elements to capture the testing.

There are a few final stages to complete and it is envisaged BFRS will be in the position to award contract to the successful supplier mid-January with the aim of phased introduction of BRE across our fleet of Rescue Appliances in Qu 1 2022-23.



About The Fire Investigation Team

Meet The Team

We saw GC Andy Draper and SC Jason Gell retire from the BFRS Fire Investigation Team at the beginning of 2021 which opened a wonderful opportunity to recruit new members to the team.

FIT are trained Fire and Arson Investigators who undergo a pathway of development to include a Fire Investigation and Arson Course and Legal Expert Witness Training.

The team includes:

- ▶ SC Trevor Gradwell-Smith
- ▶ GC Ian McLaren
- ▶ GC Rich Gordon
- ▶ SC Simon Williams
- ▶ SC Ivan Finch
- ▶ SC Jamie Clarke (FI in development)
- ▶ SC James West (FI in development)
- ▶ SC Steve Sugars (FI in development)

How We Help?

Fire Investigation is a statutory duty placed upon Fire and Rescue Services under the Fire Service Act 2004 Section 45.

All BFRS Incident Commanders complete an Introduction to Fire Investigation Course equipping them to undertake Tier 1 Fire Investigations which are defined as a routine or uncomplex fire investigation. These are undertaken to provide information required by the Secretary of State, through the Incident Reporting System (IRS). It is important to remember that the FIT are there to support Incident Commanders (IC's) under Tier 1 to determine origin, cause and spread of fire but they should always be requested by the IC for the following types of incident:

- ▶ Every property fire where a SOCO is required to attend to investigate a potential crime scene.
- ▶ Any fatalities and / or serious injuries from fire.
- ▶ On request of the Incident Commander / Police / SOCO.
- ▶ Property fires with four or more pumping appliances attending.
- ▶ Fires where the Incident Commander is unable to determine the origin and cause and would record 'Unknown' on the Incident Recording System.
- ▶ Deliberate fires that form a pattern and the collection of evidence would be of value to the investigation/prevention strategy.
- ▶ Fires involving a large financial loss and require multi-agency working with Insurance/ loss adjusters.

Whilst the FIT support IC's under Tier 1 Fire Investigation to determine the origin, cause and spread of fire. They also work collaboratively under Tier 2 Fire Investigation with our Scene of Crimes Officers (SOCO's) from Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police to investigate more complex fires and/or explosion incidents (non terrorist) where the origin, cause and fire spread cannot be easily established with the aim of preventing fire deaths, fire injuries, reducing arson as well as the financial costs to the public we serve.



A new online introduction to fire investigation course will be made available via Gardners Associates during 2022.

How Can Incident Commanders Support The Fire Investigation Team?

“Thorough investigations don’t just happen, they are the result of careful planning, organisation and an ability to anticipate problems before they arise”

NFPA 921 Guide for Fire & Explosion Investigation

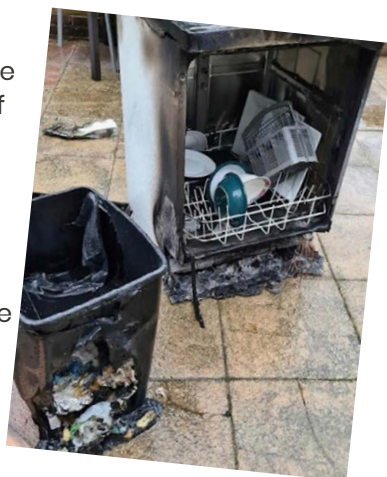
Scene preservation – *“Every contact leaves a trace”*:

- ▶ Consider changing jets to spray when viable.
- ▶ Minimise cutting away, turning over and damping down.
- ▶ Minimise movement of contents, if necessary, document on a plan or photograph.
- ▶ Consider photographic evidence i.e. Fire appliance mobile phone, Good Sam App, Thermal Image Camera footage etc.
- ▶ Restrict and control personnel movements in the scene, effective cordon control.
- ▶ Consider alternative access routes to the scene (also known as a common approach path).
- ▶ Electricity- if possible, leave all electrical equipment in-situ and undisturbed isolating the main switch only on the consumer board.



REMEMBER: FIT meet once a month to review fires of significance. They meet quarterly with trading

standards to collate appliance details to ensure faulty appliances are recalled. If you come across a faulty appliance that has caused a fire ensure the: make, model and serial number are recorded on the IRS and also emailed to fireinvestigationofficer@bedsfire.gov.uk.



Ensure that operational crews deployed to incidents complete a fire witness statement (FSO76) prior to going off duty and submit to the FIT lead.



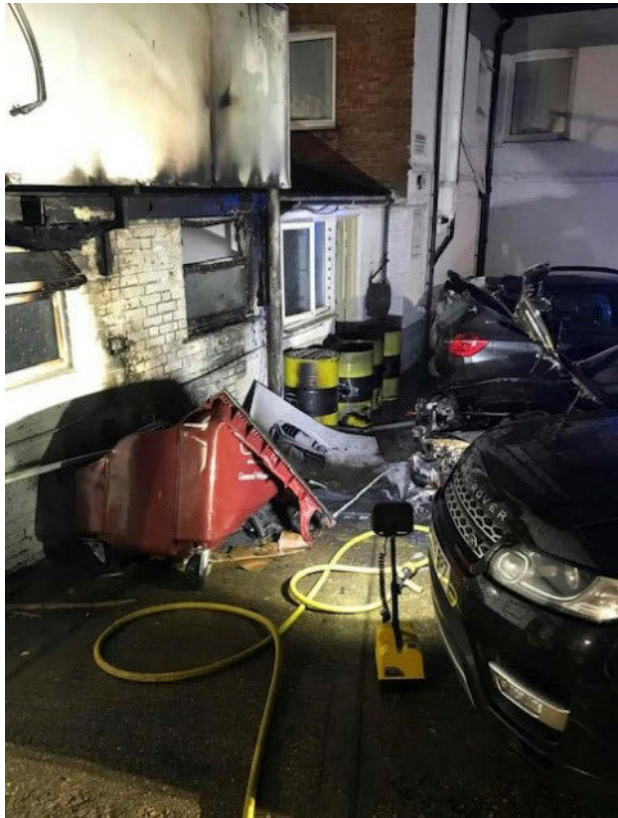
REMEMBER: A fire investigation team member can be contacted via service control to provide advice support over the phone.



Things To Look Out For?

- ▶ Intruder or fire alarms sounding on arrival.
- ▶ Signs of forcible entry.
- ▶ Position of any item, prior to being moved by crews.
- ▶ Position or absence of commercial stock, fixtures, fittings, machinery or records.
- ▶ Position or absence of valuables, pets, furniture or appliances (TV's), family photographs, possessions.
- ▶ More than one apparent seat of fire.
- ▶ Unusual containers, improvised timing devices.
- ▶ Unusual burn patterns or odours.
- ▶ Location of owner, casualties or deceased.
- ▶ Fire intensity and location.
- ▶ Unusual intensity or location for the type of premises.
- ▶ Safety or security systems tampered with.
- ▶ Unusual hindrances to fire fighting.
- ▶ Unusual fire behaviour during suppression.
- ▶ Artificial conditions to aid fire spread.

Operational Learning?



Tudor Road, Luton, Bedfordshire

Burn pattern that originated from the Eurobin spreading to a vehicle and building. Initial Incident Commanders thoughts were that the fire was a deliberate ignition of the vehicle with fire spread to Eurobin and building but CCTV footage and a detailed excavation proved the fire to be accidental ignition of the bins, mostly likely a smouldering cigarette.

Westoning, Bedfordshire

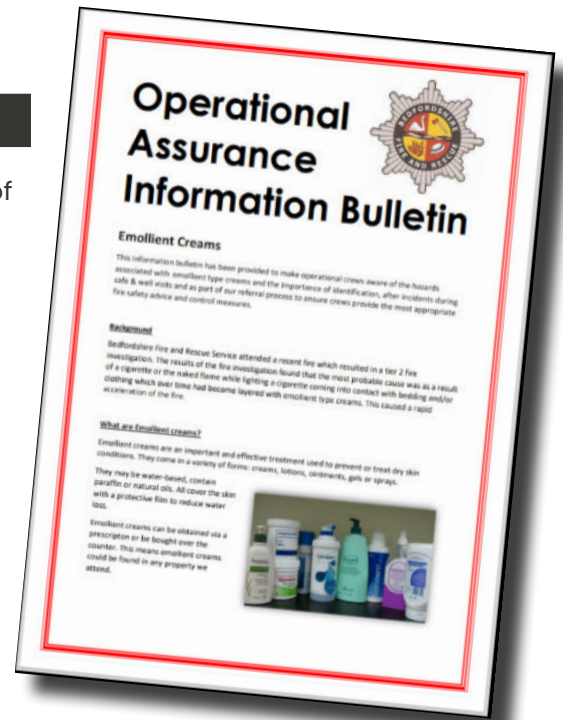
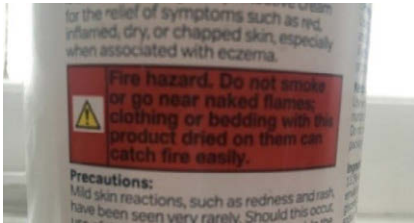
Lithium battery (unknown manufacturer) which had gone into “thermal runaway” causing the owner to receive burns to the groin. Early reporting by the Incident Commander allowed the Trading Standards Department to be promptly informed.

This amongst similar incidents across the County of Bedfordshire led to a Community Fire Safety Initiative during Electrical Safety Week on the need to purchase genuine products and the risks associated with lithium batteries.



Ridgeway Road, Dunstable, Bedfordshire

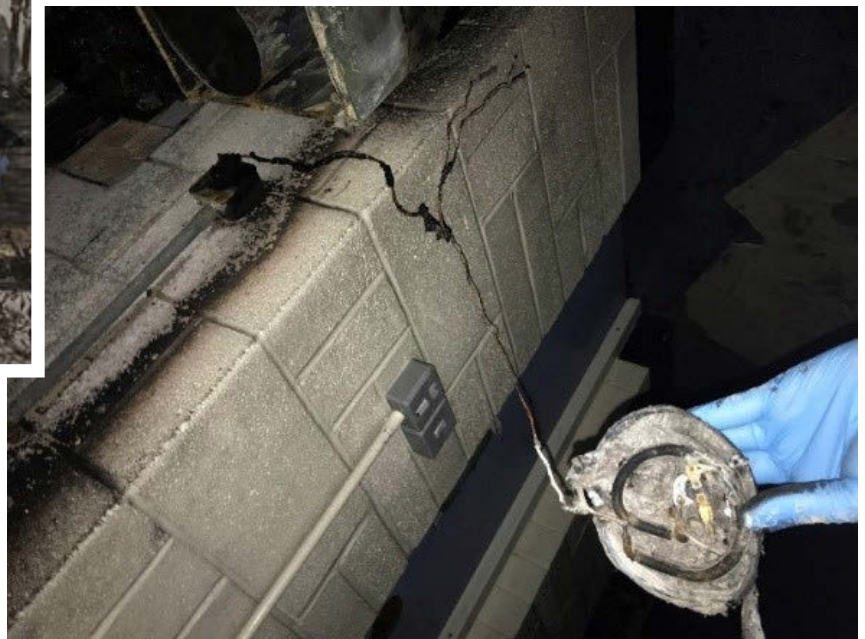
After a fire fatality, investigation by the FIT determined that the use of emollient creams helped accelerated the fire growth. On speaking with crews post incident it was identified that there was a lack of awareness of the dangers of emollient creams. This was also apparent in the Care Sector. This has generated additional learning and education for operational crews in the form of an Operational Assurance Information Bulletin, and work being undertaken by the prevention team with Community Care teams.



HM Bedford Prison, Bedford, Bedfordshire



After a fire in a works kitchen crews undertook a Tier 1 fire investigation. The fire was deemed to have started by an electrical fault within a water cooler. After consultation with the FIT, a revisit to the address subsequently ruled out the water cooler as cause due to the unit being identified not to have been energised (plugged in). Further inspection identified the cause as remains of another electrical appliance that had been energised and placed on top of the cooler. Crews conducting a Tier 1 investigation should try and validate their hypothesis as best as possible. If you have any doubt on the cause and origin, request a Fire Investigation Officer.



Replacement Mobilising Project Update



On the 1st November 2021, BFRS went live with our new cloud hosted Motorola Control Room solution.

This is a really significant development both for BFRS and our technology partners Motorola and 3TC. The new system is cloud hosted and is the first example of its kind in the UK. There are numerous benefits of this early adoption philosophy and vision of the project team, with the major one being is that the new system is already ESN (Emergency Services Network) compliant.

Therefore, when the current Airwaves migrate to ESN, BFRS will again be at the forefront of UK FRS's and able to further utilise this technology with integrated ESN devices.

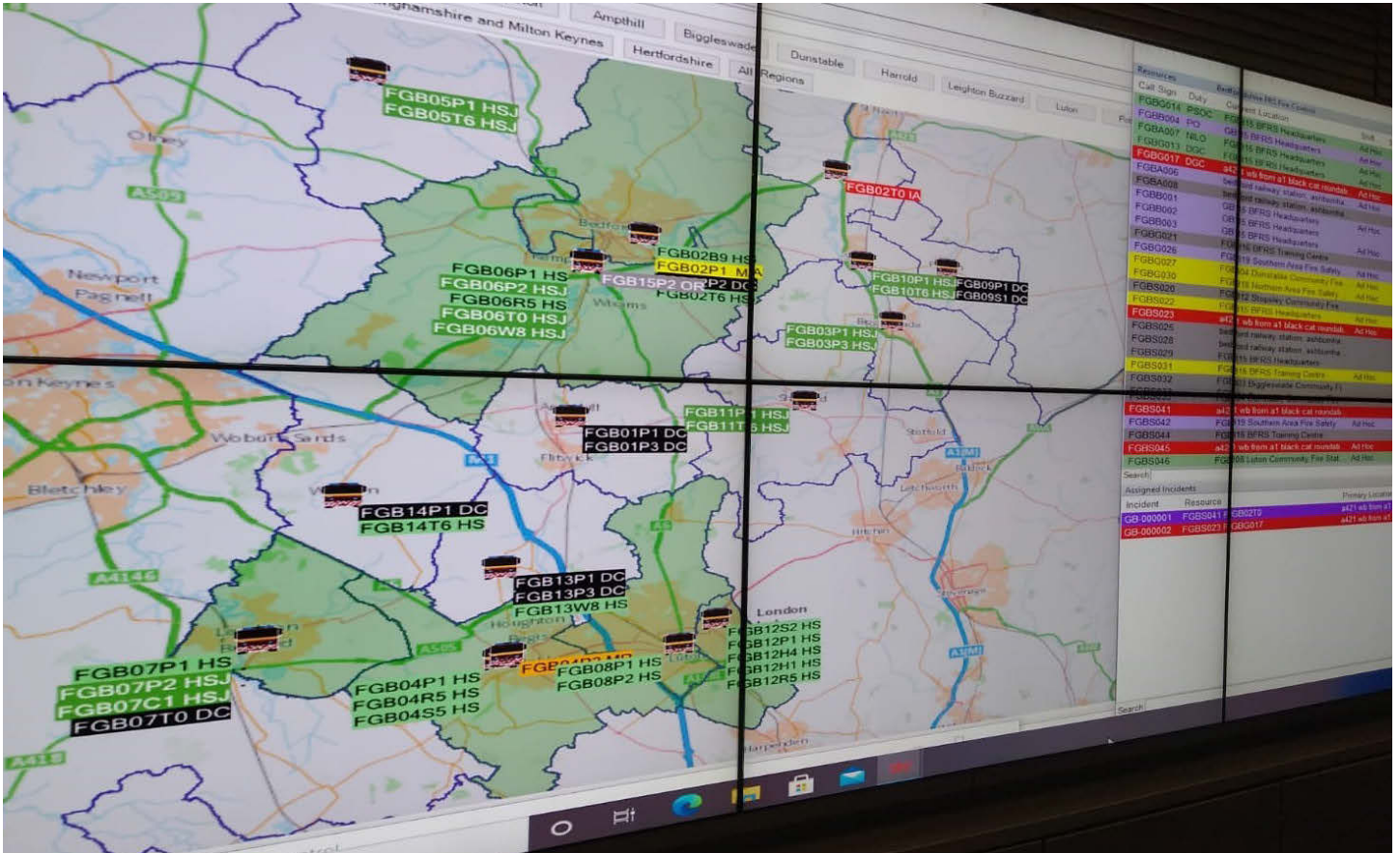
Coinciding with the switchover to the new systems, was the go live of our MDTs using ESN Connect across the entire fire appliance fleet.

In the first 2 months of the system, Control have:

- ▶ Managed 3474 total inbound and out bound calls.
- ▶ Dealt with a total of 985 emergency calls (441 were 999 from the public and 544 calls from other emergency services).
- ▶ Logged a total of 3251 incidents.
- ▶ Made 2320 mobilisations.
- ▶ Dealt with a total of 6581 radio messages.

BFRS resources have also mobilised to multiple 'What 3 Words' address directly from the new system.

The project team would like to thank everybody involved in the switch over in November – it was a very carefully managed process. This involved the day Control watch working out of Secondary Control whilst the technological switch over was made. This was done on a station by station basis and all the hardware was changed over in Control by ICT and Property teams.



Operational crews-maintained Radio Watch during the morning until their station was switched across. This involved nominated On Call personnel being on station as a Single Point Of Contact and manually activating Pagers to mobilise crews where required.

Our technology partners provided 24hr attendance within Control until Wednesday afternoon to support the new system, but due to the extensive testing, which was carried out prior to the Go Live day, they were only required for some snagging issues.

Since Go Live the Project Team has continued to work to improve the system and resolve any issues identified by both Control and Station based staff. This led to the first two software updates being implemented in early December and early January which resolved some of the prioritised issues. There is a further update scheduled for early February.

The Guardian Command software is now fully customisable and suggestions around tip-sheets and status changing sequences can be raised via your SMs at ODT. The new system also allows for more accurate short- and long-term changes to PDAs to support information being fed in across the wider organisation.

Completion of the first stage of the project is a key element of the CRMP Maximising Aim and will strengthen our data insight and analysis capabilities. The new mobilising system can provide greater telephony reporting with more dynamic reporting from the computer aided despatch.

Thank you to everybody who has been involved in the process so far and for the patience and support from all operational staff.

Further updates will be provided via future editions of the Red Bulletin.



Bedfordshire

Fire & Rescue Service

 **WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK**

 **EVERY CONTACT COUNTS**

 **WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT**

 **WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE**

Contribute to the Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's RED Bulletin

Is there operational learning you would like to share with colleagues? Is there change happening to the Service that operational teams need to know about?

Email redbulletin@bedsfire.gov.uk.



REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

For further information on this report contact: Nicky Upton
Service Assurance Manager

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

To review and report on the work programme for 2021/22 and to provide Members with an opportunity to request additional reports for the Fire Authority meetings.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members consider the work programme for 2021/22 and note the 'cyclical' Agenda Items for each meeting in 2021/22.

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY - PROGRAMME OF WORK 2021/22

Meeting Date	‘Cyclical’ Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
EXECUTIVE	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
15 March 2022	Work Programme		Outcome of the Monitoring Officer’s review of the schemes of delegation	07.10.21 meeting minutes
	Pensions Immediate Detriment Update			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
24 March 2022	Communications		White Paper Briefing	Added by ACO 01.02.22
	Executive Committee Minutes from 15.03.22			
	Proposed Indicators and Targets for 2022/23			
	Collaboration Update			
	Q3 2021/22 Performance Report Update (Sept – Dec)			
	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring (current year)	Deferred from February meeting		
	Treasury Management Strategy and Practices	Deferred from February meeting		
	Portfolio Leads Updates			
	Response Statistics – National Benchmarking Comparison (DCFO, HoR)			
	CRMP pre-publication report			
	Business Continuity Annual Review	Restricted Report Deferred from February Meeting		
	Work Programme			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
EXECUTIVE	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
20 April 2022	Work Programme			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
28 April 2022	Communications			
	Executive Committee Minutes from 20.04.22 (provisional mtg)			
	ASC Minutes from 03.03.22			
	Programme Board Update			
	Fire Prevention Statistics - National Benchmarking Analysis (Annual)			
	Asset Management Strategy (reviewed every 3 years, next review 2022/23)			
	Disposal of Assets under the Scheme of Delegated Authority			
	Portfolio Leads Updates			
	Information Bulletin (Q4 Jan – March)			
	Work Programme			

ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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