



# Bedfordshire

## Fire & Rescue Authority

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

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

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: R Berry, J Chatterley, 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 Teamson Thursday, 8 September 2022** starting at **2.00 pm**. [Click here to join the meeting](#)

John Atkinson  
Monitoring Officer

Public Document Pack

### 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).

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose of Discussion</b>
3.	Communications	Chair	
4.	Minutes	Chair	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2022 (Pages 5 - 16)
5.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme
6.	Audit and Standards Committee meeting 14 July 2022	Cllr Atkins	To receive the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting held on 14 July 2022 (Pages 17 - 28)
7.	Monitoring Officer Report	HSSA	(Pages 29 - 32)
8.	Annual Report 2021/22	ACFO	To consider a report (Pages 33 - 62)
9.	Statement of Assurance 2021/22	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 63 - 84)
10.	Q1 2022/23 Performance Report	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 85 - 108)
11.	2022/23 Budget Monitoring	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 109 - 118)
12.	Cost of Living Support to Workforce	ACFO	Verbal update
13.	CRMP Planning update	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 119 - 134)
14.	Portfolio Leads Updates: Digital and Data Transformation	Cllr Headley	To consider a report (Pages 135 - 142)
15.	Work Programme	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 143 - 152)

Next Meeting

10.00 am on 31 October 2022 at Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA / MS Teams

**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 MEETING**

**held on 20 July 2022 at 10.00 am**

### **Present**

Councillors P Duckett (Chair), R Berry, J Chatterley, K Choudhury, D Franks, J Gambold, M Headley, D McVicar and Y Waheed

Chief Fire Officer A Hopkinson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer C Bigland, and Mr S Frank were also present

Councillors C Atkins and I Shingler, Assistant Chief Officer G Chambers and Strategic Operational Commander S Auger logged in remotely to the meeting via Teams

### **22-23/FRA/16 Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Burnett.

Councillors Atkins and Shingler and Assistant Chief Officer G Chambers were unable to be present at the meeting and logged on remotely via Teams.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer A Kibblewhite was unable to attend the meeting for operational reasons. Mr J Atkinson, the Secretary and Monitoring Officer, was unable to attend the meeting as he was on annual leave.

### **22-23/FRA/17 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests.

## **22-23/FRA/18 Communications**

### **Pay Negotiations**

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Employers had written to advise the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) had rejected the employer's 2% pay offer for Grey Book staff earlier in the week.

### **Major incident caused by extreme weather conditions**

The Chief Fire Officer provided an update on the major incident that had been declared the previous day due to the record-breaking temperatures. The Service was one of fourteen in the country that had declared a major incident. In addition to receiving an unprecedented level of calls (over 700 calls, of which 210 were 999 emergency calls), there had also been many incidents to respond to, both locally and in other Service areas, with many major incidents in the County and region. Additional fire engines and crews had been deployed to cope with demand.

The Service had been leading both the Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups of the Local Resilience Forum. The Service had also taken part in national mutual aid arrangements and Control staff had taken calls which had been diverted by BT from other services who were experiencing high volumes of 999 calls. Additional control room staff had been brought in to cover the increased workload.

Six of our firefighters had been treated for heat exhaustion, with three being admitted to hospital. All six had now fully recovered.

The comments of the Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council that nationally, the Fire and Rescue Service had been stretched to its capacity, and in some areas, beyond, were noted, as was the increased likelihood of wildfires arising from the changing climate.

The Chief Fire Officer paid tribute to all staff throughout the Service for their extraordinary efforts in responding to the unprecedented level of demand in both the county and beyond on the hottest day on record.

The Chair added his thanks on behalf of the Members of the Authority.

## **22-23/FRA/19 Minutes**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 7 June 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

## **22-23/FRA/20 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).

## **22-23/FRA/21 Executive Committee meeting 22 June 2022**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 June 2022 for information.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 June 2022 be received.

## **22-23/FRA/22 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Monitoring Programme**

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer introduced his report setting out the forecast year-end budget monitoring position as at 31 May 2022.

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

- The Service had received an additional £392,000 in business rate income than had been allocated in the budget.
- The Service had provisionally budgeted for a 4% pay increase for both Green and Grey Book staff. If a 5% pay award was agreed, this would have an additional impact of £200,000 for the 2022/23 financial year, as the pay award would be effective from 1 July 2022. The full year impact of an additional 1% pay increase was £250,000.
- The Firelink grant had been £50,000 less than budgeted and would be subject to a 20% reduction each year.
- The project that was to be funded through the £593,000 received through the Government's decarbonisation grant was no longer being progressed.
- The forecast pressure of increased inflationary costs was £285,000.

In relation to the non-salary forecast, there was currently a £308,000 overspend, largely related to the increased inflationary costs. There were no variances currently being reported against the forecast salary budgets.

The Capital Programme projects were all currently on target. The Authority was being asked to bring forward spend on the thermal imaging cameras capital scheme into the current financial year from 2023/24 as there had been a number of failures with the current equipment.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer advised that the non-salary variance relating to the increased inflationary pressures had been RAG rated as green as it was believed that this cost could be managed and measures were being put in place to address this. Further consideration could be given to changing the RAG status to Amber if this was felt necessary.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer detailed how the funding for the improvement of fire safety was being allocated. This included two new crew commander posts, as well as funding the cost of a number of Level 3, 4 and 5 certifications in fire investigation.

He also reported that the funding received for dementia prevention from Bedford Borough Council funded two posts within the Prevention Team.

As it was noted that the Authority had to approve any changes to the budget over £100,000, it was agreed that the proposals for how the additional income of £392,000 received from business rates was to be allocated should be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority for Member approval. Final proposals had not yet been agreed by the Service's Corporate Management Team.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the updates provided within this report be received.
2. That the receipt of unbudgeted Business Rates Relief income from central government be noted.
3. That the potential extra unbudgeted costs as a result of the recent inflation rate increases and expectations for the remainder of the financial year be noted.
4. That the request in paragraph 3.4.3 of the report, to bring forward £300,000 spend for thermal imaging cameras capital scheme into 2022/23 from the 2023/24 Capital Programme, be agreed.
5. That a further report be submitted to the next meeting of the Authority for Members to agree the allocation of the additional unbudgeted £392,000 of business rate income.

#### **22-23/FRA/23 Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer submitted the latest position of the medium-term budget for 2023/24 onwards, after setting the 2022/23 budget in February 2022 and receiving updated business rates information and other material changes such as inflation. Five different scenarios were presented as part of the Strategy, with varying assumptions regarding the pay award, business rate income and inflation.

The budget gap, ranging between £1.075 million and £1.539 million, would need to be managed. As previously discussed, a pay increase of 4% was currently being budgeted for. There would be additional cost pressures if a larger award was agreed. The Authority held a reasonable level of reserves and, if possible, wished to retain these.

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that the Authority had set aside funding for invest to save initiatives and income generation opportunities, such as the servicing of East of England Ambulance Service vehicles. There was also the possibility that the Council Tax referendum cap could be increased. It was not yet known how the Authority, as a top-up authority, would be affected by any changes in business rates.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to reviews that were currently being undertaken, such as the emergency cover and specialist capability reviews, and the interest amongst other public sector organisations in the Blue Light Estates Strategy that had been agreed by the three emergency services, as well as the income generation opportunities, that could be explored in order to address the budget gap.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be reviewed, considered and noted.

**22-23/FRA/24 Treasury Management Annual Report**

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer presented the Authority's Annual Report for Treasury Management for 2021/22.

The Authority's long term borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board was currently £9.987 million and the remaining repayment period was 35 years. The financial penalties for the early repayment of the loan were prohibitive.

The Bank of England forecast base rate had changed significantly from the previous Treasury Management Report for 2020/21, when the interest rate for March 2024 had been forecast at 0.10%. It was now forecast to increase to 2.75%.

Members were advised that the total investment income achieved during the 2021/22 financial year was £121,000.

The view was expressed that when the Treasury Management Strategy was reviewed, the Responsible Investment Policy should be updated as part of that process. It was noted that part of the treasury management training provided by Link Asset Services related to environmental, social and governance (esg) considerations.

**RESOLVED:**

That Members review and consider the information presented in the report.

## **22-23/FRA/25 Independent Review of Governance**

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer provided an update on the independent review of governance that was being undertaken. It was his understanding that a preliminary meeting with the Chief Fire Officer had already taken place but that the Member meeting had been postponed as it had clashed with a meeting at Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the meeting referred to had taken place and that it was intended that a report on the review be submitted to the October 2022 meeting of the Authority. This would tie in with the Home Office's response to the consultation on the White Paper.

Concerns about the current governance arrangements, such as reports not including full implication sections and 'to follow' reports, on full Authority agendas, were expressed.

The Chief Fire Officer apologised that one of the reports had been marked to follow and had not been circulated. This was due to operational pressures. He also commented that the lack of detailed implication sections in reports to the Authority was being addressed. The increased resource proposed in relation to the Monitoring Officer role would improve the governance arrangements.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the update on the independent review of governance be noted.

## **22-23/FRA/26 Final Resourcing Options for Monitoring Officer**

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer introduced a report setting out the final resourcing options for the recruitment of a new Monitoring Officer. This had been discussed recently at a Member Development Day and Members were now being asked to agree their preferred option.

In discussing the initial retainer, it was agreed to start with one day per week, which could be increased up to one and a half days if necessary following a six-monthly review.

A candidate from a local Fire and Rescue Authority had been identified who had spare capacity to provide support to this Authority. This was seen as preferable to employing a Monitoring Officer from a local authority, as there would be more crossover in regards to the work undertaken.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that the annual cost for a retainer of one day was £28,500, increasing to £42,750 for one and half days a week. The current level of resourcing for the Monitoring Officer role was £16,000 per annum.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be received and that it be agreed that the identified candidate be engaged on a one day a week retainer as the Authority's Monitoring Officer.
2. That this arrangement be reviewed in six months' time.

**22-23/FRA/27 Emergency Cover Review - Pilots and Trials Update**

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on progress with the work commissioned as part of the current 2019-23 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), to review emergency cover provision and, specifically, the implementation of two pilots/trials in Luton and Central Bedfordshire.

The first related to the deployment of an additional peripatetic appliance. This had been delayed until November 2022. In the interim period, it was being proposed to primary crew one of the existing on-call rural fire appliances, once upgraded with the new hydraulic rescue equipment, which would respond to incidents in the eastern part of Bedfordshire and reduce the need for wholetime appliances in the north of the County to respond to incidents in that area. This would also reduce the number of occasions where neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services, such as Hertfordshire, were called to assist, and the costs associated with this. The analysis had identified that Shefford was the station that would have the greatest impact on improving response times but the appliance would be deployed wherever it would best improve availability.

The second pilot related to the relocation of a fire appliance from Luton Community Fire Station to Luton Ambulance Station for set periods during the day.

Whilst recognising that the relocation of an appliance somewhere between the railway station and the Luton and Dunstable Hospital would improve response times, many Members expressed concern about the specific location chosen, as this area was subject to very heavy traffic and surrounded by narrow roads down which it would be difficult to manoeuvre a fire appliance in heavy traffic conditions.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the location had been identified through analysis of the heat map of incidents and modelling of response times. The immediate availability of the site was also a factor. It was anticipated that there would be an improvement in response times to incidents requiring two pumps to be mobilised, when compared to mobilisation from the existing station to Leagrave.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that if there was not a demonstrable improvement in response times, the pilot could be stopped at any time. Officers continue to explore other potential sites to undertake further trials to inform future proposals.

The Chair mentioned other pilots that had taken place and queried whether the firefighters involved in trials were advised of the outcome.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the red route trial had not been successful and would not be pursued as there was no demonstrable impact. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was still involved in youth diversion courses and that these had been very successful nationally.

In response to a question, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the costs of the Luton pilot were negligible, relating primarily to the provision of laptops for firefighters so that they could continue to undertake online training and complete administrative tasks whilst at Luton Ambulance Station. They would also identify a fireground around the station so that they could undertake Safe and Well visits and other normal duties. The crews would return to Luton in the evenings so sleeping quarters did not need to be provided. The costs of the additional crewed vehicle in the Shefford area had not yet been confirmed, but were in the region of £100 per hour in staff costs, for 10 hours per day. This would be funded through the on-call underspend.

It was noted that there was no pilot that specifically addressed response times within Bedford Borough but the trial in the eastern area of Central Bedfordshire would indirectly improve appliance availability in the Bedford Borough area.

In response to a further question, the Chief Fire Officer advised that real-time traffic information was not currently used on the fire appliances; however, the Service sought to be a “fast follower” of the technology once it was adopted by other Services. The new mobilising system already included Automatic Vehicle Location so that the Control Room could identify the nearest available appliance to an incident in terms of response time.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposal to temporarily relocate one fire appliance from Luton fire station to Luton ambulance station for set periods each day over an initial period of 6 months be supported.
2. That the primary crewing of one of the Rural Fire Appliances during periods of low on-call availability, once upgraded with the new hydraulic cutting equipment, to reinforce appliance availability over an initial period of 6 months be supported.
3. That it be agreed that a further report be received in the autumn detailing proposals to temporarily introduce an additional, fire appliance to the fleet, primary crewed at key times, to be deployed on a peripatetic basis as required.
4. That it be agreed that a further update report be received detailing the impact of these two pilots and trials on appliance response times over the duration of the trials.



## **22-23/FRA/28 Blue Light Estate Strategy**

Members received with an update on progress to establish a Blue Light Estates Strategy between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, East of England Ambulance Service Trust and Bedfordshire Police. The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner had only very recently agreed to be signatories to the document.

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, it was now possible to gauge the level of interest of other public sector partners in Bedfordshire to sign up to a countywide estates strategy at meetings of the Chief Executives Forum.

In response to a comment about the lack of recognition of climate change issues and no mention of a net-zero target, the Chief Fire Officer offered reassurance that these issues would be addressed in the foreword and despite the length of time it had taken to reach agreement on the principles set out in the strategy as submitted, he was pleased with what has been achieved.

Members would be engaged in the oversight of the delivery plan through the development of a Steering Group.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress of this important collaboration initiative be noted.
2. That the content of the proposed Blue Light Estates Strategy for Bedfordshire between BFRS, East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) and Bedfordshire Police (BP) be approved, with the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer as signatories.

## **22-23/FRA/29 FRA Response to the White Paper 'Reforming our Fire & Rescue Service'**

The Chief Fire Officer advised that due to operational pressures, he had been unable to finalise the report setting out the Authority's draft response to the White Paper on 'Reforming our Fire & Rescue Service.' He now intended to circulate this to Members by the end of the week so that the response could be submitted in advance of the deadline on 26 July 2022.

It had previously been agreed that, given the tight timescales, responsibility for approving the Authority's response had been delegated to the Chair.

The Chair commented that Members from both Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Council had submitted motions opposing the proposals in the White Paper to transfer responsibility for holding the Chief Fire Officer to account away from Fire and Rescue Authorities to a directly elected individual appointed for that purpose. In the case of Bedfordshire, this would be the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The importance of ensuring that the response was made publicly available once it had been agreed was emphasised.

## **22-23/FRA/30 Revised FRA Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Suite**

Mr S Frank, the Head of Strategic Support and Assurance, presented proposals for revising the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the current financial year and for 2023-24 onwards to provide a more balanced suite of strategic KPI measures. This would assist Members in undertaking their oversight role.

The Authority was advised that the HMICFRS currently reported against only 25 KPIs, whereas the Authority's proposed KPI suite included approximately 60. A mapping exercise had concluded that the current KPI suite was too detailed in some areas and not detailed enough in other areas. It was recommended that there was no public reporting of 18 of the current KPIs, that 25 KPIs be reworded and 4 new KPIs be added. Gaps had been identified between the HMICFRS performance reporting and the Service's KPI suite in areas such as response standards, fire safety and training competency. There were currently no indicators relating to climate change.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that more detailed performance information would underpin the KPI suite reported to Members. These would also be reported on an exception basis as required.

In relation to the recommendation to not publicly report performance against the indicator measuring the total number of deliberate primary fires, clarification was sought as to whether this would be combined with the other deliberate fire indicators or if the intention was to no longer report to Members on this.

The view was expressed that the KPI suite should include indicators relating to the Service's response standards as published in the Community Risk Management Plan.

The Head of Strategic Support and Assurance explained that the Service would be working with academic partners to develop the new performance framework.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposals for reporting a more balanced suite of strategic KPI measures be received.
2. That it be agreed in principle that the process to amend the KPI dashboard in 2022-23 commencing with Q1 and for Members to be involved in developing a new corporate dashboard for 2023-24 by including a session on performance management in the Member Development Programme for 2022-23.

## **22-23/FRA/31 Work Programme**

Members received the proposed work programme for 2022/23.

It was noted that additional reports arising from the outcome of the White Paper may be required at future meetings. The outcomes of the community risk analysis would also be shared with Members at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme for 2022/23 be received and the 'cyclical' agenda Items for each meeting in 2022/23 be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.36 pm

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** COUNCILLOR C ATKINS  
**SUBJECT:** AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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For further information on this Report contact: Nicky Upton  
Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor

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Background Papers: None

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**PURPOSE:**

To report on the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 14 July 2022.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the submitted minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 be received and the decisions made by the Committee, informally, be ratified.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The draft minutes of the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 14 July 2022 are appended for Members' consideration.

- 1.2 The Audit and Standards Committee requests the decisions it made, be ratified by the Fire Authority, with note being given to the Committee's proposal not to adopt the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct at this time.

**COUNCILLOR C ATKINS**  
**CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON 14 JULY 2022 AT 10.00am**

Present: Councillors C Atkins (Chair), R Berry, J Burnett, D Franks, J Gambold and I Shingler  
Mr J Atkinson, ACFO A Kibblewhite, ACO G Chambers and Mr S Frank  
Ms J Kriek, Ernst & Young  
Ms L Davies, RSM

Please note: any decisions made by the Committee at this meeting need to be ratified by the Fire and Rescue Authority to take effect as the meeting was held informally.

22-23/ASC/001 Apologies

- 1.1 There were no apologies.
- 1.2 Ms J Kriek advised that Mr N Harris was unable to attend the meeting.

22-23/ASC/002 Election of Vice Chair

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Berry be elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

22-23/ASC/003 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### 22-23/AS/004 Communications

- 4.1 The Committee received RSM's Emergency Services News briefings for March and June 2022.
- 4.2 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer made reference to the section on environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations. These had been discussed during the Treasury Management training provided by Link Asset Services at the recent Member Development Day. Members had agreed to discuss ESG in relation to the Authority's investment portfolio in greater depth, recognising that more ethical investments often had a lower rate of return.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the communications be received.

#### 22-23/ASC/005 Minutes

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

#### 22-23/ASC/006 Public Participation

- 6.1 There were no members of the public present.

#### 22-23/AS/007 Review of Terms of Reference

- 7.1 Mr J Atkinson, Monitoring Officer, presented his report on the annual review of the Committee's terms of reference. No changes to the current terms of reference were being proposed; however, proposed changes may arise from the forthcoming independent review of governance.
- 7.2 Councillor Franks commented that the terms of reference may require review if the governance arrangements were changed as a result of responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service being transferred to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Terms of Reference for the Audit and Standards Committee be approved.



22-23/AS/008 External Auditor's Annual Report Year Ended March 2021

- 8.1 Ms J Kriek of Ernst & Young introduced the Provisional Audit Planning Report for the year ended 31 March 2021. This was the first such report that included the new value for money commentary. As a result of changes in the National Audit Office Code, EY had reported specifically on three areas: financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. No significant issues had been identified.
- 8.2 In relation to the valuation of land and buildings, EY had found that the estimates provided by the Service's valuers were lower than anticipated, but still within an acceptable range. EY had asked that these differences be addressed, as it had done in previous years.
- 8.3 Ms Kriek reported on the proposed audit fees. These were on the lower end of the scale fees agreed through the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA). All fees were subject to approval by the PSAA, even when agreed locally.
- 8.4 The Committee was advised that EY was still subject to resourcing issues and Ms Kriek could not confirm when the audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts would be undertaken at this stage.
- 8.5 As had been previously reported, Mr N Harris was leaving EY and Ms Kriek hoped that the new audit manager would be in post prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 8.6 In response to questions from the Committee, Ms Kriek advised that the final fee comprised the scale fee for the audit of the statement of accounts, as well as fees charged for additional work undertaken as part of that audit. This was within the range of scale fees produced by PSAA.
- 8.7 The Committee noted that there were no practical implications arising from the lower than expected land valuations, as there was no intention to sell the land or buildings currently owned by the Service. The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that there were small areas of land that could be considered for sale as part of the annual budget-setting process, although there was no current intention to sell.

**RESOLVED:**

That the submitted Auditor's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2021 be received.

## 22-23/AS/009 Draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement

- 9.1 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer referred to the draft 2021/22 Statement of Accounts that had been circulated via email to Members the previous day. These were awaiting final review and signature prior to being published in advance of the statutory deadline of 31 July 2022.
- 9.2 Although there was no statutory requirement to submit the unaudited version of the Statement of Accounts to the Committee, it was considered to be good practice. It had been the intention for the Chief Accountant to introduce the Statement of Accounts to the Committee, but he was unable as a result of sickness absence.
- 9.3 The Assistant Chief Officer suggested that, prior to the submission of the audited Statement of Accounts, a Member briefing on the Statement of Accounts be arranged, either immediately prior to the meeting or in the week before, to guide Members through the key points prior to the formal consideration of the Statement of Accounts, including a discussion on the Service's level of reserves.
- 9.4 It was anticipated that the audited version of the Statement of Accounts would be submitted to the January 2023 meeting of the Committee, although it was acknowledged that this was subject to EY being able to resource and complete the audit in advance of that meeting.
- 9.5 In response to a question about capital spend, the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that there was a high level of spend on ICT. This had included investment in the UK's first cloud-based control system. In relation to planned property maintenance, repairs under £10,000 were funded by revenue. Only repairs over this threshold would be reported as capital expenditure.
- 9.6 The increases in the technical area from £92,000 to £123,000 and in fuel from £23,000 to £42,000 were noted. Whilst it was recognised that fuel costs had increased, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer assured Members that the Service was part of a consortium for the purchase of fuel which achieved better value and minimised fluctuation in costs.
- 9.7 The section on other creditors related primarily to grants which may be awarded for a specific purpose which the Service could not fulfil and would therefore need to be paid back. The risk of this was very small and the Assistant Chief Officer could not recall the Service being required to repay grants.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the pre-external audit version of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts be received.
2. That a Member briefing be arranged in advance of the formal submission of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts to the Committee at a future meeting.

### 22-23/ASC/010 Ernst & Young Quality Assurance Processes

- 10.1 Members were asked to consider the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes in place for the Fire and Rescue Authority's External Audit arrangements. In this respect, Members had been provided with a link to EY's transparency report from 2021.
- 10.2 Ms Kriek expanded upon EY's quality assurance processes. This included both internal and external reviews to ensure that the quality of audits was safeguarded.
- 10.3 In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that EY was not contracted by the Service to provide consultancy services. Ms Kriek added that Channel 1 clients, or those for whom EY was the appointed external auditor, could not be provided with general consultancy services. There were minimal services which could be provided to reduce any perceived conflict of interest.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the effectiveness of the quality assurance processes of the Fire and Rescue Authority's external auditors Ernst and Young be confirmed.

### 22-23/ASC/011 Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22

- 11.1 Ms L Davies of RSM, presented the annual report on progress made against the internal audit plan for 2021/22. A positive audit opinion had been awarded for 2021/22. RSM, as the internal auditors, had found that the Authority had an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control in place, but had identified further enhancements to the framework to ensure that it remained adequate and effective.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be received.

### 22-23/ASC/012 Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22 and 2022/23

- 12.1 Ms L Davies of RSM submitted a report on progress made against the internal audit plan for 2021/22. Five audits had been finalised since the last meeting of the Committee in March 2022. These were: debrief and organisational development, key financial controls, management of assets, risk management and HR – Grey Book recruitment. The first three audit areas had been awarded opinions of reasonable assurance, with risk management awarded partial assurance and the Grey book recruitment awarded substantial assurance.

12.2 Ms Davies reported that risk management was currently an area in transition and that this had been acknowledged. Good progress had been made and there were a number of areas requiring further progress that had been identified as part of the internal audit process, including the development of a formal programme of training and the review of Corporate Risks within BMIS to ensure that the requirements of the risk management approach were consistently applied. It had also been noted that risk owner monthly reviews were not yet consistently taking place, operational risk registers at station level had not been developed and the organisation's risk appetite had not been reviewed since 2020.

12.3 All actions arising from the audits had been agreed by management.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received.

22-23/ASC/013 Internal Audit Actions Update

13.1 Mr S Frank, the Head of Strategic Support and Assurance, introduced the report which provided a summary statistical analysis of actions arising from internal audit reports over the last three financial years to date and from the Fire and Rescue Authority's current Annual Governance Statement; together with any exception report on those actions currently in progress, progress to date on current action plans and proposals to extend the original timing for completion.

13.2 In total, there were 130 management actions over the reporting period, with 107 of those having been completed. Extension requests were being sought in relation to the following four areas:

- Asset Management – Asset Tracking: it was recognised that this was a large project and had been proceeding well but had been delayed due to a shortage of personnel and sickness absence. All stations were live on the system with only Stopsley's specials, general stores, which had not been part of the original project plan, and the Training Centre outstanding. An extension was being requested to October 2022.
- Procurement – Proactive processes and remedial actions: this had been delayed as a result of other strategic priorities and the holiday period. An extension to September 2022 was being requested.
- Data Quality to support CRMP: There had been a delay caused by the integration of other action plans, such as the Grenfell action plan, functional actions plans, and other additional requirements. An extension was being requested to September 2022.

- Human Resources – Grey Book Recruitment: the policy was in the process of being updated and should be completed by the end of Quarter 2. An extension was being requested to September 2022.

13.3 The Committee thanked RSM for highlighting areas that might be of concern and to Officers for supporting the resolution of any issues by implementing the agreed management actions.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That progress made to date against action plans be acknowledged.
2. That the four extension requests above be approved.

22-23/ASC/014 Review of Code of Conduct and Annual Report on Standards

- 14.1 Mr J Atkinson, Monitoring Officer, introduced his report on developments relating to the standards function during 2021/22. No complaints had been lodged against Members of the Authority during this time.
- 14.2 Further to a previous report submitted to the Committee in March 2021, the Monitoring Officer requested that Members consider whether the Authority should seek to adopt the model Code of Conduct prepared by the Local Government Association. It was noted that the Model Code of Conduct produced by the Local Government Association had not been widely adopted by local authorities, and Central Bedfordshire was the only one of the three constituent authorities that had done so.
- 14.3 In previous discussions, the Monitoring Officer had also been requested to advise the Committee on the Government's response to the report on standards in public life. The relevant Minister responded to this in a very neutral manner.
- 14.4 Given that local government elections were due to take place in May 2023, it was not deemed appropriate to adopt a new model Code of Conduct at this time.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the update on standards be received.
2. That the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct not be adopted at this time.

22-23/ASC/015 Work Programme 2022/23

15.1 The Committee considered the proposed work programme for 2022/23. It was noted that the Committee would receive the External Audit Plan for 2022/23 at its next meeting on 29 September 2022 and the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 at its meeting in January 2023, subject to the completion of the external audit.

15.2 No additions were made to the Work Programme.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee's Work Programme for 2022/23 be received.

22-23/ASC/016 Annual Review of entire Corporate Risk Register

**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 item on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item

Corporate Risk Register

The meeting ended at 11.18 am

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ANDREW HOPKINSON**SUBJECT:** APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

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For further information on this report contact: Deborah Evans  
Consultant  
Tel No: 07979 247415

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Background Papers: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 FRA report on Resourcing the Monitoring Officer Position Options

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Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

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**PURPOSE:**

To appoint a Monitoring Officer for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority in order to comply with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989

**RECOMMENDATION:**That Members confirm the appointment of Mr Graham Britten as Monitoring Officer for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 from the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended), the Fire and Rescue Authority has a duty to appoint a monitoring officer.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Officer has a number of statutory duties and responsibilities relating to the Fire and Rescue Authority's constitution and the arrangements for effective governance. These duties include operating and maintaining the constitution, ensuring that no decision or omission of the council is likely to give rise to illegality or maladministration and promoting high standards of conduct.

## 2. Statutory Powers

- 2.1 The constitution provides that it is the responsibility of the full Fire and Rescue Authority to designate the Monitoring Officer.
- 2.2 The constitution states that the Monitoring Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the Fire and Rescue Authority in accordance with all current legislation including the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Localism Act 2011, and the Authority's standing orders.
- 2.3 The schedule of delegated authorities delegates the following powers to the Monitoring Officer:
  - to sign on behalf of the authority any document necessary to give effect to any resolution of the Authority or decision made by an officer pursuant to the scheme.
  - To act as the proper officer of the Authority, except where legislation or the scheme name is another officer, or the Authority has specifically determined otherwise.
  - To act as solicitor to the Authority and to advise the Chief Fire Officer on the institution, defence, withdrawal or compromise of legal proceedings, whether civil and/or criminal, pertaining to the Fire Authority statutory functions in respect of the Regulatory Reform (fire safety) Order 2005, and to authorise the institution, defence, withdrawal or compromise of any other claims or legal proceedings, whether civil and/or criminal.
- 2.4 The current Monitoring Officer, John Atkinson, will be stepping down as Monitoring Officer on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022, and retiring from post on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2022. Between 9<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> September, John Atkinson will be designated as Deputy Monitoring Officer to provide an effective handover.

- 2.5 The Fire and Rescue Authority has conducted a full independent review of the role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer, the time required for the role to be delivered effectively, and options for resourcing the role. Initial discussions took place at the Member Development Day on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
  - 2.6 The job description, person specification, proposed time requirement and final resourcing options were presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022. It was agreed to procure monitoring officer services from Graham Britten at Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, with the initial retainer specifying one day per week, with a six month review. The review will look at the effectiveness of the proposed arrangement, to include whether the time allocated for the role is sufficient, with an option to increase resource levels to 1.5 days a week if required.
  - 2.7 Graham Britten has held the position of Monitoring Officer for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority since 2012. He has extensive experience at a senior level, both in providing legal support as in-house counsel and ensuring regulatory compliance and managing litigation risk as Monitoring Officer. He additionally provides monitoring officer services to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority. With adjustments, he has capacity to deliver the required workload.
  - 2.8 The contract will start from the 1<sup>st</sup> September to allow opportunity for a handover from the existing Monitoring Officer. It is proposed that Graham Britten be designated Deputy Monitoring Officer from 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, and be designated Monitoring Officer from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
3. Financial Implications
    - 3.1 The Fire and Rescue Authority agreed the fee for the purchase of Monitoring Officer services from Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority at the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The fee is dependent on the outcome of the pay review as it is directly linked to the salary of the post holder.
  4. Legal Implications
    - 4.1 Appointing a Monitoring Officer will fulfil the Authority's duty under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. An individual can be appointed as a statutory officer by the Authority without the individual being one of its employees (Per the judgment of the High Court in Pinfold North Limited v Humberside Fire Authority [2010] EWHC 2944 (QB)) when considering the position in respect of a combined fire and rescue authority's duty to appoint a Chief Finance Officer under section 112 Local Government Finance Act 1988.

5. Risk

5.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer. Making the appointment as suggested in this report will ensure that the Authority meets these duties throughout.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Members are asked to appoint Graham Britten as Monitoring Officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority from 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

**ANDREW HOPKINSON**  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE

**SUBJECT:** ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

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For further information on this Report contact: Steve Frank  
Head of Strategic Support and Assurance  
Tel No: 07876 144846

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Background Papers: Quarterly KPI reports and BFRS Annual Report 2020-21 [BFRS-Annual-Report-2020-21-Final.pdf](#)

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**PURPOSE:**

For FRA Members to consider the Annual report for the year 2021/22.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members acknowledge the reports for information and comment.

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The final draft of our Annual Report presented here is in Word format to help readability and make it easy for Members to add any comments. Once approved, the graphic designer will produce the final publication version in the same style as the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and will include the latest set of photographs.
- 1.2 The Annual Report includes monthly highlights, full year key performance information, functional services commentary, a financial summary, updates on key projects and programmes, a summary of collaborations, and letters of appreciation.

## 2 Implications

- 2.1 Human Resource implications relate to our People Strategy which is currently integrated into our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2019-23. What this Annual Report shows is we are broadly successful in developing our human resource capacity and capabilities.
- 2.2 Any implications for Corporate risk, Finance and Policy are integrated into the process for developing the new Community Risk Management Plan from 1st April 2023.

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



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

## Annual Report 2021 – 2022



## Welcome to our Annual Report for the year 2021/22

As we started the final year of our 4-year Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) the country was still during the COVID pandemic but as we look back, we are immensely proud of how our firefighters, control operators and staff really stepped up, working tirelessly with our partners in new and innovative ways to make a difference and help keep the people of Bedfordshire safe.

In the midst of the pandemic response, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) concluded their third inspection of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS), assessing 11 aspects of the Service under the three headline areas of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have made considerable progress since our 2018 inspection, having maintained or improved in each of the 11 graded judgements. Overall, HMICFRS now judge the effectiveness of how we keep people safe and secure from fire and other risks to be **Good** and we are judged to be **Good** at looking after our people. The area of Efficiency was judged as **'Requires Improvement'**, but we have robust plans in place to address this and are confident that we will rectify the points raised in advance of our next inspection. Efficiency is broken down in to two sub questions that are graded. We were graded as 'Good' for 'Making the fire and Rescue Service affordable now and in the future. The full report can be found [here](#).

In his summary of the inspection Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM, HM Inspector of police and fire and rescue services, said that: *'the service has improved its efficiency and how it treats its staff. However, it needs to be more effective in keeping the public safe and secure. Specifically, the service requires improvement in preventing fires and other risks and protecting the public through fire regulation. The service has sound financial management and scrutiny. It also has robust monitoring and targets for response. And it has a good process in place to make sure that staff are trained and competent.'*

The last year presented some challenges with COVID affecting our normal ways of working. We have overcome these by enabling our staff to work from home where they can and providing them with the equipment to do this effectively. We have made our offices and our operational areas COVID safe and have provided additional PPE and other equipment to ensure that our staff have safe working environments. In addition, to aid the multi-agency response to COVID we have provided a valuable command and support role for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), COVID Strategic Command Group (SCG) and the Tactical Command Group (TCG) meetings. We continue to strive to be an 'employer of choice' with a highly skilled and motivated workforce that understands and reflects the diversity of our communities, and who see our Service as an engaging, positive, and rewarding place to work.

By being open and responsive to change, and through exploring and investing in new and innovative technologies and ways of working, we will continue to improve the safety and wellbeing of the diverse communities we serve. Each year we publish a Community Risk Action Plan summarising what we intend to deliver over the year.

This Annual Report highlights our progress and achievements over the past year including our award-winning collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) and the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We continue to provide updates on everything we do as a Service on our social media channels and we welcome any feedback you have.



## **Our Values**

- **We've got your back**
- **Every contact counts**
- **We dare to be different**
- **We are accountable**

You can stay connected on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as visiting our website [www.bedsfire.gov.uk](http://www.bedsfire.gov.uk) please follow us on our social media platforms @bedsfire

## **Month by Month highlights**

### **April 2021**

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) set up the first walk in vaccination pilot in the UK, in just 24 hours. The service supported the local community of Bedfordshire and enable the vaccination of a substantial number of people that were eligible for the vaccine.

BFRS and East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST) extended their partnership, which was the first within the region. This collaboration of services not only allows us to support EEAST, but to gain direct referrals for safe and well visits to improve patient safety.

BFRS received an award from Susan Lousada DL, former High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, for 'Outstanding Service to the Community' Award.

### **In May 2021**

In support of Arson Awareness Month, BFRS provided guidance and safety messages on how to reduce deliberate fires. As well as supporting 'Arson Awareness Month,' crews from Stopsley, our community safety team and the Alzheimer's Society put together a [video](#) for 'Dementia Action Week.' Then, in 'Carers Week,' we joined forces with the Disability Resource Centre on a stall in Luton informing communities of the support that was available from the Service.

### **In June 2021**

We started with 'Volunteer Week' and thanked our Fire Cadet Instructors across the Service and vaccine volunteers on our social media channels, featuring quotes from the volunteers.

We sadly lost Chief Fire Officer, Paul M Fuller, following a short illness, a mere 3 weeks before he was due to retire. Paul joined the Fire Service in 1978 and became Chief Fire Officer in Bedfordshire in 2002, having worked in West Midlands, West Sussex, Staffordshire, and Wiltshire, as well as a secondment to Warwickshire. He also supported several national bodies and will be remembered for his charity work with the Children's Burns Trust and the Fire Fighters Charity.

Our new Chief Fire Officer, Andrew Hopkinson, was appointed on promotion from his role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

### **In July 2021**

We launched our wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign receiving 332 applications. 14 Successful candidates started their training in February 2022, all passing and starting at their station in June 2022. A further cohort of 12 successful candidates are due to start their training course in September 2022 which will enable them to join their stations in December 2022.

### **In August 2021**

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service joined forces with Bedfordshire Police's Rural Crime Team to produce and distribute a fire safety guide for the agricultural community. The guidance document

produced by Kempston Green Watch, gives advice on how to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of either an accidental or deliberate fire.

### **In September 2021**

We worked alongside Forest of Marston Vale to ensure that the bodies of water at their Millennium Country Park are safe for visitors. Following a risk assessment of their lands, the Forest of Marston Vale team contacted BFRS to install several water rescue boards at key points around their Millennium Country Park site in Marston Moretaine. There are now six boards installed around the entirety of the park, which all include a locked throwline cabinet that can only be opened by using a code obtained by calling 999.

We celebrated 'Emergency Services Day' and attended the three flag raising ceremonies in Bedford, Central Beds and Luton to remember those who had given their lives to the local services.

We supported 'Gas Safety Week' to raise public awareness of gas safety and the risks involved. Several safety messages were shared across our media channels encouraging people to ensure their homes are safe including information on carbon monoxide protection.

We also engaged in 'Project EDWARD' Week to improve road safety by ensuring that vehicles are Fit for the Road. Fire Bikes hosted a Biker Down! Course trialling the Virtual Reality technology which provide road safety footage.

During 'Fire Door Safety Week' we worked with the University of Bedfordshire and attended their fresher's event to spread the word around fire door safety and the fire risks that new students should be aware of.

We hosted an open evening at Dunstable Fire Station for local councillors, MPs, and Fire Authority Members. We showcased some of our specialist rescue equipment and demonstrated how we adapted to the challenges faced during the pandemic.

### **In October 2021**

A team from BFRS attended the Fire Service College and took part in the national Breathing Apparatus competition. The team won the award for the 'Best Breathing Apparatus Team' which was an outstanding achievement for the team considering the high level and skill of the competition. The competition was open to all UK Fire and Rescue services, giving them the opportunity to showcase best practice and firefighter safety.

To support 'National Burns Awareness Day,' our community safety team visited Morrisons Supermarket in Bedford to talk to members of the public about the risks and preventative measures involved in safeguarding people, particularly children, against burns.

### **In November 2021**

We supported Brake Road Safety Week, encouraging everyone who uses UK roads to consider their responsibilities and actions. To raise awareness a [video](#) was created highlighting the importance of road safety and community support.

After restrictions imposed by the pandemic, we finally hosted our first recognition event – Long Service and Good Conduct Awards. The evening was put together to recognise those that had achieved their 20 and 25 years of service.

We were invited to the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) awards ceremony. We were recognised twice in the 'COVID-19 going the extra mile award' for our work with the East of England Ambulance Service and the role that we played providing command support to the local resilience forum.

In the Champion of Equality, we were recognised for our work on our LGBTQ+ network and our diversity work. Our former Assistant Chief Fire Officer was recognised for his contribution to AFSA as a champion of equality and diversity in the workplace and for his work in support of the Firefighters Charity.

The Shining Light Award was presented in memory to our late Chief Fire Officer Paul Fuller for his advocacy, support, and friendship to AFSA.

### **In December 2021**

The Excellence in Fire & Emergency Awards took place where we won the Emergency Services Collaboration of the Year for our work supporting EEAST during the pandemic. Former Chief Fire Officer, Paul Fuller was also recognised for his outstanding contribution to the Fire and Rescue Service.

As 2021 ended, we launched a consultation on its proposals for Service delivery and its Budget and Council Tax requirements for 2022/23.

### **In January 2022**

We engaged with the local community to seek views on the Service's priorities and proposals and to seek an increase in contributions for funding from council tax. A record number of responses to our CRMP consultation 746 responses were received.

We worked with BBC Three Counties Radio to produce a [video](#) on 'how to drive to help emergency services. This also included a live interview about how the way people drive can make things more difficult for the fire service when responding to incidents on blue lights.

To mark Register My Appliance Week (17 – 21 January) the Service undertook a campaign which urged the public to register their appliances so that they can be notified if a free safety repair was ever needed.

### **In February 2022**

We celebrated LGBTQ+ month and produced a [video](#) with Firefighters to support our recruitment department. The video gave a powerful insight into a firefighter's personal life and his journey in becoming a firefighter. We also supported National Apprenticeship Week with our Property Services Apprentice, sharing his career dreams and experience at BFRS.

We worked with Staywise and Dunstable White Watch to film a video of the 'Birthday Cake Mistake' to be used in School Year 2 visits and as part of the Staywise material collection.

On February 18th Storm Eunice battered the UK with gusts of 70mph recorded within Bedfordshire. As our crews were mobilised to storm related incidents across the county, we acted quickly to establish an Incident Room within Service Control. Throughout the afternoon our control operators responded to a total of 109 calls in 5 hours from across 7 different counties.

We issued warnings on social media encouraging people to take extra care when driving, look out for fallen objects and increase stopping distances. We worked with BBC 3 Counties Radio 3 to offer official advice and warnings to the community.

Our Protection team held a Small Business Action Day at Church Arcade to offer advice to local communities on how to keep their businesses safe.

### **In March 2022**

Bedford Blue Watch developed a mobile phone and driving safety [video](#) targeted at young drivers highlighting the impact of using mobile phones when driving can have.

We successfully prosecuted the owners of a multi storey office block in Bedford for breaching a number of fire safety regulations.

On the 29 March we hosted a delegation from the Home Office who came to learn more about our innovative work supporting EEAST. They joined us for our Staff Engagement Forum at Dunstable Fire Station followed by a tour of the station. The Chairman and Chief Fire Officer (CFO) then hosted a show & tell session on our EEAST work including meeting firefighters from our co-responder fire stations, our bariatric and complex patient rescue team based at Dunstable and our Falls Response Team crewed by our community fire safety team.

For International Women's Day we ran a campaign celebrating the work of the women at BFRS. Our female firefighters, officers and support staff are proud to represent BFRS and work hard to make a difference in our community and to keep people safe.

Finally, we hosted our first 'Have A Go Day' of 2022 for people that had an interest in a career as a firefighter. Throughout the day they faced several physical and mental challenges to gain a better insight of a firefighting role.

#### Response Statistics – April 2021 – March 2022

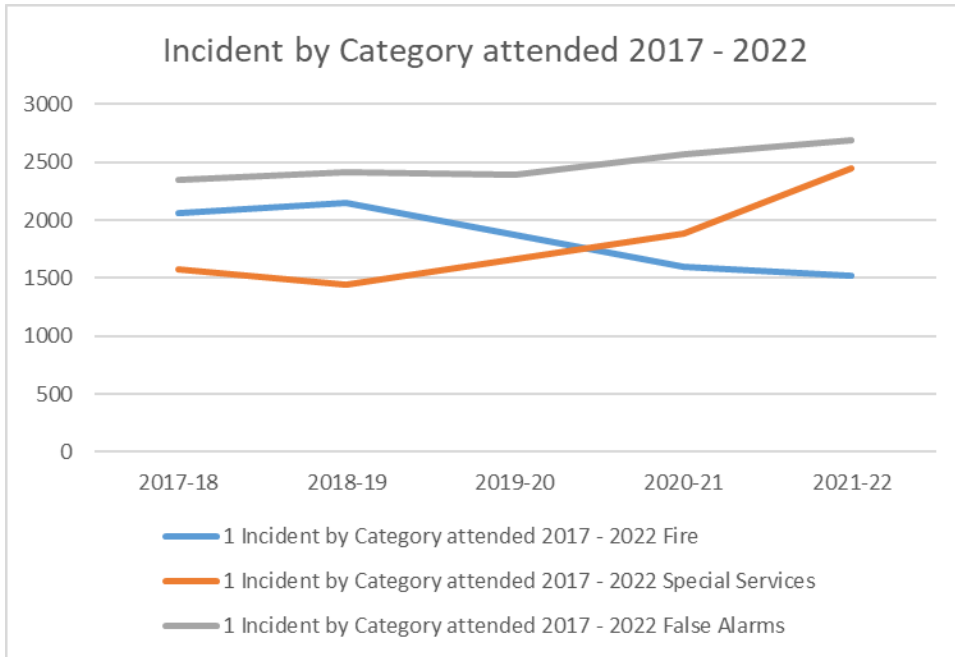
<b>Road Traffic Collisions</b>	<b>398 +16%</b>
<b>Outdoor bonfires</b>	<b>690 -21%</b>
<b>Building fires</b>	<b>481 – 5%</b>
1148 mobilisations to assist EEAST – consisting of:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 456 Co-responders</li> <li>• 265 Falls team/ lift patients</li> <li>• 427 Other calls to assist ambulance including Tactical Support Unit calls</li> </ul>
Provided logistical support for Covid vaccination and testing centres	Around 900 hours of support
Provided Command Support for Local Resilience Forum	Over 100 multi agency meetings on Covid
Award achievements for support to EEAST	<p>The Excellence in Fire &amp; Emergency Awards - won the Emergency Services Collaboration of the Year for our work supporting EEAST</p> <p>Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) awards recognised our work with EEAST</p>

## PERFORMANCE

### TOTAL NUMBER OF INCIDENTS ATTENDED

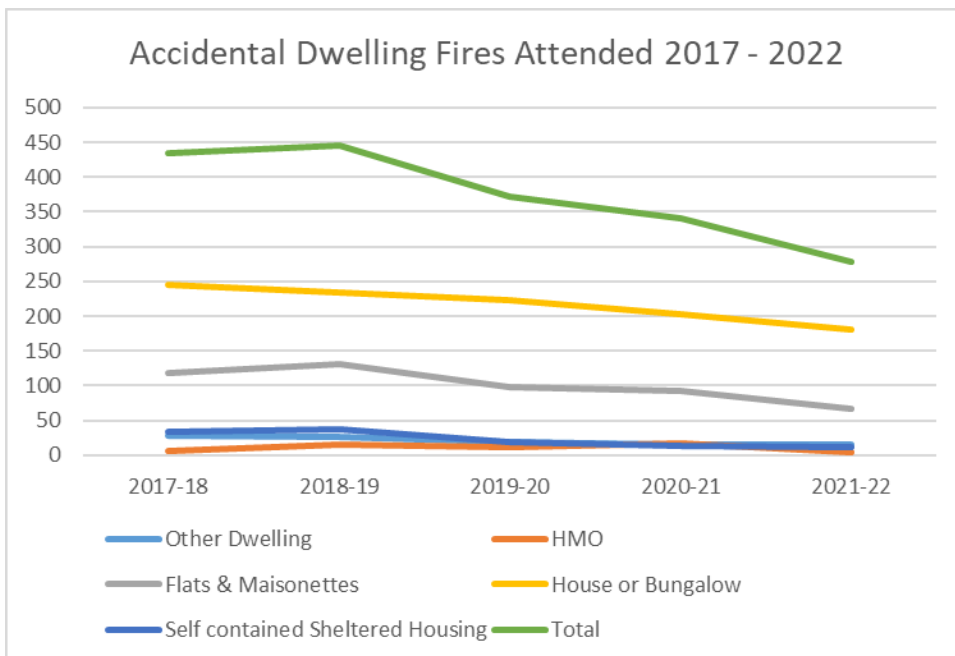
The number of incidents attended by the Service has fluctuated over the five years and had been showing a slight increase. At the time of last reporting, we felt the number of incidents was anticipated to increase as more collaborative activity expands our capabilities (e.g., forced entry for medical emergencies, EMR, Co-responding, Falls, and assisting the Police with missing persons).

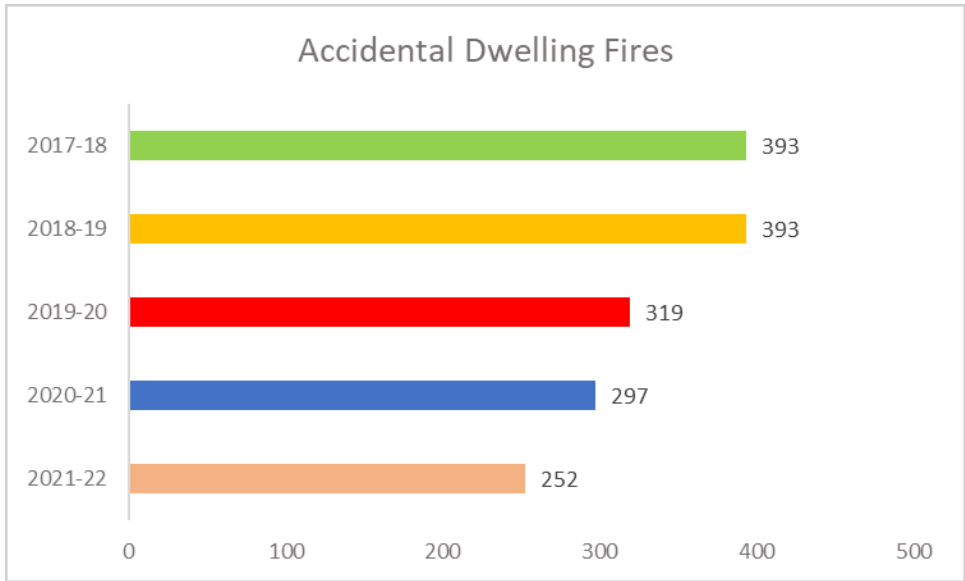
We see a continued increase in incidents attended as predicted with 647 more mobilisations in total this year than last. However, the proportion of AFA's attended represents nearly a third of the increase which was not predicted.



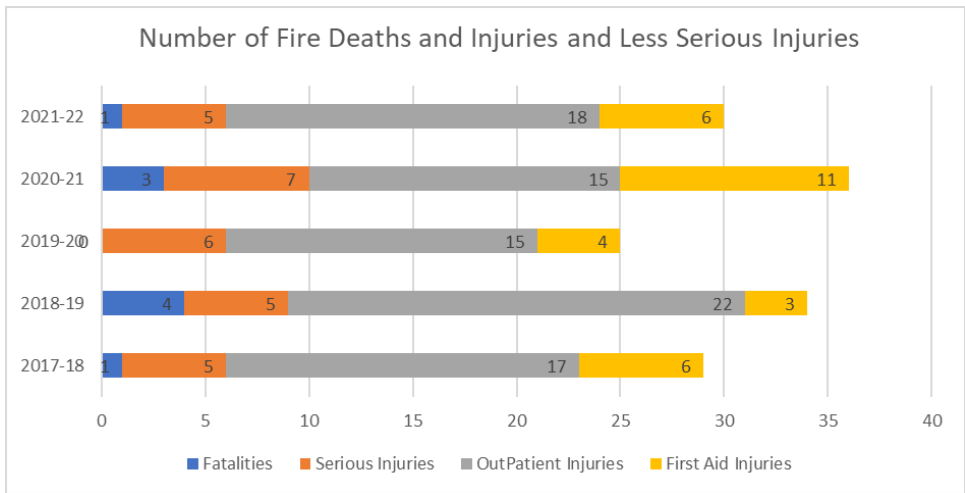
### ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES

When comparing 2020/21 and 2021/22 there has been a reduction from 297 to 252 primary accidental dwelling fires (down by 15%). The average for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022 inclusive is 330.8 accidental dwelling fires per annum. The 2021/22 total of 252 is 24% below the five-year average and is the lowest ever total since records began to be collected in the current Incident Recording System (IRS) in 2009.



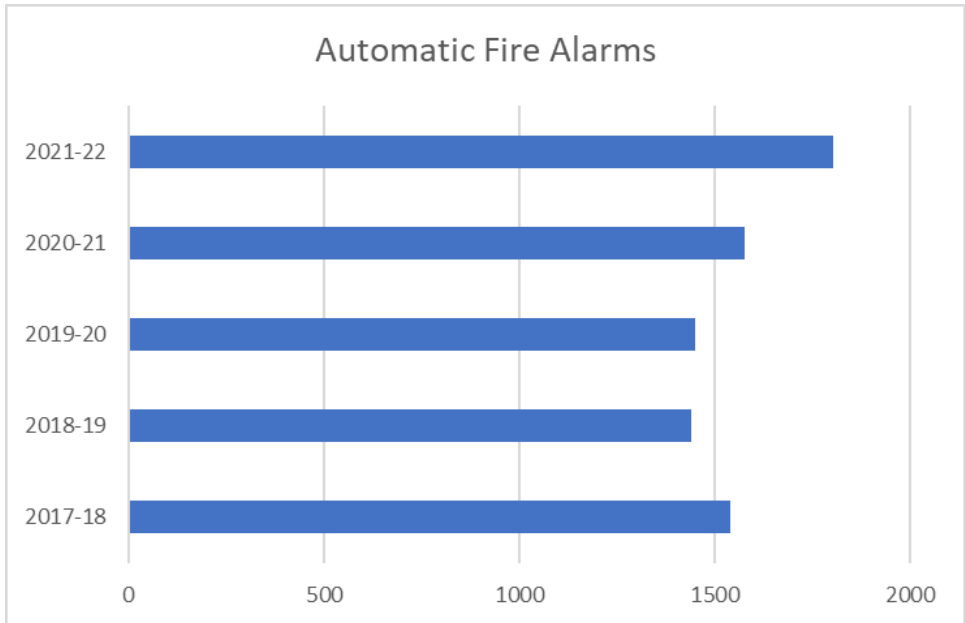


**NUMBER OF FIRE DEATHS, INJURIES AND LESS SERIOUS INJURIES**



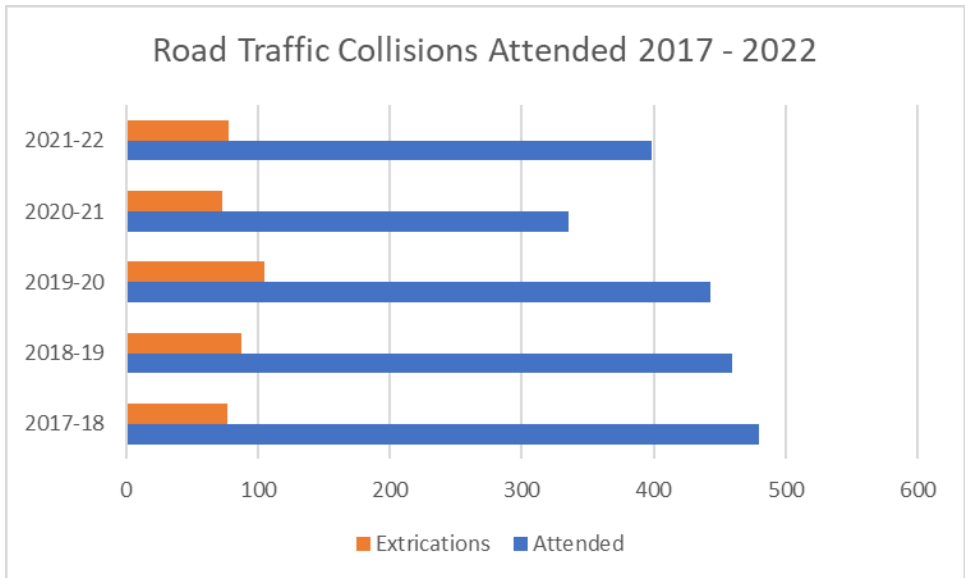
**NUMBER ALARMS FROM AFA'S**

BFRS continues to target the reduction in False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarm Systems and has been applying measures to support this. During 2021-22 we attended 1804 AFA's which is an increase of 227 AFA's. This is being actively managed in the Fire Control team to understand why these types of attendance are increasing outside of strategic intentions.



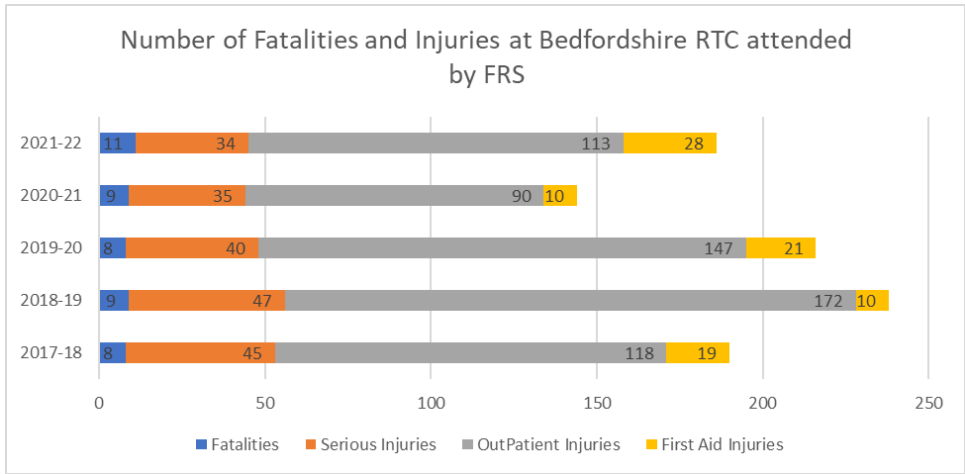
**ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ATTENDED**

The number of Road Traffic Collisions has declined over the last 4 years. However, since the number recorded in 2020/21 (lowest in the last 5 years), we have seen an increase for 2021/22. This is likely the effect of people returning to work and commuting after the global pandemic.



**ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION INJURIES AND FATALITIES**

The number of Road Traffic Collision injuries and fatalities has seen serious injuries decline over the last 3 years. However, Fatalities have remained stable with little fluctuation. Other factors have decreased and 2020/21 does appear to be an outlier probably down to the pandemic. 2021/22 has seen numbers become more consistent with what we usually see, this is almost certainly linked to people returning to work.



**PREVENTION**

**HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS/SAFE AND WELL VISITS**

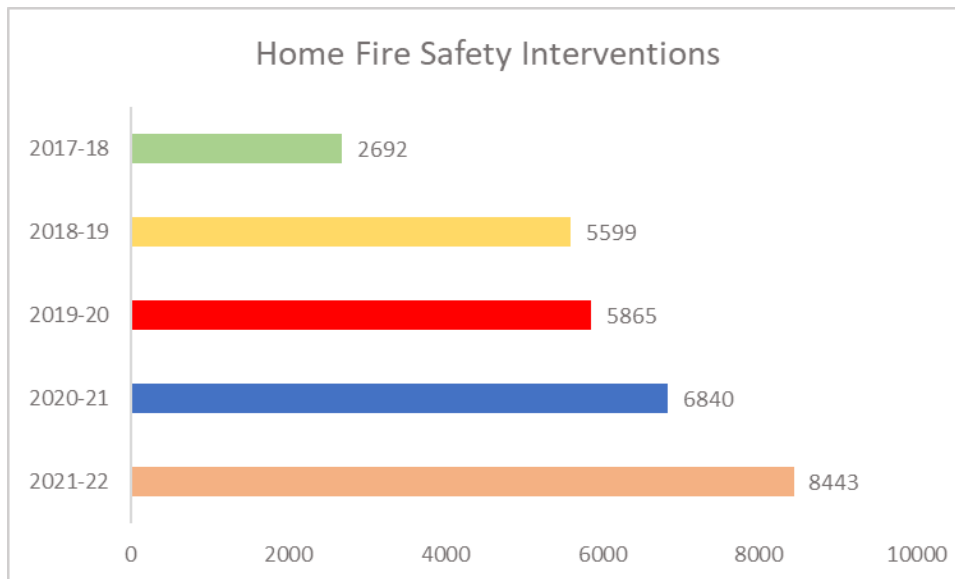
BFRS makes effective use of its own data, and that of health and other partners, to implement an intelligence led approach, targeting delivery at the most vulnerable households. The Service is continuously establishing new partnerships to generate referrals from other agencies, who can assist in identifying vulnerable households that would benefit from a Safe and Well Visit.

BFRS uses a variety of risk reduction interventions in its continued commitment to keep the communities of Bedfordshire safe.

In 2021/22 prevention activity was affected by the restrictions imposed in response to the COVID pandemic. However, BFRS continued to deliver home fire safety interventions within the community. Visits involving entering dwellings were maintained for those assessed as at high risk from fire, using measures such as social distancing and face masks to reduce the risk of infection. Social distancing approaches were also used with 2397 interventions delivered by a 'Doorstep visit' and 616 delivered by telephone.

Our online referral portal (launched in August 2020) has continued to deliver referrals with 609 (7.2% of total) visits generated by the portal. The portal generated a high proportion of visits to households with known risk factors such as elderly occupants, people living alone and households with no working smoke alarm.





In total 8,443 Home Fire Safety interventions were delivered, representing a 23% increase compared to 2021/22 and the highest numbers recorded in the 5-year period. These visits take the form of enhanced Home Fire Safety Checks that cover a range of additional areas addressing personal safety and wellbeing. These areas include advice and referrals to partner agencies aimed to reduce risks from:

- Crime;
- Slips, Trips and Falls;
- Smoking and,
- Alcohol consumption

BFRS uses a variety of risk reduction interventions in its continued commitment to keep the communities of Bedfordshire safe.

### **SAFEGUARDING**

BFRS personnel undertake a wide range of public facing roles, educating, and engaging with our communities including children, young people, and adults with complex needs and vulnerabilities. BFRS has a legal and moral obligation to recognise, and report concerns about abuse or neglect and ensure personnel have the necessary skills and training to be safe and effective practitioners. In 2021/22 we have:

- Established a paperless online Safeguarding reporting process
- Introduced a Safeguarding advisor role into the Prevention Structure
- Continued to see an increase in the number and quality of referrals made by BFRS. There were 270 Safeguarding referrals made including 208 as a result of Home Fire Safety Visits
- Fitted a total of 259 arson proof letterboxes to homes identified as at risk from fire attack including victims of domestic abuse
- Continued to engage with young fire setters

## **ARSON REDUCTION**

BFRS has an Arson Reduction Officer who leads on delivering the Arson Reduction Strategy. We work in partnership with other agencies to reduce arson by implementing interventions in three key areas:

- Environmental Interventions: aimed at removing the opportunities for arsonists to commit offences, removing potential targets for arson offences, and improving security in respect of targets for arson offences that cannot be removed
- Investigation-based Interventions: aimed at assisting the police and other partner agencies in the identification of patterns, series, and trends in respect of arson offences
- Educational Interventions: aimed at educating offenders and potential offenders to remove or prevent development of the motivation for engaging in fire setting behaviour

Despite the ongoing restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic it was 'business as usual' in respect of the environmental and investigation-based interventions. Overall, there was an increase from 430 to 565 deliberate fires (up by 21%) compared to 2020/21, but still 30% less than the five-year average.

## **ROAD SAFETY**

Our Community Safety Officer Road Safety is supported by eight part time Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Reduction Officers. Although COVID-19 restrictions continued to present some challenges, our team has been working hard to ensure that collaborative working, and educational events have continued. These include:

The delivery of 9 Biker down courses was achieved this year with the implementation of an additional module led by Bedfordshire Police. The Virtual Reality resources have also started to be used in the course content and will be developed further moving forward.

The RTCRO's also supported additional events to include TEC Courses (Tail End Charlie) where they provide incident scene management input for group rider leaders. TEC Leaders oversee large, arranged group rides.

We supported 'Survive the Drive' at Chicksands which was a multiagency event including Police, Ambulance and Fire. It comprises a mix of films featuring armed services personnel who have been involved in a road traffic collision, as well as live speakers who share their own first-hand experiences.

We have also taken the opportunity to progress joint working initiatives:

- Working alongside our local advanced motorcycle group, Herts & Beds Advanced Motorcyclists (HBAM), we have devised a training package for Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) National Observers to ensure they have the skills to manage group riding sessions and manage the initial 'first on scene' at an RTC
- We have been working in conjunction with Bedfordshire Police to deliver Police Bike Safe
- The team supported educational campaigns including at vaccination centres and a joint campaign on the A507. This was designed solely for social media due to the pandemic and was highly successful in terms of views and shares. The campaign generated significant interest from the local parish councils (Amphill / Clophill / Shefford / Maulden) who have

been campaigning to make the road safer and it resulted in Central Bedfordshire Council committing to short term improvements and exploring longer term solutions.

Following a successful CCC funding bid we are developing our own road safety vehicle with in built virtual reality (VR) experience. By introducing of a new way of delivering safety messages through a VR experience, we aim have and enhanced ability and appeal to expand our engagement significantly, targeting and then delivering to new/younger road users who we traditionally struggle to reach.

## **WATER SAFETY**

Social media campaigns have been favoured for the educational route during the last year due to pandemic restrictions. Our media campaigns aligning with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National campaign calendar.

Our safety officers have been working with colleagues at Forest of Marston Vale to install several water rescue boards around water sites they own. This included 6 boards initially, with further boards to be purchased later.

The last year included a significant amount of planning for a county wide implementation of the NFCC water safety responder programme. Riverside North and the Embankment in Bedford has been targeted previously with refresher training carried out to local businesses by our safety officers and operational crews from Bedford station.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT/FIRE CADETS**

Our Youth officers support a variety of youth initiatives many of which were reinstated as pandemic restrictions were progressively lifted.

Our Youth officers delivered a 5-day National Fire Setter training course to 6 members of our community safety team to help build resilience. This has enabled us to support 22 SAFE cases involving young fire setters within Bedfordshire. Some cases included partnership work with Beds Police

The team supported operational crews to create a virtual Year 2 educational package. A pilot received positive feedback from schools. The design phase has been completed and virtual visits have been delivered to key stage 1 and 2 pupils utilising the Staywise educational resources. Face to face visits are also taking place where it is safe to do so within schools across Bedfordshire.

Despite the challenges last year, we recruited 24 new fire cadets during October and November 2021, joining the three cadet units at Luton, Leighton Buzzard, and Sandy. 2022 has seen the introduction of a new cadet unit at Bedford expanding the current total to 32 Fire Cadets supported by 16 Instructors, including 3 volunteers.

The cadet instructors adapted and launched virtual sessions on MS Teams which kept the young people engaged with over 30 virtual sessions run from December 2021 to April 2022.

The Cadets have also been provided with training in a recognised First aid qualification as well as Mental health awareness. Both of which will support themselves and their local communities.

Our Youth team have also provided educational support to external partners to include;

- Visits for young carers from both the Ivel Valley Early Intervention Team and CHUMS Charity.
- Cornerways Care- fire/home safety session undertaken for young people.
- Transition UK Home fire safety session for young people with special needs

## PROTECTION

BFRS is the enforcing authority for the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Fire Safety Order requires anyone in control of a premises (the ‘responsible person’) to carry out a fire risk assessment to determine what steps they need to take to reduce the risk from fire and make sure people can safely escape if there is a fire.

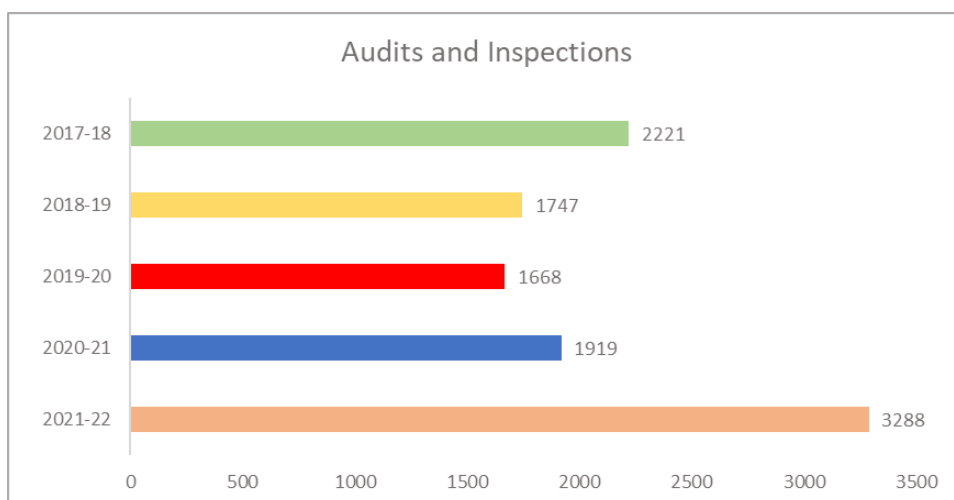
During 2021/22 we continued to refine our Protection approach in response to national learning arising from the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The Government continued to provide significant grant funding to support an uplift in protection capacity and competency.

Over the course of 2021/22 BFRS has:

- Invested a total of £167,300 of government uplift grant, including £102,000 on new Fire Safety Advisers and £18,000 on training and development
- Continued to manage risks in high-rise residential buildings reporting our findings to Government
- Continued our investment in improving our premises database and fire safety management systems

## AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

As the enforcing authority BFRS undertakes a range of planned and reactive inspections of premises (normally buildings or parts of buildings) to which the Fire Safety Order applies. The Fire Safety Order applies very widely and there are over 22,000 premises within the county of Bedfordshire to which, the Fire Safety Order applies. With so many premises, through our risk-based inspection programme we target our finite resources on those buildings that present the highest risk to life safety in the event of a fire. Premises classed as high risk are predominantly those buildings used for sleeping or with vulnerable occupants, such as care homes, hotels, hospitals, and other residential accommodation. High rise residential buildings and large public access buildings such as sports stadiums etc. are also classed as high risk. We also sample other types of premises such as offices, factories, and shops.



Our risk-based inspection programme includes the following types of activity:

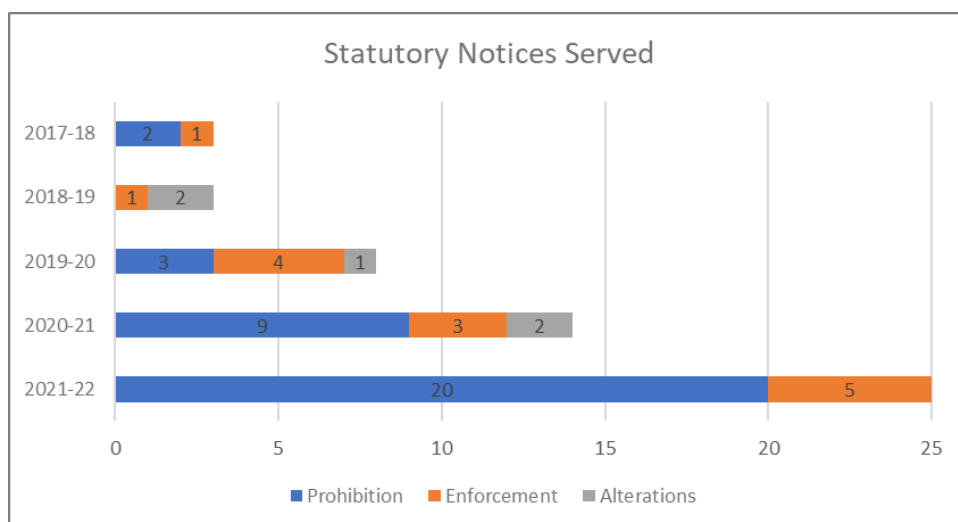
- Planned audits of higher risk premises by specialist fire safety staff
- Basic fire safety checks of lower risk premises by operational staff
- Carrying out 'after fire' inspections
- Inspections to investigate complaints we receive about fire safety standards in premises

In 2021/22 BFRS continued to enforce the Fire Safety Order taking a risk-based approach to protection activity. BFRS conducted a total of 3,288 audits and inspections during 2021/22 an increase of 71% compared to the previous year. This included 647 audits of which 243 were to high-risk premises. High risk premises receive a routine fire safety audit every three years as a minimum.

### FORMAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION

When BFRS finds that the requirements of the Fire Safety Order have not been complied with, the action that may be taken ranges from informal advice through to prosecution. BFRS takes a 'firm but fair' approach to enforcement in line with the Regulators Code. Formal enforcement actions include serving the types of notices set out below. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with these notices.

- **Prohibition Notice** – served where the risk is considered so serious that use of the premises needs to be prohibited or restricted until specified matters have been remedied
- **Enforcement Notice** - served where there is a clear breach of the law, where the degree of risk of harm is significant, and where a remedy needs to be secured within a set period
- **Alterations Notice** – served where there is a serious risk (or there would be with a change to the premises) and may require that before any changes are made details of the proposed changes must be submitted to the fire authority



During 2021/22 BFRS served higher numbers of Notices than in any previous year. Prohibition Notices have been served on twenty premises that were providing sleeping accommodation without adequate fire safety arrangements (such as fire detection and alarm systems, fire doors and escape routes). This includes several houses in multiple occupation (HMO) as a result of our joint working with the housing authorities to combat rogue landlords who are renting accommodation without ensuring that the required fire safety measures are in place.

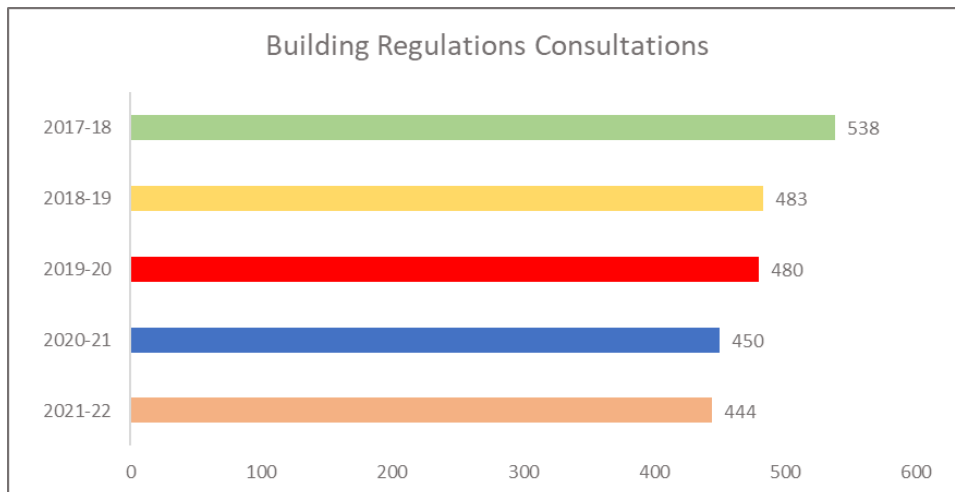
During 2021/22 BFRS successfully prosecuted an office premises in Bedford for fire safety offences, resulting in fines totalling £40,000 being imposed by the courts. Another premises accepted a simple caution for failing to comply with the requirements of an Enforcement notice issued by BFRS.

### STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

In England and Wales, the Building Act 1984 and its Building Regulations apply to new buildings and to building work such as the erection, extension, or material alteration of an existing building. Fire safety requirements are set out in Building Regulations and guidance on meeting the requirements is given in Approved Document B (Fire safety). The building control authority or approved inspector are responsible for checking for compliance with these requirements and undertake statutory consultation with the fire and rescue service as part of that process.

In 2021/22 BFRS made responses to 444 Building Regulations consultations, which was slightly fewer than in previous years.

In addition to Building Regulations consultations, BFRS also responds to other consultations including those relating to Licensing, Care standards, and Ofsted inspections. In 2021/22 BFRS responded to 118 such consultations.



### FINANCE

#### A FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF 2021/22

The Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is a precepting authority – this means that its net cost, after receipt of Government Grant, is met by a proportion of local business rates and council tax via the unitary authorities of in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton.

The FRA is acutely aware, particularly in the current economic climate, of the need to keep any increase in council tax to the minimum, always bearing in mind the need to adequately fund the Fire and Rescue Service. Resources must, therefore, be enough to enable this emergency service to be fully operational throughout the year. For the 2021/22 budget, the FRA was able to keep its Council Tax increase to 1.99%. A Band D property in 2021/22 paid £102.41 for the annual council tax charge of the Fire and Rescue Service.

#### A FINANCIAL COMMENTARY OF 2021/22

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. However, we have been proactive in identifying changes that ensure continuity of our professional services whilst delivering the required efficiencies. Future financial settlements are likely to remain difficult. As such, we continue to plan for a range of financial scenarios that may emerge in the next few years. Our ability to mitigate our risks and realise opportunities is directly impacted by our resourcing and budgetary make-up. Our current budgetary plans and assumptions determine the speed at which we will deliver our action plans. More information is available on our website. Our financial priorities are to:

- Ensure we deliver a balanced sustainable budget that provides value for money, aligns our resources to risk and supports the delivery of our CRMP;
- Be innovative in developing and delivering on our Efficiency Plan whilst maintaining a prudent level and utilisation of our reserves. Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a document that sets 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. It covers national events such as the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and then breaks down how this impacts locally on the Authority. The MTFS details our reserves policy, planning assumptions behind the budget figures and other considerations that must be considered when setting the strategy, such as the tax base, efficiencies, and shared services.

#### **Revenue Budget:**

For 2021/22 the FRA approved a revenue budget requirement of £31.713m circa 80 per cent of these costs are for employees.

#### **2021/22 Year End Contribution to Reserves:**

The unaudited year-end contribution to reserves was 77k. The underspend was predominantly due to pay awards being set nationally that were lower than had been budgeted for. This underspend had been reported during the year to the FRA.

#### **Capital Budget:**

Our capital programme highlights spending on assets such as our fire stations and fire engines. Each year the Authority draws up a rolling four-year programme of capital projects. The capital projects for this year total £1.038m and these are being funded by contributions from the revenue budget and reserves utilisation. Projects for this year include:

- Investment in our vehicle feet, to maintain effective, economic, and efficient fire appliances;
- Investment in IT;
- Investment in Equipment
- Replacement Mobilisation system;
- Investment in the modernisation of our buildings.

#### **Reserves:**

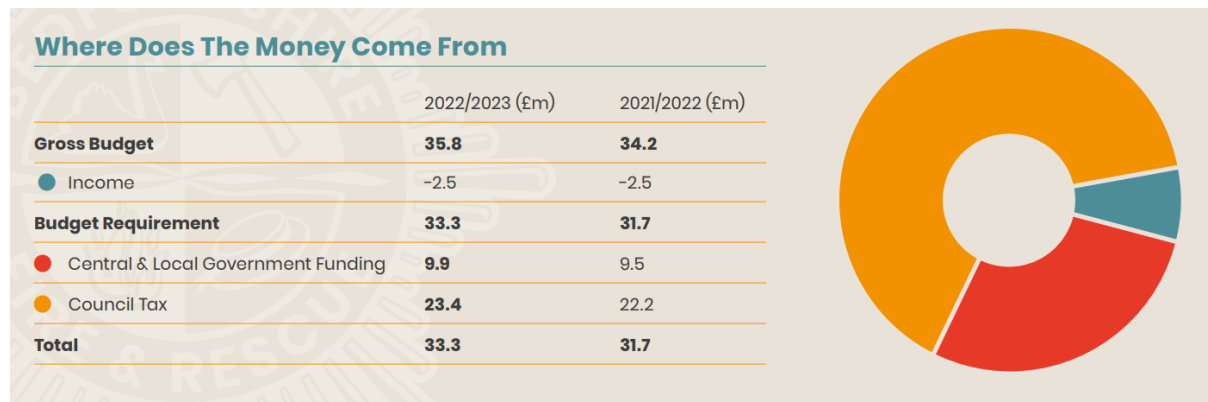
The General Reserve balance as of 31 March 2022 was £2.4m. This is following work undertaken over the last few years to establish specific earmarked reserves, which as of 31 March 2022 totalled £5.136m. The year-end revenue budget underspend of 77k was allocated to the Transformation Earmarked Reserve, this is in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The Capital Receipts Reserve as of 31 March 2022 £548k. **\* These figures (£) are unaudited as of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022.**

A full explanation of the 2021/22 finances are held within the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts. The annual accounts are subject to external audit each year, the Service's external auditors are Ernst & Young. The link below will take you to the relevant page on the Service's website.

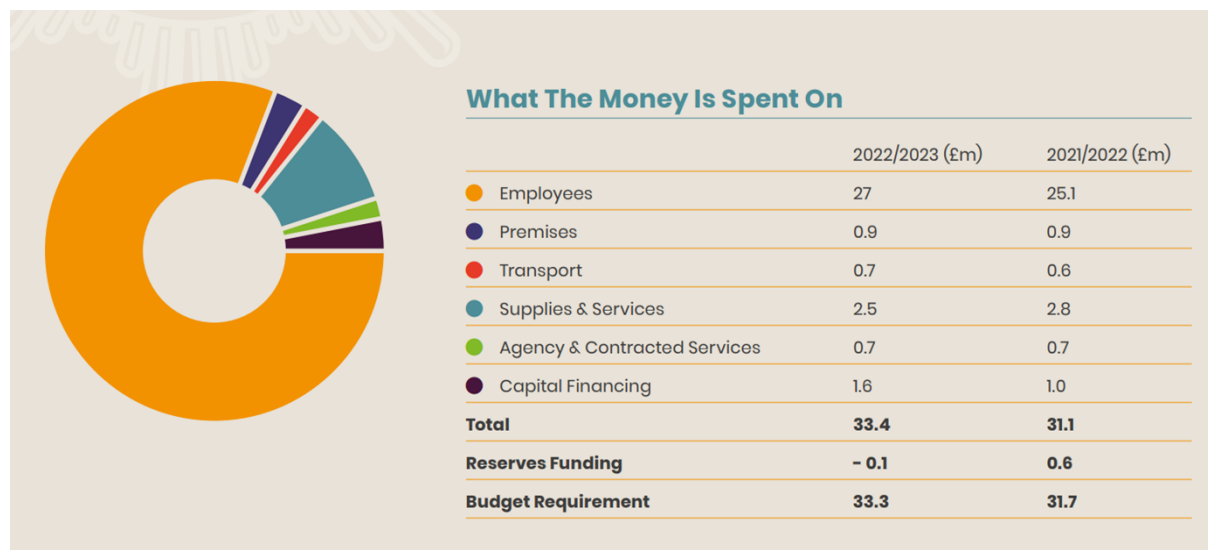
<https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Finance-and-budget/Statement-of-accounts.aspx>

***NB; The Fire and Rescue Authority has a responsibility to publish a statement of assurance on an annual basis which sets out the approach taken to ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place in terms of governance and operational delivery. The statement of assurance will be published later this year (link to follow).***

### Where does the money come from?



### What is the money spent on?



### HUMAN RESOURCES

14 employees received their Long Service & Good Conduct Awards in 2021/2022.

This was another considerably challenging year as we again worked with our partners in dealing with the pressures of COVID including leading on the logistical set up of mass vaccination centres around Bedfordshire and secondments to Eeast. The robust COVID secure measures that we adopted, and our business continuity plans enabled services to continue to be effectively delivered during periods of increased activity and/or staff absences.



This was a particularly busy year for our Resourcing Team, at a time when the recruitment market is highly competitive, and roles are becoming increasingly hard to fill. During this time, the team recruited to 22 support roles (Green book), 2 Control posts, 35 Retained Firefighters and 18 Wholetime Firefighters. Several retirements and a restructure within our corporate management team, resulted in the resourcing of 60% of the team. All this recruitment activity inevitably resulted in a high volume of pre-employment checks, contracts of employment and other onboarding activity for the HR Operations Team.

A Recruitment Audit of our operational recruitment process was undertaken by RSM Risk Assurance Services our internal auditors. They confirmed “the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this area are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.”

Throughout the year we have maintained contact with our community groups virtually using a range of media platforms. More recently face to face engagements have recommenced with us attending careers fairs and community events. Our Instagram page called WIREbedsfire (Wellbeing, Inclusion, Recruitment and Engagement) has steadily seen the number of its followers increasing.

The Employee Relations Team reviewed and implemented several organisational policies, several which are reward and benefit based as part of our commitment to a transparent approach to pay and to provide benefits that are of real value to our staff. During the year, the team have researched and developed a range of papers and guidance concerning HR procedures to support new ways of working as well as in response to COVID related legislation changes and to help the Service respond to the operational demands of the pandemic. We have continued to support managers across the Service deal with people management issues informally and formally, providing additional support for more complex issues, particularly in a remote environment.

The Occupational Health Team have continued to provide support to employees and managers across a range of absences including COVID. We have made use of our Targeted Health Scheme to expedite diagnosis of certain conditions that had been affected by the delays in the NHS as a result of COVID. The team have also revised our Wellbeing Policy and approach as well as ensuring that there is ongoing mental health support and advice for all employees 24/7.

The Payroll Team have implemented the Gartan Roster module greatly reducing the need for paper claims being printed and posted. A new Cycle to Work scheme was launched with 10 employees taking up the opportunity contributing to improved wellbeing and a reduction in our carbon footprint, whilst also achieving a secondary NI saving of approx. £1330 for the Service. There has also been much work around pay and other terms and conditions of service for additional activities to support our partners, alongside recording and reporting associated salary costs that could be recharged.

The HR Operations Team have also kept up to date with the ever-changing landscape for pension schemes and have ensured that staff have been kept informed of developments within their relevant pension schemes and regularly provided advice and guidance.

### **Empowering – Equality and Diversity**

Having a representative workforce continues to be a Service priority but also remains a sector wide significant challenge.

The recruitment of new staff that declared as Minority Ethnic has exceeded our 2021/2022 target in both On-Call/RDS and Wholetime operational roles and across the whole Service. However, the end

of year data indicates our overall proportion of On-Call and Wholetime operational staff has reduced from the previous year. This reduction is due to there being more operational leavers who declared as Minority Ethnic than those that have joined the Service in the last 12 months.

The Service has been more successful in its recruitment of women into operational roles. It has met the target for recruitment in relation to Wholetime roles and has fallen slightly below target in relation to On-Call roles. The overall percentage of women in all operational roles has not met the annual target but has slightly increased in comparison to the previous year.

The Service continues to actively engage with our underrepresented community groups including positive action initiatives where appropriate and will continue to work to improve our community representation. This was a period where most of our engagement continued to be online/remote due to Covid secure measures the Service had in place. Recently this has moved more towards attending in person events with virtual events still taking place where necessary.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Recruits' courses and conversion courses**

Our training and development centre had a remarkably busy year, despite the challenges that were faced adjusting to new ways of working as a result of Covid. Our training instructors adapted the delivery of several courses to ensure the health and safety of personnel was maintained whilst safety critical training courses were delivered.

The training and development centre continued to work alongside our recruitment team in providing courses for transferees and new recruits, including;

- 22 On-call fire fighters attended our initial On-call modular course
- 10 On-call firefighter conversions completed
- 5 Bedfordshire On-call firefighters converted to whole time firefighters
- 10 Whole time apprentices trained
- 1 wholetime firefighter to Bedfordshire wholetime conversion course
- A total of 48 new firefighters trained to start with BFRS

July 21 – 15 existing Fire Fighter apprentices completed their end point assessments. Two firefighters received an overall distinction, with 13 firefighters receiving a distinction in 1 or more of the individual assessment areas.

Feb 22 – BFRS begins its own Firefighter apprenticeship, as a supported provider in collaboration with Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

### **Training delivered in 2021/2022**

In 2021/22 the training and development centre delivered or facilitated 961 training courses. These ranged from half day manual handling courses through to 14 week On-call modular initial courses.

June 2021 – Delivery of new RTC refresher course began starting a rolling 3-year CPD programme

September 2021 – Training Instructors supported colleagues from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and the UK Rescue Organisation to deliver the national rescue competition.

October 2021 – Training Instructors from BFRS took part in the National Breathing Apparatus (BA) competition, winning best BA team.

Dec 2021 – BFRS invests circa £85k to upgrade the Firehouse complex to support the delivery of new tactical firefighting courses from 2022.

Feb 2022 – Heavy vehicle rescue training for all watches at Kempston and Stopsley to improve specialist response.

### **Exercises and assurance**

Key performance indicators for Officer Incident command revalidations maintained at 100% during 2021/2022

- April 2021 - Training and Development Centre's incident command team led the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum to undertake virtual strategic, tactical, and operational response exercises utilising a virtual online training platform for Covid safety.
- June 2021 - Training and Development Centre's incident command team attends the Fire Service College (as part of a 5 Service team) to facilitate several high-rise exercises to test new National operational guidance.
- September - October 21 – Bedfordshire hosts regional multi-agency exercises to train front line staff in the response to a major terrorist incident.
- February 2022 – PDR V5 project goes live, marking a full review of all core training for operational personnel at all levels to best support our operational response.

### **Learning and Development**

#### **Promotion Gateways 2021–22.**

We have led on several Promotion Gateways in 2021-22 which enabled 25 successful candidates to enter our Talent Pool and are eligible for temporary and substantive promotion. We have continued to develop and support our candidates by creating a development pool, this is designed for candidates that score above a set benchmark to enable them to retake elements of the process, following feedback and development, these candidates are eligible for temporary promotion. Feedback and development opportunities are offered to support all individuals.

The learning and development team have completed 20 recruitment processes over the past year which have included;

- Incident Command Trainers
- Driving School Instructors
- Fire Safety Inspector
- Wholetime Firefighter
- Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety
- Crew/Watch/Station Manager Transferees
- Fire Investigators
- Training Instructor
- Control Operators

#### **External and Internal Exercise Assurance**

As part of our continued commitment to our national assets, the Service has embarked on several exercises to test our response capability and operational performance. These exercises form part of an assurance plan to monitor the training, equipment, and mobilising arrangements to ensure that these meet the national requirements.

During 2021/22 the Service managed to participate in several exercises, despite the restrictions that were faced as part of the COVID pandemic.

As part of our continued preparation for responding to a terrorist attack our specialist and non-specialist crews participated in several major training live play events. These exercises were attended by over 1500 personnel and agencies ranging from our strategic partners through to representatives from the Home Office.

### **Procurement Tenders**

Over the period of 2021/22, the procurement section has undergone some transformation with changes in personnel and a review of processes and procedures to ensure we are supporting the service to work efficiently and compliantly. We have continued to make optimal use of national and sectoral collaborative opportunities and framework agreements as well as pursuing tender opportunities as appropriate.

We have led on several procurements, variations, and extensions to support the service in fulfilling its objectives, including;

- Supply of hardware and configuration services for replacement Wi-Fi solution (April 2021)
- Business Information Software (June 2021)
- Shower replacements and refurbishments (July 2021 & February 2022)
- Vehicle Leasing & Purchases
- Review of Cleaning provision (September 2021 – January 2022)
- RTC Equipment (October 2021 – January 2022)
- Waste (November 2021 – March 2022)
- Customer Insight Data (October 2021)

The procurement team have also conducted Market Engagement on several projects, including Virtual Receptionist provision and Appliance CCTV.

## **PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES**

### **Replacement Mobilising Project (RMP)**

In November BFRS were the first Emergency Service to go 100% “cloud based” with its new mobilising system, which is connected to the new Emergency Services Network (ESN) for live service. The project delivered a secure connection to ESN and a managed firewall, using Motorola’s cloud-based 3CRS (Command Central Control Room System) with a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), and linking to Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) fitted with ESN Connect SIM cards, which connects devices to the ESN data service. Using ESN on the MDTs is also a first for Airbus with ESN as a service provider. BFRS is effectively using ESN for live services supporting BFRS front line staff in both Control and on the fireground. The groundwork that has taken place now has ensured BFRS are well prepared for full ESN implementation, as a lot of the pre-requisite “plumbing” has already taken place.

By further integrating our Control solution with other BFRS systems, including whole time, and retained availability management, BFRS will increase efficiencies in the control room by automatically and seamlessly updating our appliance and staff availability

This integration with Gartan, our resource management software, will allow BFRS to manage resource more effectively. It will aid the service to understand dynamically what resources are

available and with what skills, allowing BFRS to increase availability by matching the incident types with the skill sets available at any given time.

This project was delivered on time, within budget and of the right quality.

### **Command Support Review Project**

After a successful tender for the Incident Command software, Airbus was appointed, and the project went live in January 2022 and achieved the following:

Up-to-date modern technologies enabling the service personnel at an incident to have the correct, up-to-date information to hand, to allow staff to make accurate, informed decisions. When making these decisions the outcomes will be logged in the system with a time stamp to aid with a detailed debrief post incident to take place.

The new IC software also improves incident command training by having a platform which provides training for the use on the MDT's for the ability to review risk information, Crash Recovery and Chem-data.

Any new Officer in Charge (OIC) will have knowledge of the Incident Command Unit and the tools this brings to enable the OIC to call on resource and incident information.

Key outcomes:

- Improved situational awareness with Live video streaming via Drones and Body worn cameras. PA: The body worn cameras are being trialed but not fully live yet.
- Effective incident management
- Upgraded hardware and software operating systems
- Improved situational awareness with Live video streaming to the ICU only via Drones and Body worn cameras.
- Emergency Services Network (ESN) compliant
- Support the CRMP action to roll out fire ground connectivity

### **Wi-Fi**

Wi-Fi was upgraded at all stations and HQ from July 2021 to October 2021. This gives much better Wi-Fi coverage due to the increased density of Wi-Fi access points. It supports Gov Wi-Fi so anyone in the public sector with a free Gov Wi-Fi account can seamlessly and securely connect to our Wi-Fi. The new Wi-Fi also allows auto enrolment of Guest Wi-Fi users (with digital approval). The outcomes are a faster, more secure Wi-Fi, supporting flexible working at BFRS locations.

### **SharePoint**

In July 2021 (the old SharePoint was made read only on 1 November 2021), the ageing legacy on-premises SharePoint system was replaced with a new cloud-based SharePoint, as part of the Microsoft Office 365 suite. This enables remote and flexible access via any device and browser, with secure Two-Factor Authentication (2FA). Key benefits are:

- Easy, secure remote access to information enabling flexible working
- Easier faster search facility for document access
- Refreshed look and feel, with a more modern and corporate aligned theme.
- Improve corporate internal communications

- Improve service external communications
- Reduction in the number of paper-based and manual corporate processes
- Improve the BFRS staff experience with SharePoint
- Business systems improvement
- Business process improvement
- Active Action Plans
- Automated reporting
- Business continuity and organisational resilience

### **Business Management Information System (BMIS)**

The new Corporate Risk Register went live Sept 2021. This is a new tool which allows a central repository for updates against risks and actions. It is a cloud-based system, accessible from any browser, giving up to date information and progress against actions. The Corporate planning tool and project management tool are being implemented in quarter 2, 2022.

### **Course Management System and PDR Pro Upgrade Project**

As part of Phase 1 of this project, a new Course Management System (CMS) was linked to the current v3 of PDR Pro. This enabled the decommissioning of the previous Training Centre administration system, MIS Training Planner, supplied by Sophtlogic.

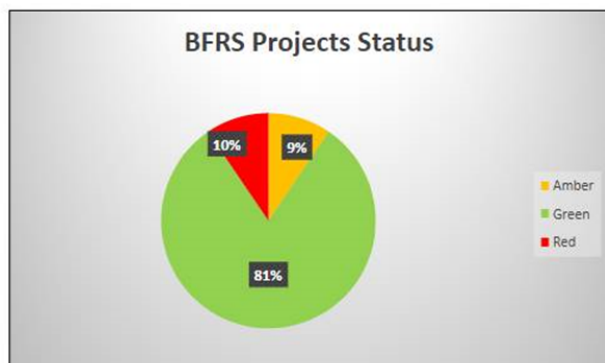
Phase 2 upgraded PDR Pro v3 to a fully supported v5, which was already implemented by the supplier across many other FRSs. The project delivered a rationalised set of core skills and training planners for all operational roles. The upgrade to the fully supported version also allowed us to reduce the administrative burden on staff and to cater for future developments.

### **Infographics FloSuite Project**

In February 2022 we concluded the delivery of the long running and quite challenging Infographics FloSuite project. The new solution is an improvement on the previous Protection system, even though it lacks in some areas. The Protection data can now be more reliably and quickly extracted than from the previous system. Audits by protection staff are entered directly into system by the inspecting officers.

In the final stages of the project the teamwork and collaboration between the Fire Safety Team, Business Information Team, Information Communications Technology and Programme Management Office has helped to progress the project and complete the delivery. We now have a working solution that the inspectors are comfortable using, we can do our reporting effectively, and we are now looking to improve the data loaded into FloSuite.

## Project Management



Projects	Count of RAG Status
Amber	2
Green	17
Red	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21</b>

The Course Management System (CMS) and (Performance Development) PDR Pro Upgrade project (training records), were delivered successfully with the new Course Management System implementation going live in September 2020.

The Service deployed MS Office 365 and are rolling out the Digital Champions Programme with cloud-based storage enabling a more effective collaborative working environment. Digital literacy training and webinars have been provided by 365Tribe and made available to all staff. This has improved the efficiency of working and has supported the remote working during the COVID pandemic lockdown.

The Assets Tracking project implemented the new Asset Tracking System live within 3 stations. This is now used for inventory checking and "task and test" activities, instead of the previous paper-based process. Full rollout is in progress.

The new Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) rollout to all appliances was completed. This project is in closedown, now progressing post implementation review. As part of the Command Support Project, we completed the Incident Command Unit (ICU) hardware refresh in April 2020 and have delivered the Procurement Phase for the Incident Command Software (March 2021), pending contract sign off by the selected provider.

### **OUR WORK WITH EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST**

Our support for EEASt began in March 2020 when BFRS decided to live our values and 'dared to be different'! It has continued ever since and our partnership has grown significantly since then with the introduction of a Falls Service, Specialist Rescue Unit, and Co-responding. Stepping forward during uncertain times has allowed both EEASt and BFRS to keep the public safe during a time of national emergency.

Evaluation shows that public services benefit by £7 for every pound we spend, with people in Bedfordshire getting £5.1 million in social value from our combined efforts.

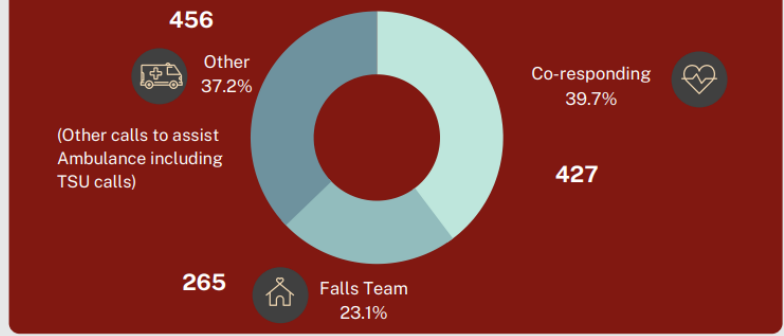
2021/22

## BFRS/EEAST COLLABORATION

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue continue to work closely with colleagues at EEAST Ambulance Service to support them in keeping the people of Bedfordshire safe and well

### MOBILISATIONS

The number of mobilisations to assist EEAST totals 1148, consisting of:



During the last year we have undertaken;

1148 mobilisations to assist EEAST – consisting of:

- 456 Co-responders
- 265 Falls team/ lift patients
- 427 Other calls to assist ambulance including TSU calls
- Continued to support EEAST with ambulance driving
- Provided logistical support for COVID vaccination and testing centres – 900 hours of support
- Provided Command Support for over 100 multi agency Local Resilience Forum meetings on COVID.

### Letters of appreciation

1. 16.04.21 - Thank you from Council colleagues and residents following a house fire in , Houghton Regis who emailed to say a big thank you and a well done for making the residents in the area feel safe and putting their minds at rest.
2. 28.05.21 - Thank you from BCH police who attended the water safety training in Harrold. - I just wanted to write and say thank you for delivering our water training last week. It was one of the best courses we have done and the whole team thoroughly enjoyed it. It was delivered in a relaxed manner, with consideration for all levels and ability with support given to those who needed it.
3. 16.07.21 - Thank you for firefighters from Bedford Green Watch who were flagged down by a member of public to assist an unresponsive male. The crew gave CPR and applied Defib before handing over to EEAST.
4. 23.07.21 - Thanks to Harrold Station from Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service to the attending crews from Harrold community fire station who attended the field fire in Olney. I always admire the dedication and the commitment in the way on-call stations support their local communities. The crew from Harrold worked extremely hard to bring a successful



conclusion to this incident. Their swift response and actions were instrumental in the way the fire was brought under control.

5. 30.07.21 - Leighton Buzzard received a thank you card from a local resident thanking them for their support in delivering food parcels at the start of the pandemic - "My thanks is long overdue, but I want to thank you for your kindness during the first lockdown of this pandemic when you delivered a food parcel. In the most difficult of times for us your act of kindness was much appreciated.
6. 08.09.21 - To the crew @ Luton fire station and the controller who dealt with my request for assistance for my elderly stepfather who needed a ring cutting off on the evening of 8/9. Thank you so much for the prompt response and kindness shown to my parents in dealing with their situation. Your help was greatly appreciated by all the family. Nothing else to say but THANK YOU.
7. 11.11.21 - Compliment letter received from Head of Community Response at East of England Ambulance Service - Dear Potton Community Fire Service, RE: Notification of positive outcome (survival to discharge). I am writing to advise you of the positive outcome of the incident, and to thank you for your involvement in saving this individual. You responded to this patient as a Fire Responder, providing pre-hospital emergency care, and providing a vital link in the delivery of this positive outcome. Thanks to a combined effort we were able to reach this patient in 06:26 minutes. Following the resuscitation effort by EEAST and conveyance to hospital, this patient was Transferred Alive. On Behalf of the Trust, 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.
8. 02.12.21 - 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.
9. 09.03.22 - Compliment received - Thank you so much to the crew that came out to us at the Hospital tonight! I'll never forget hearing the call made through to control. 'Can confirm we have a 4-year-old, female child who is stuck in a shape sorter, commencing rescue now' The firemen were brilliant, so friendly, chatty, and reassuring with her whilst I had my hands full with my 10-month-old after a long wait at the hospital. A much-welcomed sight and rescue after multiple attempts from various people to free her. Thank you, we will always remember this day!

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE

**SUBJECT:** STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22

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For further information on this Report contact: Steve Frank  
Head of Strategic Support and Assurance  
Tel No: 07876 144846

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Background Papers: None

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**PURPOSE:**

To present to members the Annual Statement of Assurance for 2021/22 for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Members acknowledge the contents of the Statement of Assurance for 2021/22
  2. Approval by the Full Fire and Rescue Authority
  3. Publication on the Service's website.
- 

1. Background

- 1.1 Under the Fire and Rescue National Framework (England) 2018 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (BFRA) have a responsibility to publish an Annual Statement of Assurance which provides a report on the Service's performance in the previous year.

- 1.2 The Statement of Assurance reports on performance in regard to financial, governance and operational assurance arrangements.
- 1.3 The Statement of Assurance is required to be published annually and where possible form part of the existing governance reporting arrangements. The Statement of Assurance is subject to normal scrutiny arrangements which comprise of:
- Approval by the Audit & standards Committee;
  - Presentation to the Full Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting by the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee; and
  - Published on the Service's website.
- 1.4 The Statement of Assurance is attached as Appendix A.

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



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE  
& RESCUE SERVICE

# STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

2021-22



# CONTENTS




## STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 21/22

1. Introduction	3
2. Financial Assurance	4
3. Governance Framework	6
4. Operational Assurance	12
5. Conclusion	18

## CONNECT

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# 1.

The Government sets out the high level expectations and requirements for Fire and Rescue Authorities through the [Fire and Rescue National Framework \(England\) 2018](#).

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

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

- 🔥 **Financial:** How BFRA ensures that public money is properly accounted for, managed, audited and reported along with management of financial assets and the production of the Annual Statement of Accounts which is produced in line with accounting codes of practice.
- 🔥 **Governance:** How BFRA ensures that it conducts its business lawfully and that public money is properly accounted for and managed economically, efficiently and effectively and that an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is published.
- 🔥 **Operational:** How BFRA operates within a clear defined statutory framework including key documents such as National Framework and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 etc.

# INTRODUCTION

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

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

In summary this Statement of Assurance aims to provide information to the Communities, Government, Local Authorities and Partners in an easy and accessible way, so a valid assessment can be made of their local Fire and Rescue Authority's performance during 2021/22



## 2. FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

BFRA is a precepting authority; this means that its net cost, after receiving a Government Grant and a proportion of local business rates, is met by all council tax payers in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire Borough and Luton as a proportion to the valuation band of their home. The precept accounts for 65% of BFRA income. A precept leaflet is published each year on [our website](#) detailing our revenue and expenditure for the year.

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

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

The Treasurer to the BFRA has the responsibility for ensuring that the right measures are in place to manage the Authority's financial assets and that the financial reporting arrangements are sound and that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements.

The pre-audited [Statement of Accounts](#) for the year ending 31 March 2022 is a document that summarises BFRA's transactions for the previous financial year detailing how the funding was used to provide a Fire and Rescue Service to the communities of Bedfordshire and includes:

- a]** The Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts which sets out the responsibilities of the FRA and the Treasurer to the FRA;
- b]** The Annual Governance Statement (AGS);
- c]** The Movement in Reserves Statement which summarises the FRA's spending against the council tax it raised, taking into account the use of reserves during the year;
- d]** The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which summarises the income and expenditure of the FRA;
- e]** The Balance Sheet which displays the financial position of the FRA as at 31 March 2022;
- f]** The Cash Flow Statement which summarises the changes in the FRAs funds; and,
- g]** The Pension Fund Account for the year together with the Net Assets Statement at the year end.

The Accounts are supported by a Statement of Accounting Policy and Core Financial Statements and these are prepared by the Finance Team under the direction of the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer to the BFRA.



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

- 🔥 [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) ;
- 🔥 [The Local Authorities \(Capital Finance and Accounting\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2015](#); and,
- 🔥 [International Financial Reporting Standards](#) (IFRS).

BFRA are subject to independent external audit and scrutiny to ensure that appropriate and effective financial arrangements are in place. The external audit on the 2020/21 accounts was completed in May 2022 and are available on our website. It is the opinion of the external auditors that 'Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue has had the arrangements they would expect to see to enable it to plan and manage its resources to ensure that it can continue to deliver its services.'



# 3. GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

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



Three members from **Bedford Borough Council**



Five members from **Central Bedfordshire Council**; and,



Four members from **Luton Borough Council**

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

BFRA's governance framework derives from seven core principles identified in the International Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: [Framework \(CIPFA/SOLACE\) Review of Annual Governance Statements](#).

## 3.1. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2021/22 explains how the BFRA manages its governance arrangements and internal control measures. It is an open and transparent account of how the BFRA ensures its financial management systems are adequate and effective, as well as ensuring there is a robust and sound system of internal control.

The AGS also explains how BFRA has complied with the Code and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement. BFRA's financial arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA – Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. The Treasurer to the BFRA reports in this role directly to the Chief Fire Officer whilst directly supporting the FRA as Section 151 Officer.

## 3.2. INTERNAL AUDIT

The role of internal audit is to review the internal control framework that governs the operations of the BFRA and, in so doing, provide an independent opinion to both Management and Members of the BFRA on the robustness of the Authority's internal control environment. Each year an Internal Audit Plan is produced and developed by the auditors, in conjunction with the Assistant Chief Officer – Finance and Corporate Services and Treasurer to the BFRA and is based on a risk assessment of all the services/systems of the Authority. Members and Service Managers are directly involved in the development of the plan and it is subject to input and review by the Corporate Management Team (CMT), prior to being approved by the Audit and Standards Committee. In summary, the plan identifies the audits to be completed each year, including core fundamental systems and other operational systems.

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

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2022, the Head of Internal Audit's opinion for the Authority was as follows:

*“The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.*

*However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.”*

### 3.3. EXTERNAL AUDIT

BFRA remains committed to continuing to improve its performance towards achieving excellence in all areas. Value for Money (VFM) is part of an annual review carried out by the Service's external auditors with an opinion whether the BFRA is delivering VFM as part of their annual report and whether the BFRA has proper arrangements for:

- 🔥 Securing financial resilience; and,
- 🔥 Challenging how it secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

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

- 🔥 National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Practice, International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland);
- 🔥 The 2021/22 Code of Practice; and
- 🔥 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The 2021/22 financial accounts are due to be audited later in the 2022/23 financial year by our external auditors Ernst & Young (E&Y). This is due to a capacity shortage and backlog of work from the Covid-19 pandemic with E&Y.

Additionally E&Y confirmed that in their opinion, in all significant respects the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2021. As noted above, the audit of the 2021/22 accounts will be in late 2022 due to the availability of E&Y's audit team.

In 2020/21 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were inspected by HMICFRS twice. HMICFRS returned to the Service for the second time to carry out a full inspection covering the areas of Effectiveness, Efficiency and People in February 2021.

In their report, published December 2021, it was stated that the service has improved its efficiency and how it treats its staff. The report praised the sound financial management and scrutiny within the service, as well as robust monitoring and targets for response and good processes in place to make sure that staff are trained and competent.

Compliments were paid to the use of technology, the new service values as endorsed by staff members, increasing staff diversity and the clear and concise robust arrangements in place to respond to large-scale, multi-agency incidents. It was noted that looking forward, the service could do more to assure itself of the quality and content of its risk-based inspection programme.

It was stated that during the pandemic, the service had innovated and used new technology to help other organisations. It had adapted to enable staff to work from home and its firefighters were helping local businesses to comply with COVID-19 restrictions, with particular praise added to the fact that the service took the lead in setting up and managing mass vaccination centres.

## 3.4. COMMITTEE & GROUPS

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

All areas of the Service are covered to ensure that the Service is functioning efficiently and effectively. This is achieved by providing checks and challenges, monitoring performance and approving associated policy and activity. The Executive and Audit and Standards Committees make recommendations on matters within their terms of reference to the Authority according to their area of concern.

The Chairs of these Committees report any recommendations arising from these meetings to the meeting of the full FRA. Reporting will also include on-going policy and decision making, which is facilitated by a clear framework of delegation set out in the Authority's Constitution, including details of delegated authorities to officers.

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

In 2021/22 the BFRA appointed each member of the Executive Committee with a special responsibility for the following portfolios:



\*Please note at the AGM in June 2022 these positions were updated.

In 2010, the Authority agreed to publish an Annual Review of the Fire Authority's Effectiveness and Record of Member Attendance and has done so since then up to 2017/18. In 2021/22 Members agreed that an independent review of governance will take place in 2022/23.

## 3.6 INTERNAL CONTROL FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

BFRA has a robust Performance Management Framework in place for securing continuous improvement in its services and where the quality of service to the communities can be measured using local performance indicators.

An integral part of the performance framework includes the setting of organisational key performance indicators. These are agreed and monitored continuously using a data toolkit and reported and scrutinized quarterly by senior managers of the Service with performance being reported through the Corporate Management Team, the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Audit & Standards Committee, and to full FRA Meetings.

For the year ending 2021/22 the Annual Internal Audit report advised that the Auditors were satisfied that sufficient internal audit work had been undertaken to allow them to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements.

## 3.7 DATA TRANSPARENCY

In accordance with the *Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency*, BFRA is committed to greater openness and financial transparency through the publication, on the [Authority's website](#), of information regarding how public money is spent. This includes payments for goods and services to external bodies and suppliers above £500, and details of salaries and allowances paid to staff and Members.

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



# 4. OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE

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

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

- 🔥 Identifying and assessing the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks in the respective areas;
- 🔥 Making provision for prevention and protection activities and responding to incidents appropriately;
- 🔥 Working with partners within the communities both locally and nationally to deliver their services; and,
- 🔥 Being accountable to communities for the service they provide through the 'Statement of Assurance'.

FRAs operate within a defined boundary of a statutory framework that has a number of key documents that outline responsibilities, these include:

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



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

- 🔥 Internal audits of service delivery functions;
- 🔥 Quarterly performance reporting against station-based targets;
- 🔥 Formal evaluation of prevention and protection activities; and,
- 🔥 Full summary report of performance for the previous financial year.

Further Operational Assurance is provided externally by HMICFRS who found BFRS in 2021/22 to be 'Good' at responding to fires and other emergencies and also periodically by National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT) for our National Resilience assets.

## 4.1. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

BFRA oversees the performance of the Service throughout the year by the monitoring of robust and challenging Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated targets, aimed to maximise the effort and resources of the Service. The implementation of the Service Corporate Performance Dashboard provides all staff with easy access to these PI's.

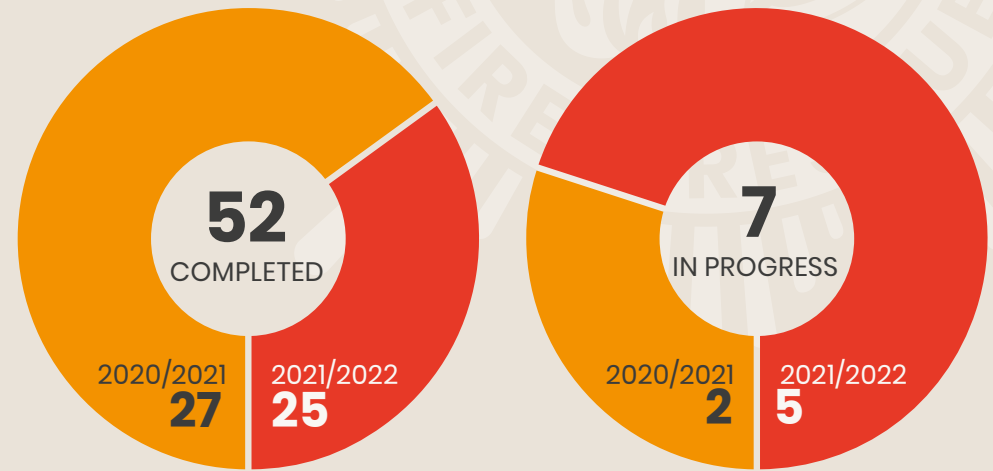
The FRA scrutinises the performance data and provides challenge to Officers on the Service performance. The Service continues to develop its KPI Dashboard that enables officers to easily access our performance data and actively manage the service an informed way. The end of year Service performance report is available [here](#).

Full details of the Service's performance for 2021/22 and comparison against performance for 2021/22 is reported within the [Annual Report 2021/22](#).

## 4.2. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

In April 2021/22 BFRS launched a refreshed version of the Community Risk Management Plan 2019 – 2023 (CRMP). This document is the Authority's programme for securing continuous improvement in its services and outlines the Authority's vision, objectives and priorities for the future, sets performance targets and outlines the Authority's accountability to its stakeholders and the communities in line with the requirements of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in England.

The CRMP contains a Service Action Plan (see Appendix A) which is an ambitious programme of 30 actions to drive improvement across the Service. 21 (70%) of the actions have been fully completed. Each action is split into several tasks with 70 individual tasks out of 87 being completed (80%).



**Table 1: Progress on Community Risk Management Plan Actions**

Year	Completed	Deferred	In Progress	Total
2020–2021	27	1	2	<b>30</b>
<b>2021 – 2022</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>60</b>

## 4.3. MUTUAL AID AND REINFORCEMENT SCHEMES

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

## 4.4. BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS

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

In response to these duties BFRA has robust Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans in place which are integral in managing corporate risk and provides, in the event of a major disruption, a Fire and Rescue Service to the community. The BCM plans cover a broad range of interruptions for specific events such as wide spreading Pandemics through to individual functional disruptions within the Service. These plans provide resilience arrangements across the entire Service.

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

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

The Service Pandemic Business Continuity Plan was utilised in March 2020 to formulate the Service response to the COVID pandemic. The plan focused our planning and delivery of services with our response to COVID creating opportunities to swiftly review, develop and deliver new ways of working for our staff, partners and communities. The Service response to COVID was inspected by HMICFRS in October 2020. HMICFRS reported that: *'In line with good governance, the service had a pandemic flu plan and business continuity plans in place which were in date. These plans were activated.'* HMICFRS also stated that: *'The plans were detailed enough to enable the service to make an effective initial response, but, understandably, they didn't anticipate and mitigate all the risks presented by COVID'*.

The Service is a member of the NFCC Business Continuity Group. This gives the Service access to information on best BCM practice for the Fire and Rescue Sector.



## 4.5. NATIONAL RESILIENCE

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

Category 1 Responders include Blue-light emergency services as well Local Authorities and NHS hospitals etc. where the capacity and capability of FRs work together with Category 1, and Category 2 Responders (Utilities/Transport infrastructure providers etc.) to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents, emergencies and disruptive challenges.

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

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

BFRA are actively involved in National Resilience arrangements and hold a Module for Mass Decontamination. The Service also has Water Rescue national assets which have been mobilised to assist other Fire and Rescue Services on several occasions, this would be following requests from the National Resilience Fire Control based in Merseyside.

## KEY FACTS <sup>21/22</sup>

	<b>477</b>	sq miles of service area
	<b>1520</b>	fires attended
	<b>14</b>	stations
	<b>40</b>	appliances
	<b>64</b>	animal assistance incidents
	<b>287</b>	wholetime workforce
	<b>102</b>	on call workforce
	<b>165</b>	support staff
	<b>24</b>	control (staff)
	<b>6038</b>	total number of incidents
	<b>342</b>	primary dwelling fires
	<b>6808</b>	safe & well visits

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

In August 2020 we launched a new Technical Support Unit, based at Dunstable Fire Station. This was the first of its kind in the country, where emergency removal of a Bariatric or complex patient is required to support EEAST.

Specially trained firefighters have responded to more than 300 calls. Instead of the four-step resource-intensive approach, previously involving up to three ambulances and several ambulance staff, a two-step response has proved successful. This new vehicle will respond to Bariatric and complex patient incidents where emergency removal of a patient is required to support the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST).

This dedicated vehicle carries specialist equipment including a bariatric stretcher provided by EEAST which, will enable crews to provide the best possible care to the patient. This was part of our joint Blue Light Collaborations with various response vehicles being co-located at fire stations across the County. With a bariatric stretcher on the unit, the process is quicker, easier and more dignified for the individual and frees up ambulance capacity. It also ensures those vulnerable and at risk of fire are identified. This is an additional part of our collaboration with EEAST who have ambulances based at Dunstable, Luton, Sandy, Stopsley and Shefford Fire Stations.

# 5.

# CONCLUSION

This Statement of Assurance provides an accurate account of Bedfordshire Fire Authority's Financial, Governance and Operational Assurance arrangements secured from the 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

I am satisfied that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority conducted its business practices within the appropriate legal framework and standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. This Statement of Assurance was approved by the FRA on the 8th September 2022.



Signed

Chief Fire Officer

Signed

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

Signed

Chair of the Bedfordshire Fire and  
Rescue Authority



WE'VE GOT  
**YOUR BACK**



WE ARE  
**ACCOUNTABLE**



**EVERY CONTACT**  
COUNTS



WE DARE TO BE  
**DIFFERENT**

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR END OF QUARTER ONE (2022-23)

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For further information on this report contact: Paul Hughes  
Head of ICT  
Tel No: 01234 845015

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Background Papers: None

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**PURPOSE:**

To present a summary of organisational performance at the end of the first quarter of the financial year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Members:

1. Consider the Service's performance against the delivery of the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) at the end of the first quarter 2022-23 and consider any issues arising.
- 

1. Background

- 1.1. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the regular Corporate Management Team (CMT) meeting.

- 1.2. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and targets included within the report reflect those established as part of the Authority's 2022/23 planning cycle, and in support of the strategic aims set out in the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan 2019-2023 (CRMP):
  - Section 3-5: Prevention, Protection and Response (Service Delivery);
  - Section 6: Utilising and Maximising (Corporate Services);
  - Section 7: Empowering (Human Resources)
- 1.3. One of the strategic priorities set out in the CRMP is to enable better access to data and performance insight as doing so will help empower staff to greater ownership for delivering performance improvements at a local level. To support this strategic priority, the Service is undertaking a comprehensive review of how it captures and utilises the broad range of risk and performance data available.
- 1.4. This report contains a revised and expanded set of Service Delivery KPIs that are aligned to the service delivery aims of the CRMP, namely Prevention, Protection and Response. These KPIs are drawn from a greatly expanded set of over 220 KPIs measuring both output and outcome performance across the Prevention, Protection and Response areas of the Service. They have been devised to give a Service level view of performance but also allow 'drill-down' to local levels and, where applicable, they are aligned to the measures used by the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to benchmark performance between other fire and rescue services.
- 1.5. The FRA meeting in July 2022 received an update report on the 2022/23 PI's, including rationalisation of certain PI's which are reported to the Authority. In the main these updates including re-wording some PI's for clarity, and some current PI's reported to the FRA that will instead be scrutinised at CMT, will be incorporated during the year.
- 1.6. Performance data is collected from the Incident Recording System (IRS) and internal databases such as iTrent, Protection and Safe and Well databases. For a variety of reasons some records take longer than others to upload to the IRS and other databases and therefore totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers). The performance report therefore represents a 'snapshot' based upon the best information available at the point in time this report was prepared.

## 2. Performance Reporting by Exception

2.1. The following sections of the report present an overview of performance in key areas of the Service, providing explanatory narrative on specific operational and corporate indicators where performance was notably strong or where additional work is required to secure improvement.

2.2. Service Delivery performance is presented from 3 perspectives:

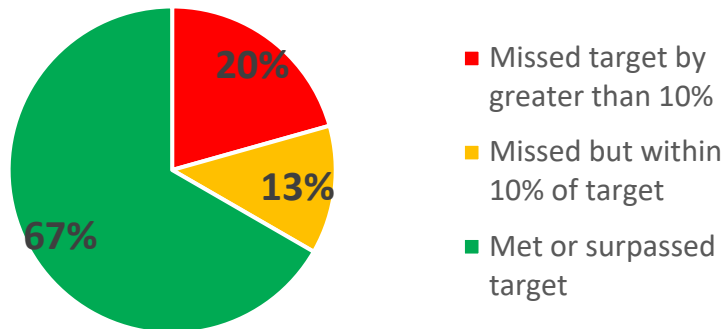
- Comparison against the annual target levels;
- Comparison with performance at the same point last year;
- Comparison with the 5-year average.

2.3. The status of each measure is noted using the following key:

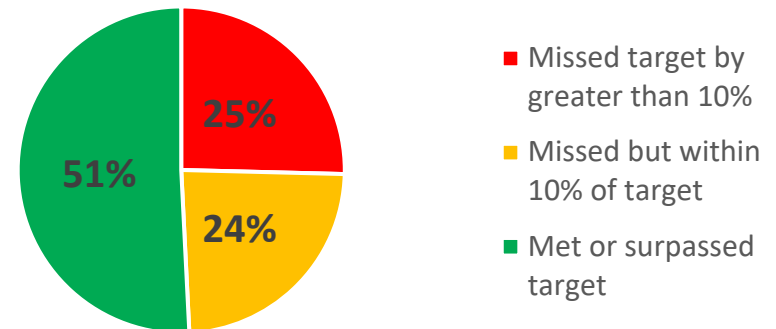
Colour Code	Exception Report	Status
GREEN	n/a	Met or surpassed target
AMBER	Required	Missed but within 10% of target
RED	Required	Missed target by greater than 10%

Note: All targets are represented as 100% of the target for that period and the actual as a percentage of that target.

1. Breakdown of Performance Achievement  
Against Current Target



2. Breakdown of Performance Achievement  
Against Previous Year





## PREVENTION

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Total number of primary fires	Down	225	204.75	+9.89%	206	+9.22%	248.4	-9.42%
Number of accidental fire fatalities	Down	0	0	0.00%	1	-100.00%	0.40	-100.00%
Number of (primary) fire injuries where victim went to hospital	Down	6	7	-14.29%	10	-40.00%	9.00	-33.33%
No. of Deliberate (Arson) Fires	Down	210	171.75	+22.27%	167	+25.74%	191.00	+9.95%
Total number of primary fires - dwellings - accidental	Down	76	80.25	-5.30%	66	+15.15%	78.00	-5.13%
Total number of primary fires - dwellings - deliberate	Down	16	7.75	+106.45%	7	+128.57%	8.20	+95.12%
Total number of primary fires - other buildings - deliberate	Down	14	11	+27.27%	14	0.00%	13.80	+1.45%
Number of delivered Safe and Well visits	Up	2158	2500	-13.68%	2684	-19.60%	1128	+91.31%
Total number of secondary fires	Down	334	215.25	+55.17%	256	+30.47%	262.60	+27.19%

**Prevention Commentary:****Total number of primary fires**

The primary fire target has been missed by 9.89% and the number of primary fires is higher than the same quarter last year (however 21-22 had a low number of primary fires compared to previous years). The increase in primary fires compared to last year is due to increases in the number of dwelling, outdoor and outdoor structure fires. The number of fires is 9.42% fewer compared to the five-year average for this quarter. Primary fires show some seasonality, on average over the past five years 27% of primary fires for the year were in Q1. Accounting for this seasonality, the projection is that the number of fires would be just over target by year end (2.44%). However, given the exceptionally hot dry weather so far in Q2 it is anticipated that there may also be an increase in Q2 compared to previous years.

**No. of Deliberate (Arson) Fires**

The linear target for the quarter has been exceeded by 22%. There is a correlation between levels of rainfall and deliberate fires. Q1 22-23 has been drier than Q1 21-22 which may explain the increase compared to Q1 last year. Overall, deliberate fires show seasonal patterns with more fires in spring and summer. When this is taken into account, the current projection is that the annual target will be met, however, given the exceptionally hot dry weather so far in Q2 it is anticipated that there will be an increase in Q2 compared to previous years.

**Total number of primary fires - dwellings - deliberate**

The target for the number of deliberate dwelling fires has been missed by 106.45%. There have been 11 deliberate primary dwelling fires recorded with the cause of deliberate (others property) or deliberate (unknown owner) and 5 as being deliberate (own property). Of the 11 dwelling fires recorded as being deliberate (others property) or deliberate (unknown owner) 2 were unoccupied and under construction. The rest were occupied as were the 5 recorded as being deliberate (own property). There have not been any repeat locations in respect of the 16 primary deliberate dwelling fires. However, on 20/04/22 there were three arson attacks in close proximity at Green Court, Hockwell Ring and Thorntondale, Luton. All were linked to the same suspect who died following a fire at his flat at Green Court, Luton the next day. BFRS took action with other agencies to address the concerns of local residents following this incident. Appropriate action has been taken to address repeat locations, clusters, 'hot spots' and emerging trends/patterns in respect of deliberate fires wherever possible and this will continue to be focus of arson prevention work.

**Total number of primary fires - other buildings - deliberate**

There have been 14 primary other buildings fires and whilst none have been recorded as being derelict 14 of the 10 records say that the buildings were unoccupied and permanently vacant. Of the fires in occupied buildings 3 were at HMP Bedford.

**Number of delivered Safe and Well visits**

The target for safe and well visits has been missed by 13.68%. However, despite not quite meeting the target, numbers are 91.31% more than the five-year average year. The prevention team is actively engaging with other agencies at work in the community to encourage them to make referrals for vulnerable households they encounter. The prevention team is also going to be delivering training to teams from other agencies to enable them to identify fire risk and make referrals and to deliver safe and well visits in the community.

**Total number of secondary fires**

The target for the number of secondary fires has been missed by 55%. Secondary fires show seasonal variation with more fires in the spring and summer, however, even taking account of this, the current projection is that the annual target will be missed. As set out above, Q1 has been dry compared to previous years. 70% of the total secondary fires are outdoor fires and 44% of the total secondary fires have been deliberate in nature. BFRS has been engaging in community messaging about the greater risks of fire due to the hot dry conditions and has been discouraging the use of barbeques and other behaviours that can increase the risk of fires starting.



## PROTECTION

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
% of Building Regulations consultations completed on time	Up	95%	95%	0.00%	95%	0.00%	95%	+0.21%
Total Fire Safety Audits/inspections completed	Up	515	600	-14.17%	839	-38.62%	508.6	+1.26%
Total number of primary fires in non-domestic buildings	Down	24	30.25	-20.66%	30	-20.00%	40	-40.37%
The number of automatic fire detector false alarms in non-domestic properties	Down	179	171.75	+4.22%	149	+20.13%	136.25	+31.38%

### Total Fire Safety Audits/inspections completed

The number of fire safety audits & inspections completed is 14.17% below target. Vacancies in specialist fire safety posts have impacted the number of audits conducted as workloads across all activities need to be balanced e.g. to achieve the improvement in performance on completing Building Regulations consultations within statutory guidance. There has been a significant amount of formal enforcement activity with 3 Enforcement Notices & 6 Prohibition Notices served in Q1. Operational crews now have more discretion over how basic fire safety checks are planned & delivered & the number of these inspections may increase in subsequent quarters.

### The number of automatic fire detector (AFD) false alarms in non-domestic properties

The target has been narrowly missed, but performance is poor compared to the same quarter in previous years. Retirement, care home & other residential home premises account for 21.2% of the total of these false alarms. The next highest categories are Hospital premises (11.7%), schools (11.7%) & warehouse premises (8.38%). Around 50% of the total is from a single false alarm attendance to a building. The Service aims to reduce attendance to this type of false alarm through call handling & interventions by the protection team. Call handling has the greatest scope for reducing the number of incidents attended. Fire Control now record the reason if a mobilisation is made during normal working hours to AFD in lower risk premises, in order to enable better understanding & analysis.



### RESPONSE: Incident Totals

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Total Incidents	Down	1791	n/a	n/a	1652	+8.41%	1599	+12.04%
Total Fires	Down	535	n/a	n/a	470	+13.83%	580	-7.76%
Total Special Services	Down	624	n/a	n/a	563	+10.83%	413	+51.09%
Total False Alarms attended	Down	632	n/a	n/a	619	+2.10%	606	+4.36%

NOTE: The measures highlighted in bold below and overleaf relate to the CRMP Emergency Response Standards



### RESPONSE: Resource Availability

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Percentage availability of first on-call pump	Up	62.32%	90%	-30.76%	62.82%	-0.80%	71.70%	-13.08%
<b>Percentage of time whole-time global crewing availability enabled 9 riders on 2 pump responses</b>	Up	41%	90%	-54.86%	70%	-41.78%	81%	-49.86%
The % of occasions global wholetime crewing met minimum level (4 riders)	Up	90.66%	100%	-9.34%	98.89%	-8.32%	99%	-8.33%





## RESPONSE: Response Time Performance

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
<b>% emergency calls handled within 60s</b>	<b>Up</b>	<b>20.11%</b>	<b>80.00%</b>	<b>-74.86%</b>	<b>22.15%</b>	<b>-9.21%</b>	<b>24.71%</b>	<b>-18.64%</b>
Average Call Handling Time (seconds) (Bedfordshire incidents (Sec))	Down	127.60	60	+112.67%	120.74	+5.68%	119.27	+6.99%
<b>% of Primary Fires attended within 10 mins</b> (From Time of Send/Alert)	<b>Up</b>	<b>73.38%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>-8.27%</b>	<b>74.42%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>	<b>72.24%</b>	<b>+1.58%</b>
Average response time to primary fires (Sec)	Down	598.88	600	-0.19%	579.70	+3.31%	586.26	+2.15%
<b>% of RTCs attended within 13 mins</b> (From Time of Send/Alert)	<b>Up</b>	<b>86.24%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>+7.80%</b>	<b>82.80%</b>	<b>+4.15%</b>	<b>83.31%</b>	<b>+3.52%</b>
Average response time to RTC'S (Sec)	Down	664.09	780	-14.86%	629.06	+5.57%	651.93	+1.87%
<b>% of Secondary Fires attended within 20 mins</b> (From Time of Send/Alert)	<b>Up</b>	<b>96.77%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>+0.80%</b>	<b>96.70%</b>	<b>+0.07%</b>	<b>96.74%</b>	<b>+0.03%</b>
Average response time to secondary fires (Sec)	Down	613.01	1200	-48.92%	601.58	+1.90%	599.02	+2.33%

**RDS availability of 1st pump - primary available or alternate available –****Percentage of time whole-time global crewing availability enabled 9 riders on 2 pump responses –**

**Total Incidents-** We have seen another increase in total incidents attended in Q1 which continues the recent trend, albeit fires continue to go down when compared to the 5-year average. Special services account for most of this increase (see below). False Alarms are the next contributor which we are working to reduce with colleagues in Fire Control and Protection.

**Total Fires-** Total fires are increasing on the same quarter last year (down on 5-year average), there may be some links to dry weather and a particularly low number last year. Secondary fires account for the biggest increase, albeit increases have been seen in all types except accidental dwelling fires. Response teams remain focussed on prevention activity as contained in station plans and reaction to specific events e.g., Green Court and Redwood Grove fires.

**Total Special Services-** Special service incidents have increased again, which can be attributed to the ever-evolving operational environment. The important work carried out to support the NHS with winter pressures looks likely to continue as the health sector struggle to catch up after the pandemic. BFRS support the NHS with a range of activities including bariatric response, Falls Teams, Emergency Medical Response and Co-responding. The new concept of operations for the whole East region is up and running, BFRS have successfully invoiced EEAST for agreed activity.

**Total False Alarms-** These remain broadly in line with the 5-year average. However, there is a slight increase which is not the direction of travel we expect to see. A review of mobilisation rationale is underway to help understand why Fire Control make specific mobilisations. We want to explore the scope to further call challenge within the current policy framework and more autonomy to not mobilise to repeat locations where risk is low I.e., sleeping risk during the day etc.

**Percentage availability of first on-call pump-** The DCFO and a small project team attended the NFCC launch of an On Call improvement working group in August. Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge in the On-Call both locally, regionally and nationally. The On Call project is looking at new innovative ways of managing the On-Call workforce, linked to the national work in this area. We have a new Station Commander directly working on the On-Call project, with a new Group Commander joining the Service as project lead in September we anticipate seeing improvements linked to their work in line with the CRMP during Q3/4. The challenges discussed at the NFCC working group with On Call availability are linked to a model which has not changed drastically since 1948. We are committed to reshaping the model to improve availability in our rural

communities. Significant work has been started to develop local solutions that work for our people and our communities. Key deliverables will be factored into the CRMP 2023 – 2027.

**Percentage of time whole-time global crewing availability enabled 9 riders on 2 pump responses-** The challenges in crewing on our wholetime stations can be linked to several factors for example transfers and resignations. To mitigate these challenges we have brought forward the next recruit course to maintain the 55 per colour watch. Overtime is used to cover these deficiencies where possible but often short-term absences will result in the loss of availability to enable 9 riders.

We maximise overall pump availability by deploying the 5<sup>th</sup> person on a 2-pump station to increase pump availability at other locations. This increases our number of pumps available in key strategic locations but may reduce the global crewing for this specific KPI, success in the On-Call project will have a direct impact on this measure.

We have completed the task and finish group work to address crewing challenges such as retirements, transfers out and promotions. As a result, we have attracted extra transferee's into BFRS as well as using several reserve places for new trainees.

We are also considering supporting the migration of qualified On-Call drivers and BA qualified Firefighters onto wholetime contracts.

**The % of occasions global wholetime crewing met minimum level (4 riders)-** This remains on target and has been maintained due to the proactive work of the recruitment working group.


**% emergency calls answered within 60 seconds –** This remains broadly in line with the 5-year average. However, this average remains low compared to the KPI. More in depth analysis with the new mobilising system will be required before we can make an informed decision about the relevance of the current KPI target.

**Average Call Handling Time for Bedfordshire incidents (Sec) -** The service recently went live with the new mobilising system. As a result we expect to see call handling time improve overall once fully bedded in. The service control team will be reviewing this KPI to ensure it is realistic. In addition, we have started a Fire Control project to improve resilience and introduce more capacity for training and professional development. This will improve the consistency across the four watches and competence with the new system. We are reviewing the blanket 60 second handling time to consider splitting to addressable locations in 60 seconds and non-addressable locations to 120 seconds, this will be more reflective of the work undertaken to identify nonaddressable locations in various location tools. A decision will be made on this in due course and is being discussed at the KPI working group.

**% of primary fires attended within 10 mins-** The emergency cover review project, and the pilots and trials in the Leagrave area of Luton will help us consider and then address first pump attendance times in the South Bedfordshire area. We will achieve an improved spatial distribution of cover across Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Toddington. Modelling suggests this will have a positive impact of around 34 seconds on average. Live trial data will be used to bring forward proposals in our future CRMP 2023-27.

**% of RTCs attended within 13 mins-** This remains broadly on target, again we expect this to improve as part of the risk cover review trials, especially with the introduction of an additional crewed appliance in the A1 East corridor.

**% of secondary fires attended within 20 mins –** This remains on target.

	EMPOWERING							
	Human Resources							
Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
The percentage of working time lost due to sickness (excludes On-Call)	Down	3.38%	4.4%	-23.18%	2.49%	+35.74%	3.44%	-1.68%
The percentage of the On-Call workforce with 4 or more incidences of sickness in a 12-month period	Down	0.00%	5%	-100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.46%	-100.00%

**Empowering – Human Resources Commentary:**


The Service moved from counting COVID related absence separately to part of the normal absence data for attendance management and pay occupational sick pay purposes on 01 June 2022. We are pleased to report that despite this move attendance remains below the targets set for Q1. HR have developed improved management information to support managers in their attendance management activity and will be providing additional managerial training, advice and support in Q3 and Q4 of the performance year.



## EMPOWERING

### Organisational Development

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Percentage of station based operational BA wearers that have attended a Tactical Firefighting assessment within the last 2 years	Up	100%	98%	+2.04%	95%	+5.26%	96%	+4.38%
Percentage of qualified LGV drivers that have attended a refresher course within the last 3 years	Up	98%	98%	0.00%	97%	+1.03%	97%	+0.62%
Percentage of station based operational staff that have attended a Water Rescue revalidation course within the last 3 years	Up	96%	98%	-2.04%	94%	+2.13%	97%	-0.62%
Percentage of watches/sections at BFRS stations that have at least 60% of operational personnel qualified in Trauma Care or equivalent	Up	84%	98%	-14.29%	93%	-9.68%	95%	-11.76%
Percentage of station based operational staff that have attended a Working at Height or Rope Rescue Revalidation assessment within the last 3 years	Up	94%	98%	-4.08%	72%	+30.56%	89%	+5.15%
Percentage of Level 1 Incident Commanders that have attended an Incident Command Assessment within the required frequency for their role.	Up	95%	98%	-3.06%	85%	+11.76%	94%	+1.50%
Percentage of Flexible Duty Officers that have attended an Incident Command Assessment within the required frequency for their role	Up	100%	98%	+2.04%	100%	+0.00%	93%	+7.99%

	EMPOWERING							
	Organisational Development							
Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Percentage of workplace training completed by Wholtime Operational Personnel via PDR Pro within the last 12 months*.	Up	0%	92%	n/a	95%	n/a	94%	n/a
Percentage of workplace training completed by On call Operational Personnel via PDR Pro within the last 12 months*.	Up	0%	90%	n/a	88%	n/a	88.80%	n/a
Percentage of workplace training completed by Control Personnel via PDR Pro within the last 12 months*.	Up	0%	90%	n/a	92%	n/a	87%	n/a
Percentage of workplace training completed by Senior Management roles (SM to SOC) via PDR Pro within the last 12 months*.	Up	0%	92%	n/a	90%	n/a	92.00%	n/a
Percentage of workplace training completed by Wholtime Day Duty WM's via PDR Pro within the last 12 months*.	Up	0%	92%	n/a	94%	n/a	94%	n/a

\* The above table relates to PDR Pro records. During Quarter 4 2021-22 BFRS migrated from PDR Pro version 3 to version 5, which has brought about several updates. Familiarisation training has been completed during February and the new system went live on 28<sup>th</sup> February. As expected, we have been working closely with the provider to ensure the system is operating effectively and addressing any issues promptly. Reporting in the V5 system will not be a true reflection of competence and we have therefore omitted figures for Q1 on this occasion.

**Empowering - Organisational Development Commentary:**

**Commentary:** The Service have achieved a total of 100% of station based operational BA wearers that have attended a suitable Firefighting assessment within the last 2 years as the Service transitions to the new Tactical Firefighting course. The percentage of Flexible Duty Officers that have attended an Incident Command Assessment within the required frequency for their role was also 100% and the percentage of qualified LGV drivers that have attended a refresher course within the last 3 years met target at 98%. Some generic factors including the recovery from the pandemic, capacity with the delivery of in-house wholetime recruits' courses and the maintenance of operational cover have affected the KPI's detailed below. We have provided exception reporting below only.

A total of 201 training courses have been recorded on the course management system as completed during Q1 of 22/23.

**T3 - Percentage of station based operational staff that have attended a Water First Responder or Water Technician course within the last three years**

The target KPI for Q1 is set at 98%, the actual performance figure achieved was 96%, this equates to 13 personnel. One Water Rescue course had to be cancelled in Q1 due to operational requirements, however Water Rescue Courses are scheduled for Q3 and Q4 to cover all personnel required.

**T4 - Percentage of station based operational Emergency Care for Fire and Rescue trained personnel that have attended a requalification course within the last three years.**

The target KPI for Q1 is 98% the actual performance achieved was 84% which is under target by 14%. Several factors have affected this KPI. Courses have been under nominated in Q1/2 from operational staff resulting from inability to release from operational cover and primary employment. Staff turnover at On Call sections have left some section below the threshold awaiting newer joiners to complete their Initial Trauma Care Courses which are scheduled to coincide with their development programmes. Additionally, due to the Covid pandemic many operational staff also lapsed their skills certifications and now require a full 4-day course which can be more challenging for crews to schedule with operational cover commitments.

**T5 - Percentage of station based operational Working at Height Operators that have attended a Working at Height recertification assessment within the last three years.**


The target KPI for Q4 is set at 98%, the actual performance achieved was 94% which is 4% under the desired target but a 31% improvement on the previous year. Three Working at Height courses had to be cancelled in Q1 due to insufficient nominations



from operational staff due to maintenance of operational cover and problems being released from primary employment. Courses are scheduled in and nomination received for Q3 and Q4 to cater for all who require the training and to achieve KPI target.

**T6 Percentage of Level 1 Incident Commanders that have attended an Incident Command Assessment within the required frequency for their role.**

The target for Q1 is set at 98%, the actual performance achieved is 95%, 3% below the desired target. The reason for this non-conformance is that personnel have not booked onto assessments due to absence and operational cover arrangements. There has been and continues to be sufficient assessments for nomination on the CMS to achieve the KPI target.

	EMPOWERING							
	Health & Safety							
Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Number of serious accidents (over 28 days) per 1000 employees	Down	0.00	0.945	-100.00%	1.89	-100.00%	0.77	-100.00%
Number of working days/shifts lost to accidents per 1000 employees (excluding RDS//On-Call employees)	Down	38.50	72.79	-47.11%	132.43	-70.93%	62.91	-38.81%
Number of 24-hour cover periods lost to accidents per 1000 RDS/On-Call employees.	Down	13.09	175.91	-92.56%	944.21	-98.61%	435.83	-97.00%

#### Empowering – Health and Safety Commentary:

- **H1 Number of Serious Accidents.**

There have been no over 28 days injuries in Q1. The H1 figure is below the Q1 target of 0.945 by a significant margin (-100%).

- **H2 Number of working days/shifts lost to accidents per 1000 employees (excluding On Call (RDS) employees).**

The H2 figure is below the Q1 target of 72.79 by a significant margin (-47.11%). The Q1 actual figure of 38.5 equates to 17.5 days/shifts lost during the period where 6 workplace injuries had resulted in lost time.

- **H3 Number of 24-hour cover periods lost to accidents per 1000 On Call (RDS) employees.**

The H3 figure is below the Q1 target of 175.91 by a significant margin (-92.56%). The Q1 actual figure of 13.09 equates to one 24-hour cover period lost due to one workplace injury.



## UTILISING

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Grade A Defect Response Time (within 1 hour)	Up	91.11%	90%	+1.23%	97.78%	-6.82%	91.55%	-0.48%
Grade A Defect Response Time (within 2 hours)	Up	91.11%	95%	-4.09%	97.78%	-6.82%	98.22%	-7.24%
The percentage of time when Rescue Pumping Appliances were unavailable for operational use due to an annual service, defect or other works. (Turnaround Time)	Down	2.09%	5%	-58.20%	2.23%	-6.15%	2.19%	-4.69%
The percentage of time when Aerial Appliances and SRU were unavailable for operational use due to an annual service defect or other works. (Turnaround Time)	Down	3.47%	5%	-30.65%	2.36%	+46.80%	2.57%	+35.01%
The percentage of time when other operational appliances were unavailable for operational use due to an annual service, defect or other works. (Turnaround Time)	Down	0.62%	3%	-79.22%	0.42%	+49.47%	0.43%	+45.83%
The number of hours as a percentage the appliance is unavailable for operational response in the reporting period, other than for the time measured under the turn-a-round time. (Idle time)	Down	1.07%	2%	-46.55%	1.23%	-13.24%	1.11%	-3.66%
The total time expressed as a % when ALL Appliances were available for operational use after the turn-a-round time and idle time are removed from the total time in the reporting period	Up	97.94%	93%	+5.31%	97.56%	+0.39%	97.67%	+0.28%
Annual Services undertaken	Up	100.00%	97%	+3.09%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%

**Utilising – Fleet Commentary:****Grade A defect Response Time (within 1 hr)**

The target for a Grade A response within 1hr has been achieved. The Q1 target for this KPI is set at 90% and an actual measure of 91.11% was achieved. This figure is 6.82% down on the previous year, and lower than the 5 -year average by 0.48%. The 0.48% decrease on the 5-year average represents one incident of non- performance against target.

**Grade A Defect Response Time (within 2 hrs)**

The target for a Grade A response within 2 hours has not been achieved. The Q1 target for this KPI is set at 95% and an actual measure of 90.11% was achieved. Overall, this represents 4.09% lower actual performance than the target for Q1. This figure is lower in comparison to the previous year by 6.82%, where the performance was recorded as 97.78%. The drop in performance in comparison to the previous year relates to one incident of non-performance during Q1.

**The percentage of time when Aerial Platforms and the SRU are unavailable due to defects or annual service requirements. (Turnaround Time)**

The target for the percentage of unavailability of the Aerial platforms and SRU due to defects or annual service is set at 5%. The performance target was achieved with an overall measure of 3.47%. This represents an achievement of 1.53% over target for Q1. This figure is a decrease against the Q1 performance for the previous year Q1 figure by 0.11%. The performance for Q1 3.47% is a decrease against the 5-year average performance of 2.57%, variance 0.9 % overall. This was by a Fleet 14 gearbox oil leak, which was fixed by OEM.

**The percentage of time when other operational appliances were unavailable due to annual service, defects or other work.**

The target for other operational appliances being unavailable is set at 3%. The performance for Q1 was achieved at 0.62%, which is 79.22% above the Q1 target. In comparison to the previous year's Q1 performance 0.42% this is an increase of 0.20% however this is represented as an overall increase of 49.47% as a comparator. This increase is related to one incident of non-performance, namely fleet 10, TSU which suffered a serious engine defect and was off the run for seven weeks. The performance of Q1 0.62% is an increase of 48.83% against the 5-year performance figure of 0.43%.



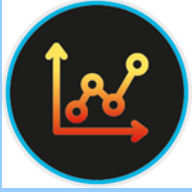
## MAXIMISING

### Finance

Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
Percentage of routine financial reports distributed within 6 working days of period-end closure	Up	100%	90%	+11.11%	100%	0.00%	100%	0.00%
Percentage of uncontested invoices paid within 30 days	Up	89.34%	96%	-6.66%	91%	-1.8%	93.64%	-4.6%
Percentage of outstanding debt over 90 days old	Down	0.72%	1.5%	-52.17%	4.09%	-82.47%	3.21%	-77.63%

#### Maximising – Finance Commentary:

Percentage of uncontested invoices paid within 30 days - Measure is amber due to the many invoices still being received without a valid purchase order in place, and delays in managers authorizing invoices for payments, work continues with budget managers to ensure that PO's are raised and invoices authorised in a timely manner.

	MAXIMISING							
	Information and Communication Technology							
Performance Indicator	Objective	2022/23 Q1 Actual	2022/23 Q1 Target	Actual v Target	2021/22 Q1 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year	5-year average	Actual v 5-year Average
The Number of Incidents on Mission Critical services resolved within 1 Hour	Up	n/a	96%	n/a	100.00%	n/a	100.00%	n/a
The Number of Incidents on Business-Critical services resolved within 2 Hours	Up	100.00%	97%	+3.09%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
The Number of Incidents on Business Operational services resolved within 4 Hours	Up	n/a	97%	n/a	100.00%	n/a	98.00%	n/a
The Number of Incidents on Administration Services resolved within 8 Hour	Up	93.39%	93%	+0.42%	94.00%	-0.65%	91.78%	+1.75%
Core ICT services availability	Up	100.00%	98%	+2.04%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Business Applications Availability	Up	99.60%	98%	+1.63%	100.00%	-0.40%	99.96%	-0.36%

**Maximising ICT Commentary:**

All measures on target for reporting quarter. Note the N/A is because there were no such incidents in Q1.

## Implications

- 3.1 Human Resource implications relate to our People Strategy which are currently integrated into our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2019-23. We will need to decide how we present strategies such as workforce planning, fleet and asset management, environmental management, and financial management in the new CRMP.
- 3.2 Corporate risk implications include potential impacts on all the Risk Register's current corporate risks. Members agreed new aims for our approach to corporate risk at the Audit and Standards Committee meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The Member development day on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 will be based on integrating CRMP planning with financial planning and corporate risk.
- 3.3 No new spending proposals are included at this time. Financial implications for our new CRMP 2023-28 include the development of spending proposals and their subsequent consultation.
- 3.4 Policy implications include all functional areas of the Service. The aim is to develop manageable and affordable actions over a 4-5-year period. Previous CRMP action plans contained 63 actions in 2019-20, 44 in 2020-21, in 32 in 2021-22 and 16 in 2022-23.

**CHRIS BIGLAND**  
**DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER / FRA TREASURER

**SUBJECT:** 2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT 31ST JULY 2022

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For further information  
on this Report contact: Gavin Chambers  
ACO/FRA Treasurer  
01234 845000

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Background Papers: 2022/23 FRA Budget Setting Papers February 2022

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**PURPOSE:**

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority of the forecast year-end budget monitoring position as at 31 July 2022.

**Recommendations:**

1. That the FRA consider and comment on the updates provided within this report.
2. That the FRA consider and approve the proposed use of the unbudgeted Business Rates Relief income from central government (see para 2.3.4).
3. That the FRA note the potential unbudgeted increase for both Grey and Green Book pay awards built into the salaries forecast in table 2 and use of an Earmarked Reserve to fund these. (also para 2.3.76)
4. That members note the updated inflationary pressure on Utilities budgets which has increased from a forecast 40% above budget to 60% above budget which results in an extra £40k pressure from the last monitoring report. (para 2.3.4)
5. That member note the increase in forecast income from investments from £55k above budget reported at the end of May 2022 to £135k as at the end of July due to greatly improved rates available on investments. (para 2.3.4)

## Executive Highlights Summary

- The 3 year **CSR** review was announced in December 2021 however the Authority only received a 1 year settlement for 2022/23.
- The service has received a further £392k relating to Section 31 Business Rates relief above the amount which was included in the budget in February 2022, this is proposed to be used to offset the forecast inflationary pressures (see para 2.3.4)
- Pay awards for both Grey Book and Green Book have been built into the 2022/23 base budget @ 4% however these are yet to be agreed, current pay negotiations are ongoing and it is expected that the pay awards will be different from those currently offered by the employers and this is what has been built into the forecast year end position. (see para 2.3.7) It is proposed that the FRA approve the use of the existing Pay/Pension Earmarked reserve to fund the unbudgeted pay awards.
- The service has been notified that the Firelink Grant (which offsets the cost of the response radio contract costs) will be £50k less than budgeted. It will also reduce by 20% each year, but should be reflected by an increase in grant income.
- The Home Office has informed the service that we will receive an unbudgeted Protection grant of £153k in 2022/23. Further to this our local authority partners have agreed a further £82k in funding, towards the Dementia pilot.
- As a result of recent UK wide high inflation rate announcement and forecasted ongoing inflationary pressures there is a potential unbudgeted cost from an increase in the price of Derv, gas, electric and other service contracts of £325k. (see para 2.3.4)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 10 February 2022, the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) approved a Revenue Budget Requirement for 2022/23 of £33.393m and a Capital Programme of £1.357m.

### 2. Revenue Budget Monitoring

- 2.1 The Revenue Budget efficiency savings for 2022/23 can be found in Appendix 1. The budgets have been reduced for these areas and will be monitored during the year.
- 2.2 The funding of the 2022/23 Revenue Budget is by way of Government Funding £6.858m, local Business Rates redistribution £2.300m, a one off revenue grant for 2022/23 of £0.410m and Council Tax of £23.401m, Collection Fund surplus of £0.378m which have been reported by our Local Authority partners and the use of the collection fund reserve of £46k.

## 2.3 Forecasting Outturn:

2.3.1 Tables 1 and 2 below are populated during the year in line with the spreadsheet returns that Corporate Management Team (CMT) members submit to the Finance Team and through the meetings that Finance Officers have with CMT members. The forecast outturn positions are as accurate as the information received from each CMT member.

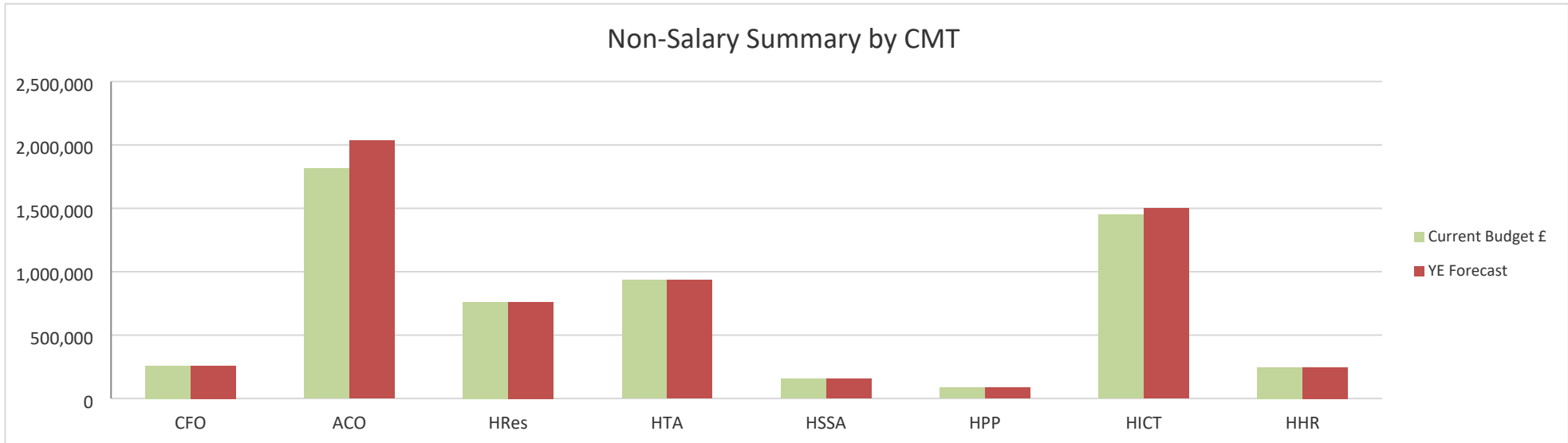
2.3.2 Table 1 below details the current budget excluding salary budgets, for each CMT service area. The forecast year-end outturn is shown in column three.

### 2.3.3 Table 1: 2022/23 Revenue Budget Forecast Outturn (excluding salary budgets)

Title	Area	Current Budget £	F/cast Yr-End Outturn £	Variance £	RAG status (see note below**)
<b>Strategic Management</b>	Management	308,400	308,400	0	Green
<b>Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)</b>	Income, Capital & Year End	1,375,600	1,269,000	(106,600)	Green
	Corporate Support	438,200	763,200	325,000	Green - if FRA approve the use of Business Rate income otherwise - Red
<b>Head of Response (HRes)</b>	Operational	761,600	761,600	0	Green
<b>Head of Training and Assets (HTA)</b>	Training	419,900	419,900	0	Green
	Technical/Workshops	191,800	191,800	0	Green
	Corporate Support	320,100	320,100	0	Green
<b>Head of Strategic Support and Assurance (HSSA)</b>	Media & Communications	34,950	34,950	0	Green
	Organisation Assurance	122,100	122,100	0	Green
<b>Head of Prevention and Protection (HPP)</b>	Partnership Working	(60,100)	(60,100)	0	Green
	Prevention	136,700	136,700	0	Green
	Protection	8,600	8,600	0	Green

Title	Area	Current Budget £	F/cast Yr-End Outturn £	Variance £	RAG status (see note below**)
<b>Head of Information Communications Technology (HICT)</b>	ICT	1,450,950	1,500,950	50,000	Green - if FRA approve the use of Business Rate income otherwise - Amber
	ICT Projects	0	0	0	Green
<b>Head of Human Resources (HHR)</b>	Human Resources	183,400	183,400	0	Green
	Occupational Health	62,800	62,800	0	Green
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,755,000</b>	<b>6,023,400</b>	<b>268,400</b>	
Proposed use of Business Rates Income				(392,000)	
<b>Revised Outturn Variance</b>				<b>(123,600)</b>	

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



#### 2.3.4 The variances shown in Table 1 and graph above as at 31 July 2022 are;

The forecast underspend (£107k) within the ACO area (Income, Capital & Year End) above is a result of;

A forecast increase for investment income to (£200k), this is (£135k) above the budgeted income of (£65k). The finance team are constantly monitoring the rate of returns available and also the opportunities to invest in more “ethical / green” investments and as a result of this we have recently placed an investment with a counterparty in one of their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment areas, the rate of return on this investment was comparable with the rates available on our other available investments.

This extra income has been partially offset by a budgeted rebate from FRIC (£40k) due to an apportioning of releasable reserves built up over a number of years, FRIC Directors however decided to take a more prudent approach and spread the rebates over a number of years and so the service has received only (£12k) in 2022 with the remaining £28k income expected over the next 2 years.

The (£392k) unbudgeted income relating to Section 31 Business Rates relief is also contained within this area.

The forecast overspend £325k within the ACO area (Corporate Support) above is a result of a number of inflationary pressures were built into the 2022/23 budget which was agreed by the FRA in February, general inflation for utilities, contracts, supplies and services was included at a rate of 4%, Derv was budgeted at a cost of £1.45 / ltr. Since then due to worldwide economic pressures and the war in Ukraine the UK CPI inflation in July is at 10.1% and it is expected to remain high for the remainder of the financial year. The total amount of inflation contained within the budget for 2022/23 was £159k, it is currently forecast that there will be an extra pressure of £325k above the budgeted figure as a result of inflation for utilities £110k, contracts, supplies and services £180k with inflation based on an average of 9% for the remainder of the financial year and Derv £35k based upon a price of £1.65 / ltr. All of these overspends £325k are currently captured within the ACO (Corporate Support) area, further work will be undertaken to input these pressures into the relevant service areas.

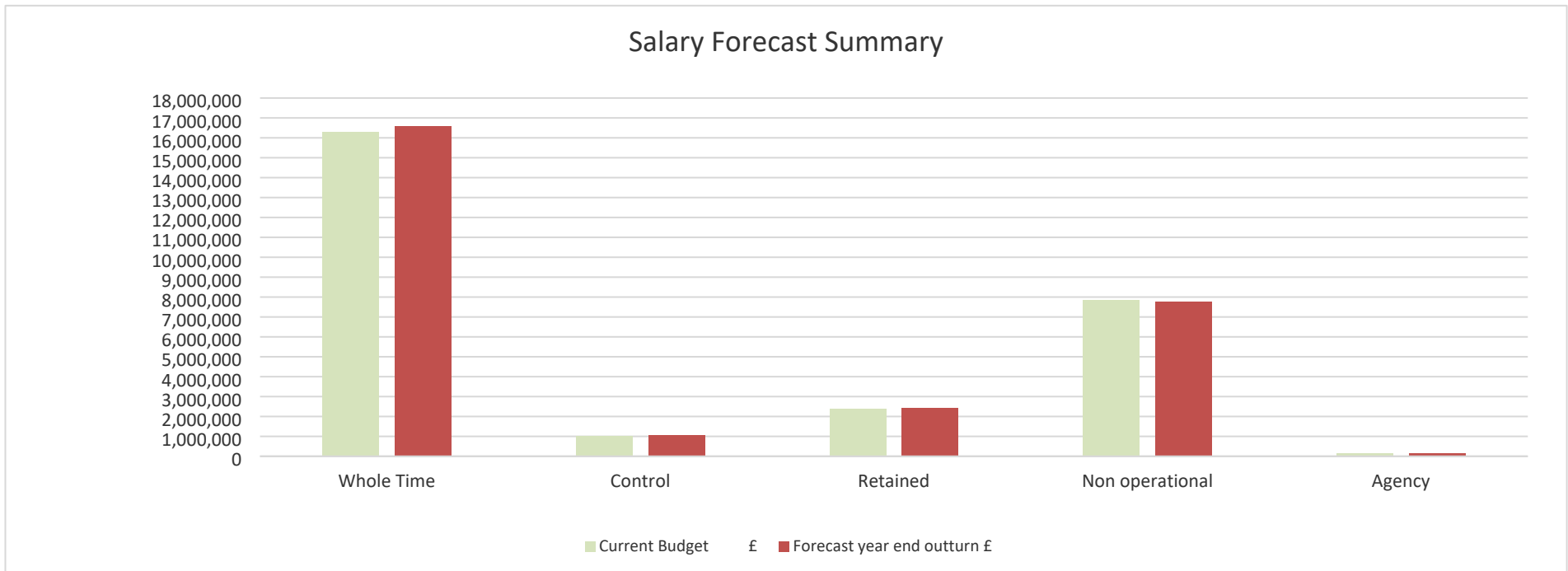
The £50k overspend forecast within the HICT is as a result of the reduction in Firelink grant allocation which the authority has been notified will be £50k less than budgeted.

It is proposed that the unbudgeted Business Rates income of £392k be allocated to offset both the in-year inflationary pressures and reduction in ICT Firelink grant as identified above.

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

**Table 2: 2022/23 Salary Budget Forecast Outturn**

Category	Current Budget £	YTD Actuals £	Forecast year end outturn £	Variance £
Whole Time	16,295,600	5,220,262	16,590,600	295,000
Control	1,032,000	381,550	1,062,000	30,000
Retained	2,373,900	670,934	2,419,900	46,000
Non operational	7,831,600	2,286,402	7,781,600	(50,000)
Agency	154,400	92,912	154,400	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27,687,500</b>	<b>8,652,061</b>	<b>28,008,500</b>	<b>321,000</b>
Proposed use of Earmarked Reserve				(321,000)
<b>Revised Outturn Variance</b>				<b>0</b>



- 2.3.6 The forecast overspend within the Operational areas (Whole Time, Retained & Control) in table 2 above of £371k are as a result of the potential unbudgeted pay awards above the 4% included within the current budgets. Firefighters have been offered a 2% pay award, however, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) are currently preparing to ballot members on potential industrial action. The forecast above has assumed that employers will negotiate a new offer with a pay award being more in line with that offered to Police officers (part funded by the Home Office) and local government officers which is c.£1900 for each grade of staff.

The above YTD actuals in table 2 above do not include the On Call payments (Retained) which were as a result of increased call outs due to the Critical Incident and drought, it is likely that these on call payments for the summer period will be higher when compared to previous years.

The underspend in the Non Operational area in the table above is due the potential extra unbudgeted pay award as a result of the employers offer for an increase in each pay scale of £1925 which would result in an extra pressure of £129k above the cost budgeted pay award (4%) of £274k. This is offset by a number of current vacancies across the service (£179k);

The vacancies within the Non Operational area include Business Support Manager (£22k), Procurement officer vacancy (£12k), Vacancies within the Site team (£15k), an expected saving of (£25k) as a result of the difference between the Cleaning contract and employing these staff directly, vacancies within the Equality and Diversity area (£41k), vacancies within Occupational Health (£25k), (£10k) as a result of employees not being in the pension scheme plus other minor variances. These posts have now either been filled or are being advertised.

It is proposed that the FRA approve the use of the existing Pay/Pension Earmarked reserve to fund the unbudgeted pay awards above.

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

- 2.4.1 The total forecast variance at year end including both the non-salary figure in Table 1 above and for pay and on costs, including agency staff shown in Table 2, is currently expected to be £589.4k overspent however if the FRA approve the use of the business rates and Earmarked Reserve to offset these then the figure would be (£123.6k) underspent.

## 3. Capital Programme Monitoring

- 3.1 Table 3 below is the 2022/32 Capital Programme. The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status indicates how well the schemes are progressing (Green being on target for year-end completion within budget; Amber indicating possible slippage or overspend; and Red indicating actual slippage/overspend or deletion of the scheme).
- 3.2 It should be noted that the Vehicles, ICT and HR System Projects and Property Capital Works Programmes need to be treated with fluidity as the costs and expected completion dates can vary considerably and span across financial years. However, in

accordance with the financial regulations, any significant changes of expenditure over 10% of an approved capital scheme need to be reported back to the FRA.

### 3.3 Table 3: The 2022/23 Capital Programme

CMT Area	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Capital Programme	Capital Budgets 2022/23 £'000	RAG Status
	<b><u>Fleet:</u></b>		
HTA	Vehicles	262	Green
HTA	Drone (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle capability and enhancements)	30	Green
HTA	Light Portable Pumps (LPP)	28	Green
	<b><u>ICT Projects:</u></b>		
HICT	Additional SAN storage	85	Green
HICT	Equipment refresh (tablets and phones)	116	Green
	<b><u>General: Property Works service wide</u></b>		
	Various: Lighting replacements, CCTV, fire protection, doors & windows, security gates, electric infrastructure, EV charging	86	Green
ACO	Major Roofing Replacements	323	Amber
ACO	Drill yard resurfacing	32	Green
ACO	WC/Shower facility refurbishments	158	Amber
ACO	Heating - boiler replacements	66	Amber
ACO	Bay Floor replacements	65	Green
ACO	Dormitory refurbishment	30	Green
ACO	Station Kitchen Refurbishments	21	Green
	<b><u>Other:</u></b>		
HHR	Fitness Equipment Expenditure	5	Green
HTAM	Electronic Fuel (Diesel) Monitoring system	50	Green
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,357</b>	

### 3.4 Capital Programme Updates:

The Major roof repairs project above is currently rated as Amber due to the availability of both construction materials and contractors to be able to complete the works by the 31 March 2023.

The WC/Shower refurbishment is currently rated as Amber awaiting the outcome of the Training Centre and contaminates work review, it is unknown if this refurbishment will be complete prior to 31 March 2023.



Following the withdrawal from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme phase 3 (PSDS3), the heating – boiler replacements project has been rated as Amber as further options are now being considered to ensure that the best solution is found.

Members will be provided with regular updates on the above in future reports.

**Capital Programme – Withdrawals, Slippage, Additions or Variations:**

3.4.1 **Slippage:** None to Report.

3.4.2 **Additions:** None to Report.

3.4.3 **Variations:** None to Report.

**GAVIN CHAMBERS**  
**ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER / FRA TREASURER**

Savings and Efficiencies 2022/23

CMT Area	Savings/Efficiencies	Budgeted £'000s 2022/23	Forecast £'000's 2022/23	RAG Status
ACO	Energy Management Savings (Insulation & works following bid for grant)	5	5	Green
ACO	Collaboration Income - Partner at Bedford station	4	4	Amber
ACO	Team Structure and Staffing review	5	5	Green
ACO	Surplus redistribution from the Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) (estimate for 2022/23 only)	40	12	Amber
HHR	Occupation Health system review	2	2	Green
HICT	Cessation Whole-time Recruitment system	4	4	Green
HRes	Drone Income	2	2	Green
HRes	Business Rates Reductions	66	66	Green
HTA	Income from Workshops Non business Activity	5	5	Green
HTA	Combine 3 existing BA courses (CFBT, BAR and TVT) into a new Tactical Firefighting Course negating the use of outside venue and instruction.	20	20	Green
HTA	Collaboration - vehicle servicing income	50	50	Green
		<b>203</b>	<b>175</b>	

\* NB - All Savings have been removed from 2022-23 Base Budget

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**REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

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For further information on this Report contact: Steve Frank  
Head of Strategic Support and Assurance  
Tel No: 07876 144846

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Background Papers: Item 7 of the FRA Executive Committee report on Proposals for the Strategic Planning Cycle for CRMP, and the timetable presented to Members at the Member Development Day on 7th July 2022

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**PURPOSE:**

For FRA Members to consider progress with CRMP Planning and any implications of the CRMP summer survey results

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members acknowledge the content of this report for information and comment.

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1. Summary

- 1.1 During 2022-23 considerable work is being undertaken to develop our next Community Risk Management Plan. The Community Risk Analysis and PESTEL analysis is complete. These will all be discussed with Members at the next Member

Development Day on the 6<sup>th</sup> October. A summary of the results of the CRMP Summer survey is in Appendix 1. A comparative analysis of CRMPs from other Fire and Rescue Services is contained in Appendix 2.

1.2 The results of the CRMP community concerns survey in Appendix 1 shows some interesting results:

- Response services are the top public priority
- Working with our communities is second
- Water rescue is third although it is worth considering that we launched this survey at the Bedford River Festival and therefore water safety will be uppermost in people's minds
- Local collaboration is rated three times more important than national collaboration
- Extreme weather is the public's top concern
- The impact of poverty and deprivation on community safety is second, and a particular concern raised by younger people
- Third is slow time to incidents

1.3 The comparative analysis of other Fire and Rescue Service's CRMPs in Appendix 2 finds

- Most Fire and Rescue Services have four-year CRMPs;
- Noteworthy practice is contained in many plans, but not consistently throughout;
- Weaker areas include Supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and showing results of ongoing engagement consultation processes. Asking the 'so what' question is enlightening;
- Consideration of risk appetite is also a weaker area;
- Showing how FRS are matching operational capabilities with community risks is generally poor; and
- No community engagement survey had over 250 responses, but focus groups were used extensively.

## 2. Timetable

- 2.1 With reference to the CRMP timetable in paragraph 2.6 which was first presented to Members on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022, we can see we are on schedule. The CRMP Steering Group has met three times, and CRMP community concerns survey is now complete.
- 2.2 An important aspect of community risk management planning and is community engagement. This is an area of high public interest as expressed in the results of the public survey on the CRMP action plan for 2022-23. Our CRMP community engagement plan is based on the following principles:
- Any appropriate national guidance and thinking;
  - Building on previous engagement;
  - Insight developed from our community risk analysis;
  - Evaluation of our top 50 stakeholders for power and influence – this guides our engagement priorities and effort;
  - Effective internal and external collaboration and not duplicating effort in line with our service value Every Contact Counts;
  - Towards Bedfordshire 2050 long term horizon scanning;
  - Integrating Equality, diversity and inclusion into everything rather than treat it as an ‘add on’;
  - Effective People Impact Assessment – formerly known as an Equality Impact Assessment; and
  - Demonstrating ethical principles, Values based thinking and professional behaviours.
- 2.3 Our CRMP Reference Group has yet to meet due to diary clashes and holidays but we have met the members individually. As a result, we dovetailed our CRMP community concerns survey with council community safety surveys and did not duplicate questions.
- 2.4 So far, we have spoken with nine groups of key stakeholders including a wider range of community groups including faith groups, housing partners, business forums, Bedfordshire Chief Executives Forum, the Local Resilience Forum administrators, and sports clubs. Key findings include:

- A shared value in the importance of data sharing and concern over no common data sharing agreement;
- All public services are working in a 'fragile system' with little resilience;
- Rising demand and sustained reliance on public service and the voluntary sector since the pandemic;
- No single voice on community resilience, and understanding of the impact of the cost of living crises on communities;
- The need to join up efforts on volunteering; and
- The importance of positive communications "*to give people courage*"

2.5 Our stakeholder mapping of our top fifty stakeholders is based on an assessment of resource reliance, relationship risk, benefits rating, national/regional/local drivers and CRMP impact. Our analysis finds:

- Local Councillors and Members of Parliament have a high rating for power and influence;
- Community groups such as advocacy and poverty reduction charities have limited power but increasing influence over how effectively we can collectively prevent fires and other emergencies. The impact of Poverty on community safety is rated highly in our community concerns survey.

## 2.6 CRMP timetable with Member input:

Activity	Dates	Member input
CRMP Timetable discussed	7th July 2022	Member development day on 7th July on CRMP
Launch community concerns survey	23-24 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Member attendance at River Festival, Members share survey with their networks, and support completion of survey (1 <sup>st</sup> of two surveys).
CRMP External Reference Group	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	Member rep attendance (tbc). Including Bedfordshire Police, all three Councils, Multi Faith Group, Bedfordshire Chamber of Commerce etc
Community Risk Analysis (CRA)	By 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 for internal completion	Member development day on 6 <sup>th</sup> October on community risk analysis
Plain Language summary of CRA	By the end of August 2022	Member development day on 6 <sup>th</sup> October on community risk analysis
Staff engagement on CRMP and budget	February 2022 to April 2023	Member updates at FRA meetings
Community engagement	May 2022 to March 2023	Member input to community engagement planning
Member Development Workshop (CRA overview and sounding board for CRMP proposal options)	6th October 2022	Member development day on community risk analysis & sounding board on options being developed for CRMP proposals for consideration at 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct meeting prior to launching consultation survey.
Launch budget consultation and Survey of specific CRMP proposals	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2022	Member input to survey on CRMP November 2022
Horizon scanning workshop (long term forward look)	November 2022 (date tbc)	Member attendance
CRMP Reference Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2022	Member rep attendance (tbc)
CRMP and Medium-Term Financial Planning	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2022	Member workshop on integrating the CRMP with Corporate Risk and Medium-Term Financial planning and budget for 2023-24
Consultation analysis	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	FRA report on cumulative results on consultation and engagement and our response
Draft CRMP	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2023	Members are presented with draft CRMP for approval
CRMP action planning for 2023-24	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2023	Member development day on performance reporting
CRMP Reference Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023	Member rep attendance
Final CRMP	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 FRA Meeting,	Members are presented with the final CRMP 2023-24 to 2027-28 for publication

### 3 Implications

- 3.1 Human Resource implications relate to our People Strategy are currently integrated into our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2019-23. We will need to decide how we present strategies such as workforce planning, fleet and asset management, environmental management, and financial management in the new CRMP.
- 3.2 Corporate risk implications include potential impacts on all the Risk Register's current corporate risks. Members agreed new aims for our approach to corporate risk at the Audit and Standards Committee meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The Member development day on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 will be based on integrating CRMP planning with financial planning and corporate risk.
- 3.3 Financial implications include the development of spending proposals and their subsequent consultation.
- 3.4 Policy implications include all functional areas of the Service. The aim is to develop manageable and affordable actions over a 4-5-year period. Previous CRMP action plans contained 63 actions in 2019-20, 44 in 2020-21, in 32 in 2021-22 and 16 in 2022-23.

**CHRIS BIGLAND**  
**DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

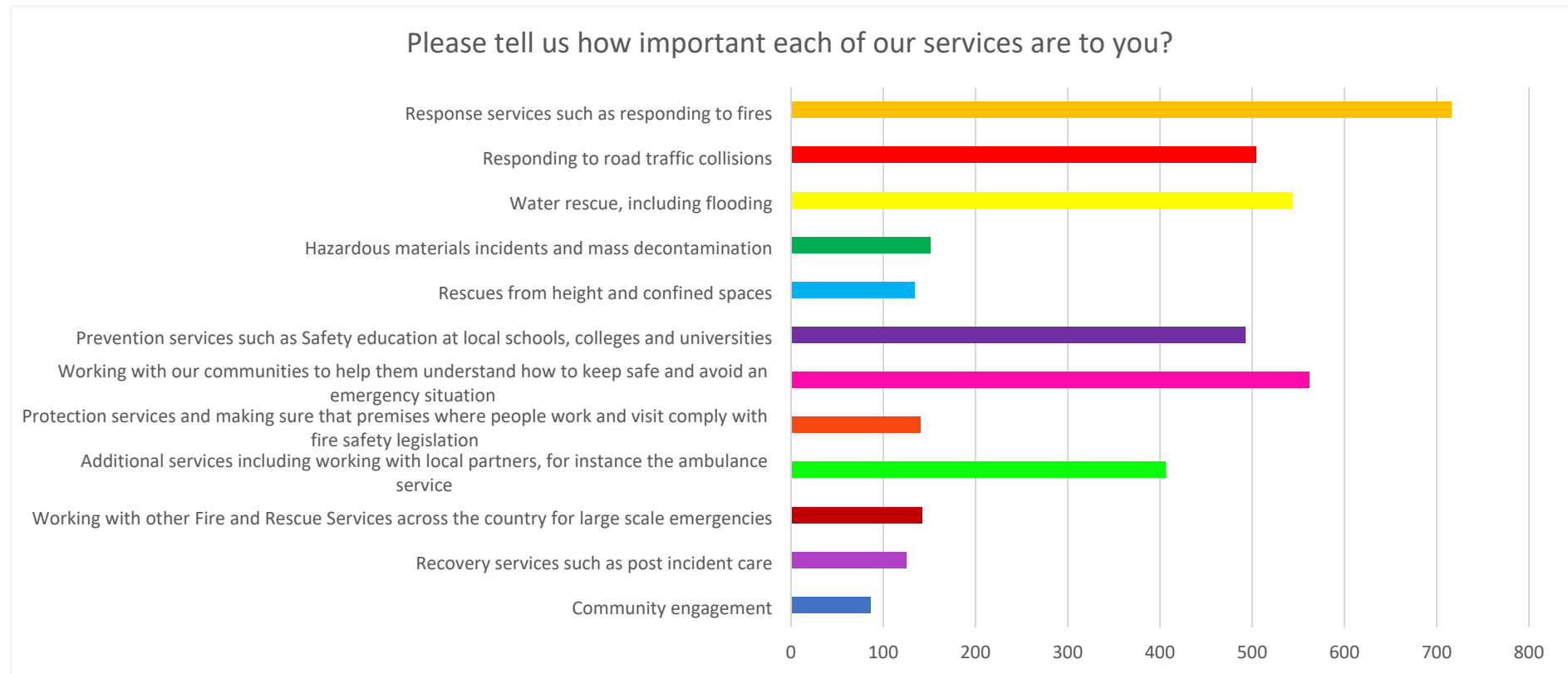
**STEVE FRANK**  
**HEAD OF STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND ASSURANCE**



## Appendix 1 – Results of our CRMP Summer Survey on community concerns based on 786 responses

### Key points:

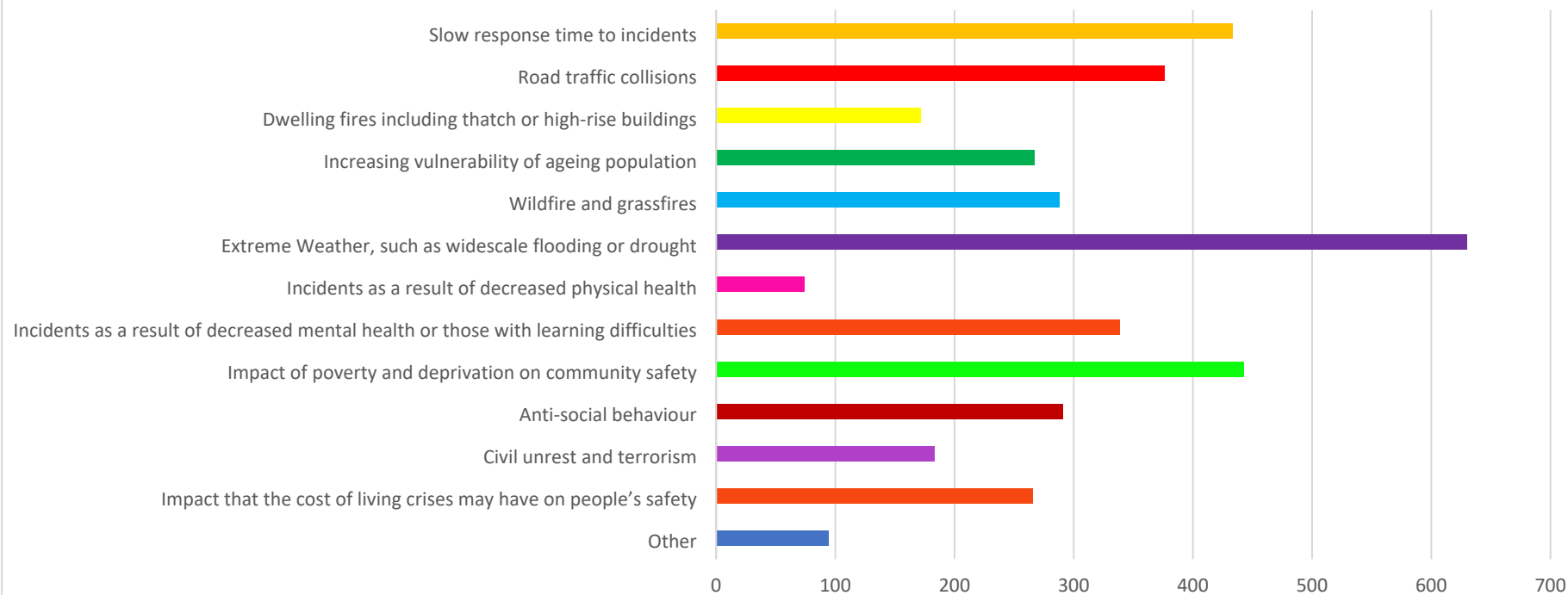
- Response services are the top public priority
- Working with our communities is second
- Water rescue is third although it is worth considering that we launched this survey at the Bedford River Festival and therefore water safety will be on people’s minds
- Local collaboration is rated three times more important than national collaboration



Key points:

- Extreme weather is the public's top concern
- The impact of poverty and deprivation on community safety is second, and a particular concern raised by younger people
- Third is a slow response to incidents
- Decreased mental health is the biggest health concern
- Anti-social behaviour is a high concern, especially to people in the LU1 and MK42 postcode areas
- Concern about the cost of living crises is a concern across all locations, ages, and ethnicity, and more frequently raised by women
- Civil unrest and terrorism is a high concern by older people

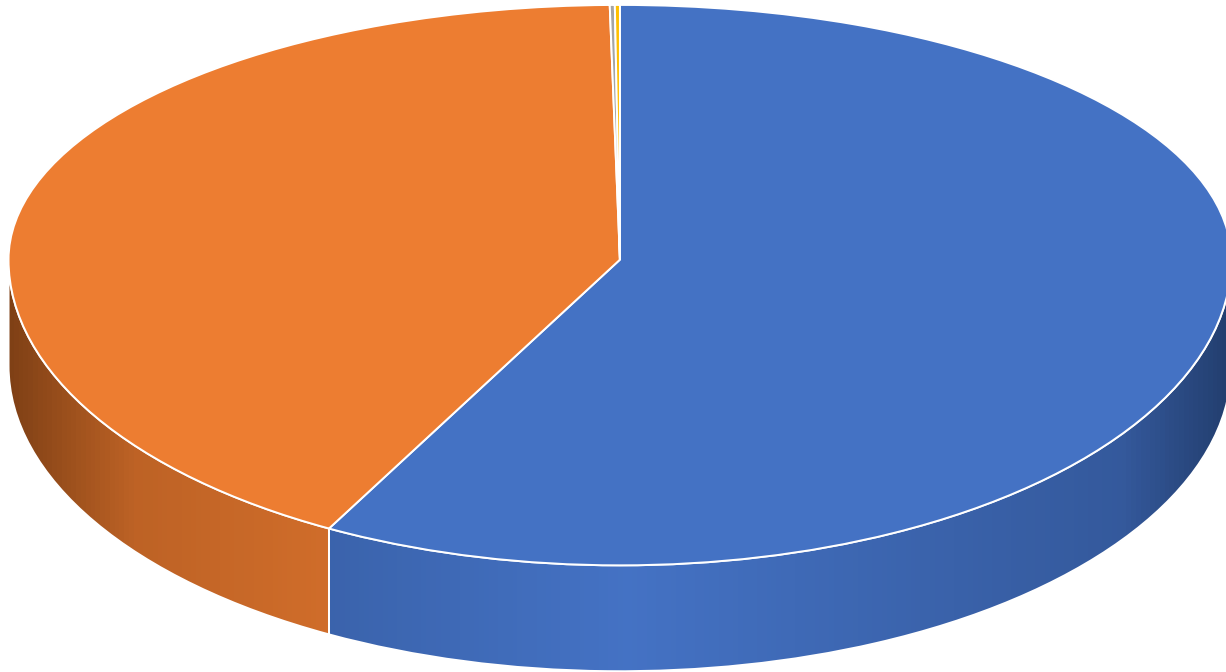
## What concerns you the most when thinking about your safety?



The most frequently named issues in the 'other' category in order of frequency are:

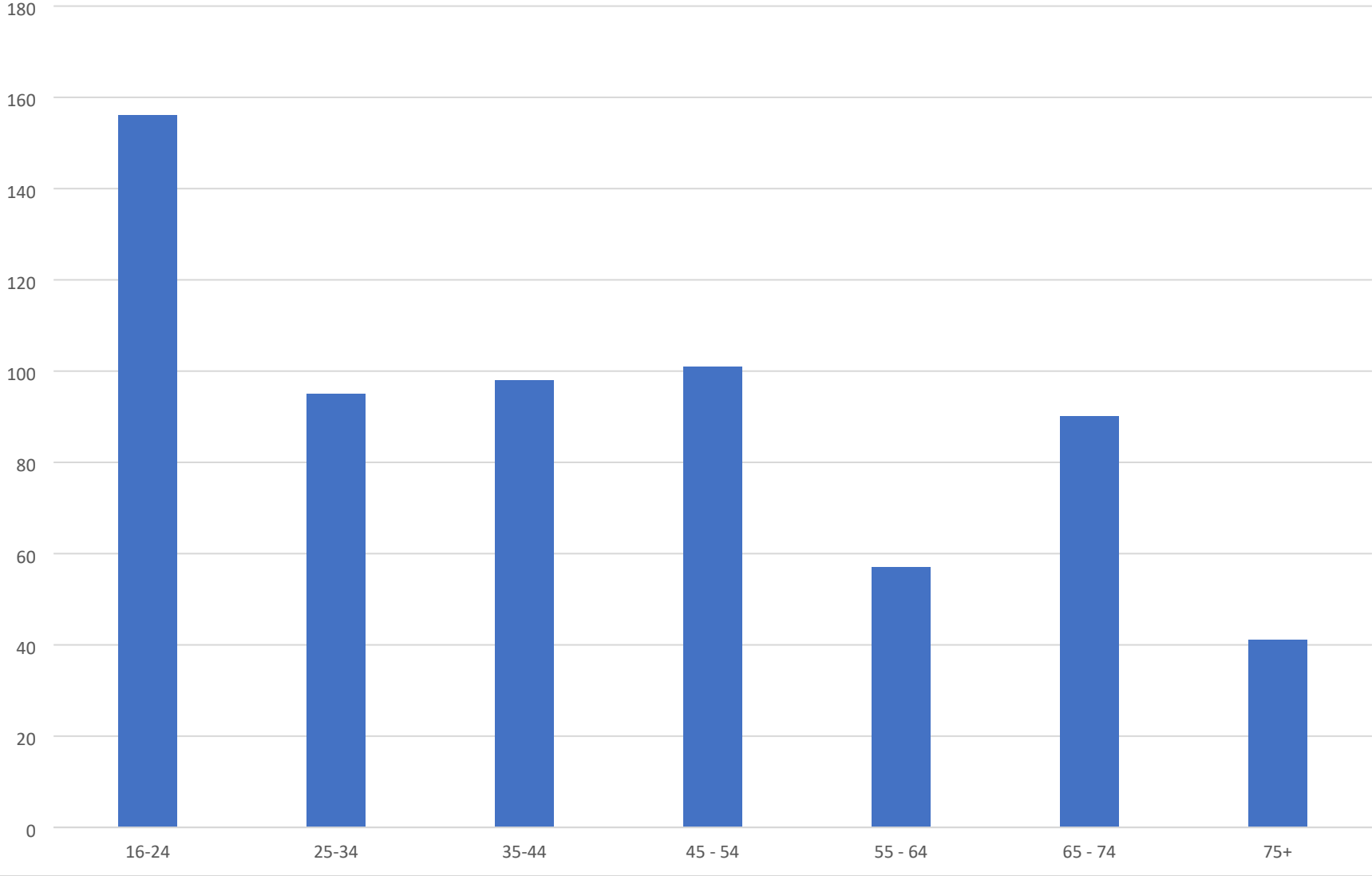
1. Domestic violence and abuse
2. Cyber-attack and online security
3. Safety when cycling
4. Further pandemic

What gender do you identify with?



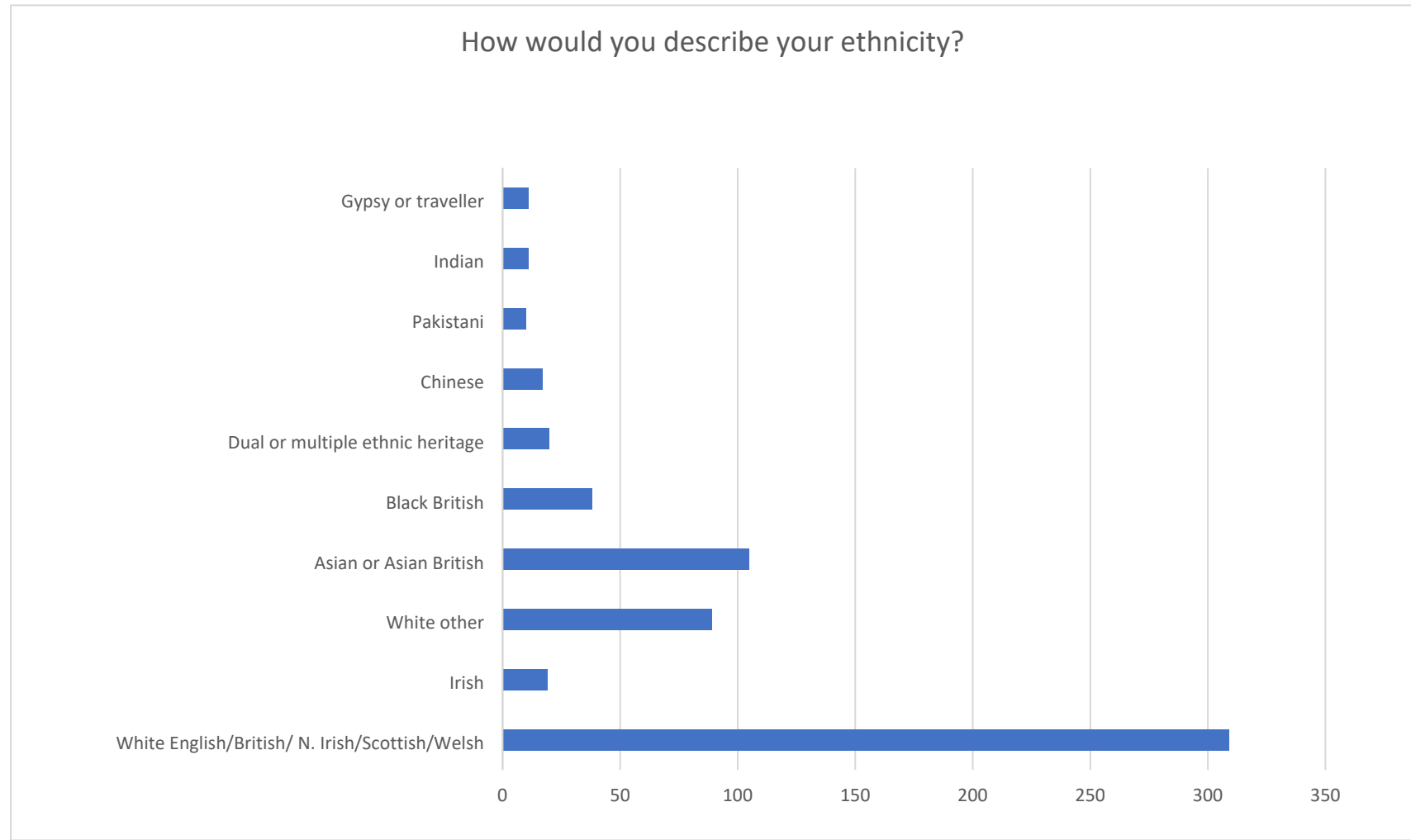
■ Woman ■ Man ■ Non-binary ■ Transgender

What is your age?



The reason for so many younger respondents is because most of our cadets responded and we worked hard to share information with university and college campuses across Bedfordshire.

We also asked about religion and ethnicity. We have had a much more diverse response....



Appendix 2 - Analysis of recent FRS Community Risk Management Plans

<b>Fire Standard/ Fire and Rescue Service</b>	<b>East Sussex 2021-25</b>	<b>Durham and Darlington 2021-25</b>	<b>Essex 2021-24</b>	<b>Northants 2022-25</b>	<b>Norfolk 2021-24</b>	<b>Notts 2022-25</b>	<b>Glosfire 2022-26</b>	<b>Oxfordshire 2022-26</b>
<b>Based on evidence of accurate data and business intelligence</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Includes results of ongoing engagement consultation processes</b>	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Supports equality, diversity, inclusivity (not just an EIA/PIA)</b>	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓

Shows clear governance requirements of FRA and CRMP performance reporting	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Evidences its external and internal operating environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Describes the existing and emerging local, regional and national hazards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Analyses risk, considers its <u>risk appetite</u> , and <u>prioritises</u> risk accordingly	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X



Shows how it matches operational capabilities with community risks.	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Includes decisions about the deployment of resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓

### Summary of findings

- No one FRS has a perfectly compliant Community Risk Management Plan
- Most FRS have 4-year CRMPs
- Oxfordshire's CRMP is strong on long term horizon scanning
- Notts, East Sussex and Essex all referenced detailed fire cover reviews
- Links to bottom-up station planning in East Sussex is strong
- What the community risks are in Durham and Darlington are very clear in their CRMP
- Supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and showing results of ongoing engagement consultation processes are the weakest areas. Asking the 'so what' question was enlightening
- Consideration of risk appetite is a weaker area
- Matching operational capabilities with community risks is generally poor
- No community engagement survey had over 250 responses, but focus groups were used extensively

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HEADLEY  
**SUBJECT:** PORTFOLIO LEAD UPDATE: DIGITAL, DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

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For further information: Gavin Chambers  
on this report contact: Assistant Chief Officer

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Background Papers:

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**PURPOSE:**

To present a Portfolio Lead update on Digital, Data and Technology

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members receive the update.

**COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HEADLEY**

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# Digital, Data & Technology: Portfolio Member Update

## Website update

### Why are we doing this?

- The contract with our current supplier expires at the end of October.
- The website is very difficult to navigate, and it is hard to find information.
- Images on the homepage require large resolutions which drowns out any important information. In addition, the branding is outdated
- Our website is the main vehicle for:
  - ✓ Supporting our social media messages and for pointing people to further guidance
  - ✓ Posting our news releases
  - ✓ Hosting our consultations
  - ✓ BFRS recruitment including advertising Jobs and the online application process
  - ✓ Displaying our prevention, protection and performance information
  - ✓ Publishing fire and rescue authority (FRA) governance reports and minutes
  - ✓ Publishing key organisational and financial documents in accordance with national requirements for transparency

### Progress since last Member update

#### Value for Money:

- Our Procurement processes integrate value for money requirements
- We have ensured no tie ins are included; the updated specification makes this clear

## User involvement:

- We have involved staff, senior users, subject matters experts and our ICT shared service partner in further developing our specification
- We listened to feedback on our website in CRMP stakeholder engagement events
- Equality, diversity and inclusion aspects are being integrated such as translation features and other functions to be compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard

## Project management focus:

- We have met with the current provider and we have a backup plan in place agreed in writing if the project is delayed and they will continue to support our current website etc.
- The website solution will cater for regular and full backups to restore the website content

## Modern.gov.uk:

- We are integrating Modern.gov.uk into the proposals and have involved our democratic services in the consultation process
- We will also involve the new Monitoring Officer

## Next steps

We will:

- Share requirements with new supplier and analyze response with delivery team
- Sign contract with new supplier
- Wireframes and creative design
- Development sprints, intermediate testing and quality assurance
- User testing
- Content rewrites and editing
- Final review internally with staff and Members

- Close down old website

## LAN & Firewall refresh update

### Why are we doing this?

- The On-Premises ICT Local Area Network (LAN) Network, Internal Firewalls and Network Components are becoming end of life (EOL) and need replacing for Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire FRS.
- Project was originally scheduled for 2020 but competing priorities for both services, such as enabling workforce to WFH during Covid, on-site Covid restrictions, Mobilising System Replacements and Wi-Fi Upgrades meant this got delayed (whilst sweating the assets even more....).

### Benefits

- Fit for purpose and fully support LAN & Firewall
- Full resiliency failover of core network components at both data centres (BFRS & CFRS)
- Enhanced Security: Next Generation threat defence and anti-malware protection.
- New security services for authentication and authorisation. This allows faster identification, containment and remediation of security threats and is a key recommendation of the recent 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit
- Consolidated dashboard for operational management of the network

### Value for money

- Standardisation – the solution proposed is based on industry standard technology facilitating integration with existing ICT Shared Service systems and collaboration with other blue light services. Choosing the technologies proposed will reduce the Authorities requirement on costly and complex integration solutions
- Simplification – the proposed solution has been designed to simplify the on-going management of the network utilising tooling to automate appropriate tasks, allowing the ICT Shared Service team more time to focus on service delivery.
- The existing ICT Shared Service operational support team already supports a LAN & Firewall environment reducing the training overhead required to transition and minimising the risk and cost of change.

- Contract awarded to SCC via direct award procurement utilising the NHS Shared Business Service Framework (<https://sbs.nhs.uk>)

## IP Telephony

### Why are we doing this?

This is the final stage of the Unified Comms project in O 365 which enables IP Telephony to run via MS Teams and complete the digital transformation for unified comms. The implementation is due for completion in October 2022.

### Benefits

- Digital transformation which enables Direct Dial (DDI) (01234) numbers to operate via MS Teams in all end point environments, e.g. Laptops, iPad's, iPhone's as appropriate.
- Consolidates the O 365 stack enabling decommission of 5 x legacy BT Nortel telephone switches also known as Private Branch Exchanges (PBX)
- Centralised telephony admin enabling quick changes for DDI with starters, leavers, changes.
- Simplifies physical office moves.
- Supports our workforce by enabling remote, flexible and agile working which is a stated aim in CRMP.

Page 140

### Value for money

- There is no direct cost saving as the existing PBX costs and BT Line rental is replaced with software costs (IP Telephony Teams licenses) and SIP trunk costs (the infrastructure to haul IP Telephony voice traffic)
- Reduced ICT admin as it enables decommission of 25 windows servers (for both CFRS & BFRS) that run the legacy Skype system.

## Cyber Essentials

- BFRS is progressing through its annual Cyber accreditation against the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) standard - Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials +
- Cyber Essentials re-accreditation expected Sept 2022
- Cyber Essentials + re-accreditation expected Oct 2022



## RSM Audits

### **Digital Literacy**

#### Why are we doing this?

There are stated aims in the CRMP to improve digital literacy across the service.

#### Scope:

This review will consider user competence and proficiency in respect of key digitalised systems to ensure the organisation is achieving the value and benefits of those systems and user proficiency across the service based on sample testing as part of the audit. This will include the use of a questionnaire as well as one to one interviews to gauge staff awareness and competence in using those systems.

#### Status:

The initial part of the audit is complete and a debrief will be arranged shortly.

### **Data Maturity**

#### Why are we doing this?

There are stated aims in the CRMP to improve our data quality for our performance insight and reporting needs.

#### Scope:

The scope is still being finalised with RSM, but it will include an assessment against a recognised data maturity model, to enable BFRS to understand the “As Is” and “To Be” state so we can plan our roadmap accordingly.

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**REPORT AUTHOR:** CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

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For further information on this report contact: Nicky Upton  
Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor

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Background Papers: None

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**PURPOSE:**

To review and report on the work programme for 2022-23 and to provide Members with an opportunity to request additional reports for the Fire Authority meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Members consider the work programme for 2022-23 and note the 'cyclical' Agenda Items for each meeting in 2022-23.

**ANDREW HOPKINSON**  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>'Cyclical' Agenda Items</b>		<b>Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items</b>	
<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (2)</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
6 October 2022	Budget Planning for 2023-24			
	Community Risk Analysis and implications for the CRMP 2023-24 to 2027-28			
	ECR Pilots & Trials update			
	CRMP Proposals discussion			

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>'Cyclical' Agenda Items</b>		<b>Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
11 October 2022	Work Programme		Pensions Immediate Detriment update	
			Targeted Abatement Policy	
			LGA Independent Review of Governance update	
			CRMP update	

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
31 October 2022	Communications		CRMP update	
	ASC Minutes from 29.09.22		Outcomes from Governance Review	
	Programme Board Update			
	Collaboration Update			
	Portfolio Leads Update: Workforce & OD			
	Work Programme			
	CRMP consultation proposals			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>				
15 November 2022	Work Programme		CRMP update	

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
<b>COMBINED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (3) / BUDGET WORKSHOP (1)</b>	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
22 November 2022	Linking the budget and Medium Financial Strategy with the Community Risk Management Plan 2023-24 to 2027-28			
	Results of Horizon Scanning and implications for CRMP			
	LGA Independent Review of Governance (TBC)			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
14 December 2022	Communications			
	Executive Committee Minutes from 15.11.22			
	Portfolio Leads Updates: Assets and Collaboration (DCFO & ACO)			
	2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring			
	Q2 2022/23 Performance Report (July to September)			
	Public Sector Equality Duty Report			
	CRMP update			
	2023/24 Budget Update and Consultation			
	Members' Allowances Scheme			
	Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24			
Work Programme				

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>'Cyclical' Agenda Items</b>		<b>Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items</b>	
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
10 January 2023	Work Programme		CRMP update	

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>'Cyclical' Agenda Items</b>		<b>Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items</b>	
<b>BUDGET WORKSHOP (2)</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
25 January 2023	Council Tax Consultation – Summary of Responses		CRMP update	
	Revenue Budget			
	Capital Programme 2023/24-2026/27			
	Summary and Next Steps			



Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
2 February 2023	Communications			
	Executive Committee Minutes from 10.01.23			
	ASC Minutes from 12.01.23			
	The 2023/24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax setting			
	CRMP draft			
	Treasury Management Strategy and Practices			
	Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement 2023			
	Portfolio Leads Updates: Prevention & Protection and Operational Response and Resilience (DCFO, HPP, HoR)			
	Business Continuity Annual Review	Restricted Report		
	Work Programme			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
<b>MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (4)</b>				
23 February 2023	CRMP Performance Reporting and development of a public facing Balanced Scorecard of Key Performance Indicators			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
<b>EXECUTIVE</b>				
14 March 2023	Work Programme		CRMP update	

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
30 March 2023	Communications			
	ASC Minutes from 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023			
	Executive Committee Minutes from 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2023			
	Proposed Indicators and Targets for 2023/24			
	Collaboration Update			
	Q3 2022/23 Performance Report Update (Sept – Dec)			
	Portfolio Leads Updates			
	CRMP pre-publication report			
	Work Programme			

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