



Bedfordshire

Fire & Rescue Authority

21 October 2022

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

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **Fire and Rescue Authority** to be held at **Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA** on **Monday, 31 October 2022** starting at **10.00 am**, for the transaction of the following business:

Graham Britten
Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
1.	Apologies	Monitoring Officer	

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
2.	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests	Chair	Members are requested to disclose the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and any other interests as required by the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct (see note below).
3.	Communications	Chair	
4.	Minutes	Chair	To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 (Pages 5 - 18)
5.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme
6.	Audit and Standards Committee 29 September 2022	Cllr Atkins	To receive the Audit and Standards Committee minutes from 29 September 2022 (Pages 19 - 30)
7.	Executive Committee Minutes 11 October 2022	Chair	To receive Executive Committee minutes from 11 October 2022 (Pages 31 - 42)
8.	Programme Board Update	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 43 - 50)
9.	Fire and Rescue Authority's Action Plan following LGA Governance Review	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 51 - 56)
10.	Mid- Year Treasury Management Report	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 57 - 72)
11.	Collaboration Update	DCFO	Verbal Update
12.	Portfolio Leads Update: Workforce & Organisational Development	Cllr K Choudhry	Presentation (Pages 73 - 86)
13.	Work Programme	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 87 - 94)

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
Next Meeting		10.00 am on 14 December 2022 at Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA	

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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 8 September 2022 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT

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

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

Councillors C Atkins and Assistant Chief Fire Officer A Kibblewhite and Area Commanders S Auger and I Evans logged in remotely to the meeting via Teams

22-23/FRA/32 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Franks and J Gambold.

Councillor Atkins apologised for being unable to attend the meeting in person.

22-23/FRA/33 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests.

22-23/FRA/34 Communications

Pay Negotiations

The Chair referred to discussions with the Fire Brigades Union regarding the ongoing national pay negotiations.

Fire Station Open Days

The Chair thanked all Members who had supported the Open Days held over the summer.

White Paper

The Chair reported that he and the Chief Fire Officer had met with Richard Fuller, MP to update him on the latest developments in the Service such as our collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service; and to discuss the Government's White Paper on 'Reforming our Fire Service', outlining the Authority's views on the proposed changes in governance in particular. The discussion also covered the national pay negotiations and the need for proper investment in the fire and rescue service. Meetings with the other MPs representing areas of Bedfordshire are being arranged.

General Communication

The Chair continued to circulate information and communications to Members of the Authority as and when they were received.

Governance Review

The Chair thanked all those who took part in the morning's exercise.

Lord Lieutenant's Service of Thanksgiving

The Chief Fire Officer advised that he and Councillor McVicar had attended the Lord Lieutenant's Service of Thanksgiving held on 4 September 2022 to celebrate the retirement of Mrs Helen Nellis, CVO and the appointment of Mrs Susan Lousada, DL to the post.

Fundraising for the Firefighter's Charity

The Chief Fire Officer reported that a letter had been received from the Firefighter's Charity thanking the Service for raising over £63,000 in support of the Charity's work.

Quarterly Shout Out

The quarterly shout out, which had replaced the information bulletin, would soon be circulated to all Members. This document would form the basis of the reports to the constituent authorities and looked both forwards and backwards at future plans and past achievements and performance.

22-23/FRA/35 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 20 July 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

22-23/FRA/36 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/37 Audit and Standards Committee meeting 14 July 2022

Members received the Minutes of the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 14 July 2022 for information.

As the Committee continued to meet remotely, the Authority was required to ratify all decisions made by the Committee as set out in the Minutes.

Councillor Atkins introduced the Minutes and highlighted the following:

- Councillor Berry had been appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee.
- The Committee's terms of reference had been approved with no amendments proposed.
- In receiving the external audit year-end report, it was noted that EY could not commit to specific dates for the completion of the audit of the Statement of Account due to ongoing resourcing issues.
- Neil Harris, who had managed the audits on behalf of EY, had accepted a role outside the organisation and EY was hoping to appoint a successor in advance of the Committee's next meeting.
- There were no implications arising from lower than expected land valuations as the Service had no current intentions to sell any of its property assets.
- The Committee received the draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement and a Member briefing would be arranged in advance of the formal submission of the accounts post-audit.
- A report from EY on its quality assurance processes had provided assurance to the Committee that these were effective.
- A positive internal audit report had been received. The Committee had provisionally approved four extensions to completion dates and these would require ratification by the Authority.

- In reviewing the Code of Conduct, it was pleasing to note that no complaints had been lodged against Members of the Authority. The Committee had recommended that the LGA Model Code of Conduct not be adopted at this time, although it was suggested that this could be reviewed the following year.
- A comprehensive report on the Service's Corporate Risk Register had been considered.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 14 July 2022 be received.
2. That the decisions made by the Committee be ratified by the Fire Authority, with particular note being given to the extension requests to completion dates and the Committee's proposal not to adopt the Local Government Association's Model Code of Conduct at this time.

22-23/FRA/38 Monitoring Officer Report

The Authority received a report asking it 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.

The Chair thanked the current Secretary and Monitoring Officer, Mr J Atkinson, for his years of service to the Authority and wished him a well-deserved retirement.

RESOLVED:

That 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 9th September 2022 be confirmed.

22-23/FRA/39 Annual Report 2021/22

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the Annual Report for 2021/22. This document set out the performance of the Service from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and was prefaced with a welcome and the Service's values before summarising the highlights of each month during the year.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to the following:

- Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) had increased by 16% from the previous year to 398, with outdoor bonfires decreasing by 21% and building fires by 5%.
- There were 252 accidental dwelling fires during the year, a 24% reduction when compared to the five-year average and a 15% reduction from the previous year.
- There had been one fire death during the year, which was a reduction on the previous year, with a comparable number serious injuries and outpatient injuries to previous year.
- The Service had responded to 1,804 automatic fire alarms, a significant increase of 227 from the previous year.
- The number of road injuries and fatalities remained consistent with figures recorded over the five-year period, with 2020/21 being an outlier as fewer people were travelling as a result of the pandemic.
- A total of 8,443 Safe and Well Visits had been conducted in the year. Whilst this was below the stretch target of 10,000, it was the highest number of visits ever conducted by the Service. This included 2,397 doorstep visits and 616 telephone consultations.
- 270 safeguarding referrals had been made, 208 directly as the result of Safe and Well visits.
- To combat arson when there was an identifiable threat, 259 arson proof letter boxes had been installed during the year.
- There had been an increase in deliberate fires from 430 in 2020/21 to 565 in 2021/22, although this was still under the five year average.
- The Service continued to actively engage with partners in relation to road safety. Examples of this included participation in “Survive the Drive” at Chicksands, the development of a training package for Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) National Observers in partnership with Herts & Beds Advanced Motorists and assisting the Police in delivering “Bike Safe”.
- A road safety vehicle with built in virtual reality was being produced and would hopefully be available by the end of the year.
- The Service had been involved with the installation of six water safety boards at the Forest of Marston Vale to improve water safety.
- 22 young people fascinated with fire had been supported by the Service to change their behaviour.
- 24 fire cadets had been recruited in October/November 2021 with three centres at Luton, Leighton Buzzard and Sandy. Another unit had been formed later in that year in Bedford, bringing the total number of cadets up to 32.
- A total of 3,288 audits and inspections had been conducted during 2021/22, an increase of 71% compared to the previous year. This included 647 audits of which 243 were to high risk premises. 20 prohibition notices had been served; this was the highest number to date. Fines totalling £40,000 had been awarded to the Service through the court process.
- 14 employees had reached the milestone of working for the Service for 20 years and this had been recognised internally.
- The Recruitment Team had successfully recruited to 22 support roles, 18 whole time operational roles and 35 retained roles. It was worthy of note that the Service had been awarded a positive audit result in relation to recruitment.
- The Wellbeing Policy had been revised and a Cycle to Work Scheme had been launched.
- 961 training courses had been delivered during the year.
- The Service was now providing training in house to new recruits in partnership with Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, rather than using the Fire Services College.
- Promotion gateways had been provided at every level and 25 individuals had been identified for the talent pool.

- Several major training live play events for major terrorist attacks had been undertaken and these had been attended by over 1,500 personnel from a wide range of agencies.
- The Service had been the first in the country to adopt a 100% cloud based mobilising system compatible with the Emergency Services Network. This had also been integrated with Gartan, enabling the Service to manage its resources more effectively.
- New incident command software had been implemented in January 2022 and Wi-Fi had been upgraded at all stations from July to October 2021.
- The Corporate Risk Register had been updated in September 2021.
- The Service had upgraded from version 3 to version 5 of PDRPro.
- The Service continued to work in partnership with East of England Ambulance Service. An exercise had been conducted demonstrating that public services benefited by £7 for every pound spent by the Service in this work.

In response to questions about the increase in deliberate fires, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service worked closely with the Police to identify the cause of the fire and to put cases forward for prosecution where possible. Following a recent spate of arson incidents, the Service had installed 7 arson-proof letter boxes in one afternoon as a preventative measure. Community engagement events were held after incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer added that deliberate fires classified as outdoor fires were primarily seasonal in nature and there had been four months during the year that had been over target levels. Performance had improved following this period, and despite the increase, final performance remained under the target level.

It was noted that there was a duplication of bullet points on page 57 relating to improved situational awareness and this would be rectified before the final version was published.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service had not altered its working relationship with EEAST, although there were discussions ongoing with the FBU regarding additional duties.

The value of maintaining the collaborative working relationship with EEAST was acknowledged, as was our impact on their organisational performance.

In response to a question on operational leavers, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that exit interviews were offered to all staff upon their resignation from the Service. The Chief Fire Officer commented that, in the majority of cases, the reason for leaving the Service was purely financial. There was a recruitment and retention crisis throughout the industry and currently only 25% of operational staff had worked for the Service for more than 5 years. This was a major issue that would have to be addressed at a national level.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that the Service was now an accredited apprenticeship provider which enabled it to provide training and to draw down from the Apprenticeship Levy. The ability to provide training to recruits in house generated a significant saving and also provided recruits with a more family friendly training package.

RESOLVED:

That the report, and the content contained therein, be acknowledged.

22-23/FRA/40 Statement of Assurance 2021/22

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer presented the Authority's Statement of Assurance for 2021/22. As the Statement had not been submitted as normal practice through the Audit and Standards Committee prior to its submission to the full Authority for approval, Members were asked if they were satisfied that they could consider the report and approve it at the meeting or if they wished to approve it in principle subject to further scrutiny by the Audit and Standards Committee at its next meeting.

The Statement of Assurance covered the three following areas: finance, governance and operational assurance, and was very similar in content to the Annual Governance Statement that was produced in conjunction with the annual Statement of Accounts. Therefore, consideration would be given to whether these two documents could be combined, taking into account this may not be possible due to timescales involved in the production of the Statement of Accounts and the audit process.

The Monitoring Officer advised that, as the Audit and Standards Committee, if meeting virtually, would not be able to approve the Statement, and any decision would have to be referred back to the Authority for ratification.

Members agreed that the Authority would be able to approve the Statement at this meeting, as Members of the Audit and Standards Committee were present and part of the full Authority.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Statement of Assurance for 2021/22 be acknowledged.
2. That the Statement of Assurance be approved and published on the Service's website.

22-23/FRA/41 Q1 2022/23 Performance Report

Members received a summary of organisational performance at the end of the first quarter of the current financial year. These included some of the changes that had been agreed at the previous meeting of the Authority (Minute 22-23/fa/030 refers).

In response to a question on how the response standards were reported against in this report, the Chief Fire Officer advised that some amendments had been made to improve the visibility of the performance indicators relating to those standards and that the narrative had been updated to make it easier to understand. As there was a difference in how response was measured by the Service (as set out in the response standards) and by the Inspectorate, the response standards may need to be revisited in future. For example, the current response standards set a target of attending 80% of critical (primary) fires responded to within 10 minutes, measured from the time a fire appliance is alerted by Control whilst HMICFRS measure response times from the time the first 999 call is received by our Control Room. In summary, the reporting of indicators in this area were still evolving in order for them to be more reflective of the Service's published response standards.

Prevention

As previously discussed under the Annual Report item, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported on the rise in arson incidents and a particular spate of events in Luton in April 2022. Given the extreme weather experienced during the summer and the corresponding increase in number of events attended, it was unlikely that a downward trend would be reported for the next quarter.

There had been a decrease in the number of Safe and Well visits conducted as staff were directed to a high volume of operational incidents. A volunteer manager had recently been appointed and it was envisaged that, in future, volunteers and third sector organisations could be trained to conduct the visits on behalf of the Service to increase capacity. It was also recognised that the target measuring the number of Safe and Well visits delivered was a stretch target and that the Service had conducted more visits in this reporting period than in had done during the whole year of 2016/17.

Area Commander I Evans added that the community risk analysis recently undertaken had identified that those households most at risk of accidental dwelling fires, poorer pensioners, were also the group that was most likely to be the subject of Safe and Well visits.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer referred to the work of the Falls Team in identifying and supporting individuals in this cohort.

Protection

National shortages in qualified fire protection officers had impacted on the ability of the Service to recruit to vacant posts in this area. However, a recent recruitment exercise had been successful and the Service was beginning the process of training and upskilling staff to take on these roles.

Area Commander I Evans advised that four new staff, two Grey Book and two Green Book staff, had recently started in the fire safety team, with the cost funded through the grant.

To combat the increase in attendances to Automatic Fire Detectors, a greater level of call challenge and other measures had been introduced in Control.

Response

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that there had been an increase in special services. This was expected to continue as the Service was supporting EEAST with a range of activities including bariatric response, falls, Emergency Medical Response and co-responding.

The increase in total incidents was also expected to continue as the extreme heat and associated incidents had fallen within the second quarter of this reporting year.

As previously mentioned, false alarm calls were being subject to greater challenge.

On call availability was affected by recruitment and retention issues and the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that he and a small team had recently attended an On Call Improvement Working Group meeting run by the National Fire Chiefs Council in August. A new Group Commander had been appointed, with one of the job roles being to lead on on-call availability.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the Service had to take operational decisions that could impact adversely on performance against the indicator measuring whole-time global crewing enabling 9 riders on two pumps as the Service sought to maximise overall pump availability by deploying the fifth person on a two pump station to increase pump availability at other locations. This increased the number of pumps available in key strategic locations but reduced the global crewing for this specific indicator. It was hoped that the On-Call project would positively impact on performance against this target.

The view was expressed that the trial of relocating a pump to Leagrave would not improve response times as measured by the indicators, as it had been suggested that there would be an improvement to response times within Luton and the surrounding areas by 30 seconds.

Most of these incidents were already responded to within 10 minutes, and this did not appear to improve response times in the rural areas so that these would be within 10 minutes.

The Chair suggested that response times would be a good topic for discussion by a Scrutiny Panel and it was agreed that a meeting to conduct a deep dive of this issue would be arranged.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the relocation of the pump would also improve response times in parts of Central Bedfordshire.

Area Commander S Auger provided assurance regarding the pilot that the project team was taking views such as those expressed at the meeting into account and that the data would be analysed to determine if there was a measurable benefit in response times and what geographical location this related to.

The Service had concerns about the performance of indicators measuring call handling. The majority of calls were from individuals who could provide an identifiable address or could use What3Words to provide their specific location to Control staff. The primary issue affecting performance related to road traffic incidents on roadways where motorists could easily provide an addressable location. In these instances, it could take 2-3 minutes to triangulate a location from the information available. In future, consideration would be given to separating out the calls without an identifiable location.

Empowering

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that sickness absence remained within target levels even though COVID-19 sickness was no longer being reported separately.

Some of the training indicators could not be reported against as the Service had recently upgraded from version 3 to version 5 of PDRPro.

Training for water responding had to be cancelled during quarter one for operational reasons; these were being rescheduled later in the year for all relevant staff. A new trauma care course was being provided for new starters.

All health and safety indicators were achieving target levels.

Utilising

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that there had been one incident relating to a gearbox repair which was not completed in time due to the delay in receipt of parts from a third party supplier.

The Technical Response Unit had required a complete motor refit and this had led to it being unavailable during that time period. The repairs had been funded by the Ambulance Service as part of the partnership arrangements.

Maximising

The indicator measuring invoices paid within 30 days was amber as there were many invoices being received without a valid purchase order in place and/or delays in managers authorising invoices for payment. Work continued with budget managers to improve processes so that invoices could be processed in a timely manner.

RESOLVED:

1. That 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 be acknowledged.
2. That a Scrutiny Panel meeting be arranged to consider a deep dive on response times.

22-23/FRA/42 2022/23 Budget Monitoring

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

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

- Following a request made at the previous meeting, it was proposed that the unbudgeted Business Rates Relief income of £392,000 be allocated to offset both the in-year inflationary pressures and a reduction in ICT Firelink grant.
- Pay awards for both Green and Grey Book staff had not yet been agreed and it was suggested that the earmarked reserve be used to fund these.
- There were increased budgetary pressures arising from inflation and the rising cost of gas. This was now at 60% above budgeted levels. It was anticipated that the CPI rate would rise to 14.5% by January 2023.
- The forecast income from investments was £80,000 above the levels reported at previous meetings. The Service had recently invested £4 million in environmental, social and governance (esg) investments following due diligence into the green credentials of the fund.
- The report included the salary and non-salary budget forecasts. It was noted that the salary budget forecasts did not include all on call payments.
- Only two projects in the Capital Programme had been reported as amber, with the rest on target.

RESOLVED:

1. That the updates provided within this report be acknowledged.
2. That the proposed use of the unbudgeted Business Rates Relief income from central government, as set out in paragraph 2.3.4 of the report, be approved.
3. That 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, as set out in paragraph 2.3.76 of the report, be noted.
4. That the updated inflationary pressure on Utilities budgets which has increased from a forecast 40% above budget to 60% above budget, resulting in an extra £40,000 pressure from the last monitoring report, as set out in paragraph 2.3.4 of the report, be noted.
5. That the increase in forecast income from investments from £55,000 above budget reported at the end of May 2022 to £135,000 as at the end of July due to greatly improved rates available on investments, as set out in paragraph 2.3.4 of the report, be noted.

22-23/FRA/43 Cost of Living Support to Workforce

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation on the results of a staff survey undertaken earlier in the year as well as the recent meeting of the Cost of Living Taskforce.

The survey had been conducted in April 2022 and ran for 29 days. 28% of staff, or 164 individuals across the organisation, responded to the survey. Suggestions on actions that the Service could take to support staff with the cost of living arising from the survey included changing the CPD uplift to an annual payment, offering access to discount schemes and offering access to independent legal and financial advice and access to private medical treatment.

44 suggestions had been submitted as a result of the Cost of Living Taskforce meeting. These were very similar to those listed above, with the addition of the possible provision of affordable takeaway meals for purchase from the mess deck, the provision of childcare during the school holidays and the creation of a hardship fund. A more flexible approach to hybrid working and access to a pool of electric bikes to travel to meetings were also suggested.

As a result of these discussions, a discount for the use of leisure facilities had been negotiated through Active Luton. The Service had also committed to paying the cost of IFE exams. Individual support and advice was provided to certain members of staff following the meeting by HR. The current Employee Assistance Programme had been promoted internally and a special edition of the Blue Bulletin had been circulated on 5 September which included information and advice for staff. Financial wellbeing had now been included as an item for consideration of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Group.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the Service would be assessing the recommendations and their associated costs so it could determine the level of additional support that it would be able to provide. Government announcements would be monitored and information passed on as and when it was provided.

Members recognised the importance of good financial education and supporting members of staff in understanding the difference between wants and needs.

Councillor Burnett commented that “The Richest Man in Babylon”, available on YouTube, was a good resource and that staff could be signposted to this. The Chair suggested that Macmillan was also providing information and guidance and this should be investigated by the Service.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that a representative of the Citizens’ Advice Bureau would be attending the next staff engagement meeting.

RESOLVED:

22-23/FRA/44 CRMP Planning update

Members received an update on progress with Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) planning and the summer survey results.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Members would be presented with a summary of the latest community risk analysis at the Member Development Day scheduled for 6 October 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be acknowledged.

22-23/FRA/45 Portfolio Leads Updates: Digital and Data Transformation

Councillor Headley gave a presentation on digital, data and technology and highlighted the project to update the Service’s website. This would improve its content, effectiveness and accessibility. It was anticipated that the updated website would go live early in the New Year and Members would be updated on progress.

It was also noted that 84% of staff had completed the recommended cyber security training.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received.

22-23/FRA/46 Work Programme

Members received the proposed work programme for 2022/23.

The Chief Fire Officer introduced Lauren Fair, the new Business Support Manager, to Members of the Authority. He advised that a report on immediate detriment would be prepared for the October meeting of the Executive Committee.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Authority would be held on 31 October 2022.

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 16:12

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

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

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

To report on the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 29 September 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the submitted minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022 be received and the decisions made by the Committee, informally, be ratified.

1. Introduction
 - 1.1 The draft minutes of the informal meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 29 September 2022 are appended for Members' consideration.
 - 1.2 The Audit and Standards Committee requests the decisions it made, be ratified by the Fire Authority.

COUNCILLOR C ATKINS
CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE INFORMAL MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022
AT 10.00am**

Present: Councillors C Atkins (Chair), J Burnett, D Franks, J Gambold and I Shingler
Mr J Atkinson, Mr G Britten, ACO G Chambers, Ms S Fecondi and Mr S Frank
Mrs D Hanson, Ernst & Young
Mrs S Rowlett, 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/AS/017 Apologies

17.1 There were no apologies.

17.2 The Chair welcomed Mr G Britten to the meeting. Mr Britten had recently been appointed as the Authority's new Monitoring Officer to replace Mr Atkinson, who had held this role for seven years, upon Mr Atkinson's forthcoming retirement.

22-23/AS/018 Declarations of Interest

18.1 There were no declarations of interest.

22-23/AS/019 Communications

- 19.1 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that a letter had been received from Ernst & Young. This would be discussed under the External Audit Update.

22-23/AS/020 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

22-23/AS/021 Public Participation

- 21.1 There were no members of the public present.

22-23/AS/022 External Audit Update

- 22.1 Mrs D Hanson of Ernst & Young (EY) introduced herself as the new Audit Manager for the Authority following the departure of Mr N Harris. She would be supported by Mr O Randall, who was replacing Ms J Kriek. A number of handover meetings had taken place, both internally at EY and with the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer, to ensure a smooth transition for the new external audit team.
- 22.2 Mrs Hanson explained that, due to ongoing resourcing issues, the timetable for completion of the audit of the Authority's Statement of Accounts had been delayed and it was anticipated that this would now commence in March 2023, rather than December 2022 as previously reported. Recognising the impact on the Authority, EY would be working closely with the Finance Team to minimise any further delay and had resourced the team with staff members with appropriate levels of experience.

- 22.3 In response to a question on the impact of resources on the completion of audits for future years, Mrs Hanson advised that all 2021/22 and 2022/23 audits to be undertaken under the PSAA arrangements were currently in the process of being timetabled, as the PSAA contract ended on 31 March 2023. The 2022/23 audit had originally been planned for completion by December 2023 and had now been delayed to conclude by March 2024. As the Authority was one of EY's smaller and less complex audits, it was unlikely that the audit would be in the final tranche, and EY would endeavour to ensure the Authority was notified of any potential delays to the completion of the audit of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.
- 22.4 In response to a question from the Chair, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer detailed the impact of the delay in the completion of the audit on the workload of the Finance Team, confirming that he was working closely with EY to avoid busier periods, such as January/February when the budget was being produced.

RESOLVED:

That the external audit updated be received.

22-23/AS/023 Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22 and 2022/23

- 23.1 Mrs S Rowlett of RSM submitted a report on progress made against the internal audit plan for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The 2021/22 internal audit programme had now been concluded with the follow up audit being finalised. Of the 27 management actions identified throughout the year, evidence had only been provided in relation to 11 of these, with 5 having been completed and 6 still in progress. RSM had met with management to discuss the lack of evidence provided to the internal audit team and to agree a new process going forward.
- 23.2 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer confirmed that further evidence had been provided and that the completion of the majority of actions should be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 23.3 The 2022/23 audit programme had commenced with one audit completed, one in progress and the remainder scheduled throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

22-23/AS/024 Internal Audit Actions Update

- 24.1 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.
- 24.2 Extension requests were being sought in relation to the following two areas:
- Human Resources – Grey Book Recruitment: the policy was in the process of being updated and should be completed by the end of Quarter 3, therefore an extension was being requested to December 2022.
 - Asset Management – Asset Tracking: the asset tracking for equipment was proceeding well; however a three month delay was experienced due to a shortage of personnel and an extension was being requested accordingly.
- 24.3 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer updated the Committee on the action relating to asset management. He had spoken with the relevant Area Commander and had ascertained that the action had been completed. Work remained ongoing to log additional assets located in the Training Centre and Stores, but the original action to log 18,000 assets had been completed and therefore an extension was no longer required.
- 24.4 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer advised that the Human Resources - Grey Book recruitment action to update the On-Call Recruitment Policy had not yet been completed as the Human Resources Team had been running various recruitment campaigns and had to prioritise the work associated with this process. There was also an issue related to the current employment market, with individuals agreeing offers of employment, then deciding to take other offers that subsequently had been made available to them.
- 24.5 The view was expressed that, given the current economic climate and the recent Government announcements in the mini-budget, recruitment and retention of suitable candidates would only become more difficult.

- 24.6 Ms S Fecondi, Head of Human Resources highlighted the substantial assurance audit opinion that had been awarded to this area of Human Resources by the internal auditors and expressed the view that the outstanding work required on the On Call Recruitment Policy would be completed by the end of the third Quarter, December 2022, in line with the extension request.

RESOLVED:

1. That progress made to date against action plans be acknowledged.
2. That the extension request for Human Resources – Grey Book Recruitment to the end of December 2022 be approved.

22-23/AS/025 Abatement Policy

- 25.1 Ms S Fecondi, Head of Human Resources, presented a report on the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy that had been updated in accordance with the recently issued Local Government Association guidance. The changes made were to Paragraphs 3-5 in Section 4.2 (Abatement Rules),
- 25.2 Under the abatement policy, if a member of staff retired and was then subsequently re-engaged, the level of pay, when combined with the amount of pension payment being received, could not exceed the level of salary received prior to retirement. The Service had discretion not to abate; however, it would then be liable for the additional pension costs.
- 25.3 The Committee was advised that this did not apply to the 2015 Firefighter Pension Scheme.
- 25.4 As the guidance did not include a definition of “material change”, it was being proposed within the Policy that calculations be taken at the point of re-engagement and henceforth on an annual basis, or upon a material change or a request from the affected employee. This should identify any changes resulting from pay awards, pension changes or additional allowances.
- 25.5 In response to a question referring to previous discussions of abatement and whether the updated Policy was in accordance with regulations, the Head of Human Resources confirmed that this was the case and that this had been verified by the Service’s independent pension administrators, Local Pensions Partnership Administration (LPPA).
- 25.6 The Chair requested that Paragraph 61 of the LGA guidance, which stated that *“informal guidance issued by CLG in 2009 references the “level of earnings directly prior to...retirement” and goes on to say: “The substantive pay at the last day of*

service comprised of all permanent elements of pensionable pay, expressed as an annual rate, should be the level of earnings used for the comparison”, be included in the Policy so that it was clear which pay figure was to be used for the initial abatement calculation.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed amendments to the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy be approved, subject to the inclusion of Paragraph 61 of the Local Government Association guidance, as this clarified which pay figure should be used in the initial abatement calculation.

22-23/AS/026 Review of Work Programme 2022/23

- 26.1 The Committee considered the proposed work programme for 2022/23.
- 26.2 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer advised that, as a result of the delays to the audit of the Statement of Accounts as discussed earlier in the meeting, the Audit Results report would need to be deferred from the Committee’s meeting on 12 January 2023 to sometime after the audit had been concluded in March 2023.
- 26.3 The Committee was advised that the Internal Audit Actions Update report would include information on the 16 management actions that had not been evidenced through RSM’s follow-up audit.

RESOLVED:

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

22-23/AS/027 Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 of Part 1: Exclusion of the Public

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 finished at 10.51am

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

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REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR P DUCKETT

SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

Background Papers: None

PURPOSE:

To receive the Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 11 October 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the submitted minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 be received.

1. Introduction

1.1 The draft minutes of the Executive Committee held on 11 October 2022 are appended for Members' information.

**COUNCILLOR P DUCKETT
CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
HELD AT FIRE AND RESCUE HEADQUARTERS ON 11 OCTOBER 2022 AT 9.30 AM**

Present: Councillors P Duckett (Chair), J Chatterley, K Choudhury, M Headley and Y Waheed
CFO A Hopkinson, DCFO C Bigland, ACFO A Kibblewhite, ACO G Chambers, Mr G Britten and Mr S Frank
Ms S Fecondi and Ms S Green were present via Teams for Minute No. 21

13. Apologies

13.1 There were no apologies.

14. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

14.1 There were no declarations of interests.

15. Communications

15.1 The Chair advised that a meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner would take place later on that day. Topics for discussion included the Estates Strategy and the use of Toddington Community Fire Station.

15.2 The Chief Fire Officer reported that he had attended the national BA competition at the Fire Services College on 8 October 2022. The Service had come in seventh out of twenty-three services and there had been many learning points.

15.3 Open Days were going to be held at Harrold Community Fire Station on 15 October 2022 and Toddington Community Fire Station on 16 October 2022.

16. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022 be confirmed as a true record.

17. Public Participation

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

18. LGA Independent Review of Governance Update

18.1 The Chief Fire Officer provided a summary of the main points that had emerged from the governance session and workshop that had taken place the previous week. A roadmap would be produced and submitted to the next meeting of the full Authority on 31 October 2022. A copy of the slideshow presented by the LGA would be circulated to Members for information.

18.2 Areas to be progressed included: clarifying the role of the Monitoring Officer, strengthening the oversight and scrutiny function, considering extending the tenure of the Executive Chair to provide greater continuity, providing a clear CPD programme for Members, including induction programmes for Members newly appointed to the Authority, and redefining and clarifying the role of Executive Lead Members.

18.3 Areas of good practice had also been identified, including the content of the Member Handbook.

18.4 Members discussed how the scrutiny role could be strengthened. The only Members who did not have Executive responsibilities were those who sat on the Audit and Standards Committee. This Committee was also a decision making body so it would not be appropriate to add the scrutiny function to this Committee's terms of reference. However, the Members of the Committee could sit on a separate Scrutiny Committee to undertake this role.

18.5 Arising from the afternoon session, the Chief Fire Officer reported that a very experienced individual had been appointed to the Performance & Insight Manager post, and would help shape a new team to lead in this area.

18.6 The provision of a joint training centre was being progressed with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Services, with the expectation that the facility would be made available, at cost, to other blue light partners.

- 18.7 In relation to the discussion around workshops, the Chief Fire Officer invited Members to visit the workshop at Headquarters at the end of the meeting so that Members could view the level of investment required. Work around the three station sites discussed was also being progressed.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

19. Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Update

- 19.1 It was noted that proposed Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) consultation questions would be presented to Members at the next Authority meeting, with a draft version of the CRMP being submitted to the meeting of the Authority in December, with a view to the final version being presented in February 2023 for adoption.
- 19.2 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer provided an update on the slightly different approach being taken to the budget-setting process for 2023/24, with all revenue and capital bids being analysed by the Corporate Management Team before they were presented to Members at the forthcoming Member Budget Workshops. There would be a particular focus on income generation, as there were fewer opportunities for savings and efficiencies as most of these had already been explored and/or implemented. There was a possibility that the Government would mandate reductions in funding across the public sector in its next budget announcement.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

20. Response Standards – Options for Developing a Framework for Discussion

- 20.1 Members considered a report on how best to scrutinise the performance indicators relating to the Authority's emergency response standards.
- 20.2 It was proposed that, in light of the ongoing governance review, and as the Authority did not currently have an agreed call-in process, a Task and Finish Group be constituted of non-Executive Members of the Audit and Standards Committee to undertake a deep dive of performance. This would most likely involve inviting the relevant Portfolio Lead, Councillor Chatterley, and senior Officers to produce a detailed report with a number of options for the Task and Finish Group to consider, ensuring that the scoping questions contained within the report were responded to.

- 20.3 It was noted that Task and Finish Groups could meet informally and would not be subject to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972, with the findings of the Task and Finish Group would be presented to the full Authority.
- 20.4 Members considered the current roles of the Portfolio Leads and the Chair, recognising that these were different than those of the constituent authorities and other Fire and Rescue Services that were not combined authorities. Concentrating the power in the position of an Executive Chair, as proposed in the White Paper, was more difficult in combined authorities and would require a concerted effort of the part of the Chair to liaise with all constituent authorities.
- 20.5 It was agreed that a hybrid of Option 2 and 3 be presented as the way forward to Members at the meeting of the Authority on 31 October 2022, and it was suggested that the Chair may wish to brief non-Executive Members prior to that meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be received and that Members of the Audit and Standards Committee be asked to appoint a Task and Finish Group to undertake the 'performance call-in' of service performance against the Authority's emergency response standards.

21. Pensions Immediate Detriment Update

- 21.1 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced a report providing an update and seeking agreement from Members on the way forward following developments since the meeting of the Executive in May 2022, concerning the treatment of Firefighters' Pension Scheme members who had (or would) suffer an "Immediate Detriment" by reason of their retirement (or impending retirement), following the decision made by the Court of Appeal on 20 December 2018 and the Employment Appeal Tribunal on 12 February 2021. The current position was that Immediate Detriment was not being applied within the Service.
- 21.2 Additional guidance had been issued on 30 September 2022 following the preparation of the report and the view was expressed that a decision could not be made at the meeting. It was proposed that a further report be presented to the next meeting of the Executive and any decisions made could then be submitted to the meeting of the full Authority in December 2022. This report would include updated calculations. The cost of processing Immediate Detriment claims was estimated to be between £1200-1500 each.
- 21.3 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer reported that the guidance appeared to mitigate against the risks of contribution refunds.

- 21.4 In response to a question, Ms Green advised that Category 1 related to all members of the relevant Pension Scheme members who were due to retire up to October 2023 (of which there were currently 9) and Category 2 related to members who had already retired. The remedy period was from 2015, when the new Pension Scheme was introduced, to 2022. For this period of time, members were able to choose which Pension Scheme, the 1992 scheme or 2015 scheme, would be more financially advantageous for them. If this was the 1992 scheme, the contributions that had been made into the 2015 scheme would be refunded and the member would be expected to make the contributions for the 1992 scheme. It was this risk, that the Service may need to cover the cost of if a member did not make the contributions, that appeared to be mitigated in the most recently issued guidance.
- 21.5 There was also the issue of unauthorised payment charges, for which the Service would be liable, and other additional tax charges that would have to be taken into account by both the Service and the individuals concerned. A judgement from a case that had been submitted by a Category 2 member in Manchester to the Pensions Ombudsman was awaited as this may provide additional clarity.
- 21.6 The Service was one of several that was listed as a respondent to a claim put forward by the FBU on behalf of 750 members. Ms S Fecondi, the Head of Human Resources, advised that the case had been stayed, with no further action being taken until November 2022. As the response was being co-ordinated by the Local Government Association (LGA), she would chase the LGA for an update.
- 21.7 The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer added that Immediate Detriment was being discussed at the Annual Fire Finance Conference he was attending the following day, with a presentation being given by the Fire Pensions Adviser.
- 21.8 In response to a suggestion that external legal advice should be sought, Mr G Britten, the Monitoring Officer, advised that he was aware that other Fire and Rescue Services had obtained legal advice in relation to the application of Immediate Detriment and, as Bedfordshire was named as a respondent in a claim, obtaining legal advice could be considered subject to discussions with the Chair, the Assistant Chief Officer and the Chief Fire Officer.
- 21.9 It was agreed that a briefing should be provided to Members prior to the next meeting of the Executive, for Members to be fully briefed on the issue before having to make a decision.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and the implications and risks associated with adopting the LGA/FBU Immediate Detriment Framework be noted.

2. That a decision as to whether to apply Immediate Detriment within Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service be deferred.
3. That the principle of obtaining external legal advice on the application of Immediate Detriment be agreed.
22. Targeted Use of Abatement
 - 22.1 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a report proposing the potential targeted application of the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy to re-engage to roles that had proven hard to fill due to the specialist skills and experience required, the length of time it took to develop them, and the limited numbers available to recruit from in the market.
 - 22.2 Members were advised that the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy had been updated and this had been approved by the Audit and Standards Committee, noting that this would have to be ratified by the full Authority at its next meeting. This clearly set out the processes to be followed when re-engaging previous members of staff. This would primarily relate to on-call roles, or areas of specialist skill such as Fire Safety and driver training. Abatement did not apply to the 2015 Firefighter's Pension Scheme.
 - 22.3 The Chief Fire Officer referred to the commutation scheme that was now in operation in Scotland whereby the cap on lump sums had been increased for those who retired early and the impacts that this may have on the Service.
 - 22.4 Members were supportive of the targeted use of abatement, recognising the difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced staff. The potential cost savings were also recognised, as the Service would only have to pay the part of the salary that was not abated.
 - 22.5 In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer advised that the Audit and Standards Committee had added clarification to the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy so that it was the final permanent salary that was used in the abatement calculations.

RESOLVED:

That the targeted use of the Abatement and Re-engagement Policy for roles that prove hard to fill due to the specialist skills and experience required and the time it takes to develop them be approved.

23. Work Programme

- 23.1 The Executive received its updated work programme.

23.2 It was noted that the results of the scrutiny exercise would be reported back at a future meeting. The newly appointed Business Manager would be populating the remaining meetings with appropriate items following the previous week's workshop session.

RESOLVED:

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

24. Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Part 1: Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED:

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

Item

24. Legal Challenge to EEAST Collaboration

The meeting closed at 11.26 am

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 4, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: PROGRAMME AND PROJECTS REPORT – Q1 & Q2 2022/23

For further information on this Report contact: Petia Asparouhova
Programme and PMO Manager
Tel No: 07920 576342

Background Papers: Previous Programme and Project reports to the FRA

PURPOSE:

To provide the Fire and Rescue Authority with an update on the Service Corporate Programme. This report covers Q1 and Q2 of financial year 2022/23, detailing progress and current status of all major projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note the progress made on the Corporate Programme and raise any matters arising.

1. Background

- 1.1 This update report covers the progress made on the Corporate Programme over the Q1 and Q2 of the 2022/23 financial year. It should be noted that projects and programmes can span many months and sometimes years, so completion will not always align with the financial year end period.

- 1.2 Significant Projects and Programmes are monitored via the Corporate Programme Board (CPB). The CPB is chaired by DCFO Bigland and consists of four Corporate Management Team (CMT) Members, the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO), Heads of ICT, HR and Prevention & Protection, and supported by the Programme and Projects Management Office (PMO) Manager. The Procurement Manager has also been invited to attend the CPB sessions. Additional stakeholders are invited as appropriate. Following each CPB a Highlight and Escalation report is provided to CMT.
- 1.3 The PMO is now fully embedded and the Service/Authority is benefiting from the improved effective governance and management of programmes and projects.

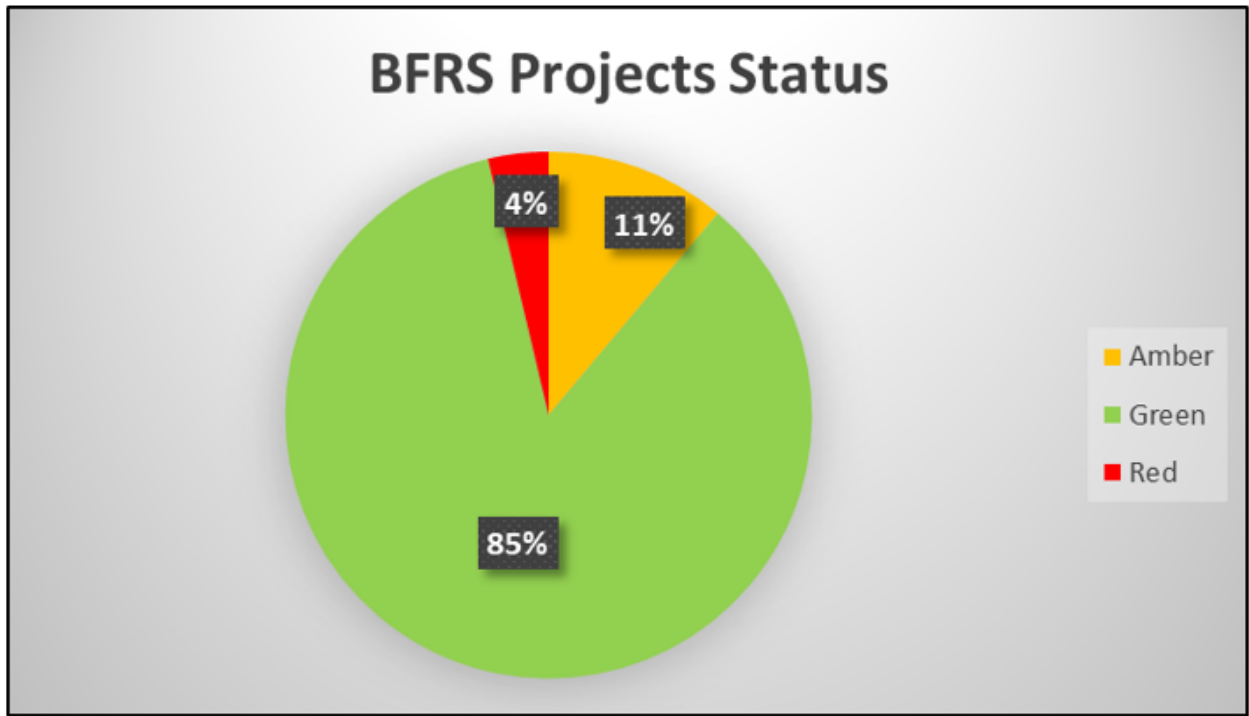
2. **Introduction**

- 2.1 A high-level update covering the Projects and Programmes undertaken during Q1 and Q2 2022/23 is provided below in section 3, with a pie chart presenting a pictorial summary of the positive position as at end of the financial year. As of October 2022, there are 23 projects with a green status, 3 with amber and 1 with red status.

The exception reports for projects with Amber and Red status are included in Appendix A. These are the Safe and Well Project (Red), Protection Fire Risk Data Warehouse Project (Amber), Replacement Mobilising System Residual Work Project (Amber) and National Operational Guidance Project (Amber). In most cases the Red and Amber status reflects extended timelines to complete the project delivery.

- 2.2 The majority of the active projects (85%) are on track to deliver the set objectives on time against latest plans, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.



Projects	Count of RAG Status
Amber	3
Green	23
Red	1
Grand Total	27

Colour Code	Project Status Key
GREEN	No issues. On course to meet targets.
AMBER	Some issues. May not meet targets.
RED	Outside of agreed targets.

3. **High-Level Summary of Key Milestones achieved Q1 & Q2 2022/23**

3.1 The following corporate projects and workstreams were delivered successfully and closed:

- CMS & PDR Pro Upgrade – This project delivered the BFRS Course Management System and successfully upgraded our training platform for Grey Book staff from v3 to v5
- Stations Productivity Assessment - The project studied the BFRS stations productivity and utilisation of our assets and resources in line with our Community Risk Management Plan.
- SharePoint Upgrade - This project delivered the implementation of an upgraded version of SharePoint, from on premise to an online version. It also enabled the use of workflows to allow us to automate current business processes, collaborate more easily and effectively when working on documents, reports, plans and strategies, provided an intranet to use as a communication tool to share information and improved two-way communication and feedback on a range of subjects.
- iTrent Management Dashboard workstream - This project implemented a standard management absence dashboard allowing managers to understand the trends and take action quickly and easily.

3.2 Work commenced on the following new projects:

- BFRS Website Upgrade Project – This project will deliver a secure, reliable, and modern website solution that will aid the Service significantly in delivering our mission in an accessible way. Website upgrade supplier selection has been completed, a preferred supplier identified, and contract review and sign off activities are in progress.
- Luton Pump Relocation Trial Project - The trial will allow BFRS to verify the ORH modelling data in a real-life situation, which could help improve response times. Luton Pump Relocation Trial soft launch commenced on 19th Sep whilst finalising the work on the license to occupy the EEAST premises. The full trial commenced on 3rd October.
- Pension Data service Project - The Fire Pensions Administrator changed their software provider from Heywood's to Civica to reduce their spend and cost to BFRS in the long-term. Civica require BFRS to report fire pensions data monthly rather than annually as we do at present. BFRS has no easy way to produce these reports frequently. This project delivers monthly pension reports for Fire Fighters Pension Scheme (FPS) and will help in the production of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) reports. Retrospective FPS reports have been created from April 2022 and are under review by the Payroll Managers.

- PDR Pro Appraisals Workstream - This project delivers digital transformation of the Appraisal process by replacing the paper-based solution with an electronic module on PDR Pro. The PDR Pro appraisal module has been configured in test. An updated Appraisal Policy, Procedure and Talent Grid has been submitted to HHR for review and approval. eFireService Super Users training has been provided to key Learning and Development team members. Consultation with FBU and neurodiversity group to follow once the draft Policy has been approved.
- The iTrent On-boarding workstream will replace the existing paper based on-boarding process with an electronic solution through an iTrent module, this will ensure new employees can acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and behavior expectations in order to become effective members of our organisation. Scoping documents and a delivery plan have been produced. This workstream is expected to complete by end of 2022.
- BA Replacement Project - This project supports the safety and wellbeing of our Fire Fighters. Fire and rescue service personnel operate in dynamic and at times extremely hazardous environments e.g., incidents involving fire, chemicals, biological hazards, radiation etc. The wearing of breathing apparatus by personnel is one of the risk control measures likely to be employed within the overall operational plan for many incidents of these types. Breathing apparatus enables the wearer to breathe safely in an otherwise irrespirable and/or toxic atmosphere. This project also delivers compliance with general Fire and Rescue Services Legislation. Discovery and planning work is being progressed.
- Prevention Road Safety Vehicle Virtual Reality - BFRS are continually striving to look at new innovative ways to deliver road safety education. With the collaborative work that we do with our partners on the Beds Road Safety Group, BFRS have successfully won a funding bid to support the development of a Road Safety Vehicle (RSV) that will utilise modern technology to engage and educate young drivers utilising Virtual Reality videos to enhance the learning experience in various areas of road safety. A new vehicle has been ordered and quotes have been received for provision of the other elements of the solution. Due to unforeseen inflation pressures at the time of scoping this project is experiencing cost challenges. The service remains in dialogue with the partnership and the OPCC to seek to collectively meet those pressures so the project can continue.
- Control Resilience Project – This project aims to increase Fire Control resilience, remove single points of failure, increase effectiveness and optimise office space. Initial work started to review the office space, obtain Control Team availability and task analysis data to inform the project deliverables.

- On-call Improvements Project – This project will aim to improve the On-Call availability including ensuring we are using our on-call crews effectively to respond to incidents based on risk, and by providing the right tools and policies to our staff to maximise our service capabilities.

- 3.3 The Asset Tracking Project is in the final stage of its delivery. 95% of Training Centre assets and HQ stores are now documented. The team is now working to complete the remaining items.
- 3.4 GIS, Risk & Workload Modeller Project has now delivered the implementation of all Cadcorp tools, including Local Knowledge for Web Mapping which is now fully configured. The Web Mapping is also available for live use. The next steps are to complete the 3TC IRS Interface – a delivery plan is awaited from 3TC.
- 3.5 Station End Equipment Project – the requirements specification and procurement plan were completed and approved through service governance which led to a preferred supplier being selected. The Peripheral Equipment check has been completed for 14 stations & Test Control and procurement is now in progress with the selected supplier.
- 3.6 Red Fleet CCTV Cameras Project – The requirements specification has been reviewed and updated and was presented to the HTAM Board for final sign off on 13/10.
- 3.7 PDR Pro to Gartan interface – the interface development from PDR Pro into the staging database has been completed. We are now working on the import into Gartan.
- 3.8 Clothing Project focus is on the requirements specification production. Contact made with HFRS to explore collaboration opportunity. A list of garments has been shared and is being compared, samples have been presented by both services. Officers are now working to establish feasibility of a joint procurement.
- 3.9 BMIS Project - The HMICFRS module has been configured on BMIS
- 3.10 Safe and Well – The new Power App form has exited development. 5 of the 6 subsequently raised Change Requests have been developed and released for testing. The In-house system MVP development effort estimate is being worked on by BIT. Once received, the end-to-end delivery plan will be produced for the new Power App mobile form implementation.

- 3.11 iTrent WT Recruitment workstream – the UAT has now been completed and the live environment is ready for use. Only one outstanding issue is being investigated (the process of linking the Mail Merge Templates to the Lifecycle needs to be confirmed).
- 3.12 MDT Phase 3 Project has completed the Protection Fire Safety form UAT. Live implementation planning is in progress. SC Capture configuration has also been completed by Airbus and training provided to Hydrants Team on 11/10. A draft implementation plan has been produced and is under review. Incident Handover Form development has also been completed.
- 3.13 Replacement Mobilising Project – dates have been received from Motorola for the 999s hosted solution delivery (end of Jan 2023). The Project Manager is working to confirm testing dates based on Control resource availability.
- 3.14 ESN Assure 1.9 in-building testing started and is ~40% complete. It is expected to be fully finished by end of October.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note the progress made on the Corporate Programme and discuss any matters arising.

**CHRIS BIGLAND
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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REPORT LEAD: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING LGA GOVERNANCE REVIEW

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

Background Papers: FRA Executive report from 26 May entitled Independent Review of Governance See [HERE](#)
FRA report from 7 June on the Member Development Programme See [HERE](#)
FRA Executive report from 22 June on Final Resourcing Options for Monitoring Officer role See [HERE](#)
FRA report from 20 July entitled Independent Review of Governance see [HERE](#)
FRA report from 8 September 2022 entitled Monitoring Officer Report See [HERE](#)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present members of the Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) with an action plan to update the Fire and Rescue Authority's constitutional aspects of the Member's Handbook.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge the content of this paper and:

- That Members approve the action plan.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Association's independent review of governance has been an inclusive and engaging process. The Authority now has a clear route map to move forward.
- 1.2 In particular, the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) will now develop and redefine the professional partnership between officers and FRA Members, define the scrutiny function and futureproof our governance arrangements.

2. Background

- 2.1 The LGA's Joint Member and Officer Workshop held on 6 October 2022 was a culmination of a programme of development and support activities as follows:

- A desktop document review of Bedfordshire FRA Governance Documents conducted by Shahin Ismail, Monitoring Officer at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Separate diagnostic sessions for Members and Officers:
- Member Discovery Session on 8 September 2022; and
- Officer Discovery Session on 14 September 2022.

- 2.2 Key themes from the Discovery Sessions according to the LGA are:

- clarifying of the governance roles and responsibilities including the Remit of the executive; role of portfolio/challenge groups; role of non-executive members; and build in the monitoring officer function;
- clarifying the Scrutiny process including who does it, how, when, and how can it be improved whilst retaining the good relationships that exists.
- developing Member and Officer engagement include more opportunities for informal dialogue and learning;
- making the FRA more visible and accountable to the public;
- empowering managers to take decisions; reduce bureaucracy
- Working together better as a professional partnership which needs to be more systematic,
- considering extending tenure of the Chair;
- reviewing the Member's Handbook including standing orders and code of conduct;

- increasing middle managers knowledge of the democratic process; and
- reviewing Member’s training and development including a programme of continuing professional development (CPD)

3. Governance Review Action Plan

3.1 Objectives:

- Future proof governance arrangements;
- Reform our governance arrangements to support a long-term professional partnership between officers and FRA Members;
- Make the FRA more accountable to the public; and
- Raise the visibility of the FRA and inform the public about what it does and why.

Action	By When	By Whom
Design a new Member Development Programme and consider the content, costs and benefits of LGA’s Development Phase delivered by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Formal member training packages could include sessions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRA governance literacy; • Community Risk Management; • Corporate Risk Management; • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; • Data literacy; and • Visits to or observation of other FRAs. 	FRA Exec meeting on 14 November 2022	HSSA
Agree new Member Development Programme	FRA meeting on 14 December 2022	CFO

<p>Agree new governance elements outside the Member's Handbook including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the LGA equality and diversity charter; • Adoption of the Fire Standard Code of Ethics; • Public and media participation; • Local pay review; • Livestream and recording FR meetings. 	FRA meeting on 14 December 2022	CFO
<p>Review constitutional aspects of Member's Handbook to include reviews and options for strengthening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FRA terms of reference; • The function and role of scrutiny; • Call-in procedures and the function and role of task and finish group(s); • The role of the Monitoring Officer; • The process of Member appointments; • Review the terms of reference of the Audit and Standards Committee; • The terms of reference of the Executive Committee; • Member code of conduct; • Scheme of Delegation to Officers; and • Financial regulations and financial instructions. 	<p>FRA workshop – 25 January 2023</p> <p>(The review will determine the timetable for approvals)</p>	MO and BSM
Test FRA elements of website and report back results	FRA Executive meeting on 10 January 2023	HSSA

Develop People Impact Assessment (formerly known as an Equality Impact assessment)	FRA meeting on 2 February and 30 March meeting 2023	HSSA
Finalise new FRA elements of the Website and modern.gov pages to improve user experience	FRA meeting on 30 March 2023	HSSA
Inform key stakeholders of governance changes	TBC subject to outcomes from review	CFO
Final approval of all new Governance arrangements	TBC subject to outcomes from review	CFO

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 The Authority will move forward in line with our action plan above and report back to FRA and FRA executive meetings.
- 4.2 The Authority will consider the content, costs and benefits of LGA's Development Phase delivered by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. We will seek quotes from other suppliers to gain assurance we are receiving value for money.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That Members approve the action plan.

ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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REPORT AUTHORS: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

SUBJECT: TREASURY MANAGEMENT – MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

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

Background Papers:

Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23, as detailed in the Budget Book 2022/23.

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the Authority's Treasury Management to 30 September 2022.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Fire and Rescue Authority consider and comment on the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Since 1 April 2006, the management of the Fire and Rescue Authority's (FRA) Treasury operations has been undertaken by the Authority's Finance staff. Treasury management activities are undertaken with the objective of maximising return/minimising cost, consistent with minimising risk. When investing, the over-riding principle is the maintenance of the capital sum.

In order to support this function, the Authority also employs Link Asset Services to provide independent, professional treasury advice.

1.2 The FRA's banking facilities are also arranged and monitored by the Finance staff.

1.3 The FRA adopted the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), revised in 2017. One of the requirements of the CIPFA Code is for there to be regular reports on Treasury Management to be presented to the appropriate 'committee'. This is the mid-year Review Report for 2022/23 to 30 September 2022.

1.4 The FRA is asked to note the report, as there are no changes requested to the Prudential Indicators, approval is not required by the FRA.

2. Treasury Management Reports

2.1 This mid-year review report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and covers the following:

- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Authority's capital expenditure (prudential indicators);
- A review of the Authority's investment portfolio for 2022/23;
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2022/23;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken (if applicable) during 2022/23;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2022/23; and
- An economic update for the first six months of 2022/23.

3. Treasury Management Training

3.1 The Responsible Officer (the Section 151 Officer) must ensure that Group/FRA Members tasked with treasury management responsibilities, including those responsible for scrutiny, have access to training relevant to their needs and those responsibilities.

3.2 Training was provided to Members by our Treasury Advisor's, Link Asset Services in July 2022, this can again be arranged at the Members request and is recommended by the Treasurer.

4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Annual Investment Strategy Update

For the current year, these were approved by the FRA on 24th March 2022. There are no policy changes to the TMSS, the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

5. Authorities Capital Position (Prudential Indicators)

This part of the report is structured to update:

- Capital expenditure plans

- How these plans are being financed
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

5.1 Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the Budget.

Capital Expenditure by Service	2022/23 Original Estimate £'000	Current Position £'000	2022/23 Revised Estimate £'000
As per Budget Book	1,357	532	876

5.2 Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programme

The table below draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans (above), highlighting the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element of the table increases the underlying indebtedness of the Authority by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), although this will be reduced in part by revenue charges for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision). This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

Capital Expenditure	2022/23 Original Estimate £'000	2022/23 Revised Estimate £'000
Total Capital Expenditure	1,357	1,357
Financed by:		
Capital receipts	35	7
Capital grants	0	0
Capital reserves	453	0
Revenue	869	869
Total financing	1,357	876
Borrowing Requirement	0	0

5.3 Changes to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), External Debt and the Operational Boundary

The table below shows the CFR, which is the underlying external need to incur borrowing for a capital purpose. It also shows the expected debt position over the period, which is termed the operational Boundary.

Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement

We are on target to achieve the original forecast Capital Financing Requirement.

Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

	2022/23 Original Estimate £'000	Current Position £'000	2022/23 Revised Estimate £'000
Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement			
TOTAL CFR	7,273	7,273	7,273
Net movement in CFR	(233)	(233)	(233)
Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt			
Borrowing	9,987	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities*	0	0	0
Total debt (year end position)	9,987	9,987	9,987

5.4 Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing, (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2022/23 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Authority has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

	2022/23 Original Estimate £'000	Current Position £'000	2022/23 Revised Estimate £'000
Borrowing	9,987	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0
Total debt	9,987	9,987	9,987
CFR* (year end position)	7,040	7,040	7,040

The Treasurer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current future years in complying with this prudential indicator.

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised limit for external Debt	2022/23 Original Indicator £'000	Current Position £'000	2022/23 Revised Indicator £'000
Borrowing	9,987	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities	2,200	2,200	2,200
Total	12,187	12,187	12,187

6. Borrowing/Investment Strategy for 2022/23

- 6.1 It was anticipated at the beginning of 2022/23 that the Authority would have surplus funds available for short-term investment, either within its Special Interest Bearing Account (SIBA) at its bankers or through the money market. As at the 30th September 2022 the SIBA account is paying a rate of 0.30%.
- 6.2 The Authority's call-account with Barclays Bank has been used during 2022/23. As at the 30th September 2022 the Barclays account is paying a rate of 1.81% (between £750K-£3M)
- 6.3 This Authority's 120-Day Interest account with Santander has been used during 2022/23. As at the 30th September 2022 this account is paying a rate of 1.18% as notice for withdrawal has been given.
- 6.4 This Authority's 180-Day Interest account with Santander has been used during 2022/23. As at the 30th September 2022 this account is paying a rate of 1.21% as notice of withdrawal has been given.
- 6.5 The Authority had three fixed term deposits maturing during the first half of 2022/23. One with Goldman Sachs (£2M) and two with Qatar National Bank (£2.25M and £2.5M). Six new fixed term deposits have been placed during the first half of 2022/23, via our Treasury Agents, Link Asset Services. Three are with First Abu Dhabi Bank for 9 months (£2M @ 1.81%), 1 year (£1M @ 2.24%) and six months (£2M @ 2.19%). Two are with Lloyds Corporate Bank for 6 months (£3M @ 1.67% and £2M @ 2.29%). The remainder deposit was placed with Standard Chartered Bank for 6 months (£4M @ 2.32%) in their sustainable fixed term deposit.
- 6.6 This Authority's 95-Day Interest account with Lloyds Bank has been used during 2022/23. However, funds were recalled and returned to us on 23rd May.
- 6.7 During the second half of 2022/23 this Authority will be considering using Money Market Funds for short-term investments. Operators use the credit ratings agencies which lay down investment restrictions to enable the funds to maintain its AAA status. Money Market Funds may also be governed by the Institutional Money Market Fund Association (IMMFA) which is a voluntary code of practice issued in 1992 by a trade body for Money Market Funds. This ensures all members offer a consistently high quality product by promoting best practice, transparency of fund values and a standardised format for published data.

6.8 Borrowing has not been undertaken in 2022/23 to finance the Capital Programme. The funding for the 2022/23 Capital Programme was through Reserves and Revenue contributions.

7. Interest Rate Movements During 2022/23

7.1 Bank base rate was 0.75% at the beginning of the year but by 22nd September had increased to 2.25%.

7.2 Interest rates applicable to temporary investments were short-term money market rates. These investments were fixed for a set period (between one month and one year), at a greater interest rate than bank base rate. During the first five months of 2022/23, three investments reached maturity, and then six were placed for a period between 6 months and 1 year. When placing these, a number of factors were considered, including cashflow, security, return etc in order to meet our Policies and at the same time get the best return.

8. Investment/Borrowing Operations

8.1 Investments:

Surplus cash is invested on a temporary basis through the money market. Levels of investment were £6.75M at the start of 2022/23 and increased to £14M as at 30th September 2022. In the year 2022/23 to 30th September 2022, £43,477 interest had been generated through these investments and through the local SIBA account, Barclays Account, Santander Accounts and Lloyds Account. Interest on PWLB borrowings totals of £210,817 will be paid on 30th September 2022. This will give a net interest paid position of £167,340 as at 30th September 2022.

8.2 The FRA's budgeted investment return (interest receivable) for 2022/23 was set at £65,400. However, due to the unexpected increase in Bank of England base rate this has been revised to an expected return of approximately £250,000 by 31st March 2023.

8.3 Long-Term Borrowing:

Debt rescheduling opportunities to date have been very limited in the economic climate given the consequent structure of interest rates, and following the increase in the margin added to gilt yields which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

Due to the current interest rates however, it may be possible to repay one of our PWLB loans resulting in a favourable position for the authority regarding revenue savings. We are now actively considering opportunities to do this and should a positive financial situation arise members will be asked to agree this course of action.

8.4 Borrowing and Investments Outstanding:

	Temporary Investments £000s	Long-Term Borrowing £000s
Outstanding at 1 April 2022	6,750	9,987
Raised	14,000	0
Repaid	6,750	0
Outstanding at 31 August 2022	14,000	9,987

NB – The Temporary Investments above do not include the balances from the Authority’s bank Accounts

9. Performance Measurement

- 9.1 The success of cash flow management, and hence the Fire Authority’s temporary investment and borrowing activity, is measured by comparing the actual rates of interest achieved and borne against a benchmark of the 7 day SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) compounded rate.
- 9.2 For the period ending 31 August 2022, the average interest rate achieved from temporary investments, the SIBA Account, Barclays, Lloyds and Santander Accounts was 1.61%, higher than the average 7 day SONIA over the same period of 1.57%.

10. General Economic Conditions

10.1 In brief, the first five months of this financial year has seen:

- Inflation – Target Inflation (CPI) was at 6.20% on 1 April 2022 and at 10.10% by 31 August 2022 (+3.90% change).
- Headline Inflation (RPI) was at 8.20% on 1 April 2022 and at 12.30% by 31 August 2022 (+4.10% change).

10.2 Economic Update - An economic update is provided at Appendix 1.

11. Economic Forecast – (Link Group Update 27th September 2022)

The Authority's Treasury Advisers, Link Asset Services, have provided the following forecast:

	End Q3 2022	End Q4 2022	End Q1 2023	End Q2 2023	End Q3 2023	End Q4 2023
Bank Rate	4.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	4.50%	4.00%
5yr PWLB rate	5.00%	4.90%	4.70%	4.50%	4.20%	3.90%
10yr PWLB rate	4.90%	4.70%	4.60%	4.30%	4.10%	3.80%
25yr PWLB rate	5.10%	4.90%	4.80%	4.50%	4.30%	4.10%
50yr PWLB rate	4.80%	4.60%	4.50%	4.20%	4.00%	3.80%

ANDREW HOPKINSON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

GAVIN CHAMBERS
TREASURER

Economic Update

Appendix 1

- The second quarter of 2022/23 saw:
 - GDP revised upwards in Q1 2022/23 to +0.2% q/q from -0.1%, which means the UK economy has avoided recession for the time being;
 - Signs of economic activity losing momentum as production fell due to rising energy prices;
 - CPI inflation ease to 9.9% y/y in August, having been 9.0% in April, but domestic price pressures showing little sign of abating in the near-term;
 - The unemployment rate fall to a 48-year low of 3.6% due to a large shortfall in labour supply;
 - Bank Rate rise by 100bps over the quarter, taking Bank Rate to 2.25% with further rises to come;
 - Gilt yields surge and sterling fall following the “fiscal event” of the new Prime Minister and Chancellor on 23rd September.
- The UK economy grew by 0.2% q/q in Q1 2022/23, though revisions to historic data left it below pre-pandemic levels.
- There are signs of higher energy prices creating more persistent downward effects in economic activity. Both industrial production (-0.3% m/m) and construction output (-0.8% m/m) fell in July 2022 for a second month in a row. Although some of this was probably due to the heat wave at the time, manufacturing output fell in some of the most energy intensive sectors (e.g., chemicals), pointing to signs of higher energy prices weighing on production. With the drag on real activity from high inflation having grown in recent months, GDP is at risk of contracting through the autumn and winter months.
- The fall in the composite PMI from 49.6 in August to a 20-month low preliminary reading of 48.4 in September points to a fall in GDP of around 0.2% q/q in Q3 and consumer confidence is at a record low. Retail sales volumes fell by 1.6% m/m in August, which was the ninth fall in 10 months. That left sales volumes in August just 0.5% above their pre-Covid level and 3.3% below their level at the start of the year. There are also signs that households are spending their excess savings in response to high prices. Indeed, cash in households' bank accounts rose by £3.2bn in August, which was below the £3.9bn rise in July and much smaller than the 2019 average monthly rate of £4.6bn.
- The labour market remained exceptionally tight. Data for July and August provided further evidence that the weaker economy is leading to a cooling in labour demand. Labour Force Survey (LFS) employment rose by 40,000 in the three months to July (the

smallest rise since February). But a renewed rise in inactivity of 154,000 over the same period meant that the unemployment rate fell from 3.8% in June to a new 48-year low of 3.6%. The single-month data showed that inactivity rose by 354,000 in July itself and there are now 904,000 more inactive people aged 16+ compared to before the pandemic in February 2020. The number of vacancies has started to level off from recent record highs but there have been few signs of a slowing in the upward momentum on wage growth. Indeed, in July, the 3my/y rate of average earnings growth rose from 5.2% in June to 5.5%.

- CPI inflation eased from 10.1% in July to 9.9% in August, though inflation has not peaked yet. The easing in August was mainly due to a decline in fuel prices reducing fuel inflation from 43.7% to 32.1%. And with the oil price now just below \$90pb, we would expect to see fuel prices fall further in the coming months.
- However, utility price inflation is expected to add 0.7% to CPI inflation in October when the Ofgem unit price cap increases to, typically, £2,500 per household (prior to any benefit payments). But, as the government has frozen utility prices at that level for two years, energy price inflation will fall sharply after October and have a big downward influence on CPI inflation.
- Nonetheless, the rise in services CPI inflation from 5.7% y/y in July to a 30-year high of 5.9% y/y in August suggests that domestic price pressures are showing little sign of abating. A lot of that is being driven by the tight labour market and strong wage growth. CPI inflation is expected to peak close to 10.4% in November and, with the supply of workers set to remain unusually low, the tight labour market will keep underlying inflationary pressures strong until early next year.
- During H1 2022, there has been a change of both Prime Minister and Chancellor. The new team (Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng) have made a step change in government policy. The government's huge fiscal loosening from its proposed significant tax cuts will add to existing domestic inflationary pressures and will potentially leave a legacy of higher interest rates and public debt. Whilst the government's utility price freeze, which could cost up to £150bn (5.7% of GDP) over 2 years, will reduce peak inflation from 14.5% in January next year to 10.4% in November this year, the long list of tax measures announced at the "fiscal event" adds up to a loosening in fiscal policy relative to the previous government's plans of £44.8bn (1.8% of GDP) by 2026/27. These included the reversal of April's national insurance tax on 6th November, the cut in the basic rate of income tax from 20p to 19p in April 2023, the cancellation of next April's corporation tax rise, the cut to stamp duty and the removal of the 45p tax rate, although the 45p tax rate cut announcement has already been reversed.
- Fears that the government has no fiscal anchor on the back of these announcements has meant that the pound has weakened again, adding further upward pressure to interest rates. Whilst the pound fell to a record low of \$1.035 on the Monday following the government's "fiscal event", it has since recovered to around \$1.12. That is due to hopes that the Bank of England will deliver a very big rise in interest rates at the policy meeting on 3rd November and the government will lay out a credible medium-term plan in the near term. This was originally expected as part of the fiscal statement on 23rd November but has subsequently been

moved forward to an expected release date in October. Nevertheless, with concerns over a global recession growing, there are downside risks to the pound.

- The MPC has now increased interest rates seven times in as many meetings in 2022 and has raised rates to their highest level since the Global Financial Crisis. Even so, coming after the Fed and ECB raised rates by 75 basis points (bps) in their most recent meetings, the Bank of England's latest 50 basis points hike looks relatively dovish. However, the UK's status as a large importer of commodities, which have jumped in price, means that households in the UK are now facing a much larger squeeze on their real incomes.
- Since the fiscal event on 23rd September, we now expect the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to increase interest rates further and faster, from 2.25% currently to a peak of 5.00% in February 2023. The combination of the government's fiscal loosening, the tight labour market and sticky inflation expectations means we expect the MPC to raise interest rates by 100bps at the policy meetings in November (to 3.25%) and 75 basis points in December (to 4%) followed by further 50 basis point hikes in February and March (to 5.00%). Market expectations for what the MPC will do are volatile. If Bank Rate climbs to these levels the housing market looks very vulnerable, which is one reason why the peak in our forecast is lower than the peak of 5.50% - 5.75% priced into the financial markets at present.
- Throughout 2022/23, gilt yields have been on an upward trend. They were initially caught up in the global surge in bond yields triggered by the surprisingly strong rise in CPI inflation in the US in May. The rises in two-year gilt yields (to a peak of 2.37% on 21st June) and 10-year yields (to a peak of 2.62%) took them to their highest level since 2008 and 2014 respectively. However, the upward trend was exceptionally sharply at the end of September as investors demanded a higher risk premium and expected faster and higher interest rate rises to offset the government's extraordinary fiscal stimulus plans. The 30-year gilt yield rose from 3.60% to 5.10% following the "fiscal event", which threatened financial stability by forcing pension funds to sell assets into a falling market to meet cash collateral requirements. In response, the Bank did two things. First, it postponed its plans to start selling some of its quantitative easing (QE) gilt holdings until 31st October. Second, it committed to buy up to £65bn of long-term gilts to "restore orderly market conditions" until 14th October. In other words, the Bank is restarting QE, although for financial stability reasons rather than monetary policy reasons.
- Since the Bank's announcement on 28th September, the 30-year gilt yield has fallen back from 5.10% to 3.83%. The 2-year gilt yield dropped from 4.70% to 4.30% and the 10-year yield fell back from 4.55% to 4.09%.
- There is a possibility that the Bank continues with QE at the long-end beyond 14th October or it decides to delay quantitative tightening beyond 31st October, even as it raises interest rates. So far at least, investors seem to have taken the Bank at its word that this is not a change in the direction of monetary policy nor a step towards monetary financing of the government's deficit. But instead, that it is a temporary intervention with financial stability in mind.

- After a shaky start to the year, the S&P 500 and FTSE 100 climbed in the first half of Q2 2022/23 before falling to their lowest levels since November 2020 and July 2021 respectively. The S&P 500 is 7.2% below its level at the start of the quarter, whilst the FTSE 100 is 5.2% below it as the fall in the pound has boosted the value of overseas earnings in the index. The decline has, in part, been driven by the rise in global real yields and the resulting downward pressure on equity valuations as well as concerns over economic growth leading to a deterioration in investor risk appetite.

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REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR CHOUDHRY
SUBJECT: PORTFOLIO LEAD UPDATE: WORKFORCE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For further information: Alison Kibblewhite
on this report contact: Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Background Papers:

PURPOSE:

To present a Portfolio Lead update on Workforce and Organisational Development

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members receive the presentation.

COUNCILLOR KASHIF CHOUDHRY

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Human Resources, Occupational Health and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Updates



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Date: 31/10/2022

FRA Member: Cllr Kashif Choudhry

Portfolio Lead: ACFO Alison Kibblewhite

Portfolio SME: Head of HR, Sarah Fecondi

HR and Occupational Health Update



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Highlights over the last year

- Recruitment of:
 - Operational roles (Grey Book): Wholetime 30 plus 6 transferees and 2 Control
 - On-Call/RDS: 22
 - Professional support (Green Book): 25 some hard to fill roles including OH Manager and EDI Manager
- Implementation of hybrid working for appropriate roles and other significant corporate change programmes
- Benefit and recognition staff survey
- Revised Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, Reasonable Adjustments Guidance and launch of an individual “reasonable adjustment passport”
- Creation of a neurodiversity steering group and staff working group including a 3 year action plan
- Extensive health and wellbeing events and services for staff
- Launch of Cycle to Work Scheme
- Implementation of systems to improve end user experience and efficiency
- Significant pensions work including LPPA change of software provider

HR and Occupational Health Update



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Areas of focus

- New CRMP people priorities
- New People Strategy
- Strategic and operational plans to deliver statutory services during potential industrial action
- Induction of OH Manager and recruitment to other hard to fill roles in team
- Review of OH including contract re-procurement and addressing the Covid backlog of health surveillance and medicals
- Continuous development and promotion of health, wellbeing and cost of living activities including a revised Benefits offer
- Significant ongoing work on pensions
- A wholetime recruitment plan for 2023/24
- Supporting corporate change programmes
- With L&D colleagues, further develop management training in core people management practices
- Ongoing system development to streamline and update processes

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Highlights over the last year

- Range of engagement activities with under represented groups eg Have a Go days, schools and college events, Eid in Luton, Bedford River Festival, social media, mailshots to community centres and local businesses, etc.
- Strengthened partnership working particularly with Beds Police on recruitment and community events
- Women in the Fire Service
- Designed and implemented a new People Impact Assessment template and guidance
- PIAs are built into the Programme Management Office and Procurement processes
- Embedding EDI into training not just to ensure it is accessible to all but also educating on how EDI needs to be considered in all that we do.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Areas of focus

- Induction of the EDI Manager
- Supporting the Service in engaging with under represented community groups
- Working with regional colleagues to share knowledge and resources
- Promote diversity and inclusion events
- Establish a Bedfordshire EDI forum with partners
- With L&D colleagues, develop relevant training eg awareness and understanding of neurodiversity
- Targeted recruitment engagement activities with under represented groups
- Review and refresh EDI policies



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Questions?

Organisational Development Update



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Date: 31/10/2022

FRA Member: Cllr Kashif Choudhry

Portfolio Lead: ACFO Kibblewhite

Portfolio SME: HTAM : AC Jason Tai

Organisational Training

Highlights

1. Training impacted by COVID 19 has been addressed and over 900 courses were delivered in 21/22
2. Introduced a Tactical Firefighting course
3. Marauding Terrorist Attack live play exercises underway at RAF Henlow
4. Paramedics now take part in our Road Traffic Collision refresher training

Future development / issues to raise

1. Will lose 3 x established instructors shortly, we have recruited new instructors and in the process of sending on training courses
2. Started work on Breathing Apparatus room to reduce exposure to contaminants
3. Had to move some safety critical training to plan for Industrial action
4. Working on collaboration with Northants and Buckinghamshire for joint training facility.



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Recruit Training update

Highlights

1. In process of delivering our 2nd Wholetime recruit cohort (12 new recruits) in house with BFRS instructors having previously trained 10 wholetime recruits as part of collaboration with Hertfordshire.
2. Delivered 3 x On call recruit modular courses that has led to 22 new On call FF's.
3. Been able to hold pass out parades for all courses now COVID restrictions have been lifted.

Future Development / Points to raise

1. Industrial action may have a delay on the latest recruits course from being completed
2. The training centre is running at full capacity and is limited by the size of the estate. This restricts the type of training that we can deliver alongside the recruits course



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Learning and Development

Highlights

1. Fully live with the e-learning and training software PDR Pro Version 5
2. Established a development portfolio for professional support personnel and have delivered a large number of new training courses
3. Professional support personnel now have access to the E learning modules
4. Designed a behaviours & values poster aligned to NFCC behaviours & core code of ethics
5. Introduced an incident command refresher to align command training to National operational guidance
6. Neurodiversity training – included in gateways and delivery of training
7. Run a large number of promotional gateways

Future Development / Points to raise

1. Online appraisals via Workforce pro
2. Coaching and mentoring courses to be offered to personnel to allow them to be part of the National Fire Chiefs Council portal



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Apprenticeship Updates

Highlights

1. Successfully approved in application as a supportive provider for Hertfordshire
2. Invoiced Herts for 1st cohort (£27k)
3. Increasing the number of green book apprentices
4. Started end point assessment course to help apprentices become competent.

Future Development / Points to raise

1. Exploring how BFRS can become an apprentice provider – commercial opportunity



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Driver training update

Highlights

1. Replaced our Green Book Driver training manager and driving instructor
2. Future proofing the ability to deliver driver training (extra instructors)
3. 1 of 2 services that can provide the Emergency Response Driving instructor course , already collaborated with Herts, LFB , Cambs, Norfolk and Cumbria
4. Technical lead for the NFCC driver training assurance group
5. New BMW training vehicle

Future Development / Points to raise

1. Development of new instructors is a lengthy process
2. Exploring providing LFB with driver training course



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

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

Background Papers: None

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

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
EXECUTIVE	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
15 November 2022	Work Programme		CRMP update	
			Immediate Detriment update	
			New Member Development Programme	HSSA (Governance Review outcome)

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
COMBINED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (3) / BUDGET WORKSHOP (1)	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		CRMP update	
	Portfolio Leads Updates: Assets and Collaboration (DCFO & ACO)		2022/23 Budget Monitoring	Deferred from October meeting
	2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring		Agree New Member Development Programme	HSSA (Governance Review outcome)
	Q2 2022/23 Performance Report (July to September)		Update Members' Handbook	MO and BSM (Governance Review outcome)
	Public Sector Equality Duty Report			
	CRMP Update			
	2023/24 Budget Update and Consultation			
	Procurement Policy and Contract Procedures (reviewed every 2 years, due 2023)			
	Members' Allowances Scheme			
	Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24	Deferred to February to tie in with constituent authorities		
	Work Programme			

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
EXECUTIVE	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
10 January 2023	Work Programme		CRMP update	
			Test FRA Elements of website	HSSA
			Approval of Members' Handbook	CFO

Meeting Date	'Cyclical' Agenda Items		Additional/Commissioned Agenda Items	
BUDGET WORKSHOP (2)	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
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		Finalise FRA Elements of Website (Modern.gov)	HSSA
	Executive Committee Minutes from 10.01.23		Final approval of new Governance Framework	CFO
	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	
MEMBER DEVELOPMENT (4)	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
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	
EXECUTIVE	Item	Notes	Item	Notes
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 nd March 2023			
	Executive Committee Minutes from 14 th 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			
	Asset Management Strategy (reviewed every 3 years, next review 2022/23)			
	Disposal of Assets under the Scheme of Delegated Authority			
	Work Programme			

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