



# Bedfordshire

## Fire & Rescue Authority

07 December 2023

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

Bedford Borough Councillors: G Coombes, M Headley and A Sultan

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: R Goodchild, K Gurney, S Owen, M Versallion and R Wenham

Luton Borough Councillors: A Ali, J Burnett, M Hussain and S Hussain

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **Fire and Rescue Authority** to be held at **Dunstable Community Fire Station, Lecture Theatre** on **Friday, 15 December 2023** 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	Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor	

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose of Discussion</b>
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 3 October 2023 (Pages 5 - 16)
5.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme
6.	Audit and Standards Committee 17 October 2023	Cllr Ali	To receive the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting (Pages 17 - 30)
7.	Executive Committee meeting 23 November 2023	Chair	To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting (Pages 31 - 38)
8.	2023/24 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 39 - 54)
9.	Q2 2023/24 Performance Report (July to September)	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 55 - 72)
10.	Response Standards	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 73 - 84)
11.	Programme Board Update	DCFO	To consider a report (Pages 85 - 108)
12.	Mid Year Treasury Management report	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 109 - 124)
13.	Public Sector Equality Duty Report	ACFO	To consider a report (Pages 125 - 164)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose of Discussion</b>
14.	Procurement Policy and Contract Procedures	ACO	To consider a report (Pages 165 - 194)
15.	Work Programme	CFO	To consider a report (Pages 195 - 206)

Next Meeting

10.00 am on 13 February 2024 at Dunstable Community Fire Station,  
Lecture Theatre

### **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.

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES OF FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2023**

Present: Councillors A Ali, J Burnett (Chair), G Coombes, R Goodchild, K Gurney, M Headley (Vice-Chair), M Hussain, S Hussain, S Owen, A Sultan, M Versallion and R Wenham

CFO A Hopkinson, DCFO C Bigland, ACFO A Kibblewhite and ACO G Chambers, Mr G Britten, Ms N Upton, Ms S Taft and Mr T Warner.

23-24/FRA/24 Apologies

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor M Hussain.

Councillors Coombes and Gurney advised that they had to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

23-24/FRA/25 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

23-24/FRA/26 Communications

**Station Open Days**

The Chief Fire Officer thanked all Members who had attended Fire Station Open Days during the summer period, the most recently at Harrold Community Fire Station. The Open Day at Ampthill had raised approximately £1200 for the Firefighters Charity.

**Civic Events**

The Chief Fire Officer reported on the recent visit of the new High Sheriff to Fire and Rescue Headquarters. The visit had included a tour of the control room and a Road Traffic Collision demonstration.

The previous evening the Chief Fire Officer had taken part in the investiture of the Lord Lieutenant's cadets for 2023/24. It was noted that it was an honour and privilege to have one of our fire cadets appointed to support the Lord Lieutenant in this way.

## **RAAC Concrete**

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was not aware of any RAAC concrete in its buildings from visual checks undertaken earlier in the year. However, given the number of school buildings that had been identified as having been built with RAAC concrete, the Service had recently commenced a more intrusive survey programme.

## **Rehabilitation of Offenders**

Following a change in legislation, the Service was now required to carry out more comprehensive background checks in a step towards raising standards, protecting staff and the public, mitigating risk, and promoting a culture of honesty and integrity. This would automatically be completed for all new employees in operational and other frontline posts working with vulnerable members of the public with enhanced DBS checks on existing employees conducted during 2024.

In response to a comment from Councillor Gurney, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service would primarily be concerned with any unspent convictions; however, any convictions or criminal record would be considered on a case by case basis.

## 23-24/FRA/27 Minutes

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority on 19 July 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

## 23-24/FRA/28 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).

In response to a question from Councillor Owen, the Authority was advised that a question had last been submitted by a member of the public to the Authority's meeting in March 2023.

## 23-24/FRA/29 Executive Committee 21 September 2023

The Chair introduced the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting that took place on 21 September 2023.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that the Democratic Services teams at the constituent authorities had been contacted regarding the length of time that had elapsed since the last submission of a report from the Authority and notifying them of the

new reporting process going forward. A brief summary of Authority meetings would be prepared for submission to the constituent authorities on a quarterly basis. This may also include performance information and updates on major projects, to allow the nominated representatives to report back to the constituent authorities effectively.

**RESOLVED:**

That the submitted minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 21 September 2023 be noted.

23-24/FRA/30 Planning report for 2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax Setting

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer presented the planning report for the 2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax setting and the proposed timetable, culminating in the presentation of the final draft budget to a meeting of the Authority in February 2024.

Member Budget Workshops had been scheduled on 21 November 2023 and 25 January 2024, with a draft budget and consultation questions being presented to Members at the Authority meeting in December 2023, which it was noted had been moved from 7 December to 15 December.

In response to a question relating to savings and efficiencies, the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the non-statutory services being delivered would be discussed at the Member Budget Workshop to determine whether they should be discontinued or if charges should be introduced.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and timescales within be agreed.

23-24/FRA/31 Treasury Management Annual Report

The Assistant Chief Officer and Treasurer introduced the Annual Treasury Management report for 2022/23. This was one of three annual reports presented to the Authority relating to the treasury management function, the others being the Treasury Management Strategy, presented in March, and the Mid-Year Report.

Within this outturn report, information had been provided on capital expenditure, loan repayments and investment income. There had been no new borrowing during the year and all prudential indicators had been adhered to.

The Authority had approximately £19 million of investments and had generated around £500,000 of income during the year, largely as a result of an increase in interest rates significantly above the levels forecast in February 2022.

A blended approach was sought, with investments held in a wide range of accounts.

In response to a question from Councillor Wenham on the Authority's outstanding debt, the Assistant Chief Officer reported that this consisted of two split loans totalling £9.9 million and that the rate of interest charged on these was around 4%. Consideration had previously been given to the early repayment of these loans; however, the early repayment penalties were prohibitively high. This would continue to be kept under review, and details of the loans would be provided to Members at the forthcoming Member Development Day.

Councillor Wenham also requested additional information on the Authority's investments in terms of what financial institutions these were held with and their associated credit ratings.

The Chair requested that treasury management training be provided for Members by the Council's treasury management advisors, Link Asset Services.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that Councillor Headley, as the Lead Member for this area, was involved in the processes leading up to the presentation of the three annual treasury management reports.

**RESOLVED:**

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

Cllr M Hussain arrived 10.26 am

Cllr K Gurney left 10.30 am

23-24/FRA/32 Q1 2023/24 Performance Report (April to June)

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the Performance Report for the first quarter of 2023/24 (April to June 2023). He highlighted the revised template that had been agreed by the Executive at its last meeting. This had been adopted to make the data set clearer and to improve accessibility. The new reporting template was based on exception reporting, so that indicators not reaching target levels were detailed at the beginning of the report.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the narrative for primary accidental dwelling fires as set out in the report was incorrect, although the data provided was correct. The number of these incidents was one over target, which was below the five year average and similar to the number of primary accidental dwelling fires recorded in Quarter 1 2022/23.



(Note: following the meeting, the correct narrative text was provided as follows – “Primary fires are larger more serious fires involving property or harm to people. The number of primary accidental dwelling fires (ADF) is one over target, but the same total as in Q1 2022-23 and below the five-year average for Q1. Numbers of ADF show some natural fluctuations.

*In common with previous trends, cooking activity was the most common cause of fire, responsible for more than one third of the fires (29 of 75). After-fire ‘hot strikes’ and other targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) are carried out to reduce the risk of ADF. Data from our new HFSV system shows that over 6% of households visited deep fry on the hob. A similar proportion of households were found with cluttered kitchens or cooker not kept clean and grease free. Risk reduction advice is provided during the HFSV. ADF have been on a downward trend with the lowest ever total on record in 2021-22. In their report, HMICFRS recognised BFRS achieved the largest reduction in ADF rate of all FRS.”)*

In relation to presentation of the data set, Members were advised that a standard deviation line had been included to illustrate if performance was on track in a more visual way. As national performance information was released for the Key Performance Indicators, these would be presented side by side with local performance indicators, where definitions were aligned.

In response to questions, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that:

- There were “family groups” of fire and rescue services that enabled the Service to compare itself to similar services in terms of size and activity levels. Additional work was being undertaken to align the definitions of Key Performance Indicators with the national indicators to facilitate improved benchmarking.
- Work continues to reduce response times to incidents, including a trial involving one of the Luton fire appliances being temporarily moved to another location. Improvements were being introduced across the entire journey of a 999 call, from time of call to time of response, and this had already had a positive impact on response times. The continued work of the on-call improvement project also sought to reduce improve response times, and additional staff resource had been allocated to this project accordingly.
- There were different measurements for time of call and time of alert, with the time of call being when the call was received by Control and the time of alert being when the resources were allocated.
- The number of Home Fire Safety Visits delivered continued to be high; however, there was now much more targeted activity, and the Service was working with partner organisations, such as housing associations, to enable them to also carry out these checks as Service staff focused on embedding the new technology and targeting high risk groups. There were plans to improve the granularity of data.
- Greater clarity around performance management would be welcomed by the Inspectorate and all areas for improvement identified in the report would be linked to a Key Performance Indicator to ensure that progress was tracked.
- The Service worked closely with Age Concern and other voluntary sector organisations to identify and support vulnerable adults with mental health issues.

The Chief Fire Officer added that the locations of the Service fire stations was also influencing the time of response, as many of the fire stations in the County had been in their present locations since the 1970s, with Dunstable being the newest fire station built in 2009. Therefore, resources were not necessarily aligned with the population and housing growth that had taken place since then. The response standards would be discussed in greater depth at the Member Development Day on 5 October 2023.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the level of prevention activity undertaken by the Service had resulted in a reduction in the number of dwelling fires. Bedfordshire had been the fifth worst performing service in this respect in 2018 and had now improved to thirteenth best. The last year had seen the second lowest level of accidental dwelling fires on record.

The Service continued to support the Ambulance Service with falls response as it was recognised that many of those individuals who were vulnerable to falls may also have a high fire safety risk.

In relation to support of residents with mental health issues, or Alzheimer's and dementia, Head of Prevention and Protection Ian Evans reported that Bedford Borough Council had provided additional funding to enable the Service to target older people with dementia for Home Fire Safety Visits. Discussions were ongoing with the BLMK Integrated Care Board and the Primary Care Networks to determine whether the NHS could provide funding for this preventative work across the County. The Service worked closely with its partners to target the Home Fire Safety Visits to the most vulnerable residents. 40% of visits were delivered as a result of referrals received from other organisations.

In response to a suggestion that, if the ICB was not forthcoming with funding, the Service may wish to approach Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils, Ian Evans reported that Luton Borough Council already funded additional work through the Early Years Alliance, and that the Service already accepted referrals to address referrals relating to those suffering with dementia county-wide.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer suggested that case studies be presented to a future meeting by the Lead Member for prevention, Councillor Sultan, to share how the Service was working with other agencies in this area with Members.

In response to a question about the percentage of Road Traffic Collisions that occurred on the M1, the Chief Fire Officer replied that the reduction in speed limit on the motorway had led to fewer incidents and that the most serious collisions usually took place on A roads involving cars travelling in opposite directions.

The Authority was advised that 30-40% of all calls arose from false alarms. These were broken down into fire false alarms due to apparatus at domestic and non-domestic premises, and false alarm good intent or false alarm malicious. 626 fire false alarms in non-domestic premises had been attended during Quarter 1 2022/23.

Noting the control indicators were all red, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that control operators had been asked to provide a greater level of call challenge to prevent mobilisation to false alarms. An increased level of challenge could lead to longer response times.

Mr Evans reported that 4% of all calls originating from detection equipment to non-domestic settings were found to be fires on attendance. For domestic properties this is higher at 9% of calls originating from detection equipment. The Service mobilising policy set out the pre-determined response based upon the type of premises. It was noted that all calls received from care homes and hospitals were provided with a full response as there was a greater threat to life in properties where individuals were not able to self-evacuate.

HMP Bedford was also a setting with a high level of deliberate fires. As this a Crown Property, the Service is not the enforcing authority for the First Safety Order. The Service continues to engage with both the Governor of the prison and the Crown Premises Inspection Group regarding its concern about deliberate fire setting there.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Service's performance, contained within Appendix 1 of the report, against the published standards within the Community Risk Management Plan and the wider corporate Key Performance Indicators be acknowledged.

23-24/FRA/33 Annual Report

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the Service's Annual Report for 2022/23. The report had been presented in a new format to improve accessibility and the quality of information that the Service was sharing with the public and its partners. The report included performance information and updates on key projects and programmes.

In response to a request for feedback on the new template and the contents of the report, Councillor S Hussain expressed the view that the report was informative and easy to understand. She particularly liked the monthly highlights.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the monthly highlights would form part of the new 'Shout' reports to the constituent authorities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be acknowledged and approved for publication.

23-24/FRA/34 HMICFRS Inspection update

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report and findings from the 2023 service inspection undertaken by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the proposed action plan to address the areas for improvement identified by the HMICFRS arising from this. The Service had been one of the first three inspected in the third round of inspections. HMICFRS had introduced a new grade of adequate and no longer issued judgments for each of the three overarching areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people, but individual judgments for the eleven underlying areas.

The Service had been judged as good in understanding fire and risk and future affordability; adequate in responding to major incidents, right people, right skills, promoting fairness and diversity and managing performance and developing leaders; and requires improvement in preventing fire and risk, public safety through fire regulation, responding to fires and emergencies, best use of resources and promoting values and culture.

In the area of promoting values and culture, the Service was judged to require improvement as a result of the singular issue of the backlog of firefighter fitness tests that had arisen during the COVID pandemic. HMICFRS had given a 'cause of concern' as they considered the Service could not assure itself that its operational members of staff meet the minimum fitness requirements to perform their roles.

The action plan specifically addressing the cause for concern was tabled. The Chief Fire Officer commented that immediately prior to the publication of the inspection report, the Service had already completed 98.6% of fitness tests. HMICFRS would return in November to assess the Service's performance against this action plan.

In response to a question, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there were no surprises arising from the inspection report and commented that there were many areas of good practice detailed in the report. The Service had been disappointed to receive an RI judgment; however, there was a commitment to improve and the draft action plan was one of the first steps on the roadmap to this.

Cllr Gurney joined the meeting virtually at 11.18 am  
Cllr Coombes left the meeting at 11.31 am

The Chief Fire Officer introduced Thomas Warner, the Service's Liaison Officer with the HMICFRS, who advised that, following the first six inspection reports being released, the Service was currently ranked third out of six.

It was noted that some services had been issued with the more serious 'accelerated' cause of concern, where HMICFRS judged there to be an issue potentially affecting public safety, that required a letter to be published before the inspection report was released.

The Chief Fire Officer provided background on the inspection regime for newly appointed Members to the Authority. Since its inception in 2018, when the HMIC assumed responsibility for the inspection of fire and rescue services, services had been inspected on approximately a two-yearly cycle. There had also been thematic reviews undertaken on such topics as COVID response and handling of misconduct charges. Therefore, it was anticipated that the next full inspection would take place in 2025.

In previous inspection rounds, HMICFRS had published a table setting out the expectations associated with each judgement. For this round, only the expectations for "good" had been published. To determine the expectations for other judgements would require reading the narrative reports contained within the published inspection reports.

In response to a question from Councillor Versallion regarding value for money and whether the higher spend per capita by this Service compared to others may have influenced the inspection result, the Chief Fire Officer referred to the development of the Productivity and Efficiency Board and the work of the Performance & Insight Team who would draw out these comparisons. The County faced specific challenges related to its large rural areas, along with the urban conurbations of Bedford and Luton, where activity levels were similar to those of a large metropolitan area.

Members recognised the commitment of senior officers in the Service to respond to the areas for improvement highlighted in the inspection report and the development of the comprehensive action plan.

The Authority was reassured that continuous dialogue would be maintained with the Service Liaison Lead for the HMICFRS and that the action plan had already been shared with her. It was important that the Service Liaison Lead was taken on the improvement journey with the Service.

Councillor Headley tabled a number of proposed amendments to the action plan to further refine the actions and suggested that there may be some deliverables that had not been included in the plan. It was important that all the actions required were very specific and measurable, so that their completion could be demonstrated to the HMICFRS in 2025.

In response to one of the suggestions, to include a completion date for all National Operational Guidance packs, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that these had not all been released and therefore, the Service was not able to determine the length of time and resource required to implement them.

The Chief Fire Officer added that these would be included in the Plan following their introduction.

Another suggestion put forward was to simplify the deliverable under action 8.

Mr Warner advised that some of the areas for improvement were subject to standardised wording.

The Chair commented that, as this action plan was available in the public domain, acronyms should be avoided. With the Executive Committee and the Authority receiving regular update reports, the public should be able to understand and engage in the improvement process.

The Chief Fire Officer proposed that the monitoring and approval of the action plan be delegated to the Executive Committee to enable Members of the Authority.

Councillor M Hussain expressed the view that the Service must ensure that it was becoming more representative of the community that it served and should put additional effort into increasing the diversity of its workforce.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the findings of the HMICFRS as set out in their report be noted.
2. That the Executive Committee be delegated authority to approve the draft HMICFRS action plan.
3. That the Authority receive regular updates on progress in delivering against the action plan.

23-24/FRA/35 Community Panel

The Chair advised that this was the final full meeting of the Authority that would be attended by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer prior to her retirement in November 2023. She thanked the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for her hard work and dedication over the two and a half years she spent in that role and expressed her appreciation for all that she had achieved during her employment in the Service.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced a report on the way forward for the Service's Community Panel following a decision made at FRA Executive Committee 21 September 2023. The Executive had agreed that a way forward be a blended approach of engaged representation on partnership groups and the development of a virtual community panel of Bedfordshire citizens.

A proposed timescale was set out in the report. Over the next three months, the Service would be developing an email marketing system. This would then be open for a 6 week sign up period, with a prize draw to encourage uptake. The aim would be to have 100 residents on the Panel which would then be consulted on a quarterly basis, with major consultation twice a year including during the budget setting period.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer acknowledged the importance of meaningful engagement and ensuring the Panel represented the diverse communities residing in the County as far as this was possible.

In response to a comment, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Panel would not be used to circulate good news stories, as this was done for each Station's via social media, but to help shape the activities of the Service going forward.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be acknowledged and welcomed.

23-24/FRA/36 Work Programme

Members received the work programmes for the Authority, Executive Committee, Audit and Standards Committee, Member Development Days and Member Budget Workshops.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that, in addition to the inclusion of standing items on progress against the HMICFRS Inspection Action Plan, a report providing benchmarking information would also be submitted to a future meeting to allow Members to compare the Service's performance against that of other similar fire and rescue services. An update would also be provided on the pensions remedy.

In response to a comment on whether there was sufficient time set aside to adequately cover all the proposed subjects due to be covered at the Member Budget Workshop on 21 November 2023, the Chief Fire Officer advised that he would consider this and report back to Members at the Member Development Day to be held on 5 October 2023.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme for 2023-24 and the 'cyclical' agenda items for each meeting in 2023-24 be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.12pm

This page is intentionally left blank



---

**SUBJECT:**                   **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

---

**Author and contact:**     Nicky Upton, [Democratic.Services@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@bedsfire.gov.uk)

---

Background Papers:       None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee Meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	N/A
2	Restricted Minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee Meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Restricted

---

### Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	
Risk Management	No	
Legal Implications	No	

Privacy and Security Implications	No	
Duty to Collaborate	No	
Health and Safety Implications	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	Yes	All minutes publicly available to view on the website, with the exception of the Restricted Minutes which are exempt from publication under paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**PURPOSE:**

To receive the minutes of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 17 October 2023.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the submitted minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be noted.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 17 October 2023 are appended for Members' consideration.
- 1.2 The Audit & Standards Committee made no recommendations to the Fire Authority.

**COUNCILLOR A ALI  
CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2023**

Present: Councillors A Ali (Chair), M Hussain and S Owen  
ACO G Chambers, Mr G Britten, DACFO J Tai and Ms N Upton  
Ms D Hanson, Ernst & Young (via MS Teams)  
Ms S Rowlett, RSM

23-24/ASC/16 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Coombes, Gurney, Versallion and Wenham.

23-24/ASC/17 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

23-24/ASC/18 Communications

The Committee received the following RSM communications for information:

a. RSM's Emergency Services News Briefing (May 2023)

Mrs S Rowlett of RSM highlighted the sections relevant to the fire sector as being updates on tools developed to support the Community Risk Management Plan process, changes in requirements for employee checks, the introduction of two new Fire Standards and a further delay to the implementation of the Emergency Services Network to replace Airwave.

It was noted that there was a separate item on the agenda relating to the Fire Standards and that this would be discussed later on in the meeting.

In response to a question on what the significance was of the implementation of Fire Standards, particularly those arising from the tragedies at Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena bombing, and how these affected the Inspectorate's judgement of the Service's operational performance, the Assistant Chief Officer advised that a full written response would be provided to all Members of the Committee.

The Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Jason Tai, confirmed that the Service had dedicated action plans in place relating to the recommendations arising from the Hackett Report on Grenfell Tower and from those arising from the Manchester Arena bombing, specifically those relating to communication with other emergency services and responding to marauding terrorist attacks. He volunteered to provide further detail on these action plans to any Members who were interested outside of the meeting.

Councillor Hussain expressed concern about the new high-rise building in Luton as, at 22 stories, it was the first of its height in the county.

The Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was aware of the development and had revised its predetermined attendance standard for high-rise buildings to increase the level of response provided to an incident reported at the location. The Service had purchased a number of items from the additional funding received following the Grenfell Tower tragedy to implement the action plan. This included smoke hoods being available for members of the public in the all the Service's appliances, as well as improvements in radio communication equipment and breathing apparatus sets, and the purchase of firefighting branches which enabled firefighters to fire fight from lower floors. In addition to revised policies and procedures, the Station Commander for Luton Fire Station was liaising with the developers of the building and crews had visited the premises.

In response to a question from the Chair seeking assurances that evidence based risk assessments had been embedded, the Assistant Chief Officer provided an update on the national guidance that had been applied in the development of the Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027. There were also two in draft relating to vehicle collisions and other building fires.

#### b. RSM's Emerging Risk Radar (July 2023)

Mrs Rowlett advised that this briefing looked at risks across the sectors and could be used to inform the Service's risk management, gap analysis and horizon scanning work.

#### c. RSM's Emergency Services News Briefing (August 2023)

Mrs Rowlett reported that the key update for fire and rescue services contained within this communication was the development by the National Fire Chiefs Council of a culture action plan. It was important for Members to consider how they were addressing this in their own Service.

In response to a request from the Chair for an update, the Assistant Chief Officer referred to an update provided by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer that detailed the results of the gap analysis and actions being taken to address this and improve the culture in the organisation.

Actions taken to date included the provision of cultural awareness training to all staff, the introduction of a new anonymous reporting line, the appointment of a professional standards investigator and the review of previous grievance and dismissal cases. Members would be provided with the detailed update for information.

d. RSM's Focus on Fraud (September 2023)

Mrs Rowlett advised that this was also an all sector update as fraud was a risk to all organisations.

23-24/ASC/19 Minutes

Councillor Owen referred to a comment he had made at the previous meeting regarding the potential need for additional meetings if the workload of the Committee appeared to be too onerous for the number of meetings currently scheduled.

The Assistant Chief Officer suggested that Members could discuss this in greater detail under the Work Programme item later in the agenda.

The Chair advised that he was seeking to introduce pre-meetings in advance of the Committee's meetings and that Members would be able to ask questions and raise concerns in this forum, which may reduce the length of the formal Committee meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

23-24/ASC/20 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

23-24/ASC/21 Annual Report

Debbie Hanson presented the Annual Report from Ernst & Young, the Fire and Rescue Authority's external auditor.

EY had awarded the Authority an unqualified audit opinion as at 8 August 2023 for the 2021/22 accounts. These could not be fully closed as the National Audit Office had not yet decided which organisations under the threshold, of which the Service was one, would be selected for sampling.

No significant issues had been identified as a result of the value for money assessment or in terms of any further risks; however, it was noted that the next few years would be challenging for local government sector organisations.

In response to a question from Councillor Owen on how the opinion awarded compared to those issued for previous years, both Ms Hanson and the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that the Authority had received an unqualified opinion for the previous year's accounts.

In response to the Chair's request for an update on the audit fees, Ms Hanson advised that she had not yet shared this information with the Assistant Chief Officer; however, the fees would be submitted to PSAA to determine in the usual way.

The Committee recognised the efforts of the Assistant Chief Officer and his team in achieving an unqualified audit opinion.

Ms Hanson was also unable to provide a timescale for the audit of the 2022/23 accounts, although she reported that EY was seeking to conclude all value for money assessments by the end of December 2023 and was seeking further guidance from the Minister on a more sustainable way forward for the audit sector and in relation to "backstop" dates so that assurance could be provided in a more timely manner.

Following a question from Councillor Hussain, Ms Hanson confirmed that the going concern assessment had been undertaken in August 2023 and looked forward for a period of 12 months, so to August 2024. However, this was based on the statements in 2021/22, and the level of reserves that were held at that time, and this could change in future years, although the Authority's retention of its reserves, particularly the Transformational Earmarked Reserves, put the Authority in a more positive position than other local government bodies who were currently facing significant financial pressure.

The Assistant Chief Officer advised that the contract with EY was coming to an end, and therefore it was likely that there would be some crossover between EY's audit closure of the 2022/23 accounts and planning meetings with the new external auditors, KPMG, for the 2023/24 audit.

**RESOLVED:**

That the submitted Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022, and the unqualified audit opinion awarded by the external auditors, be welcomed.

23-24/ASC/22 Internal Audit Progress Report

Ms S Rowlett, RSM, presented a report on progress made against the internal audit plan for 2023/24.

One audit had been completed, one was in the draft stage and another in progress. The Key Financial Controls audit had been deferred following the departure of the Chief Accountant.

The audit opinion for the governance of the Programme Management Office was substantial assurance, which was the highest opinion that could be awarded. RSM had concluded that the organisation had well-established and applied processes for project management and this was supported by the documentation for each of the five projects sampled at the time of the audit. The process for reporting to the Programme Boards and the Corporate Portfolio Board had been recorded with clear roles and responsibilities being included within the Terms of Reference documents.

In response to a request for clarification on the role of the Corporate Portfolio Board, the Assistant Chief Officer reported that this was the Corporate Programme Board, which met quarterly under the auspices of the Service's Corporate Management Team to receive updates from the Lead Programme Manager on all live projects.

The Authority received project update reports twice a year and this report would detail progress made. Whilst there were minutes of the Programme Board meetings, the Assistant Chief Officer expressed the view that the report should provide a sufficient level of detail for Members.

In response to a query from Mrs Rowlett on the updated layout of the report, the Members present expressed satisfaction with the changes made.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

23-24/ASC/23 Internal Audit Actions Update

The Assistant Chief Officer introduced the summary of actions arising from internal audit reports over the last three fiscal years together with any exception report on those actions currently in progress, progress to date on current action plans, proposals to extend the original timing for completion and those that had been completed since the last meeting.

Members were asked to approve extension requests for two actions relating to data management: to review the results of the questionnaire (Data Quality Culture Survey) and identify actions to be taken as a result, and to develop and implement a process or system of data checks to ensure data presented was accurate, reliable, complete and appropriately maintained in line with GDPR regulations.

The Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that, as there had been 128 responses received to the survey, the Service wished to have time to give these due consideration and incorporate any required changes into the digital learning training that would be provided to all staff. Therefore, an extension was requested from 30 September 2023 to 31 December 2023 to allow this work to be completed.

The second action was related to the KPI dashboard and additional improvements the Service wished to make to allow the data processing to become fully automated. This would result in efficiencies but would take longer to implement, hence the request to extend the completion

date from 31 December 2023 to 31 March 2024. This recognised the workload of the business information team, who were also currently working on the emergency cover project and other major projects.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Committee was advised that, whilst there would be a transition period, this would not impact on performance data being submitted to the Authority on a regular basis.

The Chair requested that additional information on data flow, including the parameters, be presented to Members. The Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he would liaise with the Chair to determine how this information could be presented.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report and the progress made to date against action plans be acknowledged.
2. That the extension requests for actions relating to data management as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report be approved along with the additional action raised above.

23-24/ASC/24 Statement of Assurance

The Assistant Chief Officer introduced the Annual Statement of Assurance for 2022/23 to Members for approval. The Authority had a responsibility to publish an Annual Statement of Assurance which provided a report on the Service's performance in the previous year in relation to finance, governance and operations.

Councillor Owen highlighted a spelling error on the bottom of page 101 of the pack and inconsistencies in capitalisation in the same sentence regarding the Inspectorate. He expressed the view that the text relating to the inspection reports was confusing and should be reworded. The performance section appeared to be very brief; however performance was detailed in the pages immediately following the statement provided so he suggested that this should also be amended.

He also queried whether mention should be made of the most recent inspection report as there appeared to be some sections of the report which provided a forward look and others that did not.

A discussion ensued during which the Monitoring Officer provided advice that as the Statement of Assurance was a backwards-looking document, there must be consistency of language, with no reference being made to events following 31 March 2023.

The Assistant Chief Officer advised that the change in membership of the Authority was thought to be an exception, although he acknowledged the points made and would revisit the relevant sections in the Statement.



When considering the value of introducing a statement regarding the most recent inspection, and the accompanying action plan, the Committee noted that the inspection report and a press release on the report was published on the Service website and was therefore transparently in the public domain, along with the reports and Minutes of meetings where this had been discussed.

The Monitoring Officer advised that, although the Committee was being asked to refer the Statement of Assurance to the full Authority for approval, following the most recent governance review, the responsibility for approving this document had been delegated to the Audit and Standards Committee and therefore could be approved at the meeting.

The Chair commented that the information contained in the Statement appeared to be very similar to that in the Annual Governance Statement produced for consideration with the Statement of Accounts. He suggested that these two documents be combined.

The Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that some of the information included in the Statement of Assurance did not appear in the Annual Governance Statement; however, consideration could be given to producing a document that would satisfy all requirements.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the contents of the Statement of Assurance for 2022/23 be acknowledged.
2. That, subject to amendments made by the Assistant Chief Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, the Statement of Assurance be approved for publication on the Service's website.
3. That consideration be given to whether the 2023/24 Statement of Assurance could be included as part of the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.

23-24/ASC/25 Fire Standards Board update

The Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a report that detailed progress with the gap analysis and integration of Fire Standards into business as usual.

This work was being led within the Service by the recently appointed Group Manager, Peter Knight, who had previously worked for the National Fire Chiefs Council for two years in this area and, as a result, was a subject matter expert.

A governance framework had been introduced, together with a clear approach for gap analysis and sign-off, with dedicated resources to oversee its implementation and with the Corporate Management Team providing oversight of the adoption of the standards.

The Committee was advised that, following a recent Chief Executive's Forum, the Service had agreed to create and host an Eastern region Fire Standards Forum to assist services with the implementation of Fire Standards and improve shared situational awareness across the region on Fire Standards, identify opportunities for collaboration around gap analysis and implementation and to avoid duplication.

To date, 16 fire standards had been released. Full compliance had been achieved in relation to the first fire standard on emergency driving, with all others being at some stage in the gap analysis/action plan implementation process. It was planned to complete the gap analysis on all standards by 31 December 2023.

Current criteria compliance was 70%, with 35 actions fully compliant. Of the sub-actions, 126 actions had originally been compliant, with this number increasing to 193 being compliant, with 33 partially compliant and 72 non-compliant.

In response to a question from Councillor Hussain, the Deputy Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that all actions for the Fire Standards that had passed the gap analysis stage had completion dates; however, new Standards were being released so it was not possible to have a completion date for the implementation of all Standards.

The Committee was advised that the Fire Standards Board was a Board of the National Fire Chiefs Council and comprised of Chief Fire Officers, independent members and others with experience of implementing similar standards, such as high ranking Police Officers. The Board and the Fire Standards themselves had been introduced as part of Fire Services Reform and recognition that there were not consistent standards across the sector.

Whilst it was noted that the Inspectorate did not currently inspect services specifically on their implementation of the Fire Standards, it was an expectation that Services would be working towards this.

**RESOLVED:**

That the project be supported and progress made to date be noted.

23-24/ASC/26 Work Programme

The Committee received the updated work programme for 2023/24.

In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer confirmed that progress reports on the implementation of the action plan arising from the inspection report were being submitted to the Authority meetings so that they could be discussed by all Members of the Authority.

The Assistant Chief Officer added that the work programme was subject to change, as earlier comments in the meeting suggested that the External Audit report scheduled for the Committee's next meeting would not be available at that time.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24 be received and the 'cyclical' Agenda Items for each meeting in 2023/24 be noted.

23-24/ASC/27 Corporate Risk Register

**RESOLVED:**

That, pursuant to Sections 100A(2) and 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the discussion of the following item on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item

Corporate Risk Register

The meeting ended at 11.53 am

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

---

**SUBJECT:** EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

---

**Author and contact:** Nicky Upton, [Democratic.Services@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@bedsfire.gov.uk)

---

Background Papers: None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 23 November 2023	N/A

---

### Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	
Risk Management	No	
Legal Implications	No	
Privacy and Security Implications	No	

Duty to Collaborate	No	
Health and Safety Implications	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	Yes	All minutes publicly available to view on the website, with the exception of the Restricted Minutes which are exempt from publication under paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**PURPOSE:**

To receive the Minutes of the Executive Committee held on 21 September 2023.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the submitted minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023 be noted.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The minutes of the Executive Committee held on 23 November 2023 are appended for Members' consideration.

1.2 The Executive Committee made no recommendations to the Fire Authority.

**COUNCILLOR J BURNETT  
CHAIR OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**



**MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2023**

Present: Councillors J Burnett (Chair), R Goodchild, M Headley (Vice-Chair), S Hussain  
CFO A Hopkinson, ACO G Chambers, T/ACFO J Tai, Mr G Britten, Ms N Upton and Ms L Ehren  
Cllr A Sultan was present via MS Teams  
Cllr Owen was in attendance as an observer

23-24/EC/20 Apologies

Councillor Sultan attended the meeting remotely via Teams.

23-24/EC/21 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

23-24/EC/22 Communications

**Support at Council Meetings**

The Chief Fire Officer reported that Jason Tai, the Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, had attended the recent meeting of Luton Borough Council to assist Councillor S Hussain in the event that technical questions regarding the incident at London Luton Airport arose.

Assistance would also be available at Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Full Council meetings if necessary.

Councillor S Hussain confirmed that no questions had arisen.

**Christingle Service**

The Chair reminded Members that the Christingle Service would be taking place on 19 December 2023 at 6pm at Woburn Parish Church and invited everyone to attend.

## **HMICFRS Chairs and Chiefs Meeting**

The Chief Fire Officer reported on the recent meeting with the HMICFRS attended by Chairs and Chief Fire Officers.

The Inspectorate had provided an update on how the current tranche of inspections was progressing and on the thematic review of handling of misconduct cases. Ten fire and rescue services had been selected to take part in this review; this Service was not one of those ten.

The Chair and Chief Fire Officer both agreed that this had been a productive networking opportunity.

The Fire Minister had expressed interest in the Service's collaborative work with the Ambulance Service and the invitation to the Minister to visit the Service was re-extended.

## **Passing Out Parade**

It was noted that the Passing Out Parade would take place on Wednesday, 20 December 2023 at 5pm at Fire and Rescue Headquarters.

## **Response Standards**

The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that they would receive an informal update on response standards from Area Commander S Auger following the meeting.

### 23-24/EC/23 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

### 23-24/EC/24 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).

### 23-24/EC/25 HMICFRS Action Plan Update

The Chief Fire Officer introduced an update on the progress made against the Service HMICFRS Action Plan that addressed the Areas for Improvement identified by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in their 2023 service inspection report.

The report provided the background context of the inspection, including the cause of concern identified. The Chief Fire Officer expressed confidence that, when the Inspectorate returned the following week, there would be a positive outcome as a result of the work undertaken by the Service to address the issue.

Appendix 1 of the report set out progress made against the Areas for Improvement and a full update was provided to Members.

Councillor Headley thanked Officers for improvements that had been made to some of the targets to provide additional clarity, particularly in relation to timescales and identifying responsible Officers.

The Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided a further update on areas within his remit as follows:

#### Promoting the right values and culture

- As mentioned by the Chief Fire Officer the Service was in a much stronger position in relation to fitness testing, with approximately 94% of tests completed. The 24 outstanding related largely to staff who were on long-term sick, on modified duties or secondment, or who had recently returned to work. A new Service Fitness Adviser had commenced in post at the end of September.

#### Getting the right people with the right skills

- The Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer was chairing the Workforce Planning Group. This Group met on a quarterly basis to consider staff development and succession planning. New professional support staff development pathways had been created for Grey Book staff to prepare them for assessment and a similar system was being introduced for Green Book staff to identify talent and support development.
- Staff with specialist expertise were being employed on zero hours contracts to undertake specific pieces of work.
- Work was ongoing on the on-call improvement programme. The e-learning package had been revised to help streamline training and facilitate the completion of relevant modules within the required period. Take up of the training was being monitored by a Development Support Co-ordinator and trigger points introduced so staff could be supported to complete the training.
- On call Liaison Officers had also been employed to support this process.

#### Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

- Management training on the grievance procedure, bullying and harassment had been provided in September 2023.

- A Professional Standards Investigator had been employed and consideration was being given to creating a joint standards unit with other Fire and Rescue Services so that investigations could be undertaken by staff external to the service. This was in the very early stages of development and would be subject to the agreement of the Authority at an appropriate point in the process.
- A revised grievance policy and procedure was currently out to consultation with representative bodies.
- Reviews of previous grievances cases had been undertaken to identify whether there were any learning points arising from these.
- A change had been made so that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer fulfilled the role of Investigating Commissioning Manager for all investigations. This role used to be carried out by functional heads of service. Centralising the role would provide a consistency of approach and increased awareness of any emerging themes.
- The Service had joined FRS Speak Up, a confidential reporting system, from 1 September 2023.
- Data from the recent whole-time recruitment campaign was being analysed to determine whether the positive action plan had been successful in increasing the diversity of the workforce. The Service sought to determine if those individuals from under-represented groups who had pre-registered an interest had applied for the whole-time posts, and if any of them had been successful. This was being overseen by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group.

The Chair requested a report on the work being done regarding the culture of the organisation be prepared for submission to the full Authority. This was particularly topical given the HMICFRS's thematic review.

Members suggested events, such as the Luton Employability Day and school career fairs, where the Service could seek to engage with young people and encourage them to consider a career in the Service, recognising there were both operational and non-operational opportunities available.

#### Responding to Fires and other emergencies

- The operational assurance procedures had been reviewed. The Service was working with its supplier to develop software to better record debriefs following incidents. The Service was also seeking to complete station and control audits, with the software identifying themes and facilitating comparison and allowing the Service to grade stations, to introduce healthy competition to improve standards. This was being developed in accordance with National Operational Guidance. As a result of this work, the Service would become a Centre of Excellence for the software supplier.
- A National Operational Guidance (NOG) Training Integration Officer had commenced in post and the implementation of NOG was being overseen by a NOG Board and led by the NOG Implementation Group.
- Four NOG packs were due to be implemented by December 2023, with two further packs by March 2024.

#### Managing performance and developing leaders

- A talent grid had been developed to identify individuals suitable for development.

- A Green Book Trainer had been employed to support fire fighters through the assessment process.
- 360 degree feedback sessions had been undertaken with staff from Group Manager and above, with additional sessions being held for staff below this level in future.

The Assistant Chief Officer provided the following updates in relation to making best use of resources:

- The 2024/25 budget papers would highlight the “golden thread” running through from the Community Risk Management Plan priorities to how resources were allocated.
- An internal depository of productivity and efficiency examples was being established and was started to be populated with past examples and suggestions for the future.

The Chief Fire Officer added the following updates:

- The Service was now targeting its prevention work more effectively, with an increase in Home Fire Safety Visits being provided to the most vulnerable from 45% when the Inspectorate visited to 62%.
- Work was progressing to improve quality assurance processes and reduce unwanted fire signals. Engagement with local businesses was essential in preventing the latter.
- The Service was exploring opportunities with two other fire and rescue services to improve resilience arrangements within Fire Control.

RESOLVED:

That the updated action plan be noted.

#### 23-24/EC/26 Work Programme

Members received the updated work programme for 2023/24 and noted the cyclical items.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that, following a recent meeting of the Service’s Corporate Management Team, minor changes had been made to the work programme for the full Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme 2023/24 be received and the cyclical agenda items be noted.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION 1972, SCHEDULE 12A, PARAGRAPHS 1 to 3 PART 1: EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That, pursuant to Sections 100A(2) and 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the discussion of the following items on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

The CFO, ACO, T/ACFO and HCPA along with Cllr Owen also left the meeting room at 11.02 am.

Item:

23-24/EC/27          Brigade Managers Pay Review

23-24/EC/28          Re-engagement

The meeting ended at 1.02pm

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

**SUBJECT: 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING as at 31st October 2023**

Background Papers: 2023/24 FRA Budget Setting Papers February 2023 and 2023/24 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring as at 31 May 2023

Page 39

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority 2023/24 Savings/Efficiencies (S/E) & Income Generation (I/G)	None

**Implications:**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

Implications	Yes/No	Impact/Reference
Financial	Yes	Report covers in year revenue and capital budget monitoring, detailing over and underspends.
Risk Management	No	
Legal	No	
Privacy and Security	No	

Duty to collaborate	No	
Health and Safety	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	Yes	The 2024/25 budget/council tax consultation question is included in the report

## PURPOSE:

To inform the Fire and Rescue Authority of the forecast year-end (31<sup>st</sup> March 2024) budget monitoring position as at 31st October 2023 and to also consider the 2024/25 budget/council tax consultation question.

## Recommendations:

1. That the FRA consider and comment on the updates provided within this report and the forecast year end position.
2. That the FRA consider and approve, in this financial year, the early purchase of four response vehicles currently scheduled for 2024/25.
3. That the FRA note that the unbudgeted expenditure on kitchens is due as a result of Environmental Audits and covered by Earmarked Reserves.
4. To review and approve the 2024/25 budget consultation question in paragraph 4.

## Executive Highlights Summary

- The Authority has previously been advised that it will receive a further £460k above the budgeted amount in relation to Business Rates Section 31/Tariff top-up Payments, following the Government's final confirmation for 2023/24 after February's budget setting. (see para 2.8).
- The Authority has previously been advised of increase in Services Grant of £9k (£231k up to £240k) following the Government's final confirmation for 2023/24. (para 2.8)
- As previously reported the Home Office has informed the service that we will receive an unbudgeted Protection grant of £153k in 2023/24. (para 2.8)



- That members note the increase in forecast income from investments of (£707k) above the budgeted figure of (£195.4k) as at the end of October. The forecast (£903k) investment income is due to effective cash flow and investment management by the Finance Team, combined with continued higher than forecast rates available on investments. (para 2.8).
- That members note the forecast overspend £347k in staffing areas is due to various factors outlined below. (para 2.9).
- It was agreed by the FRA in July 2023, that if there is a year-end underspend, it would be equally apportioned between the Transformational Reserve and the Pay/Pensions reserve.

## 1. Introduction

1.1. On 2 February 2023, the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) approved a Revenue Budget Requirement for 2023/24 of £34.898m and a Capital Programme of £2.258m.

1.2. For new FRA Members, to provide some background information on the setting of the 2023/24 budget, the link below provides detail on the setting of the 2023/24 budget by the FRA in February 2023. As well as council tax setting, the revenue and capital budgets were approved including some use of reserves. Please refer to item agenda item 22-23/FRA/69.

1.3. [Agenda for Fire and Rescue Authority on Thursday, 2nd February, 2023, 10.00 am | Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

## 2. Revenue Budget Monitoring

2.1. The Revenue Budget efficiency savings for 2023/24 can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. The budgets have been reduced for these areas and will be monitored during the year with any changes reported to the FRA.

2.2. The funding of the 2023/24 Revenue Budget as set by the FRA in February 2023, by way of Government Funding £7.334m, local Business Rates redistribution £2.888m, a one-off revenue grant for 2023/24 of £0.231m and Council Tax of £25.043m off set by Collection Fund deficit of (£0.598m) which have been reported by our Local Authority partners.

### 2.3. **Forecasting Outturn:**

2.4. Tables 1 and 2 below are populated during the year in line with the spreadsheet returns that Corporate Management Team (CMT) members submit to the Finance Team and through the meetings that Finance Officers have with CMT members.

- 2.5. There is regular financial monitoring of actuals versus budget, tracking variance values and reasoning which gives support in validating the forecast year end position per as per Table 1.
- 2.6. Table 1 below details the current budget excluding salary budgets, for each CMT service area. The forecast year-end outturn variance is shown in column six.

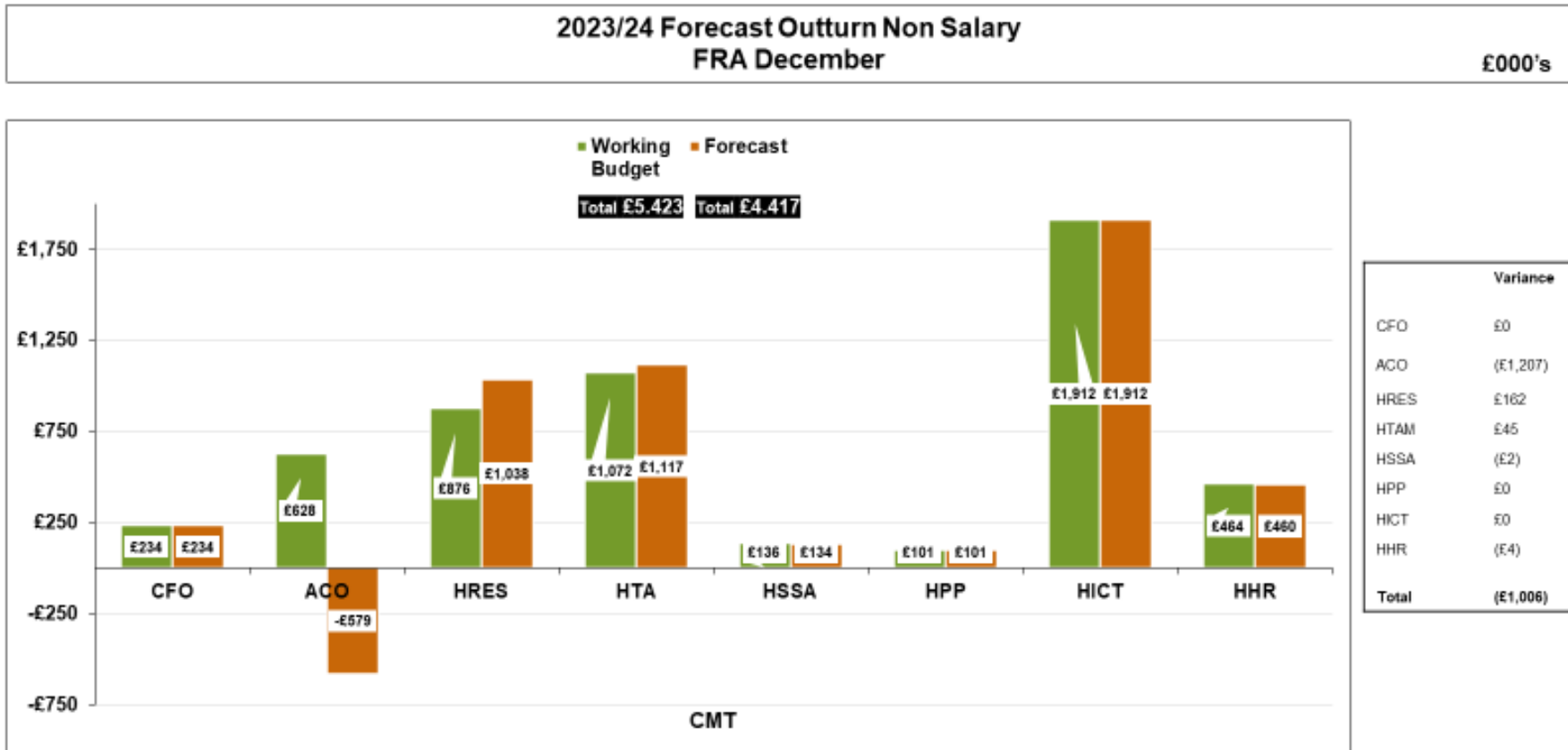
2.7. Table 1: 2023/24 Revenue Forecast Outturn Non Salary

Title	Area	Working Budget £	YTD Actuals £	F/cast Yr-End Outturn £	Variance £	RAG status (see note below**)
<b>Strategic Management</b>	Management	233,900	67,586	233,900	0	
<b>Assistant Chief Officer</b>	Income, Capital & Year End	67,226	(116,412)	(1,114,247)	(1,181,473)	
	Corporate Support	560,900	(552,734)	534,999	(25,901)	
<b>Head of Response</b>	Operational	875,800	649,441	1,037,821	162,021	1
<b>Head of Training and Assets</b>	Training	400,530	247,578	400,530	0	
	Technical/Workshops	387,700	307,663	429,449	41,749	2
	Corporate Support	284,100	117,238	287,051	2,951	
<b>Head of Strategic Support and Assurance</b>	Media & Comms	16,100	17,580	16,100	0	
	Organisation Assurance	119,600	85,335	117,800	(1,800)	
<b>Head of Prevention and Protection</b>	Partnership Working	(60,100)	(141,624)	(60,100)	0	
	Prevention	150,700	70,624	150,700	0	
	Protection	10,700	(228,834)	10,850	150	
<b>Head of Information Communications Technology</b>	ICT	1,912,300	1,376,712	1,912,300	0	
	Business Improvement Team	0	8,812	0	0	
	ICT Projects	0	(665,418)	0	0	
<b>Head of Human Resources</b>	Human Resources	327,300	50,456	323,558	(3,742)	
	Occupational Health	136,800	31,240	136,800	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,423,556</b>	<b>1,325,242</b>	<b>4,417,511</b>	<b>(1,006,045)</b>	

1 & 2; details in para. 2.8 below

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

2023/24 Revenue Forecast Outturn Non Salary



2.8. The underspend (£1,006k) shown in Table 1 and chart above as at 31st October 2023 is made up of;

**Assistant Chief Officer (£1,207k);**

Interest income (£707k) variance, this was budgeted at (£194k) with the revised forecast now (£903k) due to continued high rates for investments available to the service because of the current economic situation. A further £460k is due to an increase of Section 31 Tariff top-up Payments, following the Government's final confirmation for 2023/24. In addition, a reimbursement has been received for a seconded officer.

**Head of Response £162k;** per number 1 in Table 1

Continuing high costs of energy are still in excess of our revised budget which included additional inflationary allowance of £291k. However, market forecast trends are beginning to show signs of decreasing at wholesale levels, but this takes time to filter down to retail level. Actual published inflationary rates for October 4.6% (September 6.7%). More detailed analysis under way for 2024/25 budget. **Adverse to budget;** Diesel £30k, Electricity £68k, Gas £28k, Repairs & Maintenance £32k, Communication/Events £12k, Control Income £15k & Misc. £11k **totalling £196k. Positive to budget;** Rates (£30k) and Misc. (£4k) **totalling (£34k), Overall adverse net effect £162k.**

**Head of Training & Assets £45k;** per number 2 in Table 1

The overspend is a combination of inflationary effects and increased cost of spare parts plus more maintenance needed on an ageing fleet. Inflation on vehicle parts is estimated to be in the region of 8% to 12%.

In addition, the Service Grant will be £9k higher than budgeted for in 2023/24. The service has also been informed that they will receive £153k for the Protection Uplift grant in 2023/24, this will be utilised in year with any unused grant carried forward into 2024/25 to support the Protection activities of the service. Therefore, a nil forecast year end position.

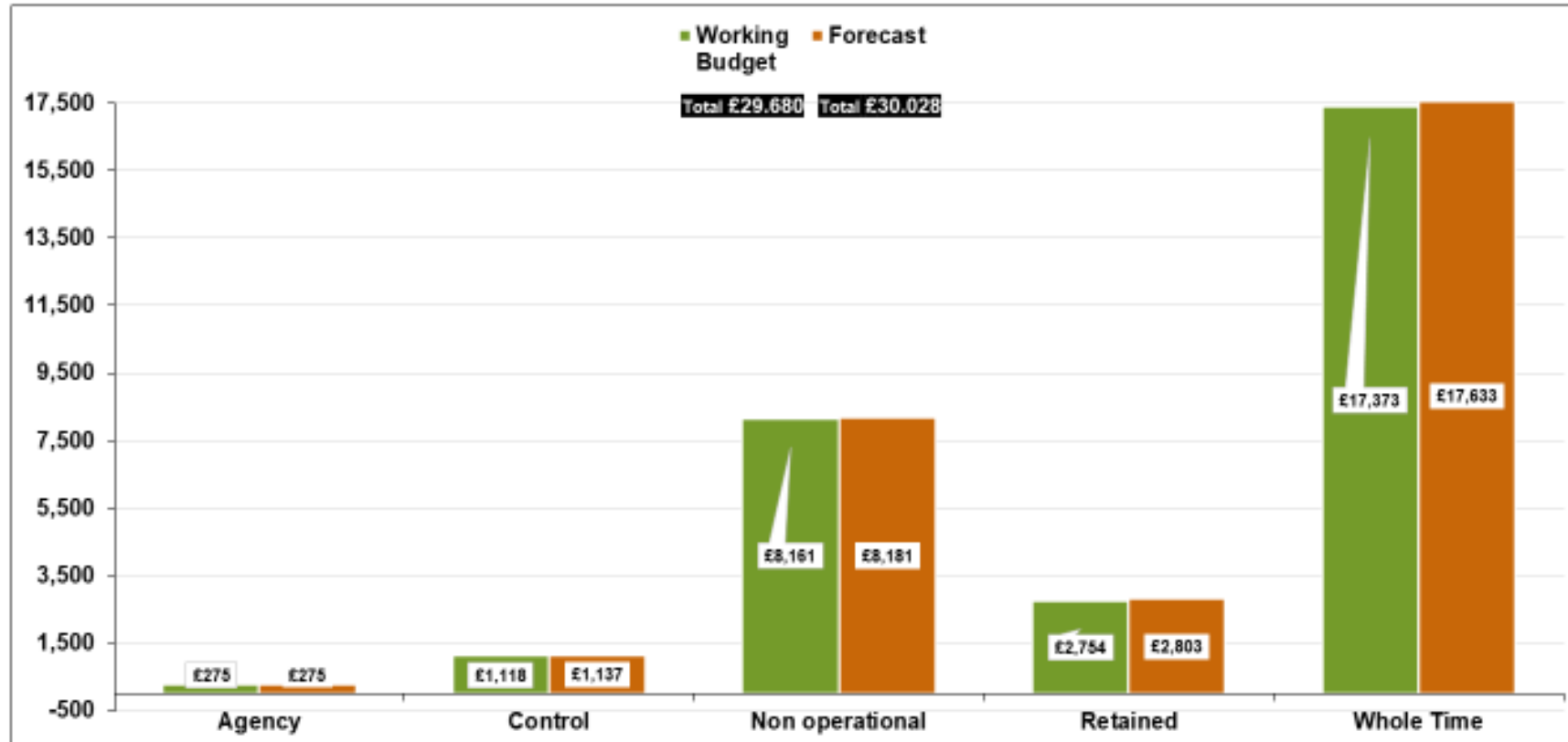
With the salary budgets being such a large proportion of the overall budget (86%), the split from the budgets above is justified.

**Table 2: 2023/24 Revenue Forecast Outturn**

Category	Working Budget £	YTD Actuals £	Forecast Year End Outturn £	Sum of Variance £
Agency	274,900	156,296	274,900	0
Control	1,118,000	734,809	1,137,043	19,043
Non operational	8,160,900	4,575,859	8,180,630	19,730
Retained	2,753,600	1,430,554	2,802,718	49,118
Whole Time	17,373,300	10,111,268	17,632,791	259,491
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29,680,700</b>	<b>17,008,787</b>	<b>30,028,083</b>	<b>347,383</b>

2023/24 Forecast Outturn Salary  
FRA December

£000's



	Variance
Agency	£0
Control	£19
Non Ops	£20
Retained	£49
Whole Time	£259
<b>Total</b>	<b>£347</b>

2.9. The overspend of £347k shown in Table 2 and chart above as at 31st October 2023 is made up of;

**Non Operational £20k;** Forecast includes back dated pay award, now nationally approved, and will be paid in November. New rates applied in forecast from December.

**Retained £49k, Whole Time £259k and Control £19k;** The FF July 2022 pay award was budgeted at 5%, as Members are aware, this was finally agreed at 7%. For the July 2023 pay award, 5% was budgeted and agreed. So, there is the 2% budget shortfall within the 2023/24 budget, hence the forecast overspend resulting from this. In addition, the forecast includes two additional FF from December 2023 and 10 new recruits from February 2024. The Retained forecast is adjusted for the one-month lag for payment of allowances.

#### 2.10. **Total Forecast Outturn, Salary and Non Salary**

2.11. The total forecast variance at year-end including both the non-salary figure in Table 1 above and for pay and on costs, including agency staff shown in Table 2, is currently forecasted to be (£658k) underspend. If the final year end position is an underspend, then as noted above, it has previously been approved that this is allocated to the Transformation and Pay/Pension Reserves.

2.12. The £1m Pay/Pensions reserve previously set up in a prior year, was much needed and allocated when setting the 2023/24 budget. This was on the back of firefighter pay awards being in excess of those budgeted. At the 2022/23 year end, the final balance on this reserve was £1.126m, therefore only £0.126m remaining after the budgeted 2023/24 use. This can be revisited as part of the 2024/25 budget work.

### 3. Capital Programme Monitoring

3.1. Table 3 below is the 2023/24 Capital Programme. The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status indicates how well the schemes are progressing (Green being on target for year-end completion within budget; Amber indicating possible slippage or overspend; and Red indicating actual slippage/overspend or deletion of the scheme).

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



### 3.3. Table 3: The 2023/24 Capital Programme

CMT Area	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority 2023/24 Capital Programme	Budget 2023/24 £'000s	Forecast 2023/24 £'000s	Deferred 2024/25 £'000s	R A G
	<b>Fleet:</b>				
HTAM	Fire Appliances (x5 Chassis Payment & stage payment)	750		750	Yellow
HTAM	Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC)	300	281		Green
HTAM	Vehicles Technical Van £35k + CFS Van £30k	65	65		Green
	<b>Sub total Fleet</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>750</b>	
	<b>Property Works service wide:</b>				
ACO	Various: Lighting replacements, CCTV, fire protection, doors & windows, security gates, electrical infrastructure, Electric Vehicle charging points	354	270	84	Green
ACO	Drill yard resurfacing	14	14		Green
ACO	WC/Shower facility refurbishments	25	25		Green
ACO	Dormitory refurbishment	23	23		Green
ACO	Station Kitchen Refurbishments	8	8		Green
ACO	Major Roofing Replacements	371	150	221	Yellow
ACO	Heating - boiler replacements	30		30	Yellow
ACO	Electric Infrastructure/Photovoltaic Tiles/Solar panels	81		81	Yellow
ACO	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (predominantly toilet and shower facilities, also access, prayer rooms)	112	30	82	Yellow
ACO	Steel Masts & Drill Towers	110		110	Yellow
	<b>Sub total Property</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>608</b>	
ACO	Fitness Equipment Expenditure	15	15		Yellow
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,258</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>1,358</b>	

### 3.4. Capital Programme Deferrals:

- 3.5. Fire Appliances £750k: The Fire Appliances are on hold pending a review. No spend will occur during current financial year. It is anticipated specifications (vehicle size and equipment) will be finalised, and order submitted by March 2024.
- 3.6. Property Various £84k: For bay floor replacements at Potton, Bedford, Biggleswade & Sandy 2024/25.
- 3.7. Roof replacements £221k, only Leighton Buzzard in 2023/24 under a procurement exemption. Others to be formally tendered when specification documents are complete, and Procurement have capacity. Heating & Electric £30k & Infrastructure £81k: Deferred to 2024/25 - audit by Pick Everard commissioned to review estate requirements in relation to Electrical infrastructure, Heating and Photovoltaic Tiles/Solar panels. Report expected in December 2023. Will be internally reviewed followed by plan regarding what expenditure is needed. Once approved this will be completed in 2024/25.
- 3.8. Steel Masts & Drill Towers £110k: At tender stage, on hold due to time of year (weather and supply availability). Planning will commence in Jan 24 for completion in spring/summer 2024/25.
- 3.9. EDI £82k: Remainder of year will be focused on the following plan, improve building signage including consideration of those with a visual impairment, installation and updating of Hearing Loops, creation/re-allocation of building spaces to provide Multi-Function private/quiet spaces, (e.g. prayer, nursing, neurodiversity, etc.), Re-location and re-marking of wheelchair accessible parking spaces, improve access to wheelchair accessible toilet facilities, larger and higher value works are in the process of being explored for future delivery. i.e. automated powered entry and exit door systems at key locations for improved accessibility, platform/passenger lift installations at key locations to make upper floors accessible, other welfare and accessibility improvements to enhance user experiences and comfort. This deferral is to complete any of the above projects not finished in 2023/24.

### 3.10. Additions:

#### **New vehicles; 4\*£30k. Total £120k.**

The Service has budgeted for four new officer response cars in the 2024/25 capital replacement programme, these vehicles are utilised by Fire Officers to respond to operational incidents. The Service requests to bring forward this purchase into 2023/24. This request is to mitigate an area of operational risk of potentially not having enough response vehicles to manage incidents. Due to changes in national guidance, the Service has phased out its 'grey' fleet with the removal of the 'essential car users' scheme' for response officers and therefore a need for a larger fleet of vehicles to accommodate the operational requirements. Currently the Service has managed this additional fleet requirement by extending the replacement life for existing cars and the lease agreements of other vehicles.

Unfortunately, the extended leases have a one months' notice, from the lease companies, so this is also a risk for the Service. The actual spend is likely to be the end of this financial year/into early next. Hence seeking FRA approval now as it may be incurred in this year and not waiting for the FRA approval of the 2024/25 Capital Programme in February 2024. It is the Service's wish to order as soon

as possible as there is currently a minimum 3-month lead time from order. Once approved and ordered the risk can be better assessed. In addition, once the new vehicles are delivered, the Service can eliminate the lease costs of £1k per month.

**Property – New kitchens unbudgeted £44k.**

Stopsley, Luton & Dunstable unplanned refurbishments complete, Bedford is a work in process, unbudgeted and required as a result of Environmental Audits which required immediate critical refurbishments to avoid possible closure. £44k offset by use of Unplanned/Urgent Property Earmarked Reserves.

3.12 **Variations:** None to report. To note the Thermal Image Cameras coming in under budget allocation.

**4. 2024/25 Budget Consultation Question**

4.1 The draft 2024/24 Budget Consultation question for Members to consider is included below. The consultation will be ran by the Communications Team following today’s meeting and up to the end of January 2024. The summary of responses will be presented back to the FRA at the February 2024 budget setting meeting. The consultation will be via social media and include businesses as well as residents/council tax payers.

*The Fire and Rescue Authority, like you, has faced increasing costs due to inflationary pressures. In particular we have seen cost increases in electricity, gas, vehicle fuel, supplies & services and pay impact on our budgets. In order to assist in managing these cost increases, the Fire and Rescue Authority are currently planning our budget for next year and are considering a council tax increase of 2.99%, which would be £3.28 per year for a Band D property. This would increase the Band D council tax charge for your Fire and Rescue Service from £109.45 to £112.73 per year. Would you support this increase to invest in and protect your local Fire and Rescue Service?*

**ANDREW HOPKINSON  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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

# Appendix 1

CMT Area		Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority 2023/24 Savings/Efficiencies (S/E) & Income Generation (I/G)	Budget 2023/24	Forecast 2023/24	R A G
			£'000s	£000's	
ACO	S/E	Saving as a result of brining cleaning back in-house	40	40	
HICT	S/E	Change of provider for the procurement framework. Move to be part of the NFCC blue light collaboration hub.	9	9	
HTAM	S/E	FF Apprenticeship residential element removal	35	42	
HTAM	S/E	Reduced use of external Compartment fire behaviour training	15	15	
HTAM	S/E	To continue to have two Crew Commanders in the instructor pool (generating savings)	12	13	
HICT	S/E	Cessation Whole-time Recruitment system	4	4	
ACO	S/E	Surplus redistribution from the Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) - over estimated 22/23	(20)	0	
HTAM	S/E	ASPIRE Leadership Programme	2	2	
ACO	IG	Increase in Investment Income through continued and robust cash flow management, combined with higher interest rates gained	130	903	
HTAM	IG	Income from Workshops Non business Activity	5	7	
HTAM	IG	Continue to develop the driver training provision to generate income from delivery of various courses including the emergency driver instructor course	30	30	
HTAM	IG	Continued delivery of driving courses for other services including Light Vehicle Response Driver (LVRD) and instructor courses.	27	27	
HSSA	IG	Income towards Communications Team (Digital support to Staywise)	15	15	
HTAM	IG	Continue to be a supportive provider through Herts FRS. This could be developed to become an apprenticeship provider and increase income generation opportunity (Recruits Training).	30	30	
HRes	IG	Income from cross boarder charging with neighbouring FRS's	10	5	1
ACO	S/E	Energy Management Savings	10		2
ACO	S/E	Protection discount due to investment of 360 degree cameras on front line vehicles	3		3
HTAM	S/E	Proposal for Internal testing of Technical equipment	5		4
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>362</b>	<b>1142</b>	
<b>Total Savings &amp; Efficiencies</b>			<b>228</b>	<b>125</b>	
<b>Total Income Generation</b>			<b>134</b>	<b>1017</b>	

\* NB - All have been reflected in the 2023-24 Base Budget

1. Memorandum of Understanding in final stages, it has taken longer than anticipated to finalise this.
2. As outlined above in 2.8., with the continued high cost of energy, this initiative unfortunately will not be delivered.
3. This project has not been completed yet and will not be delivered in 2023/24. This will roll over into next year as a saving on insurance premium, due to discount awarded when the 360-degree cameras are in use.
4. The Technical Technician is awaiting to do the training to allow them to deliver the programme. Due to work capacity and scheduling, this will fall into 2024/25.

This page is intentionally left blank

**SUBJECT:** PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR END OF QUARTER TWO (2023-24)

**Author and contact:** Chris Bigland, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
[chris.bigland@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.bigland@bedsfire.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:** Previous quarterly updates [Fire Authority - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](http://modern.gov.co.uk)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Quarter 2 Performance Report	None

**Implications**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	Any adjustments to budgets as a result of this paper will be discussed and cost implications reported to Members in line with our Members Handbook and governance arrangements.
Risk Management	Yes	Our Corporate Risk Register is reviewed monthly by officers and a quarterly update presented to the Audit and Standards Committee.

Legal Implications	No	Our performance is reported in line with the Fire Service Act 2004 and Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2018.
Privacy and Security Implications	No	Performance reports are produced in line with GDPR and information security legislation. There are no privacy issues or security implications from this report.
Duty to Collaborate	No	The <u>Policing and Crime Act 2017</u> requires the Authority to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services.
Health and Safety Implications	No	Health and safety performance implications are discussed at the Health and Safety Steering Group. Any serious implications for staff and third parties will be reviewed by the Health and Safety Manager and reported to Members.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	Where performance affects people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, we will give due regard to the public sector equality duty. A People Impact Assessment (PIA) is produced for all Projects, Strategies and public events. The purpose of a PIA is to support consideration of equality and diversity issues in the design, development and delivery of activity, change, projects, procedures, guidance and technical notes across the Service.
Environmental Sustainability	No	The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that a public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Consider the impact of the proposals on climate change, harmful emissions, consumption of resources and sustainability. The Environment Bill which is scheduled to gain Royal Assent in Autumn 2021 creates a new enforcement regime overseen by the Office for Environmental Protection if a public authority has allegedly failed to comply with environmental law.
Consultation and Communication	No	Our approach to Communications and Engagement is set out in our Comms and Engagement Strategy. This includes our principles of consultation.



## **PURPOSE:**

To present a summary of organisational performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2023-24 financial year.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Members:

1. Consider the Service's performance, contained within appendix 1, against the published standards within the Community Risk Management Plan and the wider corporate Key Performance Indicators.

---

### 1. Background

- 1.1. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the regular Corporate Management Team (CMT) meeting.
- 1.2. The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and targets included within the report attached reflect those established as part of the Authority's 2023/24 planning cycle, and in support of the current strategic aims set out in the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027 (CRMP).
- 1.3. One of the strategic priorities set out in the CRMP is to enable better access to data and performance insight as doing so will help empower staff to greater ownership for delivering performance improvements at a local level. To support this strategic priority, the Service is undertaking a comprehensive review of how it captures and utilises the broad range of risk and performance data available.
- 1.4. Performance data is collected from the Incident Recording System (IRS) and internal databases such as iTrent, Protection and Home Fire Safety Visits database. For a variety of reasons some records take longer than others to upload to the IRS and other databases and therefore totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers). The performance report therefore represents a 'snapshot' based upon the best information available at the point in time this report was prepared.

## 2. Reporting by exception and data methodology

- 2.1 The report presents areas for specific scrutiny with commentary but also includes overall performance in summary.
- 2.2 Where possible, Officers will provide comparable national datasets to evidence where the service fits within national benchmarking. This is only possible where the service target conforms to national KPI definitions.
- 2.3 Where national comparators are not available or relevant, Officers will seek to present trend analysis so Members and the public can easily track service performance.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 All performance is managed through CMT therefore any areas of improvement will be disseminated through CMT to teams or programme and project boards to seek assurance and evidence of improvement.
- 3.2 Material changes in organisational activity will be captured in specific plans, e.g., On Call Improvement Programme or through the Service HMICFRS Action Plan.
- 3.3. Any implications will therefore be captured in the change process for specific areas or initiatives and presented via the most appropriate governance framework for the size and impact of the change.

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



# **Bedfordshire**

## **Fire and Rescue Service**

---

# **Performance Report**







## **2023–24 Quarter 2**

## Contents

Measures in exception .....	4
Prevention measures in exception.....	4
Protection measures in exception.....	6
Appliance availability measures in exception .....	7
Emergency call handling measures in exception .....	8
Incident response measures in exception.....	9
Human resources measures in exception .....	10
Health and safety measures in exception .....	10
Measures on or better than target .....	11
Prevention.....	11
Protection measures .....	11
Appliance availability measures .....	11
Emergency call handling measures .....	11
Incident response measures .....	12
Human resources measures.....	12
Organisational development measures .....	12
Health and safety measures.....	12
Workshops measures.....	13
Information and communication technology measures .....	13
Measures without targets – for information .....	14
Protection measures .....	14
Incident activity measures .....	14

This report provides details of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s performance against its key performance indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 2 of 2023-24. Figures shown relate to the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023, or as at 30 September 2023 for those KPIs that are effectively snapshots at a specific moment in time.


The status of each of the metrics is indicated using the following symbols:

Indicator	Status
	On target or better than target
	Off target but within 10% of target
	Off target by more than 10% of target
	No target, but higher than the corresponding value from last year
	No target, but lower than the corresponding value from last year
	No target. For information only

## Measures in exception

### Prevention measures in exception

Off target by more than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Home fire safety visits delivered	0015	Up	<b>1731</b> (Target 2500) 

The number of home fire safety visits (HFSV) delivered is significantly below the target for the quarter. The launch of the HFSV PowerApp aligned to the NFCC Person-Centred Approach has seen a significant change of focus and approach to HFSV. Much more emphasis is now placed upon delivering a comprehensive visit targeted at more vulnerable households. Whilst the number of visits has reduced, a deeper analysis reveals very positive indicators demonstrating improved quality and support. For example:

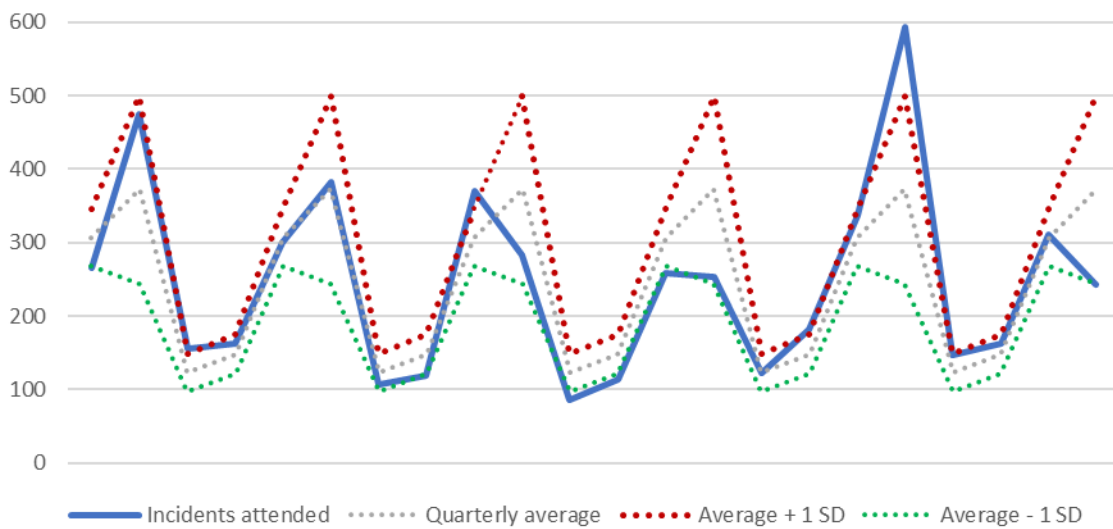
- 62% HFSV delivered to persons age 65+ and/or disabled
- 270 HFSV delivered to households with a person with a mental health/cognitive condition
- 43 HFSV delivered to households with significant clutter issues
- 73 households making a commitment to becoming a smoke free home
- 16 referrals to stop smoking service
- 77 falls referrals
- 70 Safeguarding referrals made
- 44 Bobby Scheme crime prevention referrals
- 26 arson proof letter boxes fitted to homes at risk from arson
- 9 alcohol referrals made

More time is now spent on each visit than in previous years, with the time spent rising in proportion to risk. This change in approach addresses an 'area for improvement' set out in HMICFRS inspection report. As previously reported, a change will be proposed to the performance indicator relating to 'high risk' HFSV as the current indicator relates to those groups most likely to experience a dwelling fire, but does not take account of other factors such as vulnerability which are shown to be linked to potentially worse outcomes in the event of fire.

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Secondary fires attended	0002b	Down	<b>245</b> (Target 218) 

Secondary fires are smaller fires which do not involve property or injury to persons. The target has been missed by 12%. However, the Q2 target used is a linear projection (25% of the annual target). Secondary fires show a seasonal weather-related trend: over the past five years 41% of secondary fires occurred the Q2 summer period. Taking account of this seasonality, the number of fires attended this quarter is relatively low and well below the five-year average for Q2 of 396 secondary fires.

Q2 secondary fires at lower limit of expected range  
(Q2 average  $\pm$  1 standard deviation)





Based upon Q1 and Q2 data, the projection is that performance is on track to achieve the annual target.

Of the secondary fires, 42% were found to be deliberate. 94% of the fires were in outdoor areas with loose refuse the most common item involved.

## Protection measures in exception

Off target by more than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Primary fires in non-domestic buildings	0039	Down	<b>33</b> (Target 28) 
<p>Of the 33 fires, 10 were at His Majesty's Prison (HMP) Bedford, all of which were recorded as deliberate. One of these fires resulted in an inmate requiring hospital treatment. Deliberate fire setting is a regular issue at HMP Bedford and the number of incidents is rising compared to last year. BFRS has written to the Crown Premises Inspectorate and the Governor to raise our concern over the rising number of incidents attended. If current trends in non-domestic fires continue, the annual target may not be achieved.</p> <p>The protection team carries out 'after fire inspections' on non-domestic premises where there has been a fire in order to provide support and check fire safety arrangements.</p>			
Automatic fire detector false alarms in non-domestic properties attended	0011	Down	<b>251</b> (Target 163) 
<p>The target has been missed by 54%, which is in contrast to Q1 where the target was achieved. False alarms show some seasonal variation with 28% of annual calls attended taking place in Q2 over the past five years. However, the increase compared to Q1 this year (155) and Q2 of last year (167) is significant. It is not readily apparent why this quarter has seen such a marked increase in incidents attended.</p> <p>The types of property with most attendances made were hospitals (37), retirement/elderly/nursing/care (34), warehouses (26) and schools (22). Compared to the same period last year, there have been increases in the attendances to hospitals, retirement etc and warehouses.</p> <p>Work is now underway to review the approach to dealing with unwanted fire signals taken by the protection team, including through enforcement of the Fire Safety Order and through business engagement. There will also need to be a review of call handling processes and mobilisation policy.</p>			



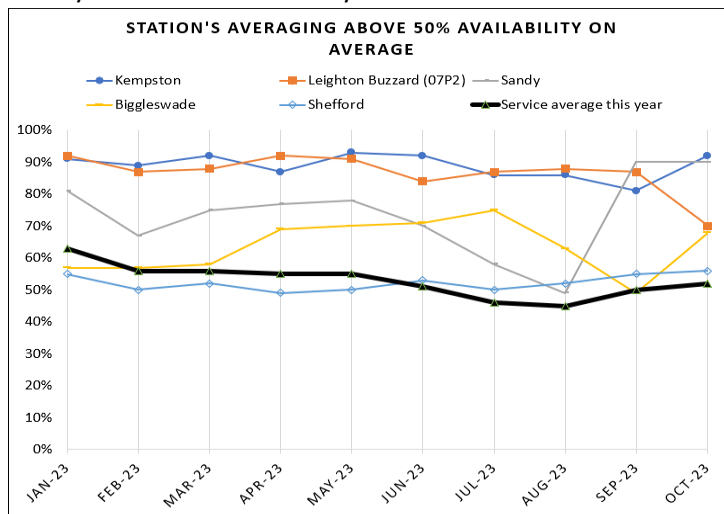
## Appliance availability measures in exception

Off target by more than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Availability of stations' first on-call pumps	0034	Up	<b>62%</b> (Target 75%) 

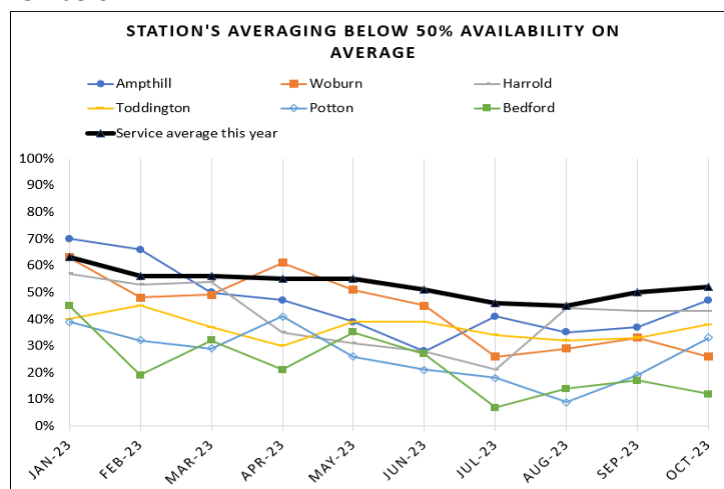
The measure is considered by the station on-call availability vs the actual on-call availability after receiving standby moves or strategic reserve staff.


As shown in the graph below, Kempston, Leighton Buzzard, Sandy and Biggleswade are above service average. Shefford remain a key strategic focus (hovering around the black line) with a specific trial taking place on booking availability in a more flexible way.



The following stations (Toddington, Potton, Woburn, Harrold, Ampthill and Bedford) are challenging even after standby moves. Performance at these stations continue to drag the service average down. This is largely due to recruitment and retention issues and will be a key focus for the new On-Call Liaison Officers and wider project.




The Service is delivering additional training and skills evenings. Primary purpose of these additional training sessions is to maximise the opportunity for staff to achieve full competence in the swiftest way, thus making the fire engines more available, more often. Secondary to this is that existing staff feel the services commitment to them and their development, making the stations a place where we keep existing staff and attract new members.



Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Occasions global crewing enabled 9 riders on two-pump responses (wholetime)	0040	Up	<b>64%</b> (Target 90%) 
This KPI is consciously broken by our Duty Group Commanders to maximise the number of appliances we can crew across the county. By doing this, we increase the available appliances at on-call stations significantly.			

## Emergency call handling measures in exception

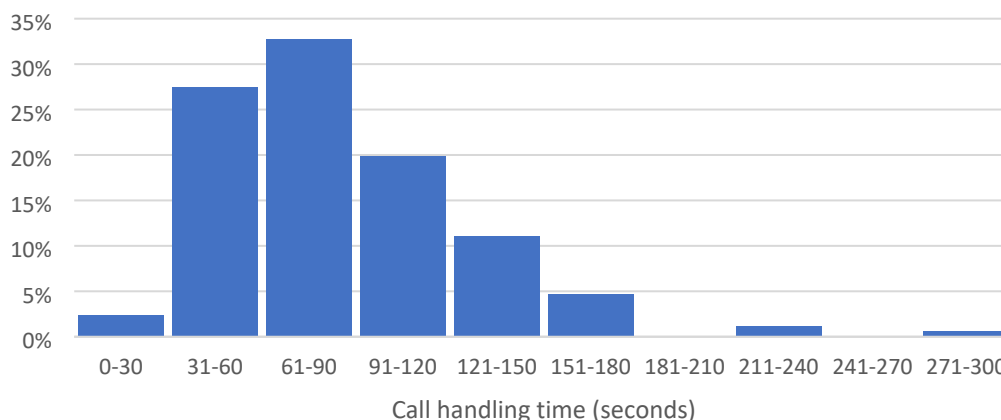
Off target by more than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Incidents with call-handling time within 60 seconds	0029e	Up	<b>27%</b> (Target 90%) 
The Service's target is the most challenging target of those English FRSs who publish call-handling targets. The 27% achieved is 10 percentage points higher than the 17% achieved in Q2 of last year. We will be bringing a paper to the FRA with proposed changes to this measure.			
Average call-handling time to mobilise to incidents (in Bedfordshire)	0029	Down	<b>118 s</b> (Target 90 s) 
The average call-handling time of 118 seconds during Q2 is 17 seconds faster than that achieved in Q2 of 2022/23. We will be bringing a paper to the FRA with proposed changes to this measure.			
Emergency calls to primary fires handled within 90 seconds	0029f	Up	<b>66%</b> (Target 90%) 

More calls were handled in 61 to 90 seconds than any other range. The BFRS average of 84 seconds in Q2 is comparable to the English FRSs average of 86 seconds in 2022/23.









### Call handling times distribution

Primary fires - Q2




## Incident response measures in exception

### Off target by more than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2 From time of call	Quarter 2 From time of send/alert
Primary fires attended within 10 minutes	0030g/k	Up	<b>58%</b> (Target 80%) 	<b>69%</b> (Target 80%) 
<p>We are amid a risk cover review looking to address the disparities between different parts of the county. We have evidence we struggle to meet our attendance standard particularly in areas of Central Bedfordshire. A roaming pump trial has started, and highlights include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live since 12th October 2023</li> <li>• Available 16 days out of 27 (of which 4 days at Workshops) – 70% availability</li> <li>• Sent to Shefford (2), Ampthill (3), Toddington (1), Woburn (2), Harrold (3), Pottton (1) and Bedford (1)</li> <li>• Data will be presented to the programme board and latterly to the FRA on the potential long-term impact of this project as part of future CRMP proposals.</li> </ul>				
RTCs attended within 13 minutes	0030f/m	Up	<b>69%</b> (Target 80%) 	<b>80%</b> (Target 80%) 
<p>Similar to primary fires, we see a mixed picture for average attendance times for RTCs. On-call availability and RTCs in rural areas affect the average across the county. Central Bedfordshire is an area we are focussing on with the roaming pump trial to seek to improve the attainment of this and other measures.</p>				
<h3>Off target by less than 10% of target</h3>				
Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2 From time of call	Quarter 2 From time of send/alert
Average response time to primary fires	0030a/h	Down	<b>607 s</b> (Target 600 s) 	<b>524 s</b> (Target 600 s) 
<p>Although slightly off target in quarter 2, we meet our target for our average response time for 2023/24 overall. This is largely due to the better response times in the Luton, Houghton Regis and Dunstable conurbation. These better than average response times anchor the overall figure for areas of the county where we are responding slower. Work continues to improve all stations performance, corporate projects to improve cover and to consider long term proposals</p>				
Secondary fires attended within 20 minutes	0030e/l	Up	<b>94%</b> (Target 96%) 	<b>96%</b> (Target 96%) 
<p>Although slightly off target in quarter 2, we meet our target for our average response time for 2023/24 overall.</p>				



## Human resources measures in exception

### Off target by less than 10% of target

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Percentage of working time lost due to sickness (excluding on-call)	0060	Down	<b>4.8%</b> (Target 4.4%) 
<p>As previously reported, absence levels have slowly increased to pre COVID-19 pandemic levels and is currently above the target. With the widely and well reported health care crisis in England, this is not unexpected. There are record numbers of patients unable to book GP appointments within the Government's two-week target as well as more than 7 million people waiting for NHS hospital treatment, this is expected to increase to 8 million by August 2024 as reported in mainstream media.</p> <p>The Service is adapting its approach in recognition of the issue for example by seeking to improve support through a revised Modified Duties programme and investing further in Occupational Health and our health surveillance programme. As well as temporarily increasing the resources available in the HR Team to advise managers so that they are better able to support and manage short term sickness absence. We have continued to improve the support for those who are unfit to attend work as well as providing Managers with additional training, advice, and support to up-skill and equip them to be better able to identify issues in advance and provide greater support to hopefully minimise the need for absence.</p>			







## Health and safety measures in exception

### Off target by more than 10% of target


Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Working days/shifts lost to accidents per 1000 employees (excluding on-call)	H2	Down	<b>96.2</b> (Target 72.79) 
<p>The Q2 figure of 96.2 equates to two injuries resulting in working days / shifts lost (excluding on-call) and is a reduction on the 102.2 reported in Q1. A total of 47 days/shifts were lost with 46 of those attributable to a single event.</p>			
Vehicle collisions involving fire service fleet vehicles, including non-operational assets	H4	Down	<b>11</b> (Target 9) 
<p>During Q2, 11 vehicle collisions involving Service vehicles occurred, which is fewer than the 17 collisions reported in Q1. Five occurred during operational response, three during operational response returning and three during routine activities.</p> <p>For two of the collisions the Service vehicles were stationary, in eight collisions the Service vehicles were travelling at 1-10 mph at the time of the collisions, and in one collision the Service vehicle was traveling at 11-30 mph at the time of the collision.</p>			

## Measures on or better than target


### Prevention

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Primary fires attended	0002a	Down	<b>179</b> (Target 204) 
Accidental fire fatalities	0013e	Down	<b>0</b> (Target 0) 
Fire injuries where victim went to hospital	0014a	Down	<b>2</b> (Target 8) 
Deliberate fires attended	0003a	Down	<b>153</b> (Target 172) 
Primary accidental dwelling fires attended	0002ai-i	Down	<b>48</b> (Target 74) 
Primary deliberate dwelling fires attended	0002ai-ii	Down	<b>5</b> (Target 8) 


### Protection measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Building Regulations consultations completed on time	0022ai	Up	<b>97%</b> (Target 95%) 
Fire safety audits/inspections completed	PI16	Up	<b>638</b> (Target 600) 

### Appliance availability measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Shifts where Service crewing level is sufficient for all wholetime pumps	0040a	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 100%) 

### Emergency call handling measures


Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Emergency calls answered within 7 seconds	0028b	Up	<b>91%</b> (Target 90%) 

### Incident response measures






Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2 From time of call	Quarter 2 From time of send/alert
-----------	-----	-----	--------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Average response time to RTCs	0030d/j	Down	<b>645 s</b> (Target 780 s)		<b>532 s</b> (Target 780 s)	
Average response time to secondary fires	0030b/i	Down	<b>677 s</b> (Target 1200 s)		<b>581 s</b> (Target 1200 s)	



### Human resources measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
On-call employees with 4 or more sickness absences in a 12-month period	0061	Down	<b>1.4%</b> (Target 5%) 




### Organisational development measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Station-based operational BA wearers who attended a tactical firefighting assessment within last 2 years	T1	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 98%) 
Qualified EFAD drivers who attended a refresher course within last 2 years	T2	Up	<b>98%</b> (Target 98%) 
Watches/sections at BFRS stations that have at least 60% of operation personnel qualified in trauma care or equivalent	T4	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 98%) 
Level 1 incident commanders who attended an incident command assessment within the required frequency	T6	Up	<b>98%</b> (Target 98%) 
Flexible duty officers who attended an incident command assessment within the required frequency	T7	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 98%) 




### Health and safety measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Serious accidents where individual is off sick for more than 28 days (per 1000 employees)	H1	Down	<b>1.8</b> (Target 1.89) 
24-hour cover periods lost to accidents per 1000 on-call employees	H3	Down	<b>14.49</b> (Target 175.91) 

## Workshops measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Time when rescue pumping appliances were unavailable for operational use due to annual service, defect, or other works (Turnaround time)	WS2a	Down	<b>2.3%</b> (Target 5%) 
Time when aerial appliances and SRU were unavailable for operational use due to annual service, defect, or other works (Turnaround time)	WS2b	Down	<b>4.0%</b> (Target 5%) 
Time when other operational appliances unavailable for operational use due to annual service, defect, or other works (Turnaround time)	WS2c	Down	<b>0.7%</b> (Target 3%) 

## Information and communication technology measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2
Resolution of Priority 1 incidents within 1 hour (Any incident preventing the mobilisation of any fire appliance or a major ICT incident that causes all users not being able to access critical / vital ICT systems)	0042	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 96%) 
Resolution of Priority 2 incidents within 2 hours (Any incident reducing the resiliency to mobilise a fire appliance or multiple users unable to perform their role or gain access to key applications and systems)	0043	Up	<b>100%</b> (Target 97%) 
Availability of core ICT network services	0046	Up	<b>99.88%</b> (Target 98.0%) 

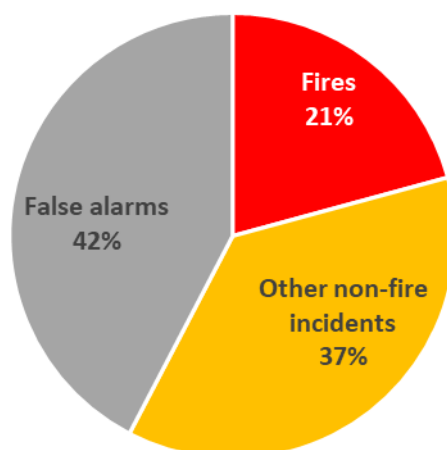
## Measures without targets – for information

### Protection measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2	
Prohibition notices served	0023g	N/A	<b>12</b>	↑
Enforcement notices served	0023i	N/A	<b>1</b>	↑

### Incident activity measures

Indicator	Ref	Aim	Quarter 2	
Incidents attended	0001	N/A	<b>2022</b>	↓
Fires attended	0001a	N/A	<b>420</b>	↓
Other non-fire incidents attended	0001b	N/A	<b>746</b>	↑
False alarms attended	0001c	N/A	<b>856</b>	↑





**SUBJECT:**                    **New Operational Response Performance Standards**

**Author and contact:**    **DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER (DCFO)**

Background Papers:        Members development day workshop on Response standards delivered on 4 October 2023.

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Response standards comparison and national definitions	

**Implications**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Impact / Reference</b>
Financial Implications		No material issues
Risk Management		Risk to reputation re: public perception of lessening standards. To be mitigated by public consultation to explain the redrafting seeks to surface actual performance and drive improvement.
Legal Implications		Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 and the National Framework document lay the legal framework for the CRMP. The Response standards are the promise to the public and are determined as part of the process laid out in this paper.

Privacy and Security Implications		N/A
Duty to Collaborate		N/A
Health and Safety Implications		Risk assessments and PDA for all incident types to remain in place - unchanged.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion		No material issues
Environmental Sustainability		N/A
Consultation and Communication		Full public consultation to be conducted as part of the change recommended

#### **PURPOSE:**

To provide Members with sufficient information to allow the Fire Authority to support changes to the Service Operational Response Performance standards in consultation with the public and key stakeholders.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Members are asked to agree to consult the public on the following:

##### 1. New operational response performance measures:

- Mobilise to primary fires within 120 seconds 85% of the time.
- First fire engine to arrive in 12 minutes to primary fires on 80% of occasions, measured from time of call. (incorporating the existing time of alert measure with the new call handling measure).
- RTCs we will arrive in 15 minutes on 80% of occasions, measured from time of call. (incorporating the existing time of alert measure with the new call handling measure).
- For secondary fires one fire engine will arrive in 20 minutes on 96% of occasions, measured from time of call.

- The removal of old descriptors that do not follow the national recording and benchmarking definitions e.g. a move from 'critical incidents' to 'primary and secondary fire'.
  - The removal of the old control measure to answer 90% of 999 calls in 7 seconds or less, as this will now be superseded by the control measure above.
  - The removal of '5 riders' being part of any performance measure due to the limiting nature of such a measure when maximising the amount of fire engines available to the whole County.
2. Should the Service also publicly measure the arrival of a subsequent fire engine should the pre-determined attendance require more than one fire engine at the time of the call. If this is required, then the following measure may be applied:
- Second fire engine to arrive in 16 mins to primary fires on 80% of occasions, from time of call.
3. Members are asked to agree to an 8-week consultation period which allows for the LGA 6 weeks best practice period but is extended by two weeks due to Christmas, thus ensuring sufficient time for stakeholders to engage with the consultation.

The consultation will be commenced following the Authority meeting that considers the content of this paper and will be formed of the proposals that are agreed from the above recommendations.

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The existing standards for operational response were adopted when the Fire and Rescue Service Act abolished the national standards in 2006. The Service defined the following standards in 2007 which have remained broadly unchanged:
- Answer 90% of 999 calls in 7 seconds or less.
  - Mobilise required resources to an addressable location within 60 secs or less on 80% of occasions.
  - For critical fire incidents, (threaten life, structures, or the environment), we will provide an initial response of:
    - 2 fire engines (9 riders) on 90% of occasions (measured from time of send).
    - Arrive within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions (measured from time of send).

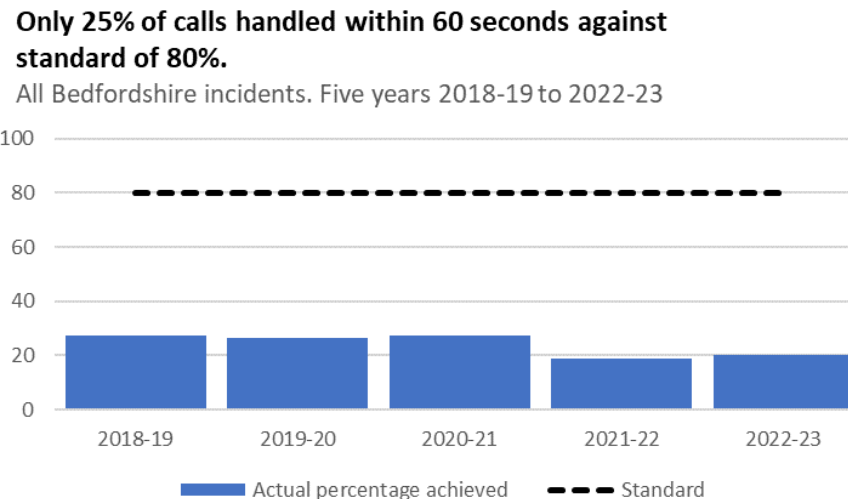
- For road traffic collisions (RTCs) we will arrive within 13 minutes on 80% of occasions (measured from time of send).
- For secondary incidents (non-life risk) one appliance with 5 crew will arrive within 20 minutes on 96% of occasions measured from time of send.

- 1.2 The standards have not been reviewed since their initial development and have failed to keep pace with the service's policies and practices. They also fail to align easily to national reporting definitions which creates additional work within the service to produce internal and local metrics as well as fulfilling the requirement to report on national measures.
- 1.3 The service reviewed data measures and definitions in use across the sector and compared our measures with comparable services as well as those who measure similar performance expectations to our own. Examples from the service review can be seen in the appendix.
- 1.4 The review shows that BFRS is significantly out of sync with the rest of the sector.
- 1.5 The proposed new standards are more transparent and aligned to national Government reporting which would make the creation and reporting of performance simpler as well as ensuring that the service's performance is more easily compared to other FRS performance – this is also evidenced in the appendix.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Performance reporting to the FRA and external stakeholders is burdensome and complex as the service has failed to change and keep pace with nationally recognised measures. The quarterly reports to the FRA were becoming more burdensome and less efficient as officers had to report on the legacy 'time of send' as well as 'time of call'. The opportunity to consult on proposals to make the measures more transparent and relevant to today's world would improve public confidence in the service they are receiving. The benefits of these changes include improved benchmarking and simplification of reporting due to being aligned with national measures, making our performance easier to compare with similar sized FRS and easier to understand.
- 2.2 This will be a much more transparent and efficient process. For example, the Home Office measure FIRE1001 is the national benchmark and considers first fire engine attendance time from time of call, which aligns to the proposals contained in the paper.

- 2.3 The call handling standard is a good example to how out of date and unrealistic the service measures have become. The figure below shows the five-year performance against handling calls within 60 seconds. The service policy dictates that control staff are required to call challenge certain call types which adds significant time to call management. With the increase in mobile technology, we see many more calls to the control room where the caller is uncertain of their own location and therefore control officers have to apply investigative skills to determine the incident location prior to committing service resources. The service also receives calls from other agencies or people in crisis; these calls can be particularly difficult to allocate resources to quickly as significant intelligence gathering is required prior to mobilising, not only to protect our staff but to ensure the response is appropriate and does not exacerbate the situation on arrival. The service must set a performance measure that seeks continuous improvement in performance but recognises the challenges, constraints and policy expectations of staff.



- 2.4 Further rationale for change is the need to maximise the number of fire engines available at all times. The service had previously committed to a specific number of 5 firefighters on certain fire engines under certain circumstances. The service has tasked officers contrary to this stated measure to maximise the number of fire engines available which ultimately reduces the time taken for a resource to reach an incident which improves survivability and seeks to meet our availability and attendance standards. There is still the ability for Officers to order additional resources to scene and Control Officers are also able to add additional fire engines based on the information gathered at the time of the call.

- 2.5 Whilst work was already ongoing to review and seek to amend the operational response standards the recent feedback from HMICFRS which suggested that we needed to consider our published standards against our intention and ability to meet those standards reinforces the importance of this review.
- 2.6 Officers have now revisited our standards with the benefit of better data and greater self-awareness of actual performance compared to when they were written, many years ago. This includes road data and travel distance modelling and historic incident data. Work will continue to model and consider future growth in the county as part of our continuous improvement journey and build any further recommendations in future CRMPs.
- 2.7 The new measures offer greater transparency to the public, linking the whole life performance of an emergency call. By joining the call handling standards and attendance standards together means we can explain in one measure the whole life cycle of a 999 call. Whilst officers will continue to measure all aspects from time of call, time of send, turn out time and the time to drive to the incident, it is important that the public can easily see and challenge the service on our performance based on what would be reasonably expected as a single measure: from the time a person in need makes the call for help to the time our crews arrive to render such help as needed.
- 2.8 Officers did consider, but discounted, an option to create a different standard for the urban and rural areas. Having taken early soundings from stakeholders it is clear that a more challenging, county-wide, approach will see the service strive for even better performance. This will be more challenging to achieve in all three unitary authority areas, but it is the right thing to do to ensure we aim to deliver the best service for the public of Bedfordshire.
- 2.9 The change to the definitions and standards may be seen as lessening the service's performance. This is not the case. Officers are seeking to show the whole life cycle of the emergency call and therefore set a target that drives performance but is cognisant of the service policies and procedures to ensure we commit the correct resources to each incident.
- 2.10 By changing our language to the nationally understood descriptors for **primary** and **secondary** fires we will reduce our internal reporting burden as well as improve our benchmarking and external reporting. The national Incident Recording System maintained by the government categorises fires as either primary or secondary fires, with chimney fires treated as a separate category.
- **Primary fires** are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property such as buildings, caravans, vehicles, some outdoor structures, any fires involving casualties or rescues and any fires attended by five or more fire appliances.
  - **Secondary fires** are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles.

- 2.11 It is important to note that there is no proposal linked to this paper with regards to changing our wholetime establishment of operational firefighters (55 per colour watch plus 9 at Leighton Buzzard).
- 2.12 The purpose of the change relating to the number of riders that crew our fire engines is to allow Officers the maximum flexibility to organise firefighters in a way that ensures the most amount of fire engines are available at all times. This will not prevent fire engines having 5 firefighters on them but should alternative options present themselves to the Duty Group Commander or their team to move firefighters to other locations to increase availability then this would be expected to improve county coverage and reduce the time taken for fire engines to reach incidents. This is in line with the service performance expectations for attendance times as described in this paper.
- 2.13 Additionally, this flexibility supports projects such as the recent roaming pump trial where the placement of firefighters within our existing establishment has allowed us to put a 23<sup>rd</sup> fire engine into areas of deficiency during the day whilst the service seeks to improve On-call availability.
- 2.14 Officer's advice is that it is better to take a much more holistic approach to reinforcing our promise to the public by improving operational coverage to the whole county in the most flexible way.
- 3 Consultation
- 3.1 Officers will create online content to be shared through multiple channels to explain the changes and seek feedback from the public and partners. This will include animation or video content and an online questionnaire.
- 3.2 Assets developed for this purpose will be accessible and consider the needs of the audience, including where English may not be the first language of the home or other neurodiversity needs would inhibit participation in a single style consultation.
- 3.3 Officers will promote the consultation on service platforms as well as seeking support from local authority communications teams. This will be bolstered through Beds Alert and other consultation and marketing channels as necessary.
- 3.4 Officers will work with stakeholders, including the representative bodies, to ensure all feedback received during consultation is considered so that the Authority is fully apprised of the outputs of the consultation.

3.5 At the end of the consultation period, the Fire Authority will receive a further report which will consider feedback and propose any adjustments to the proposals, informing the Authority's final decision on the new Operational Response Performance Standards from 2024/25.

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



## Appendix

### Response standards comparison and national definitions

#### Percentage of emergency calls answered within 7 seconds

Fire Control can consistently hit a 7-second target for 'time to answer' calls except during spate conditions, and so failure to achieve the measure typically means that there was a spell of exceptional weather during the period, be that flooding, gales or a heatwave or an incident in a busy urban environment with lots of callers for the same single incident. The KPI therefore effectively measures something outside the Brigade's control and offers little value in terms of assurance. These are the services which use this measure out of the 44 who report nationally.

Services with "Time to answer" KPIs	
Avon	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds (target 94%)
Bedfordshire	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds (target 90%)
Cleveland	Average time to answer an emergency call (target 7 seconds)
Leicestershire	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds
Leicestershire	Average time to answer an emergency call
London	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds (target 92%)
Merseyside	Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds (target 96%)
Northumberland	Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds (target 95%)
Nottinghamshire	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds (target 90%)
Oxfordshire	Percentage of calls answered within 5 seconds
Oxfordshire	Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds

Tyne & Wear	Percentage of calls answered within 7 seconds (no target)
West Sussex	Percentage of calls answered within 10 seconds (target 95%)

### Percentage of emergency calls handled within 60 seconds

BFRS is one of only 9 English FRSs that report “Percentage of calls mobilised to within X seconds” KPIs publicly. BFRS’s KPI is the most challenging and it is not surprising that we fail to meet the target.

Services with “Percentage of calls mobilised to within X seconds” KPIs	
Bedfordshire	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 60 seconds (target 96%)
Cleveland	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 120 seconds (target 98%)
Cornwall	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 120 seconds (target 80%)
Devon & Somerset	Percentage of calls mobilised to within incident type target (e.g. dwelling fire 90 seconds (about 1 and a half minutes), RTC 120 seconds (about 2 minutes), etc) (target 90%)
Humberside	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 90 seconds (target 75%)
Northumberland	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 90 seconds (target 95%)
Oxfordshire	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 90 seconds (about 1 and a half minutes)
Warwickshire	Percentage of life-risk and property emergency calls handled within 90 seconds (target 85%)
West Sussex	Percentage of calls mobilised to within 120 seconds (target 98%)

Because we don't expect Fire Control to robotically mobilise to every call as quickly as possible, keeping the KPI is unhelpful. It punishes Control for challenging calls and for taking the time to determine accurate locations of fire in the open, etc, where there is no risk to life.

### **Percentage of primary fires attended within 12 minutes from time of call**

Bedfordshire FRS is one of 17 English services classified as "significantly rural" in the urban-rural categorisation used by the Home Office and HMICFRS to compare services. Other FRSs classified as significantly rural include Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Essex FRSs.

The Home Office FIRE1004 statistics for the five-years to March 2023 show that when significantly rural FRSs responded to primary fires, the first resource arrived at 75% of primary fires within 12 minutes of the time of call and at 80% of primary fires within 13 minutes of the time of call.

### **Percentage of secondary fires attended within 20 minutes from time of call**

The Home Office FIRE1004 statistics for the five-years to March 2023 show that when significantly rural FRSs responded to secondary fires, the first resource arrived at 94% of secondary fires within 20 minutes of the time of call.

This page is intentionally left blank

**SUBJECT:** PROGRAMME AND PROJECTS REPORT – Q1 & Q2 2023/24

**Author and contact:** Petia Asparouhova, Programme and PMO Manager, [petia.asparouhova@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:petia.asparouhova@bedsfire.gov.uk)

Background Papers: Previous Programme and Project reports to the FRA

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Programme Board Update Q1-Q2	N/A

**Implications**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	
Risk Management	No	
Legal Implications	No	
Privacy and Security Implications	No	
Duty to Collaborate	No	

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Health and Safety Implications	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	No	

### **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 2023/24, 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**

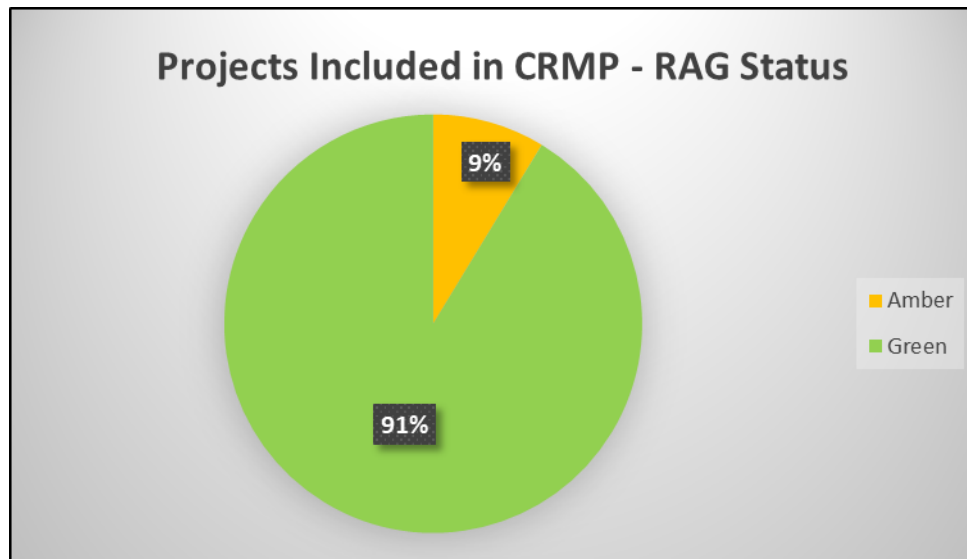
- 1.1 This update report covers the progress made on the Corporate Programme over the Q1 and Q2 of the 2023/24 financial year. It should be noted that projects and programmes can span many months and sometimes years, so completion will not always align with the financial year end period.
- 1.2 Significant Projects and Programmes milestones are monitored via the Corporate Portfolio Board (CPB). CPB controls the BFRS portfolio size, make up and prioritisation. The CPB function is performed by the BFRS Corporate Management Team.
- 1.3 The BFRS projects governance is fully embedded but continues being enhanced as appropriate so that the Service/Authority is benefiting from the improved effective governance and management of programmes and projects.

- 1.4 Recent PMO internal audit report of the BFRS PMO Governance has provided substantial assurance opinion with only 2 low management actions identified and completed. This was reported to the Audits and Standards Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- 1.5 PMO Business Case reviewed with the Principal Officers and funding bid will be submitted to the FRA for subsequent years in order to create some permanent PMO posts and to flex the additional Project Management resource to address the on-going projects demand.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 A high-level update covering the Projects and Programmes undertaken during Q1 and Q2 2023/24 is provided below in section 3, with a pie chart presenting a pictorial summary of the positive position as at end of Q2 2023/2024. As of November 2023, there are 21 projects with a green status and 2 with amber status.
- 2.2. The exception reports for projects with Amber status are included in Appendix A. These are the Clothing Project and the Replacement Mobilising System project. In most cases the Red and Amber status reflects extended timelines to complete the project delivery. The projects team aim to remediate the underlying issues and re-baseline the project delivery plans.
- 2.3 The majority of the active projects (91%) 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	2
Green	21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23</b>

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 2023/2024

3.1 The following corporate projects and workstreams final implementations were delivered successfully:

- The Command Support Review Project enabled the use of technology on the fire ground whilst enhancing the way we manage the command support process and improving situational awareness. Operational personnel are now able to use the mobilising MDT and start the incident command process electronically so that when the ICU arrives, the handover time is reduced by the information already populated by staff in attendance. The project also refreshed all ICU hardware



back into support which is now being maintained in line with the service's digital strategy. The ICU PCs and servers were upgraded to Windows 10 and modern visual connections (HDMI). A new 5G router was installed on the ICU. The ICU now utilises modern 4G services at operational incidents to provide connectivity between Control and other appliances on the incident ground.

- Appraisals Module on PDR Pro – the Appraisal module went live on 1st April as planned. All staff's training has been completed and the 2022/23 appraisals have been progressed using the new system. The Appraisal Module was implemented for all Green and Grey Book staff and changed the paper-based appraisal process to an online module with the addition of a new performance rating system and other career development procedures. The new appraisal process now complies with the NFCC leadership guidelines and provides process improvements, easily accessible data, automated reporting, business continuity and resilience. The new appraisal module will be used by L & D as a measure to aid employees career growth and development.
- GIS, Risk, Workload Modeller and Web Map project was successfully completed. The project delivered powerful modelling tools allowing the service to explore different scenarios without the need to engage external suppliers. We now have 6 trained super users within BIT, and key business areas which allows us to cater for the wider business needs.
- Corporate KPI Data Hub Phase 2 is now implemented. The project delivered additional KPI automated reporting in three of the planned additional business areas. The graphical dashboard using Power:BI provides an interactive front-end for all these areas and the Phase I areas of Prevention, Protection and Response. These are used to illustrate our performance and save time responding to data requests and producing performance papers, as well as allowing colleagues to view KPI data at their fingertips. RWTs Project – closure report signed off by SDLT/OIPB.
- Website Upgrade Project – the new BFRS Website was implemented live in May 2023. This project delivered improved user interface, enhanced accessibility, better user experience, and stronger security features in line with our Digital Transformation Strategy.
- Fire Investigation Accreditation Project was closed as the collaboration with BCH Police and the FI Accreditation will not go ahead due to the Police decision.
- The Luton Pump Trial was a strategic initiative executed to evaluate the efficiency and practicality of repositioning one of the Fire Appliances (08P1) from Luton Fire Station to Luton Ambulance Station. The trial's findings and post implementation review were completed successfully and presented to SDLT and CMT. The trial indicated that there is no significant response time improvement if we place a pump in the Luton Ambulance Station area within the Dallow ward. Further consideration will be given to undertaking a further pilot within a different area closer to or within the Leagrave area.

### 3.2 Work commenced on the following new projects:

- Review of Response Standards (KPIs) – This project will carry out an in-depth review of BFRS KPIs and those of other FRSS to enable a bench marking exercise to enable recommendations to be made to the service to change current reporting. The project goal is to:
    - Review current reported measures and compare them to those identified within the CRMP.
    - Recommend a revised proposition which ensures the measures are appropriate, realistic, measurable and that a consistent and accurate message is provided to stakeholders.
    - Incorporate into the recommendation cognisance of the mixed urban, rural and semi-rural areas of Bedfordshire.
    - Benchmark BFRS against other Fire and Rescue services, specifically those with comparable population distributions
    - Obtain FRA, representative bodies, and public support to implement the recommended changes.
  - Stations Dashboards - This project was initiated to identify a need for Station Managers and staff to be able to access station information immediately as and when required. This information will include different Management Information and performance data per watch. This will allow management to identify issues and gaps and will enable quick resolution. It will also indicate where the watches are doing and be commended for it. We currently have a service dashboard, but we believe that breaking this down to be accessible at station and watch level will further provide granularity to answer business questions as they arise so that we can deal with them proactively and not retrospectively.
- 3.3 Station End Equipment supplier contract has been signed off. The preferred supplier is Telent. The initial delivery and test configuration completed. User acceptance testing is in progress. The rollout is scheduled to start in March 2024 subject to sites preparation completion.
- 3.4 Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) Project – Follow-on Visit functionality developed and implemented successfully. Several other HFSV power app and reports improvements implemented. The delivery of the new HFSV Power App now gives the Prevention Team access to a lot richer data including the ability to compare the initial risk score to the observed position, verify that we are targeting those at the highest risk in our community and facilitate a QA process. Focus now remains on the update of the In-House System to bring it fully in line with the HFSV Power App.
- 3.5 Protection Fire Risk Data Warehouse (FRDW) – BIT have now built the main functionality allowing for further calibrations and data refresh. The Protection Team continues working on the Supplemental codes taxonomy and cleaning the data in the Protection database, FloSuite. HPP has asked the team to start using the current FRDW output live when selecting medium risk premises. There have been some challenges with the deployment of the latest version of FloSuite caused by the supplier, but we are aiming to have the release live by mid-December 2023 and the full FRDW functionality live in Q1 2024.
- 3.6 Road Safety Vehicle VR Project – van received in August. The Delta Kinetics contract has been signed off. Delta Kinetics are now producing CAD seats drawings for us to choose a preferred option. The vehicle wrap design is in progress. BFRS Workshops are scheduling the internal work prior to the work that Delta will be completing. Initial discussions also started

regarding communication piece for vehicle launch together with Bedfordshire Police. This project is aiming to go live from 1st April 24.

- 3.7 The Roaming Pump project was launched with a trial commencing in September 2023. Crewing of the pump is being managed using a mix of on-call and WT resources. The appliance is not available every day but has been crewed most of the time. Data collation has started.
- 3.8 GP Finance system Upgrade - System configuration and access testing completed. ICT have completed the historic data transfer. UAT scripts and plan created and full UAT is in progress and going well. The implementation is scheduled to take place on 26th November 2023 with post live support and closure following in Q1 2024. The project team worked very hard towards the November Go-Live date to aid the isolation of the 2008 Server and enable Citrix decommissioning towards meeting ICT's Cyber Essential accreditation requirements. Phase 2 (GP Improvements) requirements collated and issued for sign off.
- 3.9 Breathing Apparatus Replacement – preferred supplier Telent contract was fully signed off in June and the project delivery is in progress. Deliveries of most of the orders are now complete. A local assurance testing has been carried out on the MSA Hub and ECB and an excellent performance was recorded. The project team is working really hard to protect the implementation date at the beginning of January 2024, currently planned to commence between the 8th and 12th Jan subject to cylinders delivery by the supplier.
- 3.10 National Operational Guidance (NOG) Project - Fires in Buildings, Breathing Apparatus (BA), and Animal products and Water Rescue packs SGA and STGA completed in readiness for implementation planning. The BA, Animal products and Water Rescue packs are due to go live at the beginning of January. Fires in Building will follow. There has been a change to the Response Support team assignments and GC Peter Knight has now joined the team to help with this project. Work commenced on Buildings under Construction or Demolition, Fires and Firefighting, and Height, Structures and Confined Spaces.
- 3.11 Review of Response Standards - Development of reporting has commenced by BIT and an example report has been presented to FRA to obtain feedback. The call handling time has been included in the overall response target. Comms Team engaged to lead on public consultation. Story Board has been created to aid the consultation ahead of the public meeting on 23 November.
- 3.12 Pension Data Service (PDS) Project – May and June 2023 Fire Pension Scheme (FPS) reports have been validated by Civica. We are now live with the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) monthly reporting on Heywood's I-connect.
- 3.13 On-call Improvements Project – Annual Leave Policy released for consultation. We continue work on Gartan configuration and alignment to Payroll. Payroll have had meetings with Hereford and Worcestershire FRS Payroll who already do annualised hours to understand how they deal with this. Aiming to go live with this workstream, subject to successful

consultation conclusion. Other workstreams are also being worked on. The FSO 50 trial has created 650 more crewing hours within the 3 months. Further analysis will be conducted to confirm the exact impact on the availability. The project board approved trial extension to 3 more stations (now 4 in total).

- 3.14 CCTVs contract finalised and signed off. Sure 24 is the selected supplier. PO raised and the rollout plan is being worked on with the supplier and the Workshops.
- 3.15 Fleet System Project – requirements specification has now been signed off and discussions s
- 3.16 MDTs Phase 3 Project – decision was made to align the SSRI Power App delivery to PORIS and the latest National Risk Based Intervention Guidance. The redesign will start later this month. The project team has progressed work on the questions mapping against the risks categories, which will be used as a starting point. Continued work on the EWS, SSRP, SSRP HR and WAH Response Support forms by BIT towards an end of November target development completion date and release into UAT.
- 3.17 ESN – The HO programme is in the main paused from a customer perspective. Coverage issues now being managed with NFCC. Fire have stood down the support from regional coverage analysts and NFCC representatives have now taken the role of oversight of coverage activity. Work is progressing on the replacement of DNSP, but we have included this in the mobilising system project. NFCC continue to provide updates and are requesting ad-hoc work packages. The national programme is expected to resume work mid 2024 when Lot 2 is expected to be reprocured.
- 3.18 Operations Assurance Station Audits are scheduled to commence from January 2024, and All Debriefs – in February 2024.
- 3.19 Water Rescue Capability Review was completed and presented to the Principal Officers. The approach to has now been agreed and other capability reviews will be progressed in 2024.

#### **4. Future Projects and Programmes to commence in Q3 & Q4 2023/24**

- 4.1 The following corporate projects were temporarily put on hold due to resource constraints:
  - Fire Control Resilience Project – resuming work in Q3/Q4
  - Cloud Guardian Migration Project – expected to resume in 2024
  - Fuel Monitoring System Project - expected to resume in 2024, once the Fleet System project has been delivered.
  - Vehicle and Equipment Workshop Project -
- 4.2 The following corporate projects are approved by the Corporate Portfolio Board for progression in the next months:
  - Emergency Cover Review Project - The Emergency Cover Review project was commissioned by the BFRS senior management team to support the BFRS estates review and response model optimisation.

- Dwelling Fires Methodology project will develop in house and apply the NFCC Dwelling Fires Methodology to fire risk calculation.
- Road Safety Methodology - It is recognised that the RTC Methodology is in draft, and we have work to confirm the best delivery approach, but it will ultimately become a project when the methodology is finalised and if we need to develop in house. Confirmation is required with NFCC if they plan to develop the RTC tool and fund and share the results with all FRSs.
- 101C/ AMP System – This project will deliver a new Prevention software system to record all Prevention activities and to plan, document and evaluate prevention campaigns. This is a replacement to two existing applications which only offer limited and inadequate functionality and data.
- Community Wellbeing Officers Project - The project goal is to extend the collaboration between the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) and the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Services (BFRS) by creating a new, temporary (12 months FTC) CWOs team, managed within BFRS Response and trained to responding to C1, C3 and C4 incidents.
- PMO support will also be required for the BFRS Capability Review which will continue with detail analysis of RTC and Heavy rescue Equipment from January 2024 onwards.

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

This page is intentionally left blank



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

# Appendix A - Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Projects and Programme Q1 and Q2 2023/24

**20th November 2023**

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Preventing	Home Fire Safety Prevention Replacement	In house development of a bespoke application for Home Fire Safety community activities, including partner referrals.	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a Web based referral form to request a Safe and Well visit - self, for another person and Agency.</li> <li>• Web enabled Safe and Well visits form, thus allowing to reduce the reliance of paper-based processes</li> <li>• Safe and Well database and front-end redesign and redevelopment</li> <li>• Delivery of a redesigned Safe and Well web enabled form</li> <li>• Delivery of a mobile Safe and Well form app</li> </ul>	Green
Maximising	ESN Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) Project	The UK Home Office is replacing the existing Airwave critical comms system that 3ES use for critical voice and limited data. Airwave is a part of the UK critical national infrastructure and has reached end of initial contract and is now in contract extension. The replacement product is called Emergency Services Network (ESN). This is a national programme led by CFOA and the Home Office. The aim of this project is to replace and upgrade the current Airwave System for BFRS. This is a national project led by CFOA and the Home Office.	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace and upgrade the current Airwave System</li> <li>• Support the national programme led by NFCC and the Home Office</li> <li>• Complete ESN coverage test</li> <li>• Procure ESN-compliant devices and associated applications</li> <li>• Switch all new systems and devices connectivity from Airwave to ESN</li> </ul>	Green
Responding	Replacement MDT Project - Phase 3 (MDT2 additional usage)	Extend the use of MDTs to enable workforce to capture additional information by using electronic forms instead of paper.	Y	Access to corporate applications such as O 365, e-Forms for IRS, S&W and Protection via the rear MDTs on all appliances. This will reduce the reliance on paper-based processes within BFRS and will result in improved efficiency of business processes.	Green



# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Maximising	Replacement Mobilising Project (RMP) ICCS & Mobilising System	This project will deliver a new mobilising system (ICCS and CAD) that is ESMCP compliant	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replace existing Computer Aided Dispatch system</li> <li>- Replace existing Integrated Command and Communications System</li> <li>- Implement solution that will be ESMCP compliant</li> </ul>	Amber
Responding	Station Dashboard Project	<p>This project idea was initiated by the DCFO due to identifying a need for Station Managers and staff to be able to access station information at a glance and as required. This information is broken down into detailed requirements, some of which are staff figures, station availability, mobilisation times, response times, Home Fire Safety Visit data at a glance and broken down for each watch.</p> <p>This will help management identify where there are issues and gaps which can lead to quick resolution. It will also help identify where staff are doing well, and we can also commend them for it. Now, we have a service dashboard, but we believe that breaking this down to be accessible at station level will further provide granularity to answer business questions as they arise, and we can deal with them proactively and not retrospectively.</p>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivation of station staff by providing clarity around their performance and comparison to others</li> <li>Support management decisions making</li> <li>Understand performance data and various management levels</li> </ul>	Green
Responding	Station End Equipment	This project delivers the procurement, installation and maintenance of new Station End Equipment	N	Procurement and implementation of fully supported, GD 92 and ESN compliant Station End Equipment	Green

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Utilising	Clothing and Garments	The current contract for Station Wear, Corporate Wear and Associated Services is due to expire.  BFRS needs to employ a tendering process in order to select future supplier(s) and to sign a contract for the subsequent years.	N	This project will deliver a new contract for the procurement of station, corporate and special event wear only. The PPE has been procured separately.	Amber
Responding	Vehicle CCTV Cameras Upgrade	Improve the existing CCTV system to reduce or eliminate manual footage download and ensure 360 degrees coverage.	Y	The project will deliver improved CCTV data recording systems in appliances for the following purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate the need to manually download footage by physically taking the storage device off the vehicle.</li> <li>• Provide data for active monitoring of driving standards by Service Driving Instructors;</li> <li>• Provide data for investigation of external or internal complaints about driving standards;</li> <li>• Provide data for internal, police or insurance investigation following RTC involving Service appliances;</li> <li>• To deter attacks on firefighters and provide data for police investigation in the event of such attacks;</li> <li>• To capture footage of incidents for use in operational debrief.</li> </ul>	Green
Responding	National Operational Guidance Implementation Project	The NOG Implementation Project has been commissioned to ensure the latest NOG has been adopted and embedded within the organisation, and a process for on-going maintenance has been defined for progression post project handover to BAU.	Y	The NOG Implementation Project has been commissioned to ensure the latest NOG has been adopted and embedded within the organisation, and a process for on-going maintenance has been defined for progression post project handover to BAU.	Green

# Active Projects



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Empowering	iTrent Residual Modules	<p><b>iTrent - Web Recruitments</b> - Control, Retained and Wholetime (PRJ0012)</p> <p>This workstream implements an online Web Recruitment for potential Control, Retained and Wholetime staff.</p>	Y	<p>Online Web Recruitment for potential Control, Retained and Wholetime staff. The remaining deliverables include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalise RDS Recruitment</li> <li>• Wholetime Recruitment Kick Off, scoping and delivery</li> </ul>	Green
Protecting	Protection Fire Risk Data Warehouse	Creation of a new, in house built, data warehouse to support the Protection risk-based inspection programme	Y	<p>As part of Phase 1, this project will deliver a data warehouse and ability to produce a report, which presents the premises with the highest risk first, based on pre-defined criteria (e.g. the top ranking list of premises to be allocated for inspection within the next quarter, within a specific area. This could be North and South or Station Grounds based to determine individual stations priority lists).</p> <p>In Phase 2 the project will create an interface between the data warehouse and FloSuite to facilitate a batch import process to tag a number of premises. This will allow to automatically allocate multiple jobs against all tagged premises.</p>	Green
Responding	On-call Improvement Project	On-call Improvement Project (including Alerters). This is a multi workstream project that address aspects of people, processes and technology as relate to the On-Call workforce, with the intention of improving and availability and capability of BFRS On-Call stations. This will be delivered over 3 (possibly extended to 5) years by looking at workstreams that are identified as blockers and limiters in the current state.	Y	We will aim to improve On-Call availability of the 11 on-call stations, ensuring we are recruiting effectively, retaining those recruits and using our on-call crews effectively to respond to incidents based on risk, and by empowering more autonomy and decision making to on-call station and increasing flexibility allowing FF to blend their wholetime roles with their on-call commitments . On-call FF currently only meet 70% of their agreed, projected availability as a result of a number of blocking and limiting factors. BFRS strives for an 80% on call appliance availability.	Green

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Empowering	Pensions Data Service (PDS) Project	<p>This project will deliver monthly pension reports for FPS and will prepare for the LGPS reporting. MHR will provide a monthly Fire Pensions Report which complies with the necessary specification. They will ensure the data is correct and will resolve any exceptions as required. The report will then be sent to BFRS for download to Civica portal.</p> <p>There are data gaps within iTrent as the pension scheme build has been done at a very basic level when the system was introduced, which will have to be filled in to ensure all fields are populated. This will be progressed by the Payroll Team either manually or as an upload (pre-prepared) into the system. The reporting would be produced retrospectively to April 2022.</p> <p>Same requirement will apply to the Local Government Pension Scheme in a very near future (expected within 1 year). The Pension Data Service can already accommodate the LGPS. The BFRS Payroll Team is working to implement this capability for both the LGPS and FPS.</p>	N	<p>The main benefits from this project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future proof our pension reporting</li> <li>• Address pension data gaps in iTrent</li> </ul> <p>The project will ensure the service maintains up to date pensions data. Both pension schemes have employee portals that can calculate benefits for people. If the data is maintained up to date on a monthly basis, people will have more accurate information.</p>	Green
Maximising	Fleet Project	The aim of the project is to introduce a replacement vehicle servicing and defect system to replace an out of support legacy MIS application	Y	The aim of the project is to introduce a replacement vehicle servicing and defect system to replace an out of support legacy MIS application	Green

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Preventing	Road Safety Vehicle VR	<p>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 Tactical 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, entertain and educate the young drivers utilising Virtual Reality videos to enhance the learning experience in various areas of road safety awareness.</p> <p>We have trialled the VR set up with both our Fire Cadets aged between 13 – 18 years, and as part of our Biker Down course which has been received with enormous success. We plan to use this educational delivery platform to also support the awareness initiatives that we develop for our older audiences.</p> <p>The Vision for the vehicle is not only for the use of Beds Fire, but also to support all our Collaborative partners educational initiatives to achieve our joint objectives of reducing the number of KSI's on the Roads within Bedfordshire.</p> <p>The new RSV will fully embrace BFRS commitment to using VR as an education tool. Using dedicated hydraulic chairs inside the van will allow users to better experience every VR application that we have within our library or in the future, produce to support our service aims.</p>	Y	<p>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 Tactical Group, BFRS will develop a Road Safety Vehicle (RSV) that will utilise modern technology to engage, entertain and educate the young drivers utilising Virtual Reality videos to enhance the learning experience in various areas of road safety awareness.</p>	Green

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Empowering	BA replacement Project	<p>This project will upgrade the Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets on Rescue Pumps (RP's), Rural Water Tenders (RWT's) and Aerial Platforms (AP's) and as a result is looking to procure new sets from a single supplier.</p> <p>BFRS is seeking to purchase a total of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One-hundred and twenty (120) Breathing Apparatus sets</li> <li>- Four hundred and fifty (450) compressed air Cylinders</li> <li>- Twenty-six (26) Entry Control Boards</li> </ul>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•This project ensures 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 controls measures likely to be employed within the overall operational plan for incidents of this type. Breathing apparatus enables the wearer to breathe safely in an otherwise irrespirable and/or toxic atmosphere.</li> <li>•This project also delivers compliance with general Fire and Rescue Services Legislation.</li> </ul>	Green
Maximising	GP Upgrade project	<p>The GP Upgrade Project has been approved to remediate the following issues with the existing platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current version of GP that the service uses has come to the end of its useful life and will no longer be supported by our software provider (ISC).</li> <li>- Finance team is unable to send their VAT return to HMRC electronically due to a software issue that neither our software providers nor ICT have been able to rectify, this means they are totally reliant on ISC to upload the BFRS VAT claim each month, a process which is both time consuming and not sustainable going forward.</li> <li>- The old software also causes challenges in terms of server maintenance and updates</li> </ul>	N	<p>The GP Upgrade Project has been approved to remediate the following issues with the existing platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current version of GP that the service uses has come to the end of its useful life and will no longer be supported by our software provider (ISC).</li> <li>- Finance team is unable to send their VAT return to HMRC electronically due to a software issue that neither our software providers nor ICT have been able to rectify, this means they are totally reliant on ISC to upload the BFRS VAT claim each month, a process which is both time consuming and not sustainable going forward.</li> <li>- The old software also causes challenges in terms of server maintenance and updates</li> </ul>	Green



# Active Projects

Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Responding	Roaming Pump Project	This project will deliver initial options paper and business case for the creation of a flexible operational resource (strategic reserve pump) available for deployment by Control at the most needed location e.g. along the A1 corridor. Subject to business case approval, the project will then initiate a trial to examine the flexible appliance mobilisation on the BFRS operational response times and appliance availability. The results of the trial will be used to conduct a cost / benefit analysis and to decide the next steps.	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To have a positive impact on first pump attendance times by implementing an additional temporary fire appliance managed by DCG and Fire Control</li> <li>-To improve the attendance standards and response capability with particular focus by creating an additional roaming, resourced appliance capable of filling any identified gaps in fire cover, directed by fire control. The appliance will be used dynamically by fire control as and where it is needed at that moment in time.</li> <li>-Improving appliance availability and response to emergencies in line with Service key performance indicators.</li> </ul>	Green
Responding	Review of Response Standards Project	This project will review and benchmark BFRS response standards and key performance indicators, with recommendations for change made	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To publish key performance Indicators that align closely to nationally understood definitions and criteria for example primary fires instead of critical incidence provide clear and unambiguous reporting to FRA, the public and other stakeholders.</li> <li>- To benchmark BFRS against other English FRS to identify consistency and trends in reporting.</li> <li>- To ensure that standards committed to in the CRMP are accurate and aligned to the agreed FRA Reporting.</li> </ul>	Green

# Active Projects



Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Responding	Community Wellbeing Officers (CWO) Project	<p>The project goal is to extend the collaboration between the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) and the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Services (BFRS) by creating a new, temporary (12 months FTC) CWOs team, managed within BFRS Response and trained to responding to C1, C3 and C4 incidents. The CWOs primary aim will be to deliver a blend of response and preventive intervention through a unified Emergency Medical Response Framework (EMRF).</p> <p>The project also aims to collate evidence and to evaluate if this type of model is financially sustainable, beneficial and effective for both parties, which may result in future conversation about substantiating the role post its pilot phase.</p>	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A deployable resource to Categories 1, 3 &amp; 4.</li> <li>- Preventive and protective interventions from falls and other lower acuity incidents to reduce emergency medical events in the home.</li> <li>- Provide early response to persons who have fallen or experienced other lower acuity incidents in the home.</li> <li>- A response to patients who have fallen or experienced other lower acuity incidents in an indoor environment with no/minimal injuries.</li> <li>- Intelligence for BFRS regarding home environment safety checks and preventative fire measures.</li> <li>- BFRS Cost recovery - all costs and responsibilities for all material systems, training, equipment, interventions, salaries, vehicles, etc to be fully funded by the EEAST or other material agency.</li> </ul>	Green
Protecting	Dwelling Fires Methodology	Develop and apply the Dwelling Fires Methodology to calculate fire risk.	Y	Apply the NFCC recommended Dwelling Fires Methodology to calculating fire risk.	Green



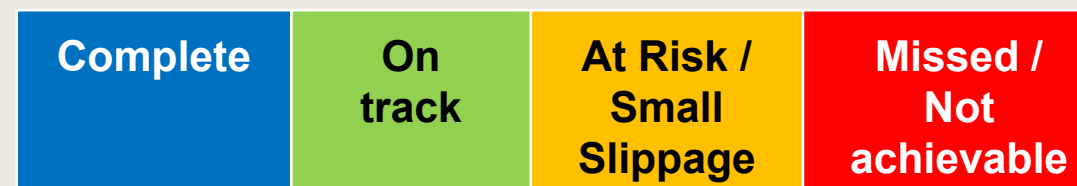
# Active Projects



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

Strategic Aim	Project Name / Workstream Name	Project Description	In CRMP Plan?	FRA Reporting Business Outcomes (The So What?)	RAG Status
Responding	Emergency Cover Review Discovery Stage	<p>The Emergency Cover Review project was commissioned by the BFRS senior management team to support the BFRS estates review and response model optimisation. The project has two workstreams. The Estates Workstream aims to investigate, analyse, prioritise and create a proposal for improving the BFRS estate to minimise out future spend whilst ensuring the BFRS fire stations meet the design principles and specification recommended by NFCC. The Modelling Workstream aims to identify the optimal stations' locations, which will allow BFRS to improve our 1<sup>st</sup> pump response times across all WT and On-call stations. The modelling should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes 1<sup>st</sup> pump response coverage across county (from time of alert to time at incident ground)</li> <li>• Maximum percentage of population we can get to in 10 minutes;</li> <li>• Maximum percentage of historic incidents we can respond to within 10 minutes;</li> <li>• Take in consideration the level of growth and demand across Bedfordshire.</li> </ul>	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the BFRS estate to minimise out future spend whilst ensuring the BFRS fire stations meet the design principles and specification recommended by NFCC.</li> <li>• Identify the optimal stations' locations, which will allow BFRS to improve our 1<sup>st</sup> pump response times across all WT and On-call stations.</li> </ul>	Green
Protecting	101C / AMP Amalgamation	<p>This project will deliver a new Prevention software system to record all Prevention activities and to plan, document and evaluate prevention campaigns. This is a replacement to two existing applications which only offer limited and inadequate functionality and data.</p>	N	<p>Delivery of a new system which will allow us to capture fuller and richer data, provide a dashboard, measure the time spent on prevention activities, allow for QA of the prevention activities, provide data that informs future practice and support basic evaluation – reaction – learning - behaviour change</p>	Green

# Exceptions Reporting



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

<b>Reporting Period</b>	Q2 2023/24	<b>Project Title</b>	Replacement Mobilising System (RMP) Project	<b>CMT Owner</b>	Paul Hughes	<b>Overall Project Status</b>	Amber
<b>Project Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify innovative ways of designing and implementing an integrated solution by exploring the combination, viability and attractiveness of various technological options;</li> <li>Procure on the basis of an outcomes-based specification which supports continuous improvement; and</li> <li>Secure Best Value by achieving more efficient, cost-effective and affordable ways of delivering the services</li> <li>Replace mobilising system and configure to work in line with BFRS procedures.</li> <li>Replace BFRS ICCS and configure</li> </ul>			<b>Strategic Aim &amp; CRMP Alignment</b>	<p><b>Responding</b></p> <p><b>Deliver a new Mobilising System</b></p> <p><b>To respond effectively, manage risks and reduce the number of emergency incidents that we attend.</b></p>		
<b>Status Update</b>				<b>Key Milestones</b>		<b>Milestone Status &amp; Due Date</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project remains Amber due to hosted 999 solution delays. Motorola plan to deliver to BFRS in December 23 or January 24 – date to be confirmed.</li> <li>Work continues on the remaining problems list</li> <li>Meetings between Moto and ICT networks team held to deep dive into performance issues. The first proposal was ICT to change the MTU size. Bernard and Matt did that and as of yesterday there was no improvement. Suggestion to use Map Extreme as a standalone application to see if it is slow on the local machines or if it is only slow in the context of CAD in the hosted environment.</li> <li>New design for replacement for DNSP proposed and approved by national accreditor. Initial meeting with Home Office held and design meeting with Motorola planned 16th October.</li> <li>Successful upgrade of CAD staging 10/10/23. Upgrade to production due 7/11/23</li> <li>Gaz Change Only Update implemented. We will now be on a 6 weekly change only update cycle</li> </ul>				New Mobilising system implemented live		01/11/2021	
				Gartan staging issues resolved (supplier)		August 2022 Feb 2023	
				999s Hosted solution implemented (supplier & BFRS testing)		August 2023 Mid / Late October 2023	

# Exceptions Reporting

Complete	On track	At Risk / Small Slippage	Missed / Not achievable
----------	----------	--------------------------	-------------------------



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

<b>Reporting Period</b>	Q2 2023/24	<b>Project Title</b>	Clothing Project	<b>CMT Owner</b>	John-Joe Pekszyk	<b>Overall Project Status</b>	Amber
<b>Project Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project goal is to enter a new contract as of 1st April 2025 for the provision of Station Wear, Corporate Wear and Associated Services. This could involve separate contracts with multiple suppliers. The project will also deliver suitable contractual arrangements and associated services for the provision of ceremonial wear for certain Grey Book roles.</li> <li>Ensure all our employees are provided with appropriate uniform and corporate clothing which provide comfort, are operationally suitable and allow staff to perform their duties</li> <li>Consider all equality, environmental and health and safety legislation when procuring the new garments</li> <li>Consolidate garments procurement under a single contract (where possible)</li> <li>Review and streamline the existing garments list to optimise spend and eliminate waste</li> <li>Procure good quality garments which provide value for money</li> <li>Secure best value in discharging our statutory duties</li> <li>Explore innovation opportunities and advancing technologies with the view of optimising wearer's protection</li> <li>Ensure that the goods and services are provided by a compliant route to market in line with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended)</li> <li>Create a JD for a new Clothing Manager role and initiate recruitment process</li> </ul>			<b>Strategic Aim &amp; CRMP Alignment</b>	<p><b>Utilising</b></p> <p><b>Utilising our assets and resources efficiently and effectively.</b></p>		
<b>Status Update</b>				<b>Key Milestones</b>		<b>Milestone RAG &amp; Due Date</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All clothing specifications have been reviewed with Clothing Committee Members.</li> <li>The Clothing Manager JD will now need funding bid to be submitted to the FRA. This will cause further delays to the project.</li> <li>The project remains on Amber due to unknown date for the Clothing Manager being in post, which is a prerequisite for the subsequent suppliers' engagement and procurement routes analysis</li> </ul>				Clothing Items Specifications Review Completed		01/09/2023	
				Clothing Manager Appointed		t.b.c.	
				Suppliers' engagements commenced		t.b.c.	

This page is intentionally left blank

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
15 December 2023

---

**SUBJECT:                   TREASURY MANAGEMENT – MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

---

Author and contact:       Mr G Chambers, Assistant Chief Officer/Treasurer  
Tel No: 01234 845000

---

Background Papers:       Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Economic Update from Link Asset Services	N/A

Will this report affect any of the following?

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Impact/Reference</b>
Financial	Y	Impacts investment income, where cash balances are invested
Risk Management	Y	Low risk appetite in terms of organisations invested in
Legal	N	
Privacy and Security	N	
Duty to collaborate	Y	There is an option for inter authority loans
Health and Safety	N	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	N	
Environmental Sustainability	Y	Consideration is always given to Green investment organisations
Consultation and Communication	N	

---

## **PURPOSE:**

To provide an update on the Authority's Treasury Management to 30 September 2023.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the report be noted.

---

### 1. Introduction

1.1 The management of the Fire and Rescue Authority's (FRA) Treasury operations is 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 2021. 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 2023/24 to 30 September 2023.

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 2023/24;
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2023/24;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken (if applicable) during 2023/24;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023/24; and
- An economic update for the first six months of 2023/24.

## 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. Further training is planned for Members on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 as recommended by the Treasurer and agreed with the FRA.

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

4.1 For the current year, these were approved by the FRA on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. 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.

<b>Capital Expenditure by Service</b>	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate £'000</b>	<b>Current Position £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised Estimate £'000</b>
As per Budget	2,258	1,011	2,000

### 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.



<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate £'000</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised Estimate £'000</b>
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	2,258	2,000
<b>Financed by:</b>		
Capital receipts	72	72
Capital grants	0	0
Capital reserves	350	350
Revenue	1,836	1,578
<b>Total financing</b>	<b>2,258</b>	<b>2,000</b>
Borrowing Requirement	0	0

It should be noted that if changes to the Capital Programme are supported in the Budget Monitoring Report also on this agenda, this will change the figure above and be included in the next report.

### 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. Although the CFR is lower than the Authority's borrowing position, this has been discussed with our Treasury Advisors and there are no concerns to flag. The position will continued to be monitored.

### Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate £'000</b>	<b>Current Position  £'000</b>
<b>Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement</b>		
<b>TOTAL CFR</b>	<b>7,375</b>	<b>7,375</b>
<b>Net movement in CFR</b>	<b>(396)</b>	<b>(396)</b>
<b>Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt</b>		
Borrowing	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities	405	405
<b>Total debt (year end position)</b>	<b>10,392</b>	<b>10,392</b>

#### 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 2023/24 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.

	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate £'000</b>	<b>Current Position  £'000</b>
Borrowing	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities	405	405
<b>Total debt</b>	<b>10,392</b>	<b>10,392</b>
<b>CFR (year end position)</b>	<b>7,375</b>	<b>7,375</b>

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.

<b>Authorised limit for external Debt</b>	<b>2023/24 Original Indicator £'000</b>	<b>Current Position £'000</b>
Borrowing	9,987	9,987
Other long term liabilities	2,500	2,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,487</b>	<b>12,487</b>

## 5. Borrowing/Investment Strategy for 2023/24

- 5.1 It was anticipated at the beginning of 2023/24 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 the SIBA account is paying a rate of 1.70%.
- 5.2 The Authority's call-account with Barclays Bank has been used during 2023/24. As at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 the Barclays account is paying a rate of 4.25%.
- 5.3 The Authority had seven fixed term deposits maturing during the first half of 2023/24. These being First Abu Dhabi Bank (£1M), Goldman Sachs (£2M), Two with Standard Chartered Sustainable Account (£1M and £2M), Lloyds (£3M) and two with Qatar National Bank (£3M and £2M).  
The seven maturing investments were then reinvested with some additional funds during the first half of 2023/24, via our Treasury Agents, Link Asset Services. Two with First Abu Dhabi Bank for 12 months (£3M @ 5.22% and £2M @ 5.81%), one with Lloyds Corporate Bank for 6 months (£3M @ 5.29%), two with Qatar National Bank for six months each (£3M @ 6.03% and £2M @ 5.96%). The two remainder deposits were placed with Standard Chartered Bank for 6 months and 3 months (£1M @ 5.75% and £2M @ 5.37% consecutively) in their sustainable fixed term deposit.

- 5.4 During the second half of 2023/24 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.
- 5.5 Borrowing has not been undertaken in 2023/24 to finance the Capital Programme. The funding for the 2023/24 Capital Programme was through Reserves and Revenue contributions.
6. Interest Rate Movements During 2023/24
- 6.1 Bank base rate was 4.25% at the beginning of the year but by 30th September had increased to 5.25%.
- 6.2 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 six months of 2023/24, seven investments reached maturity, and then all were reinvested for a period between 6 months and 1 year. When placing these, several factors were considered, including cashflow, security and return in order to meet our Policies and at the same time get the best return.
7. Investment/Borrowing Operations
- 7.1 Investments:
- Surplus cash is invested on a temporary basis through the money market. Levels of investment were £14M at the start of 2023/24 and increased to £16M as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. In the year 2023/24 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, £127,400 interest

had been generated through these investments and through the local SIBA account and Barclays Account. Interest on PWLB borrowings totals of £210,817 was paid on 2<sup>nd</sup> October for period of April to September. This will give a net interest paid position of £83,417 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

7.2 The FRA's budgeted investment return (interest receivable) for 2023/24 was set at £195,400. However, due to the unexpected increase in Bank of England base rate this has been revised to an expected return of approximately £900,000 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

7.3 Long-Term Borrowing:

Debt rescheduling opportunities have increased over the course of the past six months and will be considered if giving rise to long-term savings. However, no debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

7.4 **Borrowing and Investments Outstanding:**

	<b>Temporary Investments £000s</b>	<b>Long-Term Borrowing £000s</b>
Outstanding at 1 April 2023	14,000	9,987
Raised	16,000	0
Repaid	14,000	0
<b>Outstanding at 30 September 2023</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>9,987</b>

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

## 8. Performance Measurement

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 For the period ending 30 September 2023, the average interest rate achieved from temporary investments, the SIBA and Barclays Accounts was 5.31%, higher than the average 7 day SONIA over the same period of 4.73%.

## 9. General Economic Conditions

9.1 In brief, the first six months of this financial year has seen:

- Inflation – Target Inflation (CPI) was at 10.40% on 1 April 2023 and at 6.70% by 30 September 2023 (-3.70% change).

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

## 10. Economic Forecast – (Link Group Update 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023)

10.1

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

	<b>End Q3 2023</b>	<b>End Q4 2023</b>	<b>End Q1 2024</b>	<b>End Q2 2024</b>	<b>End Q3 2024</b>	<b>End Q4 2024</b>
Bank Rate	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.00%	4.50%	4.00%
5yr PWLB rate	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.70%	4.40%	4.20%
10yr PWLB rate	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.60%	4.40%	4.20%
25yr PWLB rate	5.40%	5.20%	5.10%	4.90%	4.70%	4.40%
50yr PWLB rate	5.20%	5.00%	4.90%	4.70%	4.50%	4.20%

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

**GAVIN CHAMBERS**  
**TREASURER**



## Economic Update from Link Asset Services

### Appendix 1

- The first half of 2023/24 saw:
  - Interest rates rise by a further 100bps, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.25% and, possibly, the peak in the tightening cycle.
  - Short, medium and long-dated gilts remain elevated as inflation continually surprised to the upside.
  - A 0.5% m/m decline in real GDP in July, mainly due to more strikes.
  - CPI inflation falling from 8.7% in April to 6.7% in August, its lowest rate since February 2022, but still the highest in the G7.
  - Core CPI inflation declining to 6.2% in August from 7.1% in April and May, a then 31 years high.
  - A cooling in labour market conditions, but no evidence yet that it has led to an easing in wage growth (as the 3myy growth of average earnings rose to 7.8% in August, excluding bonuses).
- The 0.5% m/m fall in GDP in July suggests that underlying growth has lost momentum since earlier in the year. Some of the weakness in July was due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, there is an air of underlying weakness.
- The fall in the composite Purchasing Managers Index from 48.6 in August to 46.8 in September left it at its lowest level since COVID-19 lockdowns reduced activity in January 2021. At face value, it is consistent with the 0.2% q/q rise in real GDP in the period April to June, being followed by a contraction of up to 1% in the second half of 2023.
- The 0.4% m/m rebound in retail sales volumes in August is not as good as it looks as it partly reflected a pickup in sales after the unusually wet weather in July. Sales volumes in August were 0.2% below their level in May, suggesting much of the resilience in retail activity in the first half of the year has faded.
- As the growing drag from higher interest rates intensifies over the next six months, we think the economy will continue to lose momentum and soon fall into a mild recession. Strong labour demand, fast wage growth and government handouts have all supported household incomes over the past year. And with CPI inflation past its peak and expected to decline further, the economy has got through the cost-of-living crisis without recession. But even though the worst of the falls in real household disposable incomes are behind us, the phasing out of financial support packages provided by the government during the energy crisis means real incomes are unlikely to grow strongly. Higher interest rates will soon bite harder too. We expect the

Bank of England to keep interest rates at the probable peak of 5.25% until the second half of 2024. Mortgage rates are likely to stay above 5.0% for around a year.

- The tightness of the labour market continued to ease, with employment in the three months to July falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017m in July to 0.989m in August suggests that the labour market has loosened a bit further since July. That is the first time it has fallen below 1m since July 2021. At 3.0% in July, and likely to have fallen to 2.9% in August, the job vacancy rate is getting closer to 2.5%, which would be consistent with slower wage growth. Meanwhile, the 48,000 decline in the supply of workers in the three months to July offset some of the loosening in the tightness of the labour market. That was due to a 63,000 increase in inactivity in the three months to July as more people left the labour market due to long term sickness or to enter education. The supply of labour is still 0.3% below its pre-pandemic February 2020 level.
- But the cooling in labour market conditions still has not fed through to an easing in wage growth. While the monthly rate of earnings growth eased sharply from an upwardly revised +2.2% in June to -0.9% in July, a lot of that was due to the one-off bonus payments for NHS staff in June not being repeated in July. The headline 3myy rate rose from 8.4% (revised up from 8.2%) to 8.5%, which meant UK wage growth remains much faster than in the US and in the Euro-zone. Moreover, while the Bank of England's closely watched measure of regular private sector wage growth eased a touch in July, from 8.2% 3myy in June to 8.1% 3myy, it is still well above the Bank of England's prediction for it to fall to 6.9% in September.
- CPI inflation declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August, the lowest rate since February 2022. The biggest positive surprise was the drop in core CPI inflation, which declined from 6.9% to 6.2%. That reverses all the rise since March and means the gap between the UK and elsewhere has shrunk (US core inflation is 4.4% and in the Euro-zone it is 5.3%). Core goods inflation fell from 5.9% to 5.2% and the further easing in core goods producer price inflation, from 2.2% in July to a 29-month low of 1.5% in August, suggests it will eventually fall close to zero. But the really positive development was the fall in services inflation from 7.4% to 6.8%. That also reverses most of the rise since March and takes it below the forecast of 7.2% the Bank of England published in early August.
- In its latest monetary policy meeting on 20 September, the Bank of England left interest rates unchanged at 5.25%. The weak August CPI inflation release, the recent loosening in the labour market and the downbeat activity surveys appear to have convinced the Bank of England that it has already raised rates far enough. The minutes show the decision was "finely balanced". Five MPC members (Bailey, Broadbent, Dhingra, Pill and Ramsden) voted for no change and the other four (Cunliffe, Greene, Haskel and Mann) voted for a 25bps hike.
- Like the US Fed, the Bank of England wants the markets to believe in the higher for longer narrative. The statement did not say that rates have peaked and once again said if there was evidence of more persistent inflation pressures "further tightening in

policy would be required". Governor Bailey stated, "we'll be watching closely to see if further increases are needed". The Bank also retained the hawkish guidance that rates will stay "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long".

- This narrative makes sense as the Bank of England does not want the markets to decide that a peak in rates will be soon followed by rate cuts, which would loosen financial conditions and undermine its attempts to quash inflation. The language also gives the Bank of England the flexibility to respond to new developments. A rebound in services inflation, another surge in wage growth and/or a further leap in oil prices could conceivably force it to raise rates at the next meeting on 2nd November, or even pause in November and raise rates in December.
- The yield on 10-year Gilts fell from a peak of 4.74% on 17th August to 4.44% on 29th September, mainly on the back of investors revising down their interest rate expectations. But even after their recent pullback, the rise in Gilt yields has exceeded the rise in most other Developed Market government yields since the start of the year. Looking forward, once inflation falls back, Gilt yields are set to reduce further. A (mild) recession over the next couple of quarters will support this outlook if it helps to loosen the labour market (higher unemployment/lower wage increases).
- The pound weakened from its cycle high of \$1.30 in the middle of July to \$1.21 in late September. In the first half of the year, the pound bounced back strongly from the Truss debacle last autumn. That rebound was in large part driven by the substantial shift up in UK interest rate expectations. However, over the past couple of months, interest rate expectations have dropped sharply as inflation started to come down, growth faltered, and the Bank of England called an end to its hiking cycle.
- The FTSE 100 has gained more than 2% since the end of August, from around 7,440 on 31st August to 7,608 on 29th September. The rebound has been primarily driven by higher energy prices which boosted the valuations of energy companies. The FTSE 100's relatively high concentration of energy companies helps to explain why UK equities outperformed both US and Euro-zone equities in September. Nonetheless, as recently as 21<sup>st</sup> April the FTSE 100 stood at 7,914.

This page is intentionally left blank

---

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT 2022/23**


---

**Author and contact:** Jason Tai, Temporary/Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
[jason.tai@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:jason.tai@bedsfire.gov.uk)


---

 Background Papers: None
 

---

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Public Sector Equality Duty 11 <sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2022-23	N/A

### Implications

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	There are no direct financial implications in the report
Risk Management	No	Not applicable
Legal Implications	Yes	The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory obligation on Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to produce and publish an annual report.
Privacy and Security Implications	No	Not applicable
Duty to Collaborate	No	Not applicable

Health and Safety Implications	No	Not applicable
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Yes	<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) report 2022/23 demonstrates how Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service think about promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of its functions. This means that we must consider and keep reviewing how we are promoting equality in decision making, internal policies, procuring goods and services, services we provide, recruitment, promotion and performance management of employees.</p> <p>The report aims to fulfil Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's duty to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of its employees, whilst ensuring that the Service also has 'due regard' to the aims of the Equality Act 2010.</p>
Environmental Sustainability		Not applicable
Consultation and Communication		<p>The approved report will be published on the Service website at <a href="https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Equality-Diversity-Inclusion/Reports.aspx">https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Equality-Diversity-Inclusion/Reports.aspx</a></p>

### **PURPOSE:**

To provide Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Members with the Public Sector Equality Duty Report (2022/23) for consideration and approval to publish in accordance with our statutory duty.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the content of the Public Sector Equality Duty Report (2022/23) report in Appendix 1 be noted and the publication approved.

---

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirements, the Service has produced the statutory annual report for the 2022/23 as required by public authorities.
- 1.2 The specific duties under PSED require authorities to share information relating to people with protected characteristics with due regard to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
  - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The information must be published in a format that is accessible to the public. As per previous years the document will be available on the Service's website.

- 1.3 The PSED report in Appendix 1 provides an overview of our equality and diversity considerations in the delivery of our services and employment practices. Our employment monitoring data as of 31 March 2023 covers age, gender, ethnicity, starters and leavers, recruitment, grievances, family leave, the gender pay gap and a workforce profile broken down by protected characteristics. The data relates only to those who are directly employed by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, it excludes agency staff.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The information contained in the PSED report needs to be considered within the context of 2022/23. The arrival of a new EDI Manager in January 2023 followed a period of time when the role was vacant with the departure of the previous post holder while a suitably qualified and experienced candidate was recruited and appointed. Since that time Service focus has been on further enhancing and embedding the people impact assessment process, raising equality, diversity and inclusion awareness amongst employees and engagement activities with service users and prospective employees.

- 2.2 A key area of focus across the Service is to improve our People Impact Assessment process which will be used to inform our decision making and evaluate effectiveness. This will enable the Service to continuously improve our approach to diversity, inclusion and accessibility, both in terms of workforce, employment and development opportunities, and access to services by our diverse community.
- 2.3 The Annual PSED Report enables the Service to evidence our journey to date as well as demonstrating our ongoing commitment to further embedding diversity and inclusion in everything we do to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**JASON TAI**  
**TEMPORARY/ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



# PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

11<sup>th</sup> Annual Report  
2022-23  
Page 129



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service



# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	3	JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS.....	20
BACKGROUND TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY REPORT .....	4	PROMOTIONS – ALL STAFF.....	21
ABOUT US .....	5	GENDER PAY GAP.....	23
OUR VALUES & MISSION .....	6	GRIEVANCES.....	24
THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.....	6	COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS .....	24
OUR PRACTICE.....	7	WORKFORCE PROFILE BY CHARACTERISTIC .....	25
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS .....	8	WORKFORCE PROFILE BY PAY BAND.....	26
OUR WORKFORCE.....	11	JOB APPLICATIONS – SUPPORT STAFF.....	27
REPORTING CATEGORIES .....	12	JOB APPLICATIONS – UNIFORMED STAFF.....	29
AGE.....	14	EXTERNAL TRAINING .....	31
GENDER.....	14	OUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES.....	33
ETHNICITY.....	15	NEXT STEPS.....	34
FAMILY LEAVE.....	15	YOUR VIEWS COUNT .....	35
STARTERS.....	16	CONNECT WITH BFRS.....	35
LEAVERS.....	18		

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to delivering the best Fire and Rescue services to meet the needs of the diverse population it serves. We are dedicated and committed as a public sector service to embed and mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).**

Our initiatives over the year have been;

- 🔥 To continually work towards improving the representation of our workforce by driving forward our positive action initiatives; and
- 🔥 To continually review the quality of our policies, practices and services to ensure access to employment opportunities and services consider the individual needs of our staff and the people that receive our services.
- 🔥 To measure our work against external standards that continually improve the policies, practices and functions we deploy.
- 🔥 To improve the experiences of our service users and staff; aligning them to the organisational objectives and shaping them to help us be the best Fire and Rescue Service.
- 🔥 Continuing to measure our activity against the HMICFRS requirements and the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion to meet our legal obligation against the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty, as well as our moral duties.

🔥 To work continuously to embed the 'due regard' considerations to address barriers and disadvantages faced by groups of people.

Our focus for the coming year will be to ensure the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda is established as the '**golden thread**' in all we do.

We recognise the challenges ahead, however, our efforts to continuously involve, engage and consult our service users and staff will be invaluable in achieving our ambition to be the best Fire and Rescue Service.



# BACKGROUND TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY REPORT

The Equality Act 2010 established the general duty which aims to ensure people are not excluded, discriminated against, or otherwise treated less favourably than others, due to their protected characteristics; and consists of three fundamental aims which are:

- 🔥 **Eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- 🔥 **Advance equality of opportunity** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- 🔥 **Foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

For listed public sector authorities with 150 or more employees the **Equality Act 2010** introduced a specific requirement to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of employees. Technical guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission states that the information published needs to include:

- 🔥 The profile of staff at different grades, levels and rates of pay, including any patterns of occupational segregation and part-time work;

- 🔥 The profile of staff at different stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment, training, promotion, and leavers, and the numbers of complaints of discrimination and other prohibited conduct;
- 🔥 Details of, and feedback from, any engagement exercises with staff or trade unions;
- 🔥 Any records of how it has had due regard in making workforce decisions, including any assessments of impact undertaken and the evidence used.

The present report aims to fulfil Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's duty to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of its employees, whilst ensuring that the Service also has 'due regard' to the aims of the Equality Act with respect to its workforce by using equality monitoring information in decision-making and planning.

Throughout this report, headcounts of staff members in different protected characteristics and workforce subgroups are given, with the aim of anonymising information about individuals by aggregating counts into large groups. Where this has not been possible, and the headcount within a group is small enough to pose a risk of identification for individual staff members, the figure has been redacted (alongside any other figures that would allow the initially redacted figure to be deducted).

# ABOUT US

## We cover:

- 🔥 477 Square miles
- 🔥 274,600 Households
- 🔥 3 Unitary authorities

## We have:

- 🔥 291 Wholetime positions
- 🔥 146 On-Call positions (including those on dual contracts)
- 🔥 197 support positions
- 🔥 27 control positions
- 🔥 40 Appliances (23 fire engines and 17 special appliances)
- 🔥 14 Stations

## We've dealt with:

- 🔥 7,735 Number of incidents
- 🔥 280 Primary dwelling fires
- 🔥 2,771 Special Services  
e.g. water rescue, road traffic collision etc.
- 🔥 2,123 Fires

## We undertook:





- 🔥 8,126 Home Fire Safety Visits
- 🔥 2,811 Audits and inspections of premises  
to which the Fire Safety Order applies

Source: BFRS Annual Report 2022 - 2023  
BFRS Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027

# OUR VALUES & MISSION

Our Mission is to **provide outstanding fire and rescue services that help to make Bedfordshire safer.**

Our Values have been developed with our staff and our communities to ensure that the values support our mission and priorities.

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

# THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

The population for Bedfordshire, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census 2021: Bedford: 185,300, Central Bedfordshire: 294,200 and Luton: 225,300.



# OUR PRACTICE

We collect and monitor the Service workforce profile to enable us to take equality considerations in our policies and practices and meet our responsibilities under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**.

We have published our equality objectives as part of our **Corporate Risk Management Plan**, embedding the Inclusion agenda;

We have established our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group** to drive our EDI agenda forward.

We have revised our **People Impact Assessment** (previously known as equality impact assessment) process and guidance to understand and ensure we mitigate any adverse impact on groups of people.

We have revised our **equality, diversity and inclusion training** to provide staff with an awareness of equality considerations and we have refreshed our Unconscious Bias awareness training.

We have established our **mental health and well-being programme** to support the well-being of staff through our in-house Occupational Health, Mental Health and Well-being Steering Group and Employee Assistance Programme.

We publish and report annually on our **gender pay gap** and will look to enhance this by reporting on the Ethnicity Pay Gap.

We have established our **Workplace Support Steering Group** to support reasonable adjustments for our Neurodivergent colleagues and for those who may need any form of additional support or adjustments to enable them to perform effectively in the workplace.

We continue to review and develop initiatives to improve the **work-life balance** of staff by offering opportunities such as **flexible working hours**, home-working, part-time, job-share and compressed/staggered/ annualised hours. Staff in support roles (where appropriate) can also work a flexitime system between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

We have a dedicated and committed **Corporate Management Team comprising Principal Officers and Senior Managers** ensuring EDI is embedded and main-streamed across the organisation, with progress monitored by the **Fire and Rescue Authority**.

We have maintained our **Level 2 status against the Disability Confident standard**.

We are **members of key organisations** that can support and enhances our work around the EDI agenda such as Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA), Women in the Fire Service (WFS) and Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI).

We have successfully launched an **LGBTQ+ Allies Staff Network**.

We launched a **Women's Network** in collaboration with Bedfordshire Police.

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We recognise that we have a long road ahead to embed and mainstream the EDI agenda. However, we have worked hard through the many challenges faced during the past year. Please see below some of our achievements during 2022.

## Preventative and Protection Initiatives

Monitoring the profile of our Community Safety initiatives such as Home Fire Safety Visits to enable us to target the most vulnerable. For example, the launch of our new Home Fire Safety PowerApp is ensuring that improved data is being captured which highlights how effectively our visits are targeted to those most vulnerable in the community. We have also seen a significant rise in Safeguarding referrals and referrals to other agencies that can provide specific support based on an individual's specific needs.

Engaging and working with our partners to raise awareness such as the development of community partnerships in diverse demographical areas to target groups, raise our profile and engage with those least likely to access Fire and Rescue Services. All referrals provide face to face contact within people's homes. Our prevention team works in collaboration with community groups and other organisations where two-way dialogue occurs and then work in partnership. The Prevention team attend a number of community events to highlight our work and provide an opportunity for people to arrange a home fire safety visit, for example, engagement with all communities at Eid festival, Diwali celebrations and Bedford River festival.

Our safeguarding function Intervention supports children and young people who are engaged in risk-taking behaviours. We also mentor on a 1:1 basis, those disengaging with essential protective factors such as education and community. The work takes a person-centred approach that considers elements such as a young person's self-image, their mental health and well-being, education and any special educational needs they may have.

Through careful consideration and sound relationship building, we're also able to give thought to a young person's family and cultural background, beliefs and faith, environmental and economical situation and aspirations and goals.

At the heart of our commitment to EDI is continual self-learning, and respect.

We are continuing to develop our volunteer's initiative which includes the design and development of a volunteers programme to support the delivery of initiatives in the community. Our key aim is to ensure that our volunteers are diverse, reflecting the population, we serve.





# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

We monitor and evaluate initiatives comparing to the demographic population of Bedfordshire to ensure our services are reaching out to all areas in the community, particularly those most vulnerable in society. For example, before the summer, one of our fire stations held an open day purely for special educational needs and disabled children. The crews were able to show the work we do and equipment we use and made it engaging and interesting without too much over stimulation, plus discussing any fire safety needs these children and their families may have.

Page 137 We monitor all comments, compliments and complaints process to understand issues affecting groups of people and engage open dialogue and feedback to ensure that our communities are receiving Fire and Rescue Services that meet their needs.

## Protecting People and Property

Our protection team have developed diverse fire and safety initiatives that protect people in their homes. Our engagement strategies ensure we take account of the diverse needs of people and use interactive ways of communicating. For example, the prevention team operates a community network email group which serves to provide news, updates on campaigns, seek service user feedback and to seek out new partnerships or collaborations. The network is interactive, and members are able to provide material, news or any other content which carries a community health, well-being or safety theme. The network members represent a wide variety of cultural,

business, community, health, social care and lifestyle choices groups. It is very inclusive and offers a wide and diverse collective. We served all time high numbers of enforcement notices, served 42 Prohibition Notices, 9 Enforcement Notices. This enforcement action helps to protect the community, particularly those who are vulnerable or living in multi occupancy accommodation, from rogue landlords.



## Inclusive

Our Fire and Rescue Service hosted a Black History Month event with other Fire Service colleagues from across the region engaging a host of community figures from Bedfordshire and other neighbouring counties. The event provided a strong example of an inclusive event open to all members of the community and of interest to all members of the community.

Our local stations held open days to engage with those attending the event. They raised awareness of our services enhancing our connection with communities and increasing our understanding of their needs.

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## Empowering our people

We have designed, developed and implemented initiatives to improve the outcomes for staff. These include:

- Adopting the National NFCC Maturity model to assess out EDI performance and inform our EDI improvement plan.
- Adopting the National NFCC People Impact Assessment Process and embedding the process into everything we do.
- Published Modern Slavery Statement.
- Reviewed our EDI awareness training programme in line with our Culture Change plan. 65.5% of BFRS staff have completed the EDI awareness training during the 2022/23.
- Reviewed our People Impact assessment process and guidance.
- Reviewed our EDI Policy.
- Implemented initiatives to improve staff experience such as embedding our values, professional behaviours and our code of ethics.
- Embedding EDI consideration into our procurement, tendering and contract processes.
- Monitoring and reporting on our workforce profile to improve representation across the Service by setting targets and the ongoing development of an Instagram page WIRE (Wellbeing, Inclusion, Recruitment and Engagement) to improve our reach in the community.
- The introduction of the EDI Steering Group and staff networks to engage with staff and improve experiences for protected groups of people such as the LGBTQ+ Allies Staff Network.
- Working regionally with our colleagues to improve EDI outcomes and improve representation across the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Health and well-being initiatives to improve awareness of accessible resources to staff. For example, Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health services, Fire Fighters Charity services.

# OUR WORKFORCE



↑ WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

📞 EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

🛠️ WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

📌 WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

# REPORTING CATEGORIES

Our reporting categories are captured on the Service's workforce database which allows for people to self-classify based on their:

## Age

Staff members are placed into one of six age groups and one other category:

- 🔥 17-24
- 🔥 25-35
- 🔥 36-45
- 🔥 46-55
- 🔥 56-65
- 🔥 66+
- 🔥 Prefer not to say

## Gender

This is currently recorded as male or female.

## Disability

Staff members are asked whether they consider themselves to be categorised as disabled or non disabled under the definitions of the Equality Act 2010:

Section 6(1) of the Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

- A) *that person has a physical or mental impairment, and*
- B) *the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

## Sexual Orientation

- 🔥 Heterosexual
- 🔥 Gay woman/lesbian
- 🔥 Gay man
- 🔥 Bisexual
- 🔥 Other
- 🔥 Prefer not to say

# REPORTING CATEGORIES

## Ethnicity

### White British

- English/Welsh/Scottish/Irish/Northern Irish/British

### Minority Ethnic:

#### Dual Heritage

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background

#### Asian/Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

#### Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background

## Ethnicity cont...

### Other Ethnic Groups

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group
- Any other white background
- Gypsy/traveller

## Religion or Belief

- No religion
- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion
- Prefer not to say

# AGE

The table below illustrates that almost half of BFRS Wholetime firefighters are aged between 36–45. The On-Call figures demonstrate BFRS has a wider age distribution than Wholetime. Looking at the average age column, BFRS’s has a higher average age amongst support and control, this reflects the age demographic across local government, which has an aging workforce.

BFRS	17-24	25-35	36-45	46-55	56+	Average Age
Wholetime	3.1%	25.8%	45.9%	25.1%	0.7%	40
On-Call	16.8%	17.9%	34.7%	23.3%	7.4%	39
Support	3.6%	10.4%	24.9%	22.8%	38.3%	49
Control	3.7%	22.2%	33.3%	22.2%	18.5%	42
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>36.6%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>43</b>

2023 n = 606

# GENDER

In 2021/22 the percentage of female staff was 23.3%. The table below shows the percentage of female staff in 2022/23 is 27.9%. This indicates that BFRS has increased total female staff by 4.6%. This show BFRS has been more successful in recruiting female staff during the year 2022/23.

BFRS	WT FF	On-Call	Total FF	Control	Support	All Staff
Female	6.5%	11.6%	7.8%	81.5%	60.6%	27.9%

2023 n = 169

# ETHNICITY

In 2021/22 the percentage of minority ethnic staff was 6.1% Wholetime, 3.5% On-Call, 5.2% total firefighters. 4.8% Control, 11.3% Support and 6.8% all staff. The table below indicates a decrease in minority ethnic staff in Wholetime and On-Call, but shows an increase in Control and Support. The overall all staff figure has increased.

BFRS	WT FF	On-Call	Total FF	Control	Support	All Staff
Minority Ethnic	5.5%	3.2%	4.9%	7.4%	11.4%	7.1%

2023 n = 43

# FAMILY LEAVE

As part of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service’s commitment to diversity, we support employee’s balance between home and work through offering flexible employment policies and provide enhanced pay and leave for adoption, maternity and paternity. In 2022/23, 14 staff members went on paternity leave of which all returned. Seven members of staff went on maternity leave five returned from maternity and two are due to return in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Year	Staff starting Maternity Leave	Staff returning to work from Maternity Leave	Staff on Paternity Leave	Staff returning to work from Paternity Leave	Staff starting Shared Parental Leave	Staff returning to work from Shared Parental Leave
2022/23	7	5	14	13	0	0
2021/22	5	4	17	17	0	0
2020/21	3	3	11	11	0	0

# STARTERS

During 2022/23, 83 employees joined Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service compared with 64 in 2021/22. Those in the 46-55 age category decreased, however those aged 56-65 increased. The percentage of those who are 66+ increased from 0.0% to 7.2%. The percentage of people who declared their disability decreased significantly from 2021/22 to 2022/23. 47% of our new starters were female in 2022/23 compared to 28.1% in the previous year. There was a decrease in minority ethnic communities joining the Service from 2021/22 to 2022/23. The percentage of people who declared their religion or belief also decreased. More starters declared their sexual orientation from 0.0% in 2021/22 to 10.8% in 2022/23.

Age	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
17-24	10.8%	28.1%	8.9%
25-35	28.9%	23.4%	35.6%
36-45	30.1%	23.4%	24.4%
46-55	9.6%	18.8%	22.2%
56-65	13.3%	6.3%	8.9%
66+	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Disability	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Disabled	4.8%	17.2%	2.2%
Non-disabled	74.7%	67.2%	88.9%
Not declared	20.5%	15.6%	8.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



2023 n = 83   2022 n = 64   2021 n = 45



# STARTERS

Gender	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Male	53.0%	71.9%	73.3%
Female	47.0%	28.1%	26.7%
Not declared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	8.4%	10.9%	20.0%
White	69.9%	75.0%	73.3%
Not declared	21.7%	14.1%	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Religion or belief	34.9%	40.6%	46.7%
No Religion or Belief	34.9%	40.6%	40.0%
Not declared	30.1%	18.8%	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Sexual Orientation	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	10.8%	0.0%	4.4%
Heterosexual	65.1%	82.8%	91.1%
Not declared	24.1%	17.2%	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

2023 n = 83   2022 n = 64   2021 n = 45



# LEAVERS

During 2022/23, 64 employees left the Service compared with 60 in 2021/22. The percentage for those aged between 45-54 decreased but there has been an increase of people leaving in age between 25 – 34. The number of Disabled leavers was lower. 2022/23 saw an increase in female leavers compared to the previous year. Leavers from ethnic minority background increased. Those declaring religion or belief decreased compared to the previous year. There has been an increase of people leaving from LGBTQ+ backgrounds. The data shows that BFRS needs to increase its efforts to encourage staff to declare their protected characteristics. The Service conducts exit interviews to gather the reason(s) people are choosing to leave. This identifies any patterns, ensuring data is provided to enable research to focus attention on any areas that can be improved.

Page 146

Age	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
17-24	1.6%	3.3%	5.8%
25-35	21.9%	8.3%	15.4%
36-45	12.5%	31.7%	17.3%
46-55	25.0%	28.3%	30.8%
56-65	26.6%	28.3%	21.2%
66+	12.5%	0.0%	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

These figures are based on anyone who has left BFRS completely; they do not include individuals who left one of multiple contracts.

Disability	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Disabled	4.7%	6.7%	1.9%
Non-disabled	71.9%	83.3%	86.5%
Not declared	23.4%	10.0%	11.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

2023 n = 64   2022 n = 60   2021 n = 52



# LEAVERS

Gender	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Male	59.4%	76.7%	76.9%
Female	40.6%	23.3%	23.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	6.3%	3.3%	3.8%
White	73.4%	90.0%	92.3%
Not declared	20.3%	6.7%	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Religion or belief	45.3%	48.3%	42.3%
No Religion or Belief	26.6%	30.0%	32.7%
Not declared	28.1%	21.7%	25.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Sexual Orientation	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	4.7%	1.7%	1.9%
Heterosexual	62.5%	81.7%	75.0%
Not declared	32.8%	16.7%	23.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

2023 n = 64   2022 n = 60   2021 n = 52



# JOB APPLICATIONS, RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTIONS

Recruitment to BFRS is through fair and open competition based on merit, with individuals assessed for their ability to demonstrate the required competences, knowledge and skills for the role.

BFRS is committed to ensure that all recruitment is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination. Reasonable adjustments for disabled people are made at all stages of the recruitment process, as required.

In 2022/23, 50 people aged 17-24 applied for support posts within BFRS, an increase of 2.5% from 2021/22. 36 people aged 56-65 also applied for support posts, a drop of 2.2% when compared to 2021/22. There was a significant increase of 18.9% in the number of females who started roles in BFRS in 2022/23. Applications from females for uniformed staff posts (Wholetime, On-Call and Control) increased during 2022/23. Of the 270 applicants in total, 75 were female applicants, an increase of 17.4% from 2021/22.

During 2022/23, there was a decrease of 10.26% in applications from ethnic minority individuals for support posts compared to 2021/22, with 102 (26.7%) out of 382 of those applying being minority ethnic. Of the 83 starters in 2022/23, 8.4% were minority ethnic. A further 18 (21.7%) starters in 2021/22 did not declare their ethnic origin.

The Service has internally promoted 33 staff all of which are uniformed employees during 2022/23. The percentage of promotions for female employees was 15.3% and the promotion of employees from a minority ethnic background at 7.6% compared to workforce figure of 7.1%. Employees who were promoted and had no disability was at 92.3% during 2022/23. None of the staff promoted had a disability and one of the promoted staff did not declare their disability status. Most promotions occur in the 36-45 age range which is to be expected taking into consideration the average length of time required for uniformed staff to become fully competent at each role. 38.4% of promoted staff declared their religion as Christian and Roman Catholic and 53.8% declared as having no religion/belief. 7.6% of promoted staff didn't declare their religion. 92.3% declared their sexual orientation as heterosexual. A small number of employees have not declared their religion, faith or belief and sexual orientation.

# PROMOTIONS - ALL STAFF

Age	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
16-24	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
25-34	19.5%	18.2%	3.1%	5.9%
35-44	36.6%	48.5%	68.8%	52.9%
45-54	23.9%	30.3%	28.1%	41.2%
55-64	12.4%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%
65+	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not declared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Disabled	5.6%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%
Non-disabled	87.3%	90.1%	96.9%	94.1%
Not declared	7.1%	9.1%	0.0%	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Male	72.1%	0.0%	90.6%	100.0%
Female	27.9%	84.8%	9.4%	0.0%
Not declared	0.0%	15.2%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

2023 n = 33   2022 n = 32   2021 n = 17



# PROMOTIONS - ALL STAFF

Ethnicity	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	7.1%	3.0%	6.3%	5.9%
White	86.8%	97.0%	93.8%	88.2%
Not declared	6.1%	0.0%	1.4%	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Religion or belief	47.9%	24.2%	31.3%	41.2%
No Religion or Belief	37.0%	60.6%	53.1%	23.5%
Not declared	15.2%	15.2%	15.6%	35.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual orientation	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%
Heterosexual	83.7%	81.8%	84.4%	90.4%
Not declared	12.7%	18.2%	15.6%	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

2023 n = 33   2022 n = 32   2021 n = 17

# GENDER PAY GAP

The Service has three sets of employee groups whose terms and conditions of employment are nationally negotiated through relevant joint councils that contain representatives from the employers' side and recognised trade unions.

The Service gender median pay gap for 2022 is 0%, compared with the provisional UK Gender pay gap of 14.9%, taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings survey 2022 conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The zero percentage has been achieved by the recruitment of more females within the lower and upper middle quartiles. This has had a further impact on reducing the mean pay gap to 4.00%, with more progress expected in the year to 31 March 2023.

The Service has clear policies and pay structure in place to pay employees equally regardless of gender. The gender pay gap reflects the limited number of women in operational firefighting and senior roles. This is illustrated by the distribution of women in the pay quartiles, with more than half of the women in the lower pay quartile. For more information, please see our latest Gender Pay report.

Page 151

Hourly Wages Pay Gap	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Comparison between median hourly wages	Women earn £1 for every £1 that men earn	Women earn £1 for every £1 that men earn	Women earn 91p for every £1 that men earn
The median hourly wage	0.0% lower than men's	0.0% lower than men's	9.1% lower than men's
The mean hourly wage	4.0% lower than men's	6.2% lower than men's	12.7% lower than men's

Hourly Wages Pay Gap	31 March 2022	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Top quarter	29%	28%	26%
Upper middle quarter	12%	15%	12%
Lower middle quarter	14%	10%	16%
Lower quarter	45%	45%	40%

# GRIEVANCES

Six formal grievances were submitted during 2022/23. This compares to five grievances raised the previous year. Of the six formal grievances submitted in 2022/23 one was upheld, three were not upheld, one was partially upheld, and one was withdrawn. Of those who raised a grievance, 50% were male and 50% female, 66.7% were White British, 16.6% were from a minority ethnic background and 16.6% preferred not to state their ethnic background.

# COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

During 2022/23, the Service received 51 compliments from members of the public by letter, email or through social media this is compared to 36 in 2021/22 and 98 in 2020/21. The Service received 16 complaints, compared to 28 in 2021/22 and 13 in 2020/21. Currently the Service does not capture equality information about the person making a complaint or compliment, so we are not able to report on this.

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Compliments	51	36	98
Complaints	16	28	13





# WORKFORCE PROFILE BY CHARACTERISTIC

Page 153

Age	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
17-24	5.4%	5.6%	3.5%
25-35	19.5%	20.6%	23.5%
36-45	36.6%	34.8%	33.8%
46-55	23.9%	27.0%	28.8%
56-65	12.4%	11.1%	9.5%
66+	2.1%	1.0%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Disabled	5.6%	4.4%	3.2%
Non-disabled	87.3%	89.7%	90.7%
Not declared	7.1%	5.9%	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Male	72.1%	76.0%	76.4%
Female	27.9%	24.0%	23.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Religion or belief	47.9%	46.3%	46.1%
No Religion or Belief	37.0%	40.6%	40.2%
Not declared	15.2%	13%	13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	7.1%	6.7%	8.0%
White	86.8%	88.9%	88.3%
Not declared	6.1%	4.4%	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual Orientation	31/03/23	31/03/22	31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	3.6%	3.0%	3.4%
Heterosexual	83.7%	85.2%	84.1%
Not declared	12.7%	11.7%	12.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

2023 n = 662 2022 n = 630 2021 n = 622  
(these figures are by positions)

# WORKFORCE PROFILE BY PAY BAND

Age	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 18	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/23 BFRS Profile
17-24	5.7%	0.0%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%
25-35	11.5%	9.0%	25.7%	0.0%	0.0%	19.5%
36-45	22.1%	31.3%	41.5%	57.7%	10.0%	36.6%
46-55	20.5%	22.4%	22.8%	38.5%	80.0%	23.9%
56-65	32.8%	31.3%	3.1%	3.8%	10.0%	12.4%
66+	7.4%	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 18	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/23 BFRS Profile
Male	32.8%	50.7%	86.9%	96.2%	80.0%	72.1%
Female	67.2%	49.3%	13.1%	3.8%	20.0%	27.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ethnicity	Support: Apprentice - Grade 13	Support: Grade 14 - Grade 18	Uniformed: Fire-fighter, Crew Manager & Watch Manager	Uniformed: Station Manager & Group Manager	Senior Management Tier	31/03/23 BFRS Profile
Black and ethnic minority	9.0%	16.4%	5.0%	3.8%	10.0%	7.1%
White	74.6%	80.6%	91.3%	92.3%	90.0%	86.8%
Not declared	16.4%	3.0%	3.7%	3.8%	0.0%	6.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

n = 606 (these figures are by people)

# JOB APPLICATIONS – SUPPORT STAFF

Page 155

Age	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
17-24	3.6%	13.1%	10.6%	8.9%
25-35	10.4%	33.8%	33.2%	30.4%
36-45	24.9%	25.7%	21.9%	22.5%
46-55	22.8%	17.0%	21.9%	24.9%
56-65	31.6%	9.4%	11.6%	12.4%
66+	6.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.7%
Not declared	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Disabled	7.3%	7.1%	5.3%	4.5%
Non-disabled	80.3%	89.5%	90.4%	91.9%
Not declared	12.4%	3.4%	4.3%	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Male	39.4%	44.5%	36.9%	37.8%
Female	60.6%	54.2%	62.8%	61.2%
Not declared	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Applications 2023 n = 382 2022 n = 301 2021 n = 418 (workforce profile as at 31 March 2023 = 197)

# JOB APPLICATIONS – SUPPORT STAFF

Ethnicity	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	11.4%	26.7%	36.9%	37.8%
White	77.2%	72.0%	62.8%	61.2%
Not declared	11.4%	1.3%	0.3%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Religion or belief	53.9%	63.9%	58.5%	56.7%
No Religion or Belief	28.5%	29.8%	35.9%	33.3%
Not declared	17.6%	6.3%	5.6%	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual orientation	Support Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	2.1%	9.4%	5.6%	4.6%
Heterosexual	82.4%	84.0%	91.0%	90.4%
Not declared	15.5%	6.5%	3.3%	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Applications 2023 n = 382 2022 n = 301 2021 n = 418 (workforce profile as at 31 March 2023 = 197)

# JOB APPLICATIONS – UNIFORMED STAFF

Page 157

Age	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
17-24	6.3%	32.2%	18.4%	31.8%
25-35	23.7%	40.7%	50.9%	42.6%
36-45	42.1%	18.9%	25.8%	19.1%
46-55	24.5%	5.9%	3.7%	5.0%
56-65	3.4%	1.9%	0.6%	1.2%
66+	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.0%
Not declared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Disabled	4.8%	5.9%	3.1%	2.9%
Non-disabled	90.6%	93.0%	96.3%	95.0%
Not declared	4.6%	1.1%	0.6%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Male	87.4%	72.2%	89.6%	78.2%
Female	12.6%	27.8%	10.4%	20.9%
Not declared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

# JOB APPLICATIONS – UNIFORMED STAFF

Ethnicity	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	5.1%	16.3%	22.1%	22.4%
White	91.3%	83.7%	77.9%	76.5%
Not declared	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Religion or belief	45.0%	56.7%	48.5%	35.6%
No Religion or Belief	40.9%	40.7%	48.6%	59.4%
Not declared	14.0%	2.6%	2.9%	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual orientation	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	4.4%	6.7%	8.6%	6.8%
Heterosexual	84.3%	91.5%	87.1%	89.1%
Not declared	11.4%	1.9%	4.3%	4.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Applications 2023 n = 270 2022 n = 163 2021 n = 340 (workforce profile as at 31 March 2023 = 413)

# EXTERNAL TRAINING

Age	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
16-24	5.4%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%
25-34	19.5%	11.6%	12.6%	11.4%
35-44	36.6%	38.0%	46.7%	21.4%
45-54	23.9%	21.0%	28.1%	38.6%
55-64	12.4%	19.7%	9.8%	28.6%
65+	2.1%	1.0%	1.4%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Disabled	5.6%	3.4%	6.6%	1.4%
Non-disabled	87.3%	4.6%	89.5%	94.3%
Not declared	7.1%	1.0%	3.9%	4.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Male	72.1%	56.6%	80.7%	68.6%
Female	27.9%	35.0%	19.3%	31.4%
Not declared	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

2023 n = 86 2022 n = 80 2021 n = 70

# EXTERNAL TRAINING

Ethnicity	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Black and ethnic minority	7.1%	3.4%	8.8%	4.3%
White	86.8%	84.8%	87.9%	94.3%
Not declared	6.1%	5.8%	3.3%	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Religion or belief	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Religion or belief	47.9%	61.0%	48.4%	47.1%
No Religion or Belief	37.0%	17.4%	39.5%	30.0%
Not declared	15.2%	36.0%	12.1%	22.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sexual orientation	Workforce Profile 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/23	Applications 31/03/22	Applications 31/03/21
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Other	3.6%	3.4%	3.7%	4.3%
Heterosexual	83.7%	68.6%	84.0%	84.3%
Not declared	12.7%	12.7%	12.3%	11.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

2023 n = 86   2022 n = 80   2021 n = 70



# OUR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to delivering inclusive and accessible services to the diverse communities we serve. We continued to build on the improvements and progress made in the Service including actively engaging with the communities and improving on the collation of data to focus our activities on the most vulnerable groups. Some of our key achievements are detailed below:

- 🔥 We demonstrated our support and commitment to a variety of diversity events including LGBTQ+ month, Black History Month and Windrush Flag Flying event.
- 🔥 For Neurodiversity Week members of staff shared their stories on social media including useful tools and support materials that are available.
- 🔥 Attended numerous College and Sixth Form events to promote the Fire Service as an Employer of Choice.
- 🔥 Used social media channels to promote the Service and deliver targeted safety messages.
- 🔥 Held Station Open days engaging with the local community.
- 🔥 Engaged with local authorities in and outside of Bedfordshire, with police and other agencies such as housing associations, schools, children's homes, foster parents, to support young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Amongst other activities, we delivered safety awareness sessions and provided learning resources which included posting BFRS fire safety leaflets, selecting and recommending StayWise resources.

Youth initiatives included:

- 🔥 Working with partners, raising awareness in home fire safety workshop for 15–19-year-olds with SEND needs.
- 🔥 Holding Special Educational Needs (SEND) and Disability Open Days at Fire stations.
- 🔥 Took positive action initiatives to actively engage with under-represented community groups to enhance diversity in our workforce.
- 🔥 Provided opportunities to have a go at some of the more practical activities performed by operational firefighters.

# NEXT STEPS

---

## Step 1

Seek to establish a community partner panel for targeted communication and engagement methods to engage with a wider cross-section of Bedfordshire's local communities, providing them with a voice and opportunity to shape how our services support their needs.

Review our translation and interpretation service and designing and developing information in different formats to meet the needs of our community such as those who are visually impaired.

## Step 2

Page 162 Ensure that as an organisation we are compliant with our public sector equality duties, with Bedfordshire Fire Service Authority taking the lead in scrutinising our performance as an organisation and advancing our pledge to reduce inequality and challenge discrimination in Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Assess the equality impact our policies have on people from different protected characteristics by ensuring our People Impact Assessments are robust.

## Step 3

Work in partnership to promote an inclusive Bedfordshire by working closely with our local partners in health, the Police, the Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector and the private sector.

Deliver a collaborative and combined approach to narrowing the equality gaps in Bedfordshire and helping to ensure we collectively champion equality and inclusion in everything that we deliver.

# YOUR VIEWS COUNT

Your views are very important to us and having had an opportunity to feedback on our annual Public Sector Equality Duty Report. We would welcome your feedback by e-mailing us at [diversity@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@bedsfire.gov.uk).

## CONNECT WITH BFRS



**Bedfordshire**  
Fire & Rescue Service

Page 163

[www.bedsfire.gov.uk](http://www.bedsfire.gov.uk)

@bedsfire  
wire@bedsfire



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Southfields Road, Kempston,  
Bedford, MK42 7NR





**SUBJECT:                    REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT POLICY**

**Author and contact:**     Ravina Radia, Procurement Manager, [ravina.radia@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:ravina.radia@bedsfire.gov.uk)

Background Papers:

Minutes and associated papers from meeting on Fire and Rescue Authority – Tuesday 2 November 2021

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Procurement Policy – July 2023	

**Implications**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	The updated document includes a more comprehensive summary of the policy ensuring service areas can easily follow the requirements and thereby improving compliance with procurement regulations.
Risk Management	No	It is expected that this simpler and easier to read document will ensure compliance with procurement regulations and policy therefore will reduce any risk to the Authority for non-compliance.

Legal Implications	No	It is expected that this simpler and easier to read document will ensure compliance with procurement regulations and policy therefore will reduce any risk to the Authority for non-compliance.
Privacy and Security Implications	No	N/A
Duty to Collaborate	No	N/A – This is an internal document for the Authority employees only.
Health and Safety Implications	No	N/A
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	N/A
Environmental Sustainability	No	N/A
Consultation and Communication		<p>This is an internal document. Informal feedback from service areas has been considered to make the document more user-friendly.</p> <p>Amendments to the document have been made to simplify the document and make it more concise.</p> <p>Once approval is received for this version, the updated policy will be communicated internally with colleagues who will continue to be supported to implement the policy by the procurement team.</p> <p>Changes to legislation are due to come into effect from October 2024, which will prompt a further, more in-depth review of the policy and a formal consultation will be undertaken as part of that review.</p> <p>An updated version of the proposed policy will be brought before the Authority Members in due course.</p>

**PURPOSE:**

To acknowledge and approve the amendments to the Procurement Policy.

## RECOMMENDATION:

That Members acknowledge and approve the contents of the paper.

---

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In November 2021, a Procurement Policy and Contract Procedures document was presented to Members and approved for implementation. The Policy was intended to be used as a reference document to guide service areas through the procurement process.
- 1.2 To encourage utilisation and ensure compliance, it was felt a simplified version of the process should be issued to service areas. Information on the documentation must be easy to follow, concise and relevant to the procurement activity being carried out by the service areas (i.e. spend below £25,000), with some brief guidance on the procurement process over £25,000 which is carried out by the procurement team.
- 1.3 The revised, simplified version of the policy is now being presented to Members for consideration. The Procurement Policy is currently part of the Members Handbook.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Procurement Policy sets out the internal processes and procedures that must be adhered to by all personnel who are directly or indirectly involved in the procurement of contracts on the Authority's behalf.
- 2.2 The document provides the opportunity to detail steps to be undertaken to ensure a compliant procurement process is followed in line with legislative requirements.
- 2.3 The previous document that was drafted was extremely detailed and technical, thereby deterring service areas from reading and following the policy. The forms that supported the policy were also arduous and complex to complete.
- 2.4 The procurement team has been working on reviewing the Authority's process, policy and templates with a view to simplifying them and making them user friendly.

- 2.5 Bribery and corruption used to be a section in the previous policy, however, this has been removed in the attached revised version as it is now included within the contracts with supplies/services.
- 2.6 Social value is not included in the attached revised policy and it is being worked on, to have a separate document on the procurement intranet page, so readily accessible to procuring managers.

### 3 Next Steps

- 3.1 Once approved, the procurement team will finalise amendments to the forms that have been drafted. The forms and the policy shall then be promoted to service areas for use as soon as possible, with training and support offered as required.
- 3.2 The forms created are electronic forms through Microsoft, which will allow better audit trail and enhance reporting.
- 3.3 The new Procurement Bill is currently going through Parliamentary readings and consultation following the UK's exit from the European Union. Following receipt of Royal Assent, the changes to the procurement process will need to be implemented by October 2024. This will prompt a further change in process and policies, which will be brought to Members in due course.

**RAVINA RADIA**  
**PROCUREMENT MANAGER**

**GAVIN CHAMBERS**  
**ACO/FRA TREASURER**





# Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

## PROCUREMENT POLICY

Volume 1101 : FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT

### Contents

- 1. Purpose .....2
- 2. Legislative Framework .....2
- 3. Financial Considerations .....7
- 4. Procurement Process .....8
- 6. Reporting.....23
- 7. Review.....24

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to set out the internal processes and procedures that must be adhered to by all personnel who are directly or indirectly involved in the commissioning, procurement and contract management of public contracts on the Authority's behalf.
- 1.2. The Authority's mission statement for procurement is:  
 "Achievement of the lowest whole life cost and clearly defined benefits in the commissioning of goods, works and services procured at the right time, within budget and scope and of the required quality in an ethical and socially responsible manner"
- 1.3. The Authority's strategic objective is to deliver a procurement function that is:
  - Ethical
  - Effective
  - Efficient
  - Commercial
  - Sustainable
  - Innovative
  - Socially Responsible

## 2. Legislative Framework

### 2.1. National Procurement Legislation

- 2.1.1. When procuring public contracts (except for utilities and concession contracts), the Authority must act in accordance with relevant national procurement legislation, ensuring that the principles of fairness, transparency, non-discrimination and proportionality are observed and that all procurement activity is conducted in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended from time to time).
- 2.1.2. When procuring utilities public contracts, the Authority must undertake all procurement activity in compliance with the Utilities Contracts Regulation 2016 (as amended from time to time).
- 2.1.3. When procuring concession public contracts, the Authority must undertake all procurement activity in compliance with the Concession Contracts Regulation 2016 (as amended from time to time).
- 2.1.4. The procurement principles of fairness, transparency, non-discrimination and proportionality must be observed at all times.
- 2.1.5. Authority personnel who intentionally or unintentionally breach any one of the provisions as set out within this Procurement Policy have the potential of contributing in the Authority being subject to an audit review (internal or external), a legal challenge leading to financial penalties and / or a reputational damage.

### 2.2. Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended)

- 2.2.1. The Public Contracts Regulations ('Regulations') 2015, detail the rules that must be implemented when procuring public contracts. The Regulations provide the

legislative framework for public contracts which have an aggregated value over the term of the contract (including any extensions and variations) which is equal to or exceeds a set of agreed financial thresholds.

2.2.2. All public contracts covered by the Regulations must be procured in compliance with the Regulations, unless the subject-matter of the public contract falls under any one of the following classifications (list not exhaustive), which are subject to a lighter regime ('Light Touch Regime') allowing the Authority to inject flexibility in the application of the Regulations:

- Health, Social and Related services;
- Educational, cultural and training services;
- Compulsory social security services;
- Hotel and Restaurant Services;
- Specific types of legal services;
- Investigation and Security services; and
- Postal Services;

2.2.3. The current financial thresholds under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) which are mandating the application of the full legislative regime are:

	Supplies & Services	Works Contracts
Central Government (e.g. Cabinet Office, DWP, DfE etc)	£138,760	£5,336,937
Other Contracting Authorities (e.g. Fire & Rescue Services, Police, Local Authorities)	£213,477	£5,336,937
Small Lots	£70,778	£884,720

### 2.3. Exclusion of Specific Public Contracts for Services

2.3.1. In accordance with Regulation 10, the 2015 Regulations do not apply to the following types of public services contracts (list not exhaustive) and therefore Authority personnel are permitted to enter into contractual arrangements without having to undertake a tendering process. Due to the complex nature and the caveats associated with some of these types of contracts, Authority personnel are strongly advised to consult with the Procurement Team prior to taking any action for the purpose of verifying that an exclusion is applicable.

- Acquisition or rental of land, existing buildings or other immovable property;
- Acquisition, development, production or co-production of material intended for audio-visual or radio media services;
- Arbitration or conciliation services;
- Legal advice given in preparation to legal proceedings and legal representation in such judicial proceedings held before the courts, tribunals or public authorities of a European Union (EU) Member State or a non-European Union (EU) Member State;

- Document certification and authentication services;
- Employment contracts<sup>1</sup>;
- Credit and Loan agreements; and
- Financial services in connection with the issue, sale, purchase or transfer of securities or other financial instruments (including but not limited to investment undertakings and pension funds, investment services and ancillary activities, services related to underwriting, advice to undertakings on capital structure, industrial strategy and related matters and advice and services relating to mergers and the purchase of undertakings).

2.3.2. For the avoidance of doubt, this Procurement Policy shall not be applicable to any of the public services contracts listed in Regulation 10 of the 2015 Regulations as amended.

#### 2.4. Local Government Act 1999

2.4.1. Fire and Rescue Authorities have a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to secure 'best value', having full regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Authority is committed to undertaking all procurement activities in a manner which promotes quality and value for money through effective competition.

2.4.2. Procurement documents shall state that although the Authority is seeking to procure contracts which are capable of offering good quality, sustainable, well-designed and future-proofed solutions, it is also required to achieve the desired outputs in the most economic, effective and efficient way possible.

2.4.3. As a means of securing best value and ensuring that agreed budgets are not exceeded, appropriate and proportionate affordability caps must be considered and applied, if it is deemed to be fitting to the subject-matter of the contract, the market and the overall procurement strategy.

2.4.4. Bidders whose pricing proposals breach the relevant affordability caps shall be disqualified from the procurement.

#### 2.5. Social Value

2.5.1. The 2015 Regulations expressly allow contracting authorities to incorporate social and environmental aspects into specifications, award criteria and contract conditions, where these are linked to the subject-matter of the contract, proportionate to what is being procured or provided, and will not result in unequal treatment of Bidders. This could include promoting innovation, employment and social inclusion, protection of the environment, energy efficiency, and combating climate change.

2.5.2. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which came into force on 31 January 2013, requires public sector authorities to consider how they could improve the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their local area through their procurement activities.

2.5.3. The Authority is committed to ensuring social value and sustainable use of resources is embedded throughout the procurement process from commissioning to contract management and outcomes measurement.

---

<sup>1</sup> N.B Contracts with third (3<sup>rd</sup>) party recruiters for the provision of agency staff are NOT defined as 'employment contracts' and therefore must be procured in line with this Procurement Policy.

2.5.4. Social value considerations shall be tailored to reflect the size and scope of the relevant contract and shall be embedded into all procurement and contract management activity by producing procurement strategies, technical specification documents, evaluation models and contract terms which consider:

- Accessible supply chains
- Equality – such as gender pay balance, ethnic minorities representation, inclusion and improved staff mental health wellbeing, improved community cohesion;
- Environmental impact;
- Use of sustainable and environmentally friendly materials;
- Improving employability and skills in the local community by encouraging apprenticeships;

## 2.6. Additional Strategic Considerations

### a) National Fire Chiefs Council ('NFCC')

2.6.1. NFCC is the leading professional and technical voice of UK Fire and Rescue Service and its aim is to:

- Strengthen the professional / operational leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- Improve national co-ordination;
- Reduce duplication and increase efficiency;
- Support local service delivery; and
- Provide increased influence for Fire and Rescue Authorities and their Services.

2.6.2. In response to a request by the Home Office for greater transparency and collaboration in procurement, NFCC established the Fire Commercial Transformation Programme ('FCTP'), whose purpose is the implementation of a package of reforms in the commercial operation of the sector. Within this context, the FCTP has identified six (6) key categories of expenditure, as follows:

- Clothing (including Personal Protective Equipment – PPE);
- Construction and Facilities Management;
- Fleet;
- ICT;
- Operational Equipment; and
- Professional Services.

2.6.3. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that category strategies are produced, observed and regularly reviewed for all six (6) categories of spend. Budget Managers and Contract Managers shall assist the relevant procurement lead in the production and maintenance of the category strategies and will be responsible for ensuring that their service area's business objectives are fully embedded in the respective category strategy.

2.6.4. Category strategies shall be approved by the relevant Functional Head and the relevant Principal Officer.

### b) Policing and Crime Act 2017

2.6.5. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a new duty on the police, fire and rescue and ambulance services to keep collaboration opportunities under review and, where it is in the interests of their efficiency or effectiveness, to put those

collaboration opportunities into practice. The duty is deliberately broad to allow for local discretion so that the emergency services themselves can decide how best to collaborate for the benefit of their own communities.

2.6.6. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that collaboration opportunities are identified at an early stage and that the Authority fully observes its duty to collaborate, as and when this is deemed appropriate.

2.6.7. The Authority's Procurement Manager will discuss collaboration opportunities with the appropriate Principal Officer for the purpose of obtaining approval to collaborate prior to any further procurement activity being undertaken.

c) National Procurement Strategy for Fire and Rescue Services

2.6.8. The National Procurement Strategy 2018 is based on the Local Government National Procurement Strategy 2018 and focuses on three (3) 'Themes' as listed below:

- Leadership;
- Commercial Practice; and
- Delivering Local Benefits

2.6.9. In addition to the 'Themes', the Strategy also identifies the following four (4) 'Enablers':

- Developing our Staff;
- Procurement Systems and Data Transparency;
- Innovation; and
- Embedding Change

d) Health and Safety

2.6.10. The Authority requires that all suppliers, their employees and agents and where applicable, sub-contractors shall, while working for the Authority, conform with all requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and with all other Health and Safety Legislation that relate generally or specifically, to their trade, business or undertaking.

2.6.11. While working on the Authority's premises, Suppliers and Contractor's will be required to comply with the Authority's Health and Safety Policies.

2.6.12. Where Health and Safety Policies are submitted, the Health and Safety Advisor shall be responsible for assessing its compliance based on the evaluation criteria contained in the procurement documents.

e) Equality and Diversity

2.6.13. The Public Sector Equality Duty (the equality duty) is set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It is a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Its purpose is to mainstream the consideration of equality and good relations into the decision making and business planning of all public sector bodies.

2.6.14. The Authority is committed to developing, promoting and delivering their services, information and employment opportunities without discriminating against anyone on the grounds of age, disability, faith, gender, race, sexuality, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

2.6.15. Within this context and in accordance with the Authority's Equality Policy, the Authority's Responsible Officer (Service Area) for procuring works, goods and

services shall be responsible for engaging the Equality and Diversity Team prior to any procurement activity being undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining if the contract opportunity is likely to have or will have an impact on people or groups of people with protected characteristics.

- 2.6.16. Where Equality and Diversity Policies are submitted, the Equality and Diversity Manager shall be responsible for assessing its compliance based on the evaluation criteria contained in the procurement documents.

### 3. Financial Considerations

#### 3.1. Financial Stability of Key Suppliers

- 3.1.1. Key suppliers are those suppliers whose performance materially affects the ability of the Authority to deliver its vision, aims and objectives and whose failure as an organisation could prevent the delivery of important services to the public. The annual financial assessments shall be undertaken by the Head of Finance.
- 3.1.2. In the event it is established that a key supplier is under financial duress, the Head of Finance shall notify the Assistant Chief Officer at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.1.3. Where financial duress has been identified, Budget Managers shall be responsible for:
- Producing a Mitigation Plan for the identified key supplier identifying what actions would be taken to ensure service continuity in the event of the failure of such supplier;
  - Obtaining a copy of the key supplier's Business Continuity Plan; and
  - Holding regular contract management meetings as a forum for monitoring performance, gaining an up to date understanding of the supplier's position in the market and gathering information on the supplier's future development plans.
  - The Mitigation Plan and Business Continuity Plan must be reviewed and updated (as required) on an annual basis and copies provided to the Authority's Procurement Manager.

#### 3.2. Avoidance of Fraud

- 3.2.1. The Authority recognises that there is a potential for fraudulent activity to occur when procuring goods, services or works.
- 3.2.2. The detection, prevention and reporting of fraud is the responsibility of all Members and employees of the Authority. These individuals are expected to:
- 3.2.3. Act with integrity
- 3.2.4. Comply with all relevant codes of conduct
- 3.2.5. Comply with contract standing orders, procurement regulations/legislation and financial regulations.
- 3.2.6. Where any fraudulent activity is identified or suspected, concerns should be raised via:
- Line managers
  - Corporate Management Team
  - Principal Officer Team
- 3.2.7. The Authority shall ensure that fraudulent activity in procurement is mitigated and managed through:

- fair and transparent procurement processes
- annual audit procedures

### 3.3. Corporate Insurance Requirements

3.3.1. In accordance with the Authority's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract, suppliers must hold the following insurance levels as a pre-requisite for doing business with the Authority:

- Employer's (Compulsory) Liability Insurance = £5 million for each and every claim;
- Public Liability Insurance = £5 million for each and every claim; and
- Professional Indemnity Insurance (where relevant) = £1 million for each and every claim

3.3.2. Changes to the Authority's insurance requirements shall not be permitted without the written approval of the Assistant Chief Officer.

3.3.3. Contract award shall be dependent upon provision of valid insurance certificates.

3.3.4. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall ensure that renewal certificates are obtained from Contractors on an annual basis and copies are saved in the Procurement drive.

## 4. Procurement Process

### 4.1. Procurement Planning

4.1.1. The Procurement Team hold a project plan detailing all known band 3-5 procurement activity.

4.1.2. Regular meetings will be held with service areas to discuss planned procurements ensure activities are logged on the plan to allow appropriate resources to be allocated accordingly.

4.1.3. Where unplanned activity arises, it is the service area's responsibility to advise the procurement team at the earliest opportunity and discuss timelines and resource requirements.

### 4.2. Determining the Route to Procurement

4.2.1. The route to procurement shall be determined by the application of a set of bandings which are based on the estimated total aggregated value of the contract over the entire contract period (initial term and all possible extension periods).

4.2.2. The bandings are listed below as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Expected Contract Value (including VAT)</b>	<b>Procurement Route</b>
Band 1	up to £4,999	evidence of Best Value
Band 2	£5,000 – £24,999	request a minimum of three (3) written quotes
Band 3	£25,000 – £59,999	release of a Contracts Finder Notice as a call for a national competition or delivery of a closed tender process under



		an established Framework Agreement or a Dynamic Purchasing System
Band 4	£60,000 – £213,477 (goods & services) / £5,336,937 (works)	release of a Contracts Finder Notice as a call for national competition or delivery of a closed tender process under an established Framework Agreement or a Dynamic Purchasing System
Band 5	greater than £213,477 (goods & services) / £5,336,937 (works)	release of a Find a Tender Service Notice as a call for competition at both a national and cross-border level (where relevant)

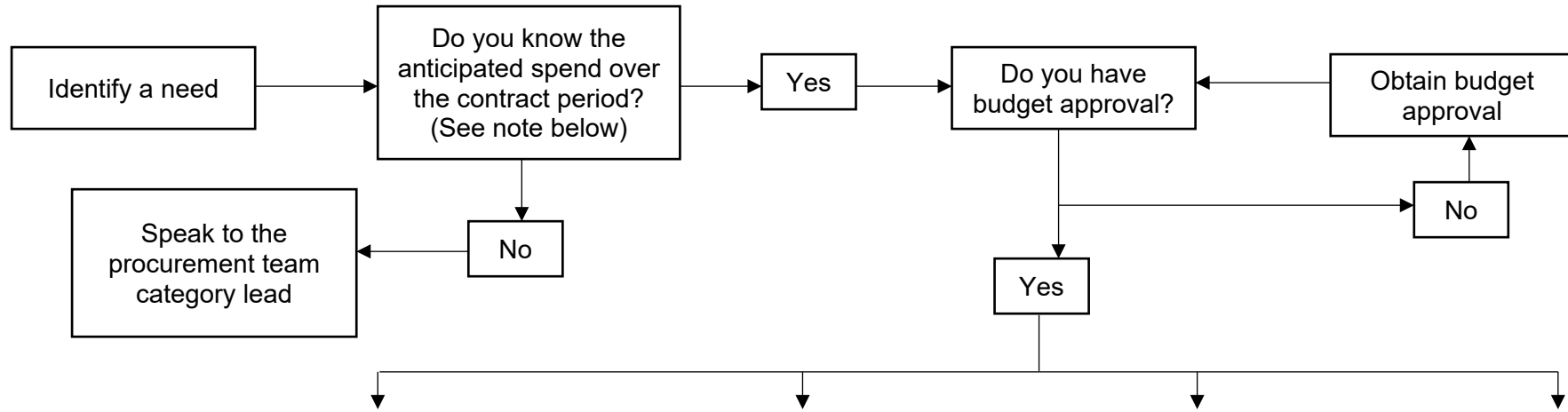
- 4.2.3. When calculating the estimated value of the contract to determine whether the regulations apply, the contract value estimation should:
- Be **excluding VAT** (where applicable).
  - Be for the **entire duration** of the contract (including any extension options)
- 4.2.4. Contract opportunities must not be sub-divided/broken down for the purpose of reducing the total value of the contract to bring the procurement exercise under the set financial thresholds and therefore exempt from the full procurement legislation regime. This obligation stands regardless of whether the purpose was intentional or not.
- 4.2.5. In the event the Authority's Procurement Manager establishes that a contract opportunity has been disaggregated, intentionally or unintentionally, they shall inform the Assistant Chief Officer or equivalent Principal Officer.

#### VAT and the Procurement Contract Regulations

- 4.2.6. From 1 January 2022, where the value of the contract is required to determine whether the regulations apply, the contract value estimation should be inclusive of VAT (where applicable).
- 4.2.7. The Procurement Team will liaise with the service area/budget manager where thresholds are approaching to allow the appropriate procurement route to be established.
- 4.2.8. The suggested, but not prescriptive, default for calculating VAT is to add an equal amount to the standard rate of VAT (currently 20%) to the contract estimation net amount. This would remove any problems of underestimating the contract value.

Appendix 1

Procurement Process Summary



Page 178

	BAND 1 - <£4,999	BAND 2 - £5,000 - £24,999	BAND 3 - £25,000 - £59,999	BAND 4 - £60,000 - £213,477 (services) / £5,336,937 (works) BAND 5 above £213,477 (services) / £5,336,937 (works)
Key documents / templates	New Supplier Request form Conflict of Interest Form Specification	Conflict of Interest Form Invitation to Quote Specification Technical questions	Request to Procure Conflict of Interest Form Invitation to Tender Tender Timeline	Request to Procure Conflict of Interest Form Invitation to Tender Tender Timeline

Appendix 1

Request for Quote (RFQ) – if applicable	Suitability Assessment Questionnaire Tender Evaluation Outcome Report / Regulation 84 Report Procurement Audit Checklist Contract Award Letter Unsuccessful Bidder Letter New Supplier Request form Contract	Specification Technical questions Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (and associated documentation – Insurance Policies) Evaluation Scoring Record Tender Evaluation Outcome Report / Regulation 84 Report Contract Award Letter Unsuccessful Bidder Letter New Supplier Request form Contract	Specification Technical questions Suitability Assessment Questionnaire (and associated documentation – Insurance Policies) Evaluation Scoring Record Tender Evaluation Outcome Report / Regulation 84 Report Contract Award Letter Unsuccessful Bidder Letter New Supplier Request form Contract	
Responsibility	Purchases of this value are the responsibility of the service area	Purchases of this value are the responsibility of the service area with support from the procurement team where required/appropriate	Procurements of this value are undertaken by the Procurement team with support from the service area	Procurements of this value are undertaken by the Procurement team with support from the service area
Procurement / purchase requirements	Purchase Order / card where permitted	Service area should contact the procurement category lead to obtain a contract reference number (this will start with BF, followed by a series of numbers).	Complete a Request to Procure Form and send to the procurement category lead.	Complete a Request to Procure Form and send to the procurement category lead.

Appendix 1

		<p>Service area should obtain a minimum of 3 quotes using the invitation to quote document.</p> <p>The same brief / specification document should be sent to the supplier electronically to ensure comparable costs are provided.</p> <p>Evaluation criteria should be identified and where quality will be evaluated along with price communicated to the potential suppliers.</p>	<p>The procurement team will work with the service area to understand the requirement and consider options for the best route to market. This may be a direct award or mini competition through an existing framework, or a formal request for quotes (RFQ) process or invitation to tender (ITT).</p> <p>The service area will be required to provide a clear specification and questions with weightings if required.</p>	<p>The procurement team will work with the service area to understand the requirement and consider options for the best route to market. This may be a direct award or mini competition through an existing framework, or a formal procurement process.</p> <p>The service area will be required to provide a clear specification and questions with weightings if required.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Service areas should retain documentation relating to additional considerations that are appropriate to the service/goods required.</p>	<p>Service areas should retain documentation relating to additional considerations that are appropriate to the service/goods required.</p>	<p>Supplier Bids will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria within the procurement process.</p> <p>Evaluation will be carried out by an Evaluation panel,</p>	<p>Supplier Bids will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria within the procurement process.</p> <p>Evaluation will be carried out by an Evaluation panel,</p>

Appendix 1

<p>This should include decisions about which considerations are appropriate and any discussions the supplier regarding these.</p>	<p>This should include decisions about which considerations are appropriate and any discussions the supplier regarding these.</p>	<p>with a moderation meeting to agree final scores.</p>	<p>with a moderation meeting to agree final scores.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence Best Value</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Best Value means:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Choosing a supplier that offers the best balance between the whole life cost (from acquisition to disposal) of goods and services against predefined requirements;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Generating savings through corporate or collective action with other public bodies; and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Generating efficiency savings through streamlining the procurement process.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Best Value can be evidenced through:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cost of the provision</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Expertise of supplier</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Quality of service delivery</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Supporting efficiencies in the service</p>			
<p>Service areas should retain documentation relating to best value – copies of quotes obtained, discussions relating to the award of the contract to the supplier.</p>	<p>Service areas should retain documentation relating to best value – copies of quotes obtained, evaluation undertaken (analysis of cost / quality), discussions</p>	<p>Best value will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria within the procurement process, based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) criterion which takes account of</p>	<p>Best value will be evaluated as part of the evaluation criteria within the procurement process, based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) criterion which takes account of</p>

## Appendix 1

	relating to the award of the contract to the supplier.	criteria that reflect qualitative, technical and sustainable aspects of the tender submission as well as price.	criteria that reflect qualitative, technical and sustainable aspects of the tender submission as well as price..
<p>Additional Considerations</p> <p>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</p> <p>Environmental impact</p> <p>Sustainability</p> <p>Social Value</p> <p>SME</p>	<p>Other factors such as EDI, the environment and social value may also play a big part in how the contract can be delivered. For every opportunity, contract owners may want to consider:</p> <p>Compliance with the Equality Act (or any replacement) – has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?</p> <p>Social and environmental benefit achieved through spend with suppliers such as working towards net zero emissions</p> <p>Sourcing more goods, services and works locally</p> <p>Ethical and sustainable sourcing through supply chains</p> <p>Creating employment opportunities for local people</p> <p>Using contracts to maximise social value benefits</p> <p>Maximising opportunities for local SMEs and VCSEs</p> <p>Reducing the negative impact of contract delivery on the environment</p> <p>Promoting the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly materials in the delivery of public contracts, having full regard to the three (3) R’s of the waste hierarchy (“Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”)</p> <p>Are there any GDPR considerations? (Does this arrangement include personal data? How will this be shared? What GDPR considerations need to be included in the contract?)</p> <p><b>Carbon footprint</b></p>		

Appendix 1

<p>Evaluation Process</p>	<p>Service areas evaluate based on identified criteria (usually price but may include additional considerations above).</p> <p>Evidence of the evaluation must be retained for audit purposes.</p>	<p>Service areas evaluate based on identified criteria (usually price but may include some quality requirements and additional considerations as above).</p> <p>Evidence of the evaluation must be retained for audit purposes.</p>	<p>An evaluation panel will be established with the service area.</p> <p>The procurement lead will discuss evaluation process with the service area/panel and provide training and documentation for evaluations.</p> <p>Evidence of the evaluation will be retained by the procurement team.</p>	<p>An evaluation panel will be established with the service area.</p> <p>The procurement lead will discuss evaluation process with the service area/panel and provide training and documentation for evaluations.</p> <p>Evidence of the evaluation will be retained by the procurement team.</p>
<p>Sign off procedure</p>	<p>Budget holder to sign off based on relevant information.</p>	<p>Summary of quote process through a Tender Evaluation Outcome Report or Regulation 84 Report for framework or DPS call off's where there is more than one supplier on the framework.</p>	<p>The procurement team will liaise with the relevant individuals to obtain sign off for the procurement process. This will involve a Tender Evaluation Outcome Report or Regulation 84 Report for framework or DPS call off's where there is more than one supplier on the framework.</p>	<p>The procurement team will liaise with the relevant individuals to obtain sign off for the procurement process. This will involve a Tender Evaluation Outcome Report or Regulation 84 Report for framework or DPS call off's where there is more than one supplier on the framework.</p>

Appendix 1

			<p>The service area will be asked to support and review the information in the report, which will then be approved at Procurement, Finance and CMT/PO level.</p>	<p>The service area will be asked to support and review the information in the report, which will then be approved at Procurement, Finance and CMT/PO level.</p>
<p>Award Process</p>	<p>The successful supplier can be notified via email of the Authority's intention to proceed with them.</p>	<p>The successful supplier must be notified in writing of the Authority's intention to proceed with them.</p> <p>The successful supplier should be asked to complete a Suitability Assessment Questionnaire providing details of the company set up and structure.</p>	<p>The procurement team will liaise with the successful and unsuccessful suppliers to notify them in writing of the Authority's intention to proceed with them.</p> <p>The successful supplier will be asked to complete a Suitability Assessment Questionnaire providing details of the company set up and structure.</p> <p>Award of the contract will be subject to a 10-day standstill period (this may be waived in exceptional circumstances).</p> <p>Awarded contracts will need to be published on the Government's Contracts Finder Site.</p>	<p>The procurement team will liaise with the successful and unsuccessful suppliers to notify them in writing of the Authority's intention to proceed with them.</p> <p>The successful supplier will be asked to complete a Suitability Assessment Questionnaire providing details of the company set up and structure.</p> <p>Award of the contract will be subject to a 10-day standstill period (this may be waived in exceptional circumstances).</p> <p>Awarded contracts will need to be published on the Government's Contracts Finder Site.</p>



Appendix 1

Supplier set up	If this is a new supplier, or a supplier who is no longer active on the finance system, a request will need to be made to set the supplier up through the procurement team using a "Supplier Request" form.	If this is a new supplier, or a supplier who is no longer active on the finance system, a request will need to be made to set the supplier up through the procurement team using a "Supplier Request" form.	If this is a new supplier, the procurement team will collate the relevant information to set the supplier up.  The procurement team may require the service area to complete the "Supplier Request" form.	If this is a new supplier, the procurement team will collate the relevant information to set the supplier up.  The procurement team may require the service area to complete the "Supplier Request" form.
Purchase Order	Service area is responsible for raising the purchase order.  If item cards are required for GP this must be requested through the procurement team. The relevant budget code will need to be provided.	Service area is responsible for raising the purchase order  If item cards are required for GP this must be requested through the procurement team. The relevant budget code will need to be provided.	Service area is responsible for raising the purchase order  If item cards are required for GP this must be requested through the procurement team. The relevant budget code will need to be provided.	Service area is responsible for raising the purchase order  If item cards are required for GP this must be requested through the procurement team. The relevant budget code will need to be provided.
Contract requirements	These are often one-off purchases, or purchases of goods, which do not need a contract, and terms are in line with our purchase order terms.	Small value contract terms If these require amendment to cater for any special requirements, please contact the procurement team.	Suppliers will be required to sign a contract. This process will be led/managed by the procurement team.  Key Performance Indicators	Suppliers will be required to sign a contract. This process will be led/managed by the procurement team.  Key performance Indicators

Appendix 1

<p>Contract Register update</p>	<p>In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Act 2015, there is no legal requirement placed on the Authority to record contracts with a total value that is less than £5,000. As such, Band 1 Procurements shall not be recorded in the Authority's Contracts Register, however the procurement team will monitor spend against organisations to ensure they remain within the stipulated values.</p>	<p>Service areas are responsible for advising the procurement team of all contracts over £5,000 so the contract register can be kept up to date.</p>	<p>Procurement will be responsible for updating the contract register.</p>	<p>Procurement will be responsible for updating the contract register.</p>
<p>Contract Management procedure</p>	<p>Contract management remains the service area responsibility.</p>	<p>Contract management remains the service area responsibility.</p>	<p>Contract management remains the service area responsibility.</p> <p>The procurement team can provide advice/support if required. This should be discussed on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>Contract management remains the service area responsibility, however the procurement team may need to be involved in some of the contract management process. This will be discussed during contract negotiation phase.</p>

## 5.1. Communication

- 5.1.1. In accordance with the 2015 Regulations, the Authority is obliged to use e-communication for all information exchanged in respect of an award of a contract that is subject to the full regime of the Regulations (please refer to paragraph 2.5 above for the definition of the full regime).
- 5.1.2. All communications with suppliers during the course of the procurement process shall be undertaken using electronic means such as Microsoft Outlook email or the Authority's e-tendering portal.

Band / Contract Value	Accepted Electronic communication
BAND 1 - <£4,999	E-mail
BAND 2 - £5,000 - £24,999	E-Tendering Portal / other means agreed with procurement manager
BAND 3 - £25,000 - £59,999	E-Tendering Portal
BAND 4 - £60,000 - £213,477 (services) / £5,336,937 (works)	E-Tendering Portal
BAND 5 £213,477 (services) / £5,336,937 (works)	E-Tendering Portal

- 5.1.3. Where possible, Band 2 Procurements should be undertaken using the Authority's e-tendering portal. If this is not possible, the Authority's Responsible Officer (Service Area) should liaise with the procurement team to discuss the issues and find an agreeable solution.
- 5.1.4. Hard copy tender submissions shall not be accepted without prior authorisation from the Authority's Procurement Manager and only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. small local supplier who does not have access or does not know how to use electronic means). Where a hard copy submission is accepted, an audit trail of decision making must be kept and stored with the tender and contract documentation.

## 5.2. Conflict of Interest ('COI')

- 5.2.1. A range of circumstances can arise in the context of procurement and other commercial activity which constitute a conflict of interest. The Regulations say that a conflict exists where relevant staff members have direct or indirect financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the procurement process.
- 5.2.2. It is the Authority's responsibility to take appropriate measures to effectively prevent, identify and remedy conflicts of interest arising in the conduct of procurement procedures, so as to avoid any distortion of competition and to ensure equal treatment of all bidders and suppliers.
- 5.2.3. The Authority's Procurement Lead shall be responsible for ensuring that Conflict of Interest ('COI') Forms are completed and signed by all Authority personnel to be

involved in the procurement and submitted to the Authority's Procurement Manager electronically prior to any activities being undertaken.

- 5.2.4. It is then the responsibility of all individuals involved in the procurement to notify the Procurement Manager if any actual or potential conflicts as soon as they become aware of any such conflicts. This can be either before the procurement commences or during the process.
- 5.2.5. In the event an actual and/or a potential Conflict of Interest is identified, the following actions will be taken at the Authority's Procurement Manager's discretion (where relevant, in conjunction with advice received by external legal advisors) having full regard to the banding of the procurement and the impact that a Conflict of Interest may have on the procurement:
- 5.2.6. The relevant Authority personnel shall be removed from the procurement with immediate effect; or
- 5.2.7. The relevant Authority personnel shall be involved in some aspects of the procurement with controlled access to procurement and Bidder information.

### 5.3. Pre-Tender Market Engagement

- 5.3.1. Before commencing a procurement, the Authority may conduct market consultations with a view to preparing the procurement and informing suppliers of their procurement plans and initial requirements.
- 5.3.2. Market engagement activity may also be used to assist the Authority to better understand its requirements.
- 5.3.3. Any market engagement will be proportionate to the scale, complexity and value of the requirement.
- 5.3.4. It shall be the responsibility of the Authority's Procurement Team to direct, organise and conduct all Pre-Tender Market Engagement activities for any procurement activity over Band 3.
- 5.3.5. For Band 1 or 2 procurements, the Procurement Team must be consulted and will advise on involvement and requirements on a case by case basis.

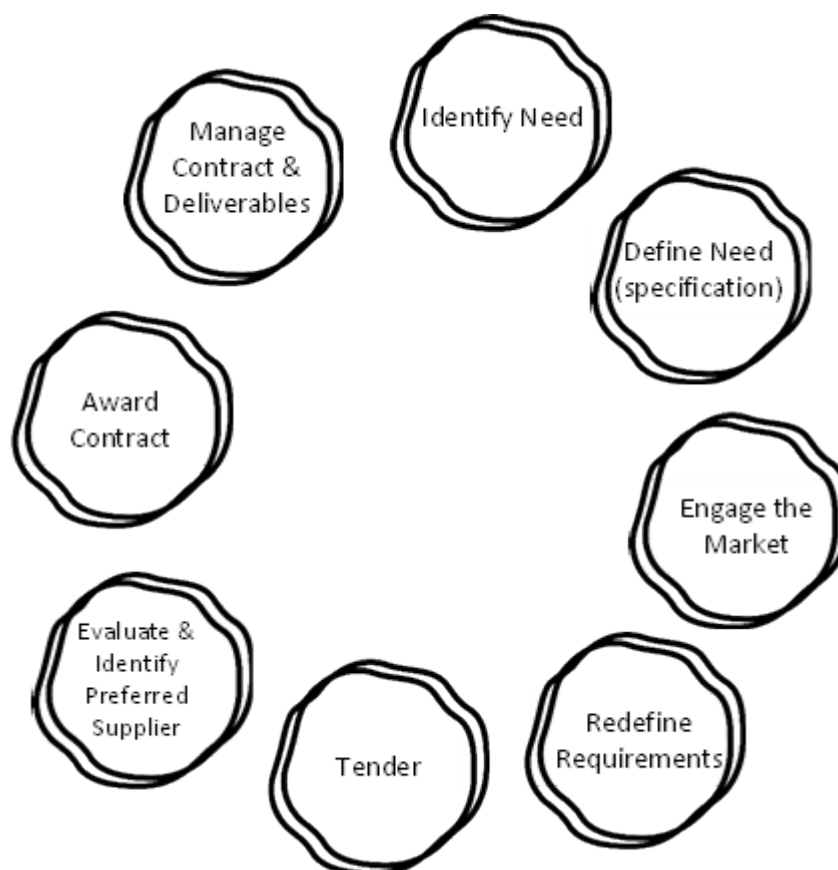
### 5.4. Tender Process (Band 3 and above)

- 5.4.1. A summary of the tender process is depicted below. The steps within each stage and the timelines will vary for each procurement and will be discussed and agreed with the relevant Responsible Officer prior to commencement of the process.
- 5.4.2. Key individuals will be engaged at each stage and provided with the relevant information and guidance required by the Procurement Lead.

### 5.5. Purchase Orders

- 5.5.1. All goods/services/works will require a Purchase Order once the contract has been awarded and signed by both parties.
- 5.5.2. It is the responsibility of the Authority's Responsible Officer to arrange for the Purchase Order to be raised.
- 5.5.3. Purchase Orders must indicate clearly the nature and quantity of the materials, works or services to be supplied, details of agreed prices, relevant discounts and delivery terms.
- 5.5.4. Unless the contract was procured under a Framework Agreement, all Purchase Orders shall include the following statement: 'This purchase order is placed in

accordance with the Authority's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract, with which you are deemed to agree. The Terms and Conditions can be accessed electronically from the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service website (<https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/home.aspx>)



## 5.6. Contract Management

- 5.6.1. Following contract award, the Authority's Responsible Officer or a nominated individual shall be responsible for managing the implementation and ongoing performance of the contract.
- 5.6.2. Contract management shall include the effective management of internal and external relationships, facilitating delivery, developing regular and structured communication routes and implementing problem resolution processes.
- 5.6.3. The Procurement team shall be available to provide guidance to the Authority's Contract Manager to support best practice for Contract Management.
- 5.6.4. No variations to the agreed Terms and Conditions of Contract shall be made, including but not limited to the contract scope, contract term, pricing, payment profile and liability provisions, without prior discussion with the Procurement Lead.
- 5.6.5. It will be the Authority's Contract Manager's responsibility to report to the Procurement Team contractual disputes and poor performance issues to the Authority's Procurement Lead, who will advise and guide to resolve any issues on a case by case basis.. Where necessary, the Procurement Manager will act as an escalation point to resolve contract related issues.

## 5.7. Procurement Exemptions

- 5.7.1. In some limited cases, it may not be appropriate or feasible to comply with the provisions for procuring public contracts as defined in this Procurement Policy, requiring the Authority to directly award the contract to a specific supplier without undertaking a competitive tendering process.
- 5.7.2. Note that the Authority can waive compliance with *its own* procurement rules, but cannot waive its obligation to comply with public contracts regulations, which apply to all contracts over the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 threshold.
- 5.7.3. Procurement Exemptions must be approved in advance of any service/goods/works being agreed. Governance arrangements would remain the same with new/amended contract terms or variation documentation still needing to be negotiated, agreed and signed and the Contracts Register will require updating.
- 5.7.4. There are a limited number of instances where this should occur. The rationale for the procurement exemption must comply with one of the below permitted procurement exemption reasons:

a) Single Source

The proposed supplier is the only one known to possess unique or specialised capacity or, the goods and / or services are unobtainable from any other source and there are no satisfactory alternatives.

b) Compatibility

That procurement of alternative goods and / or services would not be compatible with existing goods or services and any change would be detrimental to the Authority. In these circumstances, the amendments (i) must not significantly alter the nature of the contract and (ii) must not exceed 50% of the overall contract value.

c) Specialist

For goods and or services contracts where the engagement of a different supplier would require considerable training, time as well as financial and / or human resources that are disproportionate with any benefit gained by the change. In these circumstances, the amendments (i) must not significantly alter the nature of the contract and (ii) must not exceed 50% of the overall contract value.

d) Safety Critical

Where the undertaking of a competitive tendering process would create an unacceptable delay causing a risk to health, safety and/or welfare of Authority personnel and/or the public.

e) Exceptional Urgency

Involving exceptional urgency arising through unforeseeable circumstances where competitive tendering would cause unacceptable delay (namely after breakdown, storm, fire, etc.). **Failure to plan adequately would not be an acceptable qualification for this waiver.**

f) Part of a wider programme

Involving an organisation which has won a contract for an earlier phase or section of work via a competitive process and where the work forms part of a serial programme and has previously been identified as such. In these circumstances, the amendments (i) must have been set out in the tender documentation and contract; and (ii) must not significantly alter the nature of the contract.

#### g) Additional Requirement

Involving an organisation already engaged by the Authority for a similar and related procurement and where there is significant benefit to extending the contract to cover this. In these circumstances, the amendments (i) must have been unforeseen by the Authority; (ii) must not significantly alter the nature of the contract; and (iii) must not exceed 50% of the overall contract value.

#### h) Delay

Where award of the contract has been delayed **due to unforeseeable circumstances** which were out of the Authority's control. **Urgency due to poor planning would not qualify for this waiver.**

5.7.5. Under such circumstances, the Authority's Responsible Officer must complete a Procurement Exemption Form and submit it in the first instance to the Authority's Procurement Manager by emailing [procurement@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@bedsfire.gov.uk).

5.7.6. The Form will be forwarded to the Head of Finance for budgetary approval and then to the relevant Principal Officer for final sign off. All Procurement Exemption Forms shall be saved in the Procurement drive.

5.7.7. For the avoidance of any doubt, these Procurement Exemption Rules shall not apply to Band 1 (up to £4,999) and Band 5 (FTS financial thresholds and above) Procurements.

## 6. Reporting

### 6.1. Procurement Policy Audits

6.1.1. In accordance with the Procurement Team's Business Objectives, the Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for undertaking procurement audits across all six (6) categories of spend on a quarterly basis. The procurement audits shall cover the following areas:

- Compliance with the procurement policy
- Budget compliance
- Appropriate and proportionate contract management
- Contract management meeting notes/minutes

### 6.2. Transparency Data

6.2.1. In 2015, the Government introduced the Local Government Transparency Code whose purpose is "to meet the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services. Transparency is the foundation of local accountability and the key that gives people the tools and information they need to enable them to play a bigger role in society. The availability of data can also open new markets for local business, the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises to run services or manage public assets".

6.2.2. From a procurement data perspective, the Code requires contracting authorities to make the following two (2) sets of data electronically available on a quarterly basis:

6.2.3. Contracts Register listing all current contracts with a total contract value of £5,000 and above; and

- 6.2.4. Details of all invitations to tenders or invitations to quote that are likely to be issued over the next twelve (12) month period.
- 6.2.5. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that the aforementioned two (2) sets of data are published on a quarterly basis on the Authority's website.

### 6.3. NFCC Savings Register

- 6.3.1. The Authority must submit on an annual basis (or as alternatively directed by the NFCC) the completed Savings Register to the appointed NFCC representative.
- 6.3.2. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that information contained in the Savings Register is reported accurately.
- 6.3.3. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall ensure that prior to submission, the Savings Register is reviewed and approved for release by the Assistant Chief Officer.

### 6.4. Home Office Spend Data

- 6.4.1. The Authority is required to submit on an annual basis the completed Home Office Spend Data Analysis. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for liaising with the Authority's Finance Team and relevant members of the Procurement Team with the view of obtaining the required spend data reports and submitting them electronically in accordance with NFCC guidelines.

### 6.5. Freedom of Information ('Fol') Requests

- 6.5.1. If a Freedom of Information ('Fol') request is received in relation to a procurement process undertaken or currently being undertaken by the Authority, the Authority's shall be notified as promptly as possible and it will be the Authority's Procurement Manager's responsibility to compile the response to the Fol request.

### 6.6. Modern Slavery

- 6.6.1. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a responsibility on all Authorities to identify and manage in a prompt and effective manner the risks of slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking whilst discharging its commissioning, procurement and contract management functions.
- 6.6.2. The Authority is fully committed to applying proportionate risk-based analysis principles when assessing existing contracts, for the purpose of identifying and tackling modern slavery breaches.
- 6.6.3. The Authority is also committed to eliminating modern slavery in our supply chains and sub-contracting arrangements, both during the procurement and contract management phases.
- 6.6.4. In applying this overall proportionate approach, the Authority is aiming to ensure that barriers to participating in new procurements are not created and unnecessary burdens are not placed on SMEs and VCSEs when assessing risks in existing contracts.
- 6.6.5. Dispute Resolution
- 6.6.6. In the event of a dispute between the Authority's Procurement Manager, or its representative, and a representative of the Service Area relating to any matter covered by this Policy, such dispute shall be referred to the relevant Corporate Management Team member or Principal Officer.



## **7. Review**

- 7.1. The Authority's Procurement Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that this Procurement Policy is reviewed on an annual basis, or earlier in the event changes in procurement legislation are imminent.
- 7.2. Next review due – October 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

**SUBJECT:** WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

**Author and contact:** Nicky Upton, [Democratic.services@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.services@bedsfire.gov.uk)

Background Papers: None

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	FRA Work Programme	N/A
2	Executive Committee Work Programme	N/A
3	Audit & Standards Committee Work Programme	N/A
4	Member Development Work Programme	N/A
5	Budget Workshop Work Programme	N/A

**Implications**

This table provides a short statement of the impact of the recommendations in this report and/or a reference to the relevant paragraph/s in the report.

Will this report affect any of the following?

	Yes / No	Impact / Reference
Financial Implications	No	
Risk Management	No	
Legal Implications	Yes	Meetings/committees set in accordance with The Bedfordshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996 (now amended by Variation Order 2012) in

		order to carry out functions specified within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
Privacy and Security Implications	No	
Duty to Collaborate	No	
Health and Safety Implications	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	
Environmental Sustainability	No	
Consultation and Communication	Yes	Agenda items will be either statutory items for consideration, topical items or other subject matters raised via Corporate Management Team and/or Principal Officer discussions. Following initial liaison with the Chair of the Meeting/Committee, items will be added to the respective work programme with Fire Authority Members being given the opportunity at each meeting to request any additional topics for consideration or training requirements

**PURPOSE:**

To review and report on the work programme for 2023-24 and to provide Members with an opportunity to request additional reports for the Fire Authority meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the work programme for 2023-24 and the 'cyclical' Agenda Items for each meeting in 2023-24 be noted.

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

## FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY - WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

**FRA Meeting**

**Dates**

**13.02.24**

<b>Cyclical Agenda Items</b>	<b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b>	<b>CFO Review (select from drop down list)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Communications Minutes from 15.12.23 ASC Minutes from 04.01.24 Executive Minutes from 22.01.24 CRMP Update including consultation responses The 2024/25 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax setting Members' Allowances Scheme Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement 2023 Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 Proposed Indicators and Targets for 2024/25 Work Programme		
<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>			

**FRA Meeting**

**Dates**

**28.03.24**

<b>Cyclical Agenda Items</b>	<b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b>	<b>CFO Review (select from drop down list)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	Communications Minutes from 13.02.24 Executive Committee Minutes from 14.03.24 ASC Minutes from 26.03.24 2023/24 Revenue Budget and Capital Monitoring Programme Treasury Management Strategy and Practices Q3 2022/23 Performance Report Update (Sept – Dec) Business Continuity Planning Disposal of Assets under the Scheme of Delegated Authority Asset Management Strategy (reviewed every 3 years, next review 2022/23) Work Programme		
<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>			

This page is intentionally left blank

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

Executive Committee  
22.01.24

Cyclical Agenda Items	<b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b> Communications Executive Committee Minutes from 23.11.23 CRMP Update Work Programme	CFO Review (select from drop down list)	Notes
	<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>  HMICFRS Action Plan Update		

Executive Committee  
14.03.24

Cyclical Agenda Items	<b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b> Communications Executive Committee Minutes from 22.01.24 2024/25 KPIs update Work Programme	CFO Review (select from drop down list)	Notes
	<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>  HMICFRS Action Plan Update Gold book pay agreement (Brigade Managers Local Pay Award) Annual Review but next review due <b>February 2025</b>		

This page is intentionally left blank



## AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Audit &  
Standards  
Committee  
Meeting Date  
04.01.24

Cyclical Agenda Items	<p><b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b></p> <p>Communications                      ASC Minutes from 17.10.23                      Audit Results Report (E&amp;Y)(Results of 2022/23 audit including any matters outstanding)                      Review of Fire Authority's Effectiveness-                      Internal Audit Progress Report (RSM)                      Internal Audit Actions Update                      Review of the Effectiveness of the Fire &amp; Rescue Authority's Internal Auditors                      Review of Monitored policies</p> <p>Report on Registration of Interests and Gifts/Hospitality                      Fire Standards Board update                      Corporate Risk Register - Exception report                      Work Programme</p>	ACO Review (select from drop down list)	<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>To be moved to March 2024 meeting                      To consider if appropriate; ACO removed from agenda</p> <p>As per BSM, next review to be September/October 2024 so BFRS provides a full year of figures (ie aligns to financial year not calendar year)</p> <p>Deferred to March  <b>Restricted</b></p>
Additional/Commissioned Items			

Audit &  
Standards  
Committee  
Meeting Date  
04.03.24

Cyclical Agenda Items	<p><b>Agenda item (locked for editing)</b></p> <p>Communications                      ASC Minutes from 04.01.24                      Audit Results Report (E&amp;Y)(Results of 2022/23 audit including any matters outstanding)                      External Audit Plan 2024/25 (KPMG)                      Ernst &amp; Young Quality Assurance Processes                      Internal Audit Progress report                      Internal Audit Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27                      Internal Audit Actions Update                      Corporate Risk Register - Exception report                      Work Programme</p>	ACO Review (select from drop down list)	<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>KPGMs audit of 2023/24 in 2024/25</p> <p><b>Restricted</b></p>
Additional/Commissioned Items	<p>Fire Standards Board update</p>		<p>Deferred from January</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

## MEMBER DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2023/24

Member Dev  
29.02.24 (4)

Cyclical Agenda Items	Agenda item (locked for editing)	CFO Review (select from drop down list)	Notes
	Code of Ethics presentation (Tina Draper) (30 mins) CRMP EDI (Soomitra Kawal)		Moved from November's event at the request of the ACO
	Firefighter Pensions Briefing (Sally Green)		Requested by the FRA at the 03.10.23 meeting Requested by the FRA at the 03.10.23 meeting
	HMICFRS Benchmarking presentation comparing BFRS against other similar services		
<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>			

This page is intentionally left blank

## BUDGET WORKSHOP 2023/24

Budget Workshop  
25.01.24

Cyclical Agenda Items	Agenda item (locked for editing)	CFO Review (select from drop down list)	Notes
	Introduction  Council Tax Consultation - summary of responses (to date) Revenue Budget Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2027/28 Summary and next steps		
<b>Additional/Commissioned Items</b>	Treasury Management Training (45 mins via Linked Asset Management)		

This page is intentionally left blank