



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

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

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

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

A meeting of **Fire and Rescue Authority** will be held at **Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA** on **Thursday, 7 February 2019** starting at **10.00 am**.

John Atkinson
Secretary/Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

| Item | Subject | Lead | Purpose of Discussion |
|------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Apologies | Secretary/ Monitoring Officer | |
| 2. | Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests | Chair | Members are requested to disclose the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and any other interests as required by the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct (see note below). |

| Item | Subject | Lead | Purpose of Discussion |
|-------------|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 3. | Communications | Chair | |
| 4. | Minutes | Chair | To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2018 (Pages 5 - 14) |
| 5. | Public Participation | Chair | To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme |
| 6. | Audit and Standards Committee 6 December 2018 | Cllr Headley | To consider a report (Pages 15 - 46) |
| 7. | Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group 10 January 2019 | Cllr Waheed | To consider a report (Pages 47 - 56) |
| 8. | The 2019/20 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme | HFT | To consider a report (Pages 57 - 112) |
| 9. | Shared Principal Officer Cover | CFO | To consider a report (Pages 113 - 118) |
| 10. | Brexit 'No Deal' Preparations | DCFO | To consider a report (Pages 119 - 124) |
| 11. | Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement 2019 | CFO | To consider a report (Pages 125 - 136) |
| 12. | HMICFRS Update | CFO | To consider a report (Pages 137 - 144) |
| 13. | Calendar of Meetings 2019/20 | Secretary/ Monitoring Officer | To consider a report (Pages 145 - 148) |
| 14. | Community Risk Management Plan 2019-2023 Update | DCFO | Report to follow |
| 15. | Collaboration Working Group | DCFO | To consider a report (Pages 149 - 154) |
| 16. | Information Bulletin | CFO | To consider a report (Pages 155 - 160) |

| Item | Subject | Lead | Purpose of Discussion |
|------|---|--|---------------------------|
| 17. | Incident Report - Kimbolton Road, Bedford 3 January 2019 | DCFO | To receive a Presentation |
| | Next Meeting | 10.00 am on 28 March 2019 at Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA | |

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

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MINUTES OF FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2018

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

CFO P Fuller, DCFO A Hopkinson, Mr J Atkinson and Mr G Chambers

18-19/FRA/43 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Chatterley, P Duckett and Kathryn Holloway, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire.

18-19/FRA/44 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests.

18-19/FRA/45 Communications

Changes to Combination Order statutory instruments

The Chief Fire Officer reported on a letter that had been received from the Home Office relating to progress in relation to the change of statutory instruments for Combined Fire Authorities to allow the local Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to become a voting Member of the Authority. The enabling legislation was expected to come before Parliament in the spring.

HMP Prison

The Chief Fire Officer advised that, following concerns raised by Members at the last Authority meeting, he had written to the Chief Inspector of the Crown Premises Fire Inspection Group about the fire safety arrangements at HMP Bedford. A response to the letter had been received.

It was noted that HMP Bedford would be the subject of a two-day inspection programme in the early part of 2019.

A full report on the Service's concerns with HMP Bedford was appended to the Service Delivery PCG Minutes which would be discussed later in the meeting.

Letter of Thanks from Sue Ryder

The Chief Fire Officer referred to a letter from Sue Ryder acknowledging the fundraising efforts of the team at Biggleswade Fire Station. One of the events had raised approximately £630 and over £1000 had been raised for the charity to date.

This was in addition to the significant fundraising efforts of the Service on behalf of the Firefighter's Charity.

Presentation from Fire Brigades Union

The Chair advised that he, the Vice-Chair and Councillor Waheed had attended a Fire Brigades Union presentation held at the Luton Theatre.

Councillor Waheed expressed the view that the presentation had been very informative and had been well-received.

18-19/FRA/46 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/FRA/47 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).

There were no members of the public present at the meeting. Two members of the Fire Brigades Union were present as observers.

18-19/FRA/48 Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group 27 November 2018

Councillor Chapman introduced the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group held on 27 November 2018.

Mr Paul Hughes, the Service's newly appointed Head of ICT and Improvement, had been introduced to Members at the meeting. It was noted that he had extensive experience in both the private and charity sector.

A slight underspend was being forecast for the year as a result of the 2% pay award that had been agreed for firefighters.

Councillor Chapman highlighted that £350,000 of savings had been identified through the zero-based budgeting exercise that had been undertaken.

Members had requested Officers to contact the Authority's treasury management advisors regarding any advice they had to offer relating to the risks posed by Brexit.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service was seeking to identify and treat the risks across the Service relating to Brexit, particularly in the event of no deal being reached. There did not appear to be a great risk in terms of the Authority's investments as they were not dependent on the UK's relationship with Europe.

RESOLVED:

That the submitted draft Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group held on 27 November 2018 be received.

18-19/FRA/49 Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group 29 November 2018

Councillor Mingay submitted the draft Minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group that was held on 29 November 2018.

Councillor Mingay reported on performance against a number of indicators that were subject to seasonal variation, such as PI01 (primary fires) and PI04 (deliberate fires).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that, as part of the target-setting process for 2019/20, consideration would be given to profiling monthly and quarterly targets to account for seasonal variation.

Councillor Mingay also referred to the continual increase in the number of Road Traffic Collisions attended by the Service.

Councillor Mingay tabled the report he had presented at Bedford Borough Council's Full Council meeting the previous week on HMP Bedford. The Service had responded to 74 incidents at the Prison since 2013/14; 56 of these were fires.

The Policy and Challenge Group had received a report on these incidents and the response from the Service. An 'urgent notification' process was triggered in September 2018 following a week-long inspection of the Prison and it was noted that another inspection would take place in early 2019.

Councillor Mingay expressed particular concern about the Memorandum of Understanding with the Prison, which, despite being submitted for signature in March 2018, remained unsigned.

RESOLVED:

1. That the submitted draft Minutes of the meeting of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group held on 29 November 2018 be received.
2. That the report considered by the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group be received and an update on arrangements at the Prison be submitted to a future meeting of the Authority.

18-19/FRA/50 Draft 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Programme

The Head of Finance and Treasurer introduced his report on the proposed revenue budget and capital programme seeking Members' approval to consulting on a draft Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2019/20.

He reported that he had received notification from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that an error in the calculations of Revenue Support Grant had been identified, and that as a result, the Authority would receive £190,000 less in 2019/20. The Ministry had confirmed that it would not seek to recover the approximate £595,500 that had been overpaid to the Authority in the period 2016/17-2018/19.

In response to a question, the Head of Finance and Treasurer confirmed that he had spoken to the Deputy Director of Local Government Finance at the Ministry suggesting that the four-year settlement agreement should be honoured. However, he had been advised that the Ministry had a duty to rectify errors in calculation when these had been identified.

The Head of Finance and Treasurer reported that he would revisit the calculations that had been provided for previous years to identify the error.

The resultant impact of this on the budget was that the Revenue Support Contributions (line 51) had been reduced and the budget requirement to be consulted on was now £29.672 million, with a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99% and a Capital Programme of £1.736 million.

A Council Tax increase of 2.99% was equivalent to a £2.86 annual increase or 5 pence per week increase for a Band D property.

Members were advised that the tables reflecting the level of business rate income and the Council taxbase had been updated.

A revised Medium Term Revenue Plan was tabled and the Head of Finance and Treasurer highlighted the decrease in line 51 and the increase to the Collection Fund surpluses (line 56) that had been made, based on previous years.

Members commented on lines that reflected revenue contributions to capital, which illustrated one-off funding of capital projects such as the mobilisation system.

In relation to Appendix 2, which set out the assumptions and uncertainties underpinning the budget setting process, Members' attention was drawn to an estimated liability of £1.2 million for employer contributions to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. There had been additional funding awarded from Government for both Police and Fire and Rescue Services to help with these costs, however, it was likely that this was for one year only and would form part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Members were referred to a note on the budget consultation which was due to go out with the proposals and were asked to provide feedback to the Head of Finance and Treasurer.

An analysis of the consultation responses received would be submitted to the next meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED:

That the following be approved for public consultation:

1. A draft revenue budget requirement of £29.672 million, as per Appendix 1 of the report, with a council tax increase of 2.99%; and
2. A draft Capital Programme of £1.736 million as per Appendix 3 of the report.

18-19/FRA/51 Fire Authority Report - Options Paper

The Secretary and Monitoring Officer submitted his report which advised Members of the completion of the Governance report and sought to identify a way forward in considering its outcomes. It was proposed that the Chief Fire Officer and the Secretary and Monitoring Officer produce an options paper for discussion by Members at an informal workshop.

A number of concerns were raised with the recommendations set out in the audit report and on the report generally, particularly in relation to the appointment of Members to groups based on skill sets. It was noted that these would be addressed formally pending the outcome of the discussions on future governance options.

The view was expressed that the opportunity to review the Special Responsibility Allowances should also be undertaken, including consideration of whether an Allowance should be payable to the Member representative on the Collaboration Working Group.

The Head of Finance and Treasurer advised that he would discuss the Authority's dissatisfaction with the content of the governance audit report at the next contract management meeting with the internal auditors.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chief Fire Officer and the Secretary/Monitoring Officer be instructed to jointly produce a discussion paper for Members to consider informally.
2. That those Officers arrange an opportunity for discussion amongst Authority Members before any proposals, if appropriate, are made to the Full Authority at its meeting in February 2019. **[Subsequently arranged in the Budget Workshop and agreed for the paper to be received at the March meeting.]**

18-19/FRA/52 Members' Allowances Scheme 2019/20

The Secretary and Monitoring Officer introduced his review of the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2019/20.

It was noted that the outcome of the governance review may have an impact on the Members' Allowance Scheme and that this item should be deferred accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the Members' Allowances Scheme be deferred pending the outcome of the Governance review.

18-19/FRA/53 Collaboration Working Group

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on the current status of 'Blue Light' collaboration workstreams.

The first meeting of the Delivery Group, chaired by a Service Group Commander, had taken place on 9 November 2018 and had been well received. This Group would be responsible for operational delivery and project management, leaving the Programme Board to have a strategic overview.

A meeting had been held with the Deputy Chief Constable and the Assistant Chief Officer during which both Services had reaffirmed their commitment to the consideration of a Joint Headquarters. This had been confirmed in an email. The provision of a new Custody Suite at Police Headquarters had been postponed pending the outcome of these discussions. The operational requirements and output specifications would be revisited and agreement in principle had been made to the appointment of an independent project manager for a six-month fixed term period.

In response to a question, the Head of Finance and Treasurer reported that the Carbon Trust assessment of Fire and Rescue Headquarters would be completed by January 2019.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the drone that had recently been produced had been affected by a technical issue with the battery that would be resolved by the supplier.

The view was expressed that co-location was very different from having a joint Headquarters and that care must be taken in the language that was used. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Services would seek to integrate functions when there was a strong business case to do so.

Members also commented that it was important for this Service to act as an equal partner in collaboration arrangements with the Police.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report be acknowledged.

18-19/FRA/54 HMICFRS Update

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the publication of the inspection report had been delayed to 20 December 2018 and, as such, he was not able to present the findings at this meeting as the report was currently under embargo.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that Members would be provided with the final inspection report as soon as it was available.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

18-19/FRA/55 Community Risk Management Plan 2019-2023

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced his report which provided an update on progress in developing the next Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) covering the four year period 2019-2023 and sought Members' views on proposals to revise the existing vision, objectives and priorities to improve alignment with the new fire inspection framework.

A comprehensive review of local risks had been undertaken and the Service was awaiting the final results of the HMICFRS inspection to inform further work on the draft CRMP. Members' approval was being sought to progress the CRMP to a stage where a draft could be produced for public consultation.

Members were referred to the proposed timetable which set out that the draft CRMP would come before the Authority for approval for public consultation on 17 January 2019. There would then be an eight-week consultation period on the CRMP, following which the final draft would be submitted to the Authority meeting on 28 March 2019.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that detail of the collaboration projects would be contained within the document in the information supporting the priority areas.

Concern was expressed about the change in purpose to becoming “an outstanding service”. It may be more appropriate to seek to “provide outstanding services” as this was more outward looking.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report and approach to developing the Community Risk Management Plan be acknowledged.
2. That the approach to consultation and associated timetable be agreed to enable final approval of the Community Risk Management Plan at the full Authority meeting on 28 March 2019.

18-19/FRA/56 Fire Fatality Presentation

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 Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item

Fire Fatality

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR M HEADLEY

SUBJECT: AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

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

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To report on the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 6 December 2018.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2018 be received and the recommendations of the meeting, as noted, below considered.

1. Introduction

1.1 The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 6 December 2018 are appended for Members' consideration.

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

18-19/AS/038 Statement of Assurance

That, subject to the changes as discussed at the meeting being made, the Chair of the Committee be authorised to sign off the Statement of Assurance for reporting to the full Authority Meeting.

**COUNCILLOR M HEADLEY
CHAIR OF AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2018 AT 10.00am

Present: Councillors Headley (Chair), Chatterley, Downing and Waheed
Mr J Atkinson, ACO Z Evans, SOC A Peckham and Mr G Chambers
Mr N Harris, Ernst & Young
Ms L Davies, RSM

18-19/AS/028 Apologies

28.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Chapman.

18-19/AS/029 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

29.1 There were no declarations of interest.

18-19/AS/030 Communications

30.1 There were no communications.

18-19/AS/031 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/AS/032 Public Participation

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

18-19/AS/033 Internal Audit Progress Report

- 33.1 Ms L Davies, RSM, provided an update on progress made against the internal audit plan for 2018/19. Since the last meeting of the Committee, the audit of Use of Risk Management had been finalised and this had received an audit opinion of substantial assurance.
- 33.2 Ms Davies reported that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Services had advised that they did not wish to proceed with a joint audit of cyber security.
- 33.3 The Assistant Chief Officer advised that the ICT Service had recently undertaken a cyber security assessment against the government framework. She would clarify the position regarding the audit with the other Services involved as it had been intended that this would form part of Cambridgeshire's annual review for its ISO accreditation.
- 33.4 Members expressed the view that they did not wish this audit to be removed from the internal audit programme.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

18-19/AS/034 Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring - Exception Report and Summary Analysis

- 34.1 The Assistant Chief Officer presented the Committee with a summary statistical analysis of actions arising from internal audit reports over the last three financial years to date and from the Authority's current Annual Governance Statement.
- 34.2. There were no current exception reports and the actions that had been delayed as a result of the additional resource required to support the HMICFRS inspection had now been either completed or were in progress.
- 34.3 The Assistant Chief Officer reminded the Committee that the Review of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Effectiveness had been deferred to 2019/20, pending the outcome of the current review of governance arrangements.

34.4 The Chair commented that performance against the actions had improved since the current monitoring processes had been implemented.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

18-19/AS/035 Review of “Monitored Policies”

- 35.1 The Assistant Chief Officer submitted a review of the policies on Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing), Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption incorporating the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Authority’s Complaints and Compliments process.
- 35.2 RIPA powers had not been used during the reporting period. The Service’s use of RIPA powers had been audited in 2016. The outcome of this was positive and a further audit would take place in 2020.
- 35.3 In response to a question, the Assistant Chief Officer advised that the authorising Officer was the Officer on duty at an operational incident, usually the Area Manager.
- 35.4 The Assistant Chief Officer advised that she would circulate the audit report on RIPA from 2016, as well as the current RIPA policy, to Members of the Committee for information.
- 35.5 There had been no complaints received under the Service’s Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy and no cases of suspected fraud reported under the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.
- 35.6 The number of complaints had increased significantly from 2017/18. Four complaints had been received in relation to use of social media, all of which had been upheld. There had also been an increase in complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour. Three such complaints had been received, with one being upheld.
- 35.7 In response to questions, the Assistant Chief Officer reported that the service had a clear policy on the use of social media and that this was communicated regularly through the Blue Bulletin.

35.8 One complaint during the period had progressed to Stage 2. This had now been resolved.

35.9 The Assistant Chief Officer reported that the National Fraud Initiative process had commenced in October 2018, with matches expected to be released in January 2019.

RESOLVED:

1. That the arrangements in place for the Protected Reporting (Whistleblowing) policy, the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policy incorporating the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the Authority's Complaints and Compliments process and the arrangements for their review be noted.
2. That the Assistant Chief Officer circulate the 2016 audit report on the use of RIPA, as well as the current RIPA Policy, to Members of the Committee for information.

18-19/AS/036 Annual Report on Registration of Interests and Gifts/Hospitality

36.1 The Secretary and Monitoring Officer introduced his annual report on the registration of interests and gifts/hospitality by Members during the past year.

36.2 All Members had updated their register of interest forms since June 2018 and no entries had been made on the register of gifts and hospitality.

RESOLVED:

That the report be acknowledged.

18-19/AS/037 Review of the Effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Internal Auditors

37.1 The Head of Finance and Treasurer introduced his report on the effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Internal Audit arrangements. This had been referred to the Committee by the Humans Resources Policy and Challenge Group following concerns being raised at a national level about the effectiveness of the big four audit firms.

37.2 The Committee was advised that the services of RSM were jointly procured with Essex and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services.

- 37.3 RSM conformed with the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (GIIA) International Professional Practice Framework (IPF) and was subject to external quality assessment every five years. The most recent assessment had been undertaken in 2016 by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors and this had concluded that RSM had “a robust approach to the annual and assignment planning processes and the documentation reviewed was thorough in both terms of reports provided to Audit & Standards Committee and the supporting working papers. RSM were found to have an excellent level of conformance with the IIA’s profession standards, including the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.”
- 37.4 Ms L Davies added that RSM was one of only a handful of organisations that had had such an assessment undertaken and that RSM also had internal technical and quality teams that reviewed the work undertaken by the organisation on a regular basis.
- 37.5 Mr N Harris of Ernst & Young introduced himself and advised that Ernst & Young was in the process of contributing to a number of national reviews into the audit profession, including the Kingman review, and that he would be willing to share information about Ernst & Young’s quality assurance processes with the Committee at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and that the effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Authority’s Internal Audit arrangements be confirmed.
2. That the Committee review the effectiveness of the internal audit arrangements on an annual basis.
3. That the Committee receive a report on Ernst & Young’s quality assurance processes at a future meeting.

18-19/AS/038 Statement of Assurance

- 38.1 The Committee received the Statement of Assurance to the Committee for onward submission to the full Authority.
- 38.2 It was noted that a number of changes were required and the Committee went through the document page by page, suggesting the following changes:
- Page 2- index- the section numbering in the document should reflect that as set out in the index and that page numbers should be checked to ensure that the appropriate page was being referenced.
 - Page 4 – links should be added to all documents that are publicly available on the Service website.

- Page 8 - the criteria published by the Comptroller and Auditor General that was relevant was from November 2017, not 2016 as stated in the report. The phrase “more visibly effective” should be removed from the end of the first sentence of the second paragraph under section 3.4. A quote from the external auditor’s opinion on the Statement of Accounts should be included in the last paragraph of section 3.3.
- Page 10 – the Chief Fire Officer’s appraisal and the objectives set should be included in the list of internal control measures.
- Page 11- reference to the Statement of Assurance 2017/18 should be removed from the bullet points listed under the second paragraph of 4.1.
- Page 12 – the decrease in incidents attended during 2017/18 should be caveated by including “this is in part due to the temporary cessation of co-responding” in 4.2.1. In the third sentence of 4.2.2 “are” should be replaced with “our”. The second sentence in 4.2.3 should be reworded so that it reads as: “BFRS continues to work with partner agencies in order to target advice and guidance on fire safety awareness in the home to those most at risk in the community”.
- Page 13 – the text for 1.1.1 to be reworded to “the number of Road Traffic Incidents is increasing year on year”. In 1.1.4 an “s” needed to be added at the end of “Home Fire Safety Check” on line 7.
- Page 14 -the word “apparent” should be removed from the sentence on the increase in accidental dwelling fires. In section 1.1.5 the “and” in the second line should be replaced with “a” and the second sentence should refer to an “intelligence” led approach.
- Page 15 – the dates in the penultimate paragraph should be updated to 2018 and the CRMP period to 2019-2023 and it “is” currently still in draft. Reference to HFSCs in the section should be replaced with Safe and Well visits.
- Page 16- the spelling of neighbouring needed to be amended. The last bullet point under section 4.5 should start with the word “facilitate”. “Aide” should be replaced in the first sentence of the third paragraph by “aid”.
- Page 17 – in the fourth paragraph, the word “only” should be removed from the first sentence and “that has a” should be added after FRSs.
- Page 18- reference to police co-locations should be replaced with “shared locations”. “Hotspot crime areas” to be replaced with “crime hotspot” areas.
- Page 19- the last bullet point should refer to “electronic membership applications”, not “membership electronic applications”. In the second paragraph on the page “will” should be replaced with “could”.
- Page 20 – the dates in the last paragraph needed to be updated. “Exploration of a shared Headquarters” should be included in the list of collaborative opportunities with Bedfordshire Police.
- That the use of “BFRA” and “BFRS” were consistently applied throughout the document.

38.3 The Committee agreed all the changes and noted that the Statement would be submitted to a future meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the changes as discussed at the meeting being made, the Chair of the Committee be authorised to sign off the Statement of Assurance for reporting to the full Authority Meeting.

18-19/AS/039 Corporate Risk Register

39.1 The Assistant Chief Officer submitted the review of the Service's Corporate Risk Register. All changes and updates to risks had been considered by the relevant Policy and Challenge Group.

39.2 There had been no changes to risk ratings.

39.3 There had been eight updates to risks in the Corporate Services Risk Register, three updates to the Service Delivery Risk Register and one update to the Human Resources Risk Register.

39.4 The issue of Brexit risk had been raised at the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group. Whether an additional, stand-alone risk was required was being considered at the six-monthly meeting of the Corporate Management Team and Strategic Management Team at its meeting on 10 December 2018.

RESOLVED:

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

18-19/AS/040 Work Programme

40.1 The Committee considered the proposed work programme for 2018/19 and noted that, as the decision had been made to defer the Review of Effectiveness, this item had been removed from the Committee's work programme for 2018/19.

40.2 Members requested a report on the results of the HMICFRS inspection.

40.3 It was noted that the dates relating to the audit programmes needed to be updated.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Work Programme for 2018/19 be received, subject to the inclusion of an item on the HMICFRS inspection.

18-19/AS/041 Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3 of Part 1: Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED:

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

Item

FRA Requested Report

The meeting closed at 12.23pm



Bedfordshire
Fire and Rescue Service

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2017/18



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Statement of Assurance 2017/18

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

- **Operational:** How BFRA operates within a clear defined statutory framework including key documents such as National Framework (to be updated 2018) and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 etc.

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

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

In summary this Statement of Assurance aims to provide information to the communities, government, local authorities and partners in an easy and accessible way in which a valid assessment can be made of their local fire and rescue authority's performance during 2017/18.

2. Financial Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

The Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018 is a document that summarises BFRA's transactions for the previous financial year detailing how the funding was used to provide a Fire and Rescue Service to the communities of Bedfordshire and includes:

- a) The Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts which sets out the responsibilities of the FRA and the Treasurer to the FRA;
- b) The [Annual Governance Statement \(AGS\)](#);
- c) The Movement in Reserves Statement which summarises the FRA's spending against the council tax it raised, taking into account the use of reserves during the year;
- d) The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which summarises the income and expenditure of the FRA;
- e) The [Balance Sheet](#) which displays the financial position of the FRA as at 31 March 2018;
- f) The [Cash Flow](#) Statement which summarises the changes in the FRAs funds; and,

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

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

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

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

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

At the conclusion of the audit for 2017/18 the Annual Audit Letter was produced which reported on the audit of the Authority's

financial statements and an assessment of the arrangements to achieve value for money in the use of resources.

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

- Give a true and fair view of the financial position of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2018 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and,
- Have been prepared properly in accordance with the [CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18](#).

In addition, the auditors concluded that on the basis of their work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria published by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), they were satisfied that, in all significant respects, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2018.

3. Governance Framework

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

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

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

BFRA's governance framework derives from seven core principles identified in the International Framework: [Delivering Good Governance In Local Government: Framework \(CIPFA/SOLACE\) Review of Annual Governance Statements 2016/17](#)

The seven core principles are:

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

3.1 Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2017/18 explains how the Authority manages its governance arrangements and internal control measures. It is an open and transparent account of how the Authority ensures its financial management systems are adequate and effective, as well as ensuring there is a robust and sound system of internal control.

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

3.2 Internal Audit

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

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

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

The Annual Internal Audit report for 2017/18 by the Service's appointed internal auditors, RSM, advises that they were satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow them to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements. The report summarises that BFRA has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control.

3.3 External Audit

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

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

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

- The criteria published by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2017;
- The 2017/18 Code of Practice; and
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

On the 9 July 2018 External Audit issued an unqualified opinion on the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts. In the auditor's opinion, the Statement of Accounts provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and have been prepared properly in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

Additionally the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

In 2018 the Service commences its first inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) into its effectiveness, efficiency and workforce. At time of writing the Service awaits the final report. Detail will be made available to the public here: HMICFRS

3.4 Committee and Groups

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

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

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

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

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

3.5 Review of Authority Effectiveness

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

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

3.6 Internal Control Framework

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

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

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

BFRA has a robust Performance Management Framework in place for securing

continuous improvement in its services and where the quality of service to the communities can be measured by the use of local performance indicators. Other forms of measures include external performance assessment, external inspections, peer reviews, the Authority's internal reviews and audits, appraisal and objective setting for the CFO (by FRA), consultation exercises, and Service improvements identified by the Authority's Customer Care Complaints and Compliments procedure.

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

For the year ending 2017/18 the Annual Internal Audit report advises that the Auditors were satisfied that sufficient internal audit work had been undertaken to allow them to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's arrangements.

3.7 Data Transparency

In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local

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

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

4. Operational Assurance

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

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

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

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communities both locally and nationally to deliver their services; and,

- Being accountable to communities for the service they provide through the 'Statement of Assurance'.

FRA operates within a clear defined boundary of a statutory framework that has a number of key documents that outline responsibilities, these include:

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

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

- Internal audits of service delivery functions;
- Quarterly performance reporting against station-based targets;

- Formal evaluation of prevention and protection activities; and,
- Full summary report of performance for the previous financial year.

4.1 Performance Summary

BFRA oversees the performance of the Service throughout the year by the monitoring of robust and challenging Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated targets, aimed to maximise the effort and resources of the Service. In 2017/18 the Service's performance was met and surpassed in 18 out of the 23 PIs. The remaining 5 were not met and will remain as a focus to improve performance in these areas.

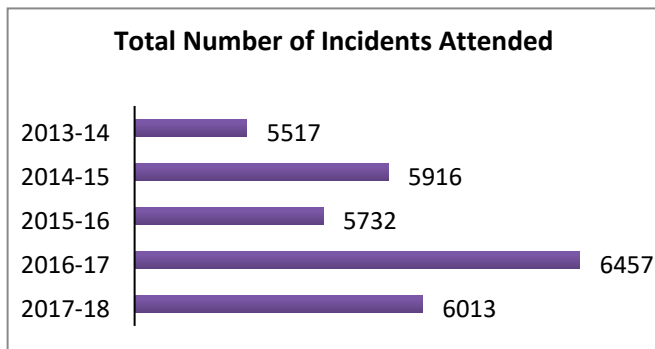
The Service Delivery PIs have been reviewed for 2018/19 and approved by the FRA. Full details of the Service's performance for 2017/18 and comparison against performance for 2016/17 is reported within the Annual Overarching Performance Report 2017/18. A copy of the published document can be found here. [Annual Overarching Performance Report year End 2017/18](#)

4.2 Overview of Service Activity

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

4.2.1 Total Number of Incidents Attended

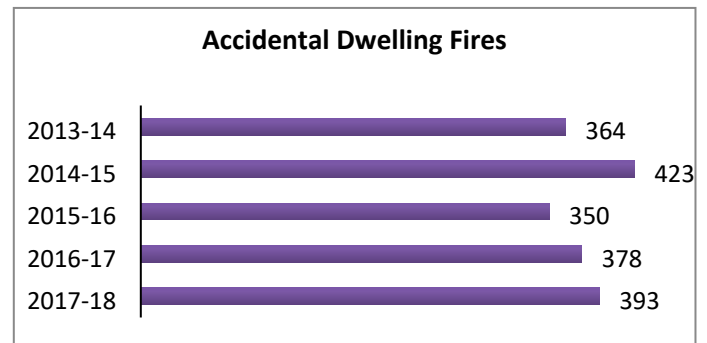
The number of incidents attended by the Service has fluctuated, with the lowest being in 2013/14. The figures for 2017/18 demonstrate a 7% reduction in the number of incidents attended compared with 2016/17; this was in part due to cessation of co-responding trails due to national negotiations. The number is anticipated to increase as more collaborative activity expands our capabilities (e.g. forced entry for medical emergencies).



4.2.2 Accidental Dwelling Fires

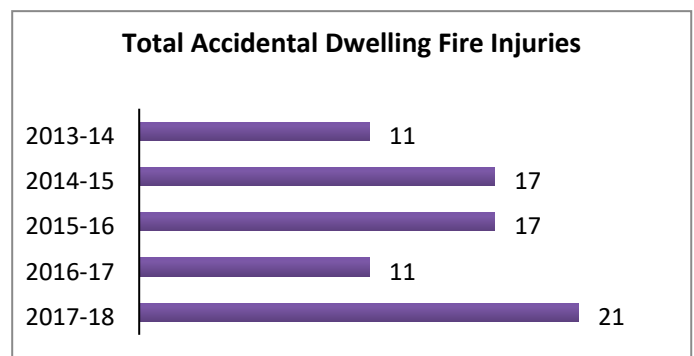
In 2017/18 Accidental Dwelling Fires are fires that occur in the home and the number across

Bedfordshire totaled 393. This is an increase from 2016/17. With the exception of 2014/15 the number of accidental dwelling fires has plateaued. BFRS continues to explore areas which will assist our commitment to drive down the number of accidental dwelling fires in Bedfordshire.



4.2.3 Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries

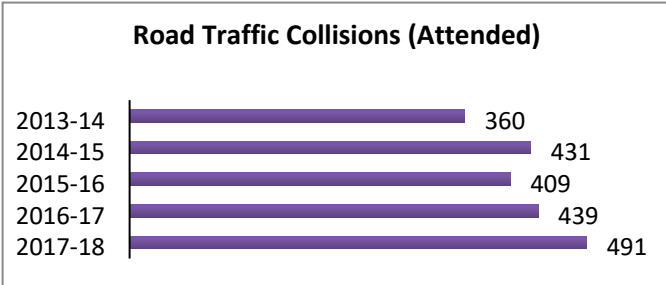
Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries continue to be one of the lowest reported within England, however we recognise the increase within 2017/18. BFRS continues work with partner agencies in order to target advice and guidance on domestic fire safety awareness to those most at risk in the community.



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

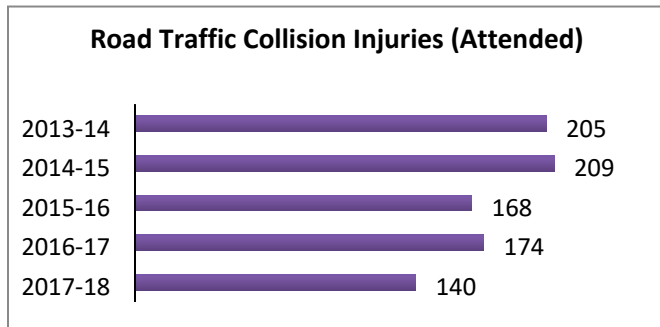
1.1.1 Road Traffic Collisions (Attended)

The Service is seeing a year on year increase in the number of Road Traffic Collisions attended.



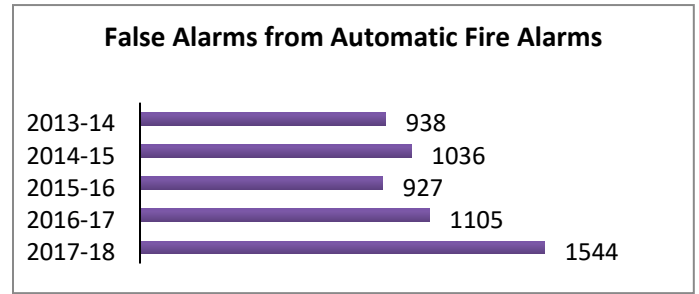
1.1.2 Road Traffic Collision Injuries (Attended)

Despite the increase in incidents attended, there has been a continual reduction in injuries; down 33% in 2017/18 compared to 2014/15 (the highest recorded period).



1.1.3 False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarms

During 2017/18 the Service attended 439 more calls to False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarm Systems when compared to the previous year. The Service continues to target the reduction in false alarms from fire alarm systems and is applying further measures to support this.



1.1.4 Total Home Fire Safety Checks/Safe and Well Visits

The Service uses a variety of preventative risk reduction activities in its continued commitment to keep the communities' of Bedfordshire safe. In 2017/18 BFRS started to deliver Safe and Well visits to the community. These visits take the form of enhanced Home Fire Safety Checks that cover a range of additional areas addressing personal safety and wellbeing. These areas include:

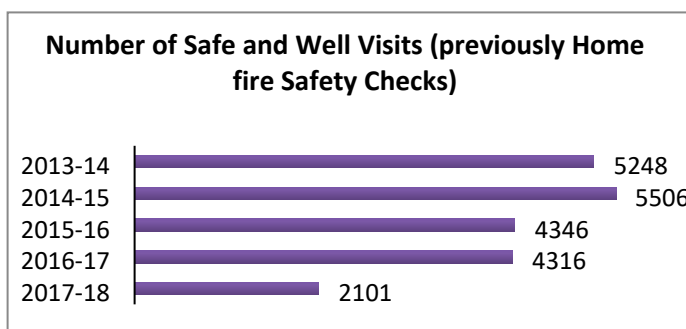
- Crime Prevention;
- Slips, Trips and Falls;
- Smoking cessation; and
- Alcohol.

BFRS works closely with Bedfordshire Police and has identified that fire risk factors closely align with the risks associated with vulnerability to crime. As such, Safe and Well visits will incorporate crime prevention advice.

BFRS make effective use of its own data, and that of health and other partners, to implement an intelligence led approach, targeting the most vulnerable households with Safe and Well visits. The Service uses existing partnerships and is establishing new partnerships to generate referrals from other professionals, who will assist identifying vulnerable households that would benefit from a Safe and Well Visit.

In response to an increase in Accidental Dwelling Fires, BFRS are reviewing their approach in 2018/19.

In 2017/18, following the tragic events at Grenfell, BFRS undertook an inspection of all high rise residential premises in Bedfordshire to assess risk levels and provide assurance to residents, owners and firefighters.

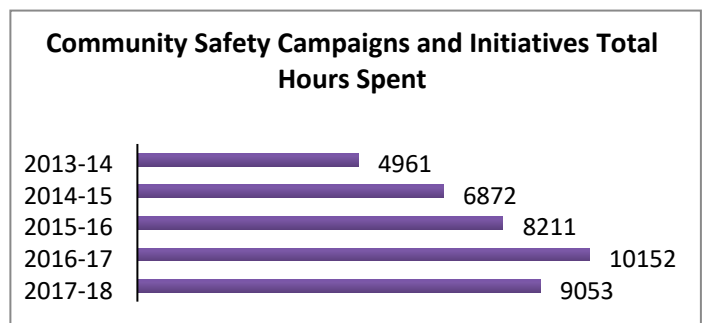


1.1.5 Total Hours spent on Community Safety Campaigns and Initiatives

The number of hours spent on Fire Safety Campaigns and Initiatives have shown an increasing commitment over the 4 year period to 2016/17. A more intelligence-led, targeted approach in 2017/18 has seen a decrease in

numbers of hours spent.

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



1.2 Community Risk Management Plan

The [Community Risk Management Plan 2015 - 2019 Summary](#) (CRMP) is the Authority's programme for securing continuous improvement in its services and outlines the Authority's vision, objectives and priorities for the future, sets performance targets and outlines the Authority's accountability to its stakeholders and the communities. This is currently under review and a new CRMP will be consulted on in 2019.

The aim of the CRMP is to inform on how the resources of the Service contribute, in a co-ordinated and meaningful way, toward keeping our communities safe.

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

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

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

processes, training, personal protective equipment, and operational equipment.

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

In 2018/19 we will be carrying out further research to understand our communities to inform our approach to risk. A new CRMP for 2019-2023 is currently in draft format and due to be consulted early 2019.

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

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1.3 Mutual Aid and Reinforcement Schemes

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

4.5 Business Continuity Arrangements

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

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

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

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

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

1.4 National Resilience

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Awards and Commendations

The Long Service and Good Conduct medal is awarded to operational members of the Fire and Rescue Service who have completed 20 years meritorious service and are awarded under Royal Warrant. In 2017/18 10 members of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service were awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Each year the Service hosts a Celebration of Success Awards night, where staff are recognised for their personal achievements in education and development, professional conduct, community and charitable activity and meritorious service.

Customer Satisfaction surveys play a key role in obtaining feedback from the communities and users of the services we deliver. From 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018, 99% of those returning a survey were satisfied with the service they received from us.

3. Future Improvements

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

During 2018/19 The Service will continue with its pursuit of collaborative projects which deliver efficiency savings as well as deliver benefits to the communities it serves.

In 2018, and following a recommendation from an RSM Internal Audit in 2017, the Service has worked closely with Bedfordshire Police to strengthen the process which generates potential projects which establishes a more inclusive and organisation-wide mechanism for engagement with front line staff.

A Blue Light collaboration conference was held in August 2018 and its success in identifying future collaboration possibilities and priorities means it will be repeated twice yearly.

Current collaborative projects in 2018/19 include the following

- BFRS shared locations with police colleagues which were established in 2017 in Ampthill, Leighton Buzzard and Bedford Community Fire Stations will continue for the longer term.
- An increasing number of Police colleagues are being provided with access to Service premises to help them manage their time more efficiently and achieve higher visibility in local communities.
- A positive evaluation of the 2016/17 Effecting Entry pilot has seen the service being continued as routine, as it satisfied all 3 of the pilot objectives.
- The service is continuing with assisting Police colleagues in searches for missing vulnerable people following a positive evaluation in 2018.
- Red Routes: The service is piloting a scheme in which service vehicles returning from incidents drive back through crime "hotspot" areas which are

regularly and routinely identified and provided by police colleagues.

Published Research suggests that this could act as a deterrent. An evaluation of the pilot is planned for 2019.

- The Service is working with police colleagues to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for a joint response capability for deployment unmanned aerial vehicles, which could include wider agreement with emergency colleagues in neighbouring counties.
- A scoping study has commenced into the feasibility of a joint BFRS and Police headquarters, as well as shared facilities to support training and vehicle maintenance.
- Collaboration in vehicle maintenance with East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust is due to commence in 2018, with an evaluation in 2019 into the effectiveness of this project.
- A project group has been established in 2018 to explore the options for all Blue Light Services to co-locate in a shared space incorporating vehicle workshops, stores and technical staff. Findings from the group are expected in 2019
- A portfolio of existing shared training with Police colleagues is being finalised and it is intended to explore expanding the collaboration into shared resources and accommodation usage.
- Community Risk analysis and Management was a collaboration identified as a priority at the August conference and so this will be explored throughout 2019 until it is identified if there are any options or benefits.
- The Service is increasing its support for the National Dementia Action Alliance and a new service action plan is being developed in 2018/19. This plan includes the Service Management team undertaking “Dementia Friends” awareness training at a forthcoming Management Briefing session.
- The process for safeguarding people with dementia, the “Herbert Protocol” partnership with Bedfordshire Police will continue into 2019 and beyond and there are plans to enable electronic membership applications on the Service website.
- The Service is exploring developing close working relationships on a pilot

basis with local and national charities operating in Luton and District. The aim is to achieve community based awareness and education gains for vulnerable people that the charities support. This work which has begun will continue throughout 2019.

- Work has begun in 2018/19 to explore a joint Driver training collaboration which enables peak demand for Response car driver training to be addressed as well as open up the possibility of developing Blue Light Motor cycle training.

- In 2018/19 work will begin to identify the feasibility, options and possible benefits of a more structured collaboration between the Service and Police Communications and Public Relations teams in order to achieve a seamless approach to community news and engagement.

Once completed, delivered and integrated these projects will provide improvements to service delivery, safety of the community and partners.

4. Conclusion

This Statement of Assurance provides an accurate account of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Financial, Governance and Operational Assurance arrangements

secured from the 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

I am satisfied that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority conducted its business practices within the appropriate legal framework and standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. This Statement of Assurance was approved by the Audit and Standards Committee on 6 December 2018.



Signed
Chief Fire Officer

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

Signed
Chair of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

GLOSSARY

AGS - Annual Governance Statement

BFRA - Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

BLRF - Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum

BCM - Business Continuity Management

CIPFA - Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

CRMP - Community Risk Management Plan

C&AG - Comptroller and Auditor General

CMT - Corporate Management Team

EEAS - East of England Ambulance Service

FSOT – Fire Service Operations Team

FRA - Fire and Rescue Authority

HFSCs - Home Fire Safety Checks

HR - Human Resources

IFRS - International Financial Reporting Standards

NHS - National Health Service

PIs - Performance Indicators

UAV - Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle

VFM - Value for Money

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REPORT AUTHOR: COUNCILLOR Y WAHEED

SUBJECT: HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP

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

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To report on the meeting of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group held on 10 January 2019.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted draft Minutes of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group held on 10 January 2019 be received.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The draft Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group held on 10 January 2019 are appended for Members' consideration.
- 1.2 The Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group made no recommendations to the Fire Authority.

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

MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillors C Atkins, D Franks, J Mingay and Y Waheed (Chair)

DCFO A Hopkinson, GC A Draper, GC I McLaren, Ms D Clarke and Mr R Jones

18-19/HR/027 Apologies

27.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Saleem.

18-19/HR/028 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

28.1 There were no declarations of interests.

18-19/HR/029 Communications

29.1 There were no communications.

18-19/HR/030 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

18-19/HR/031 Human Resources Performance Report, Quarter 2 2018/19

31.1 DCFO Hopkinson submitted the 2018/19 Quarter 2 report on performance against Human Resources performance indicators and associated targets.

31.2 Mr R Jones, the Service Diversity Adviser, provided an update on EQ1a (percentage of new entrants to the retained duty system to be women) and EQ2 (recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation), both of which had missed their targets. He acknowledged that the Service continued to face challenges in recruiting a workforce that was

representative of the communities that it served, despite putting considerable resource into positive action campaigns. It was expected that performance against EQ1a would improve during the year and that the whole-time recruitment campaign would have a positive impact on performance against EQ2.

- 31.3 The Service had undertaken a number of engagement activities across Bedfordshire, including in schools and religious venues, in order to reach underrepresented groups. As the Service recognised that there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of applicants from BAME backgrounds who became successful recruits, it had also put in place measures to address this, such as providing guidance on the required fitness standards, as well as removing a test which unfairly favoured individuals with previous knowledge of fire and rescue activities, such as those who were related to serving or retired fire fighters.
- 31.4 In response to a question, the Diversity Adviser confirmed that the Service had worked closely with Bedfordshire Police to learn from its' successful recruitment of BAME candidates. However, it was noted that whilst recruitment levels were high, the Police still had challenges relating to retention and that the Fire and Rescue Service was heavily oversubscribed with a very low level of staff turnover. The Service also performed very well in comparison to the national average.
- 31.5 428 individuals had registered an interest via the Service's joiners page, 30% of which had identified themselves as being from the targeted groups.
- 31.6 The challenges in recruiting a representative on-call workforce were also recognised, as there was a requirement that the individual lived or worked in close proximity to the on-call station, many of which were located in the rural areas of the County.
- 31.7 Ms D Clarke, the Head of Human Resources, advised that a programme was in place to assist Fire Cadets in progressing into whole-time posts. It was noted that applicants must be 18 at the time of appointment, but could be 17 at the time of application.
- 31.8 The Head of Human Resources reported that the year-end performance against HR3 (appraisals completed by 30 September – PI Target 90%) was 83.55% against a target of 90%. This measured a full year from 1 October to 30 September. Appraisals were undertaken in two stages: the initial appraisal and a review. In some cases, whilst the initial appraisal had been undertaken, the review had not been completed. Performance had also been affected by management vacancies. At the time of writing the report, 97% of appraisals had been completed and this was the figure that would be

reported to HMICFRS as it collected performance information for the period 1 January to 31 December. Managers had been reminded of their responsibility to complete and review appraisals in a timely manner.

- 31.9 DCFO Hopkinson advised that performance against H1 (number of serious accidents (over 28 days) per 1000 employees) had been adversely affected by two accident injuries. Both individuals had now returned to work. H2 (number of working days/shifts lost to accidents per 1000 employees (excluding Retained Duty System employees)), which was linked to H1, had also missed its target with 116 days lost associated with 26 workplace accident injuries. 98 of those days lost were associated with the two events detailed in the H1, with the loss of 59 days and 39 days lost respectively.
- 31.10 GC A Draper reported that the majority of training indicators had reached target levels for Quarter 2. The exceptions to this were T7 (percentage of Flexible Duty Officers that have attended an Incident Command Assessment within the required frequency for their role) and T8b (percentage of Safety Critical Maintenance training programmes completed by On-Call Operational Personnel via PDR Pro within the last 12 months).
- 31.11 T7 was rated as amber as one individual had been nominated for but withdrawn from the course and had missed subsequent courses due to sickness absence. That individual had now returned to work and had been nominated for a future course.
- 31.12 T8b was 5% below target as a number of new RDS personnel had been recruited and assigned to stations. As they completed the mandatory training, performance against this indicator should improve.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on Human Resources Performance be acknowledged.

18-19/HR/032 Human Resources Quarter 2 Programme and Projects Report 2018-19

- 32.1 The Group received the 2018/19 Quarter 2 report on the Human Resources programme and projects to date.
- 32.2 Ms D Clarke, the Head of Human Resources, reported on the progress made against the HR & Payroll System and Services Project. Stage 1 had been completed and Stage 2 was progressing well, with the recruitment and overtime modules in place

for Green Book staff. The expenses module had been introduced from the beginning of the month for both Green and Grey Book staff.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on Human Resource Programme and Projects be acknowledged.

18-19/HR/033 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

- 33.1 DCFO Hopkinson introduced the report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports. There were no current requests for extensions to completion dates. All actions arising from internal audits had been completed.
- 33.2 The one action arising from the Annual Governance Statement was currently in progress. Ms D Clarke advised that a report would be presented to the Service's Corporate Management Team (CMT) for consideration following the completion of a salary benchmarking exercise by Hay. This had identified that the salaries offered for professional posts was not competitive with equivalent posts in the private sector. This would be considered by CMT along with the implications of the recent NJC pay award.

RESOLVED:

That progress made to date against the action plans be acknowledged.

18-19/HR/034 Public Sector Equality Duty Report

- 34.1 Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, submitted the 2017/18 Public Sector Equality Duty report to the Group for approval. This was the sixth annual report produced by the Service to fulfil its duty under the Equality Act 2010 and covered the period 1 April 2017- 31 March 2018.
- 34.2 The report set out the Service's equality objectives, the profile of the community that it served, the workforce it had in place and the services that it provided.
- 34.3 It was noted that the Service had been awarded the status of being a "Disability Confident" organisation in recognition of its approach to disability, and retained this status upon being assessed in 2018.

- 34.4 The Service's workforce consisted of 417 fte firefighters, with 561 staff in total. 29 staff fulfilled more than one role so that the Service had the equivalent of 590 posts.
- 34.5 Female staff made up 7.1% of operational staff, which was higher than both the England average (5.7%) and the non-metropolitan average (5.3%). Whilst the Service performed well in comparison to other Fire and Rescue Services, its aim was to become more representative of the community that it served.
- 34.6 Staff from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME) made up 4.1% of operational staff. This was comparable to the England average and better than the non-metropolitan average. Work continued through the Service's positive action campaign which sought to improve the representativeness and diversity of the Service's workforce.
- 34.7 60 members of staff had left the Service during the year, the majority as a result of retirement. A number of RDS staff had left the Service citing the need for more flexible working arrangements. This was being reviewed by the Service and improvements to the work-life balance of on-call fire fighters would be implemented.
- 34.8 In response to a question, the Policy and Challenge Group was advised that exit interviews were voluntary and individuals could request that these be undertaken by their line manager, HR or the Chief Fire Officer.
- 34.9 Turnover was very low, with 4% for whole-time firefighters and Green Book staff.
- 34.10 In relation to the services provided, the Diversity Adviser reported that there had been a reduction in the overall number of incidents attended by the Service, although there had been a slight increase in both fires and road traffic collisions attended.
- 34.11 The number of Home Fire Safety Checks and Safe and Well visits had decreased in 2017/18. Targets had been introduced to increase the number of Safe and Well visits and to introduce more robust quality assurance procedures.
- 34.12 The Service continued to receive high levels of customer satisfaction and measures were in place to improve the number of surveys completed following Safe and Well visits, as this had recently decreased and it was difficult to obtain feedback after certain incidents, such as road traffic collisions.
- 34.13 The Diversity Adviser concluded by highlighting the following:

- The recruitment process continued to improve the diversity of the Service's workforce and the percentages of females and individuals from BAME backgrounds employed by the Service compared favourably to national averages.
- The number of staff leavers had fallen, the majority of who left the Service as a result of retirement.
- Retention of female and BAME staff was high.
- Plans were in place to collect demographic data from every Safe and Well visit.

34.14 In response to a question about asking individuals for their sexual orientation, Members were advised that this was a requirement as it was one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. It was noted that the number of people deciding to answer this question had increased and this demonstrated that these individuals had greater confidence that they would not be discriminated against.

34.15 Members commented favourably on the content of the report and it was agreed that the report should be promoted more widely. The Diversity Adviser reported that the report would be published on the Service website and agreed to investigate how it could best be promoted.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be approved.
2. That the Diversity Adviser considers ways that the report can be promoted to the public.

18-19/HR/035 Corporate Risk Register

35.1 GC I McLaren presented the report on the Corporate Risk Register. The extract of the register relating to Human Resources was displayed to Members.

35.2 There had been one update to the register as follows:

35.3 CRR40 (if there is a retirement of a large number of operational officers over a short period of time then we lose significant operational and managerial experience within the service which could ultimately affect our service delivery and wider corporate functionality in the shorter term): lessons had been learnt from the 2016/17 whole time recruitment campaign and additional support was being provided to support this process. The decision had been made to not invite transfers in so that the Service could focus on the whole-time recruitment campaign and to provide more opportunities for internal progression.

- 35.4 In relation to the loss of managerial experience, Members expressed concern about the lack of information they had received about the imminent departure of ACO Evans at the end of January 2019. DCFO Hopkinson explained to Members that he was standing in for ACO Evans as she was on leave and that he could have made this clearer at the beginning of the meeting. He advised that the Chief Fire Officer would be providing Members with more information and the proposed way forward in the near future.
- 35.5 In response to a question, DCFO Hopkinson advised that it was his understanding that determining the responsibilities of the ACO post was one for the Chief Fire Officer, although appointment to the ACO role would be a responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Authority following a decision to recruit.

RESOLVED:

1. That the development of the Service's Corporate Risk Register in relation to Human Resources be noted and approved.
2. That the Chair write a letter on behalf of all Members of the Policy and Challenge Group, thanking ACO Evans for her support to the Group and wishing her well in her future endeavours.

18-19/HR/036 Work Programme 2018/19

- 36.1 Members received the Work Programme for 2018/19.
- 36.2 DCFO Hopkinson advised that the RoSPA audit would be undertaken during the week commencing 25 March 2019. This item would therefore need to be deferred from the 12 March 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be agreed, subject to the deferral of the report on the outcomes of the RoSPA audit to the Policy and Challenge Group's June 2019 meeting.

The meeting finished at 11.01am

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REPORT AUTHORS: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND TREASURER

SUBJECT: THE 2019/20 REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

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

Background Papers:

2019/20 Revenue Budget Strategy Report to the Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group meeting 13 September 2018, 2019/20 Draft Revenue Budget Report to the FRA meeting on 13 December 2018.

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To present information to allow the Authority to:

- a. set a budget and precept level for 2019/20 in line with statutory requirements;
- b. approve a Medium-Term Revenue Plan for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23;
- c. approve a Medium-Term Capital Programme for the period 2019/20 to 2022/23;
- d. approve a Medium-Term Financial Strategy which provides the strategic context for each of the above, linking them to the Authority's corporate aims, objectives and strategic priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Fire and Rescue Authority consider this report and determine for 2019/20 that:
 - a. A Revenue Budget requirement is set at £29.702m, met as indicated in paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - b. In meeting this budget requirement, the Authority's Precept be set at £20.971m and that as a consequence, a council tax increase of 2.99% up to £98.45 per Band D equivalent property, calculated as shown in Paragraph 3.8 of this report.
 - c. In order to meet the Precept requirement, the Head of Finance/Treasurer be authorised to issue Precepts in the necessary form to each of the Unitary Councils and for the amounts indicated in Paragraph 3.11 of this report.
2. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Revenue Plan attached at Appendix 1 to this report, in doing so, to also approve the 2019/20 savings and efficiencies detailed at Appendix 2.
3. That the 2018/19 year-end underspend is allocated to the Transformation Reserve.
4. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Capital Programme attached at Appendix 3 to this report.
5. That the FRA consider and approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy attached at Appendix 4 to this report and the Reserves Strategy at Appendix 5.

6. That in considering the above recommendations, the FRA note the Treasurer's statement on the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides, attached at Appendix 6 to this report.
 7. That the FRA delegate any budget amendments, following receipt of the final settlement figures, to the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer.
-

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Authority is proposing a budget for 2019/20 that takes into account the aims and objectives of the Service and prioritises the resources available for frontline services.
- 1.2 It does this by:
 - a. Proposing a council tax increase of 2.99%.
 - b. Proposing significant efficiency savings.
- 1.3 There has been a considerable amount of work towards the 2019/20 budget setting over the past year. This has included a robust review and scrutiny of service wide budgets by the Head of Finance/Treasurer and the Principal Officers, review and challenge meetings by the Corporate Management Team and two Fire and Rescue Authority Members budget workshops. This work has covered both the revenue budget and the Capital Programme.
- 1.4 The draft budget was approved by the Authority on 13 December 2018 for consultation. Feedback on the consultation is summarised in this report at para 6.
- 1.5 The Authority's council tax precept leaflets have been electronic since 2013/14. There will therefore be a web link address on the council tax bills to the websites detailing the precept information for the unitary authorities, police and fire.

2. Government Settlement for 2019/20

- 2.1 The provisional settlement for 2019/20 was announced on 13 December 2018. The final settlement figures for 2019/20 are yet to be confirmed. It is anticipated that there will not be any material impact on the figures used in this report. Any minor changes will be met to/from the Transformational earmarked reserve.

Table 1 below shows a split of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 revenue grant funding and the Government's forecast total business rates funding. This is the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). A further detailed breakdown of this is included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Table 1: Settlement Funding Assessment split

| | 2018/19 £m | 2019/20 £m | % change |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Revenue Support Grant (RSG) * | *2.664 | 2.283 | (14.3%) |
| Business Rates baseline funding | 5.716 | 5.847 | 2.3% |
| Settlement Funding Assessment | 8.380 | 8.130 | (3%) |

*See para 3.2

- 2.2 Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in 2013/14, the Authority has been subject to fluctuations of the Business Rates collected in Bedfordshire. If business rates income increases, the Authority will receive a share of this, if it decreases again the Authority will be impacted by this. There are mechanisms in place within the funding scheme that offer protection, called safety nets, should an authority be considerably adversely impacted. From 2020 or beyond, it is expected that the Business Rates funding will increase and the RSG will cease. The RSG has still been identified in Appendix 1 in years 2020/21 onwards for transparency, albeit this funding will be included within other lines such as business rates from this year.
- 2.3 The Authority's Business Rates Baseline Funding Level (BFL) has been assessed at £5.847m by the DCLG for 2019/20 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.068m (the Government's estimate of the Authority's 1% share of locally collected business rates). As our business rate baseline is lower than the baseline funding level, we are therefore a 'top up' authority and will receive the payment of £3.779m from central government (to get back to the £5.847m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The RSG and business rates funding of £8.220m shown in Appendix 1 for 2019/20 is split between

£2.283m Revenue Support Grant funding and £5.937m Business Rates (with the local share of business rates at £2.158m, £0.090m higher than used in the SFA figures).

- 2.4 Fire grants will be treated outside of the above funding mechanisms and it is estimated that the Authority will receive £220k in 2019/20 for Firelink and New Dimensions. The final figures are yet to be confirmed.
- 2.5 The council tax referendum cap was also reconfirmed on 13 December 2018, with an additional 1% being allowed for 2019/20. The proposed council tax figure of £98.45 is a 2.99% increase, therefore under the new 3% capping limit.

Local Authorities have also had their cap increased by 1% for general council tax. Police and Crime Commissioners have the option to increase their council tax charge by up to £24 per annum.

3. Proposed Budget and Precept for 2019/20 and Medium-Term Revenue Plan

- 3.1 In setting a budget for 2019/20, the Authority must take into account the implications for the following years' financial strategy, namely 2020/21 to 2022/23. There are significant efficiency savings over the coming years, which will require action in the short-term if they are to be secured within the planned timescales.
- 3.2 The settlement figures for 2019/20 are the last of the four year funding deal that the Authority accepted. Therefore the years 2020/21 onwards are current forecasts. The 2019/20 RSG shown in Table 1 above and in Appendix 1, is £0.191m lower than previously forecast. Although this shouldn't change as part of the four year funding deal, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) has contacted the Authority advising that an error occurred in the funding calculations between our Authority and another. The MHCLG has reduced our RSG for 2019/20 but is not seeking any reimbursement for prior years. The figure in Table 1 above for 2018/19 is also showing this amended figure for comparison purposes.
- 3.3 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the budget projections for 2019/20 to 2022/23 and the key features of the projections, including assumptions of the level of Government funding and council tax funding.
- 3.4 The Medium-Term Revenue Plan (MTRP) assumes that the Authority will achieve year-on-year cashable efficiencies. The MTRP is attached at Appendix 1, with the detail of the planned savings and efficiencies at Appendix 2.

- 3.5 Based on the assumptions and proposals within this report and appendices, Table 2 below details the key budget information. The budget requirement for 2019/20 is recommended to be set at £29.702m. Key assumptions include the Government funding of the Firefighters employer pension contributions increase in 2019/20 but a budget pressure from this of £0.650m in 2020/21. The Firefighter pay award assumption is 5% in July 2019.
- 3.6 Following the draft budget report that was presented to the FRA on 13 December 2018, the three Unitary Authorities have advised what their taxbases are for 2019/20. There has been an increase at each local authority from the 2019/20 taxbase figures that were estimated in 2018/19. This revised taxbase figure will increase the council tax income to the Authority. The forecast Collection Fund figures as included on line 56 in the income section of the MTRP.
- 3.7 The 2011/12 freeze grant that the Authority did receive has been built into the formula funding baseline and is no longer visible.
- 3.8 Appendix 1 details the Government funding reductions of RSG. It should be noted that from 2020/21 RSG will cease and the equivalent funding, or potentially at a revised level, will be included within business rates. For transparency, it is currently still shown separately, although the narrative in Appendix 1 line 51 notes this. The RSG for 2019/20 reduces by 14.3% from the revised 2018/19 figure (or 20% from the original figure pre MHCLG update).

Table 2: Key Budget Information

| | 2018/19 £m | 2019/20 £m | Change £m |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Budget Requirement (£m) | 29.437 | 29.702 | 0.265 |
| <u>Funded by:</u> | | | |
| Precept Requirement (£m) | 19.972 | 20.971 | 0.999 |
| Central and Local Government Funding (£m) | 8.717 | 8.220 | (0.497) |
| Section 31 Business Rates grant | 0.187 | 0.192 | 0.005 |
| Collection Fund surplus/(deficit) | 0.291 | 0.229 | (0.062) |
| Use of Reserve (Collection Fund) | 0.270 | 0 | (0.270) |
| Business Rates Levy redistribution | 0 | 0.090 | 0.090 |
| Funding Total (£m) | 29.437 | 29.702 | 0.265 |
| Tax Base (Band D equiv. properties) | 208,933 | 213,017 | 4,084 |
| Band 'D' Council Tax | £95.59 | £98.45 | £2.86 |

- 3.9 The Authority's Officers and Treasurer recommend that the Council Tax increase of 2.99% should be implemented. This is based on need, as the current MTRP shows that there will be a future funding need. The results of the 2019/20 budget consultation support this increase, please see para 6 below.

There is planning time between now and 2022/23 to implement additional savings and efficiencies. However, these do need to be researched, planned and implemented, so there is a significant lead time for large scale savings and efficiency options. With the utilisation of reserves for investment in transformational efficiencies and also budget balancing, the budget gap is currently forecast to be in 2025/26, however this will be reviewed following the 2020/21 settlement after the funding formula review, the Spending Review and Business Rates Retention roll out.

The 2020/21 financial year will see changes in Government funding to local authorities. Local Authorities will be able to keep more of their business rate income, subject to the redistribution via tariffs and top ups. The RSG is anticipated to cease and additional responsibilities may be passed to councils too. What these are is yet to be confirmed. It is now not anticipated that the Authority will be funded by direct grant and no business rates, like Police Authorities are. The Authority will continue with Business Rates and Council Tax, but no RSG.

- 3.10 Table 3 below details the council tax per band. As there is a 2.99% increase from the 2018/19 level, there is a change across all the valuation bands. The council tax of £98.45 equates to, for a Band D equivalent property, 27 pence per day for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Table 3: Council Tax Per Band:

| Valuation Band | Tax Payable Compared to Band D (Expressed in Fractions) | Council Tax for Band £ |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| A | 6/9 | 65.63 |
| B | 7/9 | 76.57 |
| C | 8/9 | 87.51 |
| D | 1 | 98.45 |
| E | 11/9 | 120.33 |
| F | 13/9 | 142.21 |
| G | 15/9 | 164.08 |
| H | 2 | 196.90 |

In summary, the taxbase of 213,017 Band D equivalents, multiplied by the Band D council tax of £98.45 equals the precept of £20.971m.

- 3.11 Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Finance Acts 1992 and 1999 and all other relevant statutory powers, it is recommended that the Head of Finance/Treasurer issues Precepts in the necessary form to each of the Unitary Councils indicated in Table 4 below, Column 1, requiring those Authorities to make payments of the sum indicated in Column 2 in eleven equal instalments, and payments for the Authority's share of the estimated surplus or deficits on the council tax and business rate Collection Funds for 2018/19, in ten equal instalments on the agreed dates, of the sum indicated in Column 3. Column 4 details for the amounts that the local authorities will pay the Authority from their collection of Business Rates. This is 1% of their estimated net rates yield for 2019/20.

Table 4: Precepts

| Unitary Councils (1) | £ (2) Council Tax £'000 | £ (3) Deficit/(surplus) £'000 | £ (4) Business Rates £'000 |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Bedford Borough | 5,908 | (84) | 640 |
| Luton Borough | 4,986 | (86) | 670 |
| Central Bedfordshire | 10,077 | (59) | 848 |
| Total | 20,971 | (229) | 2,158 |

- 3.12 At the time of writing this report, the NNDR1 returns from the Unitary Authorities have not been received. The above figures are based on the most recent information received. It is anticipated that any updates will not be material and will be amended via the contribution from reserve.
- 3.13 In addition to the Authority's own council tax, there are separate council taxes for the Police, the local authorities of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Luton and where applicable their town/parish councils.

4 Use of Balances:

- 4.1 A prudent level of reserves, along with appropriate contributions to and from reserves, should be part of the overall budget. This risk assessment undertaken, and referred to in the MTFs, suggests that the minimum level of balances, taking all known risks into account along with the gross expenditure requirement, should be in the order of at least £2.6m for 2019/20. This equates to 9% of the Authority's budget requirement, which is circa the average for all Combined Fire Authorities. This is after a comprehensive review and setting up of specific ear-marked reserves of £2.375m (not including some specific reserves such as the Transformational reserve and Capital Contingency Reserve). It is proposed that the 2018/19 estimated year end underspend, that is currently forecast to be circa £0.555m, is allocated to the Transformational Reserve.

As discussed at the second FRA Members budget workshop, the reserves strategy is to review and reduce both the General Reserve and Earmarked Reserves in 2020/21. This date coincides with the potential significant changes from the Spending Review, Business Rates Retention and Funding Formula Review. It is prudent to plan to make these changes to reserves following clarity around these forthcoming reviews.

The Transformational reserve will be £4.655m at the 2018/19 year end, prior to any in year underspend allocation. It is currently considered adequate enough based on projections to fund transformational initiatives and balance the forecast 2023/24 budget gap and beyond. This is detailed at the foot of the MTRP in Appendix 1.

- 4.2 The reserves strategy is included in the attached MTFs. In summary, the strategy in recent years has been to increase the Transformational ear-marked reserve with underspends and budgeted contributions to enable this to be used in future years' budget setting processes. The 2015/16 and 2016/17 revenue underspend was allocated to a Collaboration Reserve, with a view that revenue and/or capital expenditure is likely in the medium term. It is recommended that the 2018/19 underspend is allocated to the Transformation reserve. The 2017/18 underspend was allocated here too.

As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that the Transformational earmarked reserve will be significantly used over the medium term to close any budget gaps in the financial years 2019/20 to 2022/23 and to invest in transformational efficiencies. This strategy will ensure that additional savings and efficiencies are introduced in a planned and effective manner over the years to close the budget gap.

5. Proposed Medium-Term Capital Programme

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

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

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

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

As anticipated, there is no Government funding or bidding round for capital in the 2019/20 budget. This was the position for the 2016/17 to 2018/19 financial years too.

The Authority's base budget revenue contributions to fund capital commenced in 2012/13 to support capital expenditure funding in future years. There is now a budgeted base budget revenue contribution of circa £1.3m per annum (with fluctuations) from 2019/20 onwards towards capital expenditure. This is with the assumption that capital grants are not forthcoming in future years. If capital funding becomes available, there will be a direct reduction in revenue contributions.

5.4 The Capital Programme, as per the approved timetable, has followed the same robust challenge/scrutiny route as the revenue budget. The Capital Strategy Team has also reviewed and assessed the bids made, approving the schemes that are attached at Appendix 3 as the 2019/20 Capital Programme.

5.5 Key items of note in the proposed 2019/20 Capital Programme of £1.736m are:

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

6 Budget Consultation

6.1 The consultation on the 2019/20 budget and council tax proposals took place between 20th December 2018 and 25th January 2019. A survey was sent to the 14,387 people registered on the BedsFireAlert Community messaging system willing to take part in consultations. It was also made available via the Authority's website and publicised through the local press and several social media campaigns on the Service's Facebook and Twitter channels. It was also promoted to BFRS staff through Blue Bulletin and a briefing note sent to all managers. A letter was sent to a number of key partners in the emergency services and local government and an email sent to all town and parish councils inviting their views.

At the time of writing (22 January 2019) there were a total of 1,111 responses with 84% supporting the 2.99% council tax increase and 73% supporting an increase of between £3 and £5. A majority of these responses were from subscribers to BedsFireAlert but 22% came from those responding through social media.

6.2 In response to the question of whether respondents thought there were efficiency areas that could be considered we received 993 comments, with the majority advising "none" or "don't know". Of the 247 that did provide comments, 53% said they did not have sufficient information to make a decision or that the Service should not make any more savings. A variety of comments related to suggestions for saving money or generating income, such as charging for some services such as freeing people from lifts, charging hoax callers or insurance companies for extinguishing fires. A small number of people mentioned that as pensioners it was increasingly difficult for them to pay for increases in council tax.

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

- Reducing the numbers of senior officers/managers, their salaries and vehicles (13%);
- Collaborating, sharing services and co-responding with Police and Ambulance Service or other FRS (12%);
- Reducing the numbers of support or "back office" staff, their pay and their pensions (12%).

The Police and Crime Commissioner emailed in support of the FRAs proposals and there were 30 responses from Town and Parish Councils, 87% supporting the 2.99% increase and 62% supporting an increase between £3 and £5.

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

- 6.3 The senior structure has already been reduced by one Assistant Chief Fire Officer and one Area Commander (AC). In addition there is a budget reduction planned in 2021/22, of another AC post, changing this to a green book role which leads to savings. The AC posts therefore reduce from the original five to three. There is also a planned reduction of a green book Corporate Management Team Member, leading to further savings that are shown in Appendix 2 in 2020/21.
- 6.4 The FRA is aware of the collaboration work underway with the Police Service, Ambulance Service and other organisations. These initiatives are increasing with the sharing of premises and operational service areas, such as Forced Entry, Missing Persons Search and Co-responding.

We also have the Shared ICT Service in operation with numerous other shared work areas with local authorities such as Democratic Services support, legal, cleaning contracts, joint procurement, shared mobilising system, GDPR and the Authority is a member of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) providing an alternative to traditional insurance.

- 6.5 The Service is informing telephone callers where charges will be levied on services provided such as lock outs and flood clearance from basements, where not deemed emergencies and suggesting seeking alternative suppliers to these incidents.
- 7. Proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
 - 7.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy, attached at Appendix 4, is a document that sets out the Authority's financial strategy for the next four years. It focuses on the 2019/20 revenue budget and capital programme, but also sets the scene for future years.
 - 7.2 The MTFS details the reserves policy, planning assumptions behind the budget figures and other considerations that must be taken into account when setting the strategy, such as the taxbase, efficiencies and shared services.

8. Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

8.1 The Local Government Act 2003 places a duty on the Section 112/151 Officer (Treasurer) to comment on 'the robustness of the estimates' included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. The Treasurer's statement is attached at Appendix 6.

9. Implications

9.1 **Financial:**

9.1.1 The resource implications are detailed throughout this report and appendices, particularly in the MTFS.

9.1.2 The Treasurer's statement comments on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of the Authority's reserves with reference to risks identified.

9.2 **Legal:**

9.2.1 The Authority must set a balanced budget by midnight on 1 March 2019.

9.2.2 The Authority has specific legal duties in relation to equalities and financial decision-making.

9.2.3 There are no further specific legal issues arising from this report.

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

9.3.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (set out in the Equality Act 2010), public authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The law requires that public authorities demonstrate that they have had 'due regard' to the aims of the equality duty in their decision-making. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have 'due regard'.

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

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

**GAVIN CHAMBERS
TREASURER**

FINAL BUDGET 2019/20 - 2.99% Council Tax 2019/20 and 5% FF Pay 19/20

| | | Original | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed | |
|--|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| | | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| MEDIUM TERM REVENUE PLAN 2019/20 TO 2022/23 | | | | | | | |
| Base Budget | | 29,284 | 29,676 | 29,676 | 30,328 | 31,069 | 31,330 |
| 1 | Full-Year effect of previous budget decisions & FMS 3 bids | -37 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Removal of 2% Fire Fighter Pay increase 2018/19 from Base Budget | 0 | 0 | -188 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Possible outcome from NJC Pay line Review (Non-Operational) | 0 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Addition of cost for FRIC & Salary abatement / Pensions to enable capture corresponding savings and efficiencies | 0 | 0 | 105 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Additional Bank Holidays | -37 | 25 | -15 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 6 | FF Pensions 2015 changes | -21 | -23 | -23 | -23 | -23 | 0 |
| 7 | Holiday pay implications | 0 | 0 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Budget Realignment | 8 | 135 | 81 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | NFCC (CFOA) subscription / LGA Pension Support / NFCC | 15 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Apprenticeship Levy | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 11 | SCAPE (FF Pensions Scheme) Costs from 01/04/2019. Assumed fully funded 2019/20 and part 2020/21 | 0 | 450 | 0 | 650 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 | Local Government Superannuation Revaluation Lump Sum | 46 | 48 | 48 | 32 | 30 | 30 |
| 13 | Minimum Revenue Provision reduction from Earmarked Reserves (MRP holiday, £200k per annum for 6 years) | | | 0 | -200 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | Total Base Budget Adjustments | -25 | 637 | 210 | 464 | 12 | 35 |
| 15 | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Forecast Variations | | | | | | |
| 17 | Investment Interest Decrease/(Increase) | -15 | -5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | Revenue Contribution to Capital | -171 | -65 | 277 | -138 | 71 | -91 |
| 19 | Revenue Implications of Capital Programme | 26 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20 | Non-Uniform Incremental Drift | 4 | 2 | 64 | 42 | 19 | 0 |
| 21 | Transformational Savings/Efficiencies | -178 | -150 | -495 | -127 | -373 | -85 |
| 22 | Scrutiny Panel Decisions | -211 | 50 | -282 | -29 | 20 | -39 |
| 23 | Service Control - Mobilisation System - see below for use of Transformational Reserve | 0 | 750 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24 | Total Forecast Variations | -545 | 594 | -425 | -252 | -263 | -215 |
| 25 | | | | | | | |
| 26 | Inflation | | | | | | |
| 27 | Fire-fighters pay - 1 April to 30 June (2% 2019 & 5% 2020 & 2% each following year) | 63 | 128 | 62 | 160 | 67 | 69 |
| 28 | Fire-fighters pay - 1 July to 31 March (5% 2019 & 2% each following year) | 376 | 192 | 446 | 192 | 197 | 201 |
| 29 | Retained Pay (As per Fire-Fighters) | 38 | 39 | 94 | 54 | 40 | 41 |
| 30 | Control pay (As per Fire-Fighters) | 18 | 18 | 48 | 25 | 19 | 19 |
| 31 | Non Uniformed pay (2% effective from 01/04/2018) | 96 | 97 | 103 | 106 | 108 | 110 |
| 32 | Member Allowances | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 33 | Gas, Electricity, Water and Derv Inflation | 29 | 32 | 25 | 19 | 27 | 28 |
| 34 | Prices Inflation at, 2% 2019/20 - 2022/23 | 81 | 81 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 78 |
| 35 | Total Inflation | 702 | 588 | 854 | 633 | 536 | 548 |
| 36 | | | | | | | |
| 37 | Budget Pressures | | | | | | |
| 38 | FMS3' bids (Current Year MTFP process) | 326 | -2 | 61 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 39 | FMS3' bids (Previous Years MTFP process) | -66 | -78 | -48 | -104 | -25 | -7 |
| 40 | | | | | | | |
| 41 | Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure | 29,676 | 31,415 | 30,328 | 31,069 | 31,330 | 31,691 |
| 42 | Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves | -239 | -1,816 | -626 | -941 | -482 | -7 |
| 43 | | | | | | | |
| 44 | Estimated Budget Requirement | 29,437 | 29,599 | 29,702 | 30,128 | 30,848 | 31,684 |
| 45 | | | | | | | |
| 46 | Budget Requirement Increase Year on Year | 720.7 | 162.4 | 265.2 | 426.3 | 719.4 | 836.0 |
| 47 | % Budget Increase | 2.5% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 2.4% | 2.7% |
| 48 | | | | | | | |
| 49 | Financed by: | | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | | | |
| 51 | Revenue Support Grant (RSG): expected to cease in 2020/21 and be included within increased business rates funding | 2,856 | 2,474 | 2,283 | 1,977 | 1,712 | 1,483 |
| 52 | Business Rate Baseline | 2,136 | 2,249 | 2,158 | 2,249 | 2,326 | 2,381 |
| 53 | Business Rate Top Up | 3,694 | 3,776 | 3,779 | 3,860 | 4,010 | 4,232 |
| 54 | Adjusted 2017/18 Business Rates Top Up following revised VOA list | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 55 | Business Rates Grant | 195 | 195 | 192 | 192 | 192 | 192 |
| 56 | Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) | 291 | 0 | 229 | 100 | 50 | 0 |
| 57 | Council Tax (the remainder) | 19,972 | 20,906 | 20,971 | 21,750 | 22,558 | 23,395 |
| 58 | Utilisation of Collection Fund Surplus Reserve | 270 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 59 | Redistribution of Business Rates Retention Levy Account surplus | 0 | 0 | 90 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 60 | | | | | | | |
| 61 | | | | | | | |
| 62 | | 29,437 | 29,599 | 29,702 | 30,128 | 30,847 | 31,683 |
| 63 | | | | | | | |
| 64 | Band D equivalent Tax base | 208,933 | 212,353 | 213,017 | 216,611 | 220,269 | 223,992 |
| 65 | % change on Band D's | 2.09% | 1.64% | 1.95% | 1.69% | 1.69% | 1.69% |
| 66 | Leading to an average council tax (Band D) of | 95.59 | 98.45 | 98.45 | 100.41 | 102.41 | 104.45 |
| 67 | | | | | | | |
| 68 | % increase | 2.99% | 2.99% | 2.99% | 1.99% | 1.99% | 1.99% |
| 69 | | | | | | | |
| 70 | Use of Transformational Reserves Summary | | | | | | |
| 71 | | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed | Proposed |
| 72 | | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 73 | | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| 73 | Transformational Earmark Reserve for Budget Setting | 4,408 | 4,169 | 4,655 | 3,333 | 2,342 | 1,610 |
| 74 | Actual 2017/18 underspend (£486k) and 2018/19 Predicted Revenue Underspend (£555k) | 486 | 0 | 555 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 75 | Contribution to/from Transformational Earmarked Reserves | -239 | -1,816 | -626 | -941 | -482 | -7 |
| 76 | Uses of Transformational Reserve for investment into the Control Mobilisation Project | 0 | 0 | -1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 77 | Annual use of Transformational Reserve for Strategic Projects and Improvements | 0 | 0 | -250 | -250 | -250 | -250 |
| 78 | Reduction of General Reserve from £2.6m to £2.4m, followed by reduction to £2.1m in future year | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 300 |
| 79 | Net Balance Transformational Earmark Reserves | 4,655 | 2,353 | 3,333 | 2,342 | 1,610 | 1,653 |

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Medium Term Savings and Efficiencies 2019/20 to 2022/23

| £'000s 2018/19 | Ref | Savings/Efficiencies | £'000s 2019/20 | £'000s 2020/21 | £'000s 2021/22 | £'000s 2022/23 |
|-------------------|-----|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 35 | 1 | Reduction of One Area Commander post and a Service Operational Commander (SOC) allowance (main financial impact was in 2017/18). | | | | |
| 15 | 2 | Income from Property Rents & Collaboration | | 8 | | |
| 0 | 3 | Control Income generation | 15 | | | |
| | 4 | Management Information System (MIS) - Wholetime Rota/Availability System, Human Resources, Technical Equipment | 45 | 44 | | |
| 0 | 5 | Saving following Procurement of new Fire Fighter PPE Contract (was £50k in 18/19, now additional £50k therefore £100k in total) | 100 | | | |
| 35 | 6 | Air Bags (operational use for lifting) | | | | |
| 20 | 7 | Re-tender of service wide waste contract | | | | |
| 1 | 8 | Refreshments reduction at Committees and meetings | | | | |
| | 9 | Change of 4th Area Commander post to Green Book Head of Service (subject to natural turnover) | | | 15 | |
| 7 | 10 | Printers/Photocopiers leasing renegotiation | | | | |
| | 11 | Draw down apprenticeship levy (therefore reduction in training budget) | 50 | | | |
| | 12 | Collaboration Savings | | 20 | | |
| | 13 | 2019/20 Zero Base Budget Exercise (forecast reduction) | 100 | | | |
| | | New Savings/Efficiencies for 2019/20 Budget process | | | | |
| | 14 | Intelligence Led Response Project | | | 340 | 80 |
| | 15 | To capture Fire & Rescue Indemnity Company - no Insurance Premium Tax | 20 | | | |
| | 16 | Savings from MDT collaborative procurement and review of licences | 40 | | | |
| | 17 | Savings due to new ICT contract | 5 | | | |
| | 18 | Savings from internal Blue Light Installations | 20 | | | |
| | 19 | Procurement - (various including stationery, cleaning materials & Fire Safety checks) | 10 | | | |
| | 20 | Energy Management Savings (Insulation & works) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | 21 | To capture salary abatement & pension savings | 85 | | | |
| | 22 | Principal Officer review/restructure | | 50 | 13 | |
| 113 | | | 495 | 127 | 373 | 85 |

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2019-20 to 2022-23

| Capital Budgets 2018/19 | Ref | Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority Capital Programme | Capital Budgets 2019/20 | Capital Budgets 2020/21 | Capital Budgets 2021/22 | Capital Budgets 2022/23 |
|-------------------------|-----|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| £000's | | Scheme | £000's | £000's | £000's | £000's |
| | | Fleet: | | | | |
| 404 | 1 | Vehicles/associated equipment | 1,290 | 917 | 447 | 280 |
| | | ICT Projects: | | | | |
| | | IT Developments | | | | |
| 320 | 2 | Server hardware renewal (deferred from 2015/16) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | IT & Communications | | | | |
| 211 | 3 | Renewal of Risk Information Mobile Data Terminals (GPS, premises information) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 4 | Primary Network Switch replacement | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 5 | Network Structured Cabling replacement | 0 | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 6 | Local Area Network (LAN) replacement | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 7 | Secondary Network Switch replacement | 0 | 35 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 8 | Renewal of Mobilising System Mobile Data Terminals | 276 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 104 | 9 | Xen Desktop (VDI phase 2) (reallocated to revenue) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 77 | 10 | Sharepoint upgrade (reallocated to revenue) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 11 | Asset Management System (now 18/19 revenue) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | New ICT 2019/20 Budget Round: | | | | |
| 0 | 12 | Wi-fi refresh | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| | | General: | | | | |
| 80 | 13 | Capital Works - Service Wide (lighting replacements, CCTV, fire protection, etc) - All locations | 68 | 86 | 52 | 27 |
| 0 | 14 | Drill yard resurfacing (Biggleswade, Luton, Woburn) | 25 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| 0 | 15 | WC/Shower facility refurbishments (Amphill, Dunstable, Harrold, Workshops, Training, Luton) | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 16 | Heating - boiler replacements (Amphill, Bedford, Woburn) | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 17 | Bay Floor replacements (Bedford, Biggleswade, Pottton, Shefford, Toddington) | 0 | 0 | 65 | 0 |
| 0 | 18 | Dormitory refurbishment (Bedford, Luton) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| 0 | 19 | Station Kitchen Refurbishments (Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard, Stopsley) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| 15 | 20 | Fitness Equipment Expenditure | 8 | 8 | 15 | 15 |
| 42 | 21 | Workshop vehicle lifting equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 22 | Future Capital Programme Schemes (yet to be finalised, reviewed and approved) | 0 | 0 | 800 | 900 |
| 0 | 23 | Community Facility - Bedford Station | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1,253 | | TOTAL | 1,736 | 1,354 | 1,379 | 1,293 |
| | | Capital Financing Summary | | | | |
| 1,119 | | RCCO = Revenue Contribution to Capital | 1,396 | 1,258 | 1,329 | 1,238 |
| 134 | | Capital Receipts & Reserve Utilisation | 340 | 96 | 50 | 55 |
| 1,253 | | Total | 1,736 | 1,354 | 1,379 | 1,293 |

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Bedfordshire

Fire and Rescue Service

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Medium-Term Financial Strategy

2019/20 – 2022/23

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Annex 1 Medium-Term Revenue Plan
(not attached to this version, see Appendix 1 of the 2019/20 budget report)

Annex 2 Medium-Term Capital Programme
(not attached to this version, see Appendix 3 of the 2019/20 budget report)

1. Introduction

This is Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority's (BFRA) Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It is a four year strategy which covers the financial years 2019/20 to 2022/23 and seeks to build upon the work undertaken in developing previous MTFS. It contains the Authority's agreed plans for both revenue and capital expenditure and the planned sources of funding to support that expenditure. It also explains the Authority's supporting strategies for matters such as council tax levels, efficiency savings, the use of reserves/reserves strategy and capital funding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. National Context

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

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

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

In a number of Fire and Rescue Authorities, moves are being taken for the Police and Crime Commissioner to take on the governance responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service. This has already taken place in Essex and more are likely to follow.

In April 2017 the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) was formed. The NFCC is made up of senior representatives from all fire and rescue services across the UK. The new Council provides clear, professional advice to government (including devolved administrations) and the wider sector on matters such as professional standards, operational guidance, research and sharing best practice, while supporting the whole of the UK FRS.

As part of the reform agenda, a Fire and Rescue inspectorate (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, HMICFRS) has been created. The Authority's review took place in the first tranche of inspections in 2018. The results of this can be found at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>

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

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

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

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 represented the most comprehensive reform of the statutory framework for the service for more than fifty years and brought about far reaching changes to the way in which individual fire and rescue authorities plan and deliver their services. Amongst the most fundamental of these was the replacement of the previous prescriptive standards of fire cover with a framework for local integrated risk management planning, a duty to engage in preventative community safety work and the provision for a National Framework (revised in June 2018) to provide clarity for Fire and Rescue Services on the Government's expectations.

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

Reform

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

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

1. Efficiency and Collaboration

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

2. Accountability and Transparency

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

3. Workforce Reform

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

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

On a more local level; the Service continues to work with a range of statutory and non statutory partners in pursuit of joint initiatives that will make our communities safer and healthier. With shrinking budgets and a Government desire to ‘do more for

less' the expectations of all partner organisations on each other will increase. As a Service we must ensure we remain best placed to meet this challenge. The Authority actively seeks joint working arrangements to best meet the need of the community. It is likely that following Parliamentary approval, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire will become a voting member of the FRA. The Authority awaits the guidance on this process from the Home Office.

2.2 National Financial Context:

On 13 December 2018 the Government announced the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019/20.

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

Headlines

- Government announced there is new money included in the provisional settlement.
- No increase to the New Homes Bonus (NHB) threshold further next year, and government has provided up to £20 million to fund this. This makes up a considerable part of funding for some councils, particularly shire district authorities.
- Government has provided extra resources to some councils in 2019/20 to cancel the 'negative RSG' adjustment to tariffs and top-ups. The Government has also made an extra £16 million available through the Rural Services Delivery Grant.
- The £180 million surplus on the levy account is returned to local government.
- Continued flexibility for local authorities in setting council tax levels will give some councils the option of raising extra money to offset some of the financial pressures they face next year.
- Further Business Rates Retention pilots will enable aspects of the 75 per cent Business Rates Retention system to be tested prior to implementation for all in 2020/21. Consultations on further Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review have been published alongside the settlement.
- The four year deal runs out in March 2020

The following Council Tax Referendum Principles were announced:

- a core principle of up to 3 per cent applying to shire county councils, unitary authorities, London borough councils, the City of London, the Isles of Scilly, the GLA general precept and fire and rescue authorities.
- a continuation of the Adult Social Care precept, with an additional 2 per cent flexibility available for social care authorities. This is subject to total increases for the Adult Social Care precept not exceeding 6 per cent between 2017/18 and 2019/20, and increases being no more than 2 per cent in 2019/20.
- shire district councils in two-tier areas will be allowed increases of up to 3 per cent, or up to and including £5, whichever is higher.
- police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will be allowed increases of up to £24 in 2019/20 (including the Greater London Authority charge for the Metropolitan Police, and the PCC component of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority precept).
- Directly elected mayors will decide the required level of precept by agreement with their combined authorities.
- Continue to defer the setting of referendum limits for town and parish councils

3. Local Context

3.1 **The Authority's Area:**

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

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

Over recent years the local economy, like many throughout the UK, has moved from traditional manufacturing and heavy industry to one based more upon the service

¹ Source: ONS Mid-Year estimates July 2014.

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

industry. These industries include logistics and air transport, higher education, research and development, tourism and hospitality, creative and cultural businesses, construction, and business services.

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

There are on-going major transport infrastructure improvements and developments to the road system within the county and continued growth at London Luton Airport; a key deliverer in the business passenger market and handling circa 16 million passengers a year in total.

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

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

3.2. The Authority's Strategic Priorities Objectives:

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

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

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

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

In accordance with its corporate planning policies and procedures, the Service undertakes a strategic assessment twice per year that assists in identifying the

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

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

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

Our Strategic Objectives

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

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

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

And:

We will enhance our customer focus through:

- Use of customer insight techniques (customer segmentation, customer journey mapping etc);
- Enhanced consultation with and involvement of communities;
- Improved use of risk and socio-demographic data to identify our 'at risk' groups and emerging issues such as an ageing population and the impact of mental health/dementia etc;

- Use of social marketing techniques, including the effective use of social media, to change behaviours in regard to staying safe; and
- Using an 'embedded' approach to diversity in relation to our customers and the community.

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

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

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

And:

Using Transformational Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by:

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

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

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

- Having a continued focus on operational excellence through safety and training;
- Reviewing our approach to leadership to determine the critical capabilities required of leaders to deliver the Service's future strategies;
- Having a continuing ethical and moral leadership approach;
- Developing an expanded skills-base and flexible workforce that will provide public value and a wider range of service delivery outcomes;

- Continue delivering a programme of investment in training and equipment across the Service;
- The use of effective change management processes.
- Using an ‘embedded’ approach to diversity in relation to our staff;
- Maintaining robust individual performance management systems aligned to service strategy;
- Utilising knowledge, skills and competence;
- Succession planning;
- Supporting innovation.

3.3. Government Funding Settlement:

The Government’s provisional settlement was announced on 13 December 2018. The Authority is yet to receive the final settlement figures at the time of writing this report which is due to be published in time for circulation prior to the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 7 February 2019. The final funding announcement was in early February in 2018 for the Authority’s 2018/19 settlement. The provisional settlement figures are detailed below in Table 1.

Table 1: Government Grant Revenue Funding

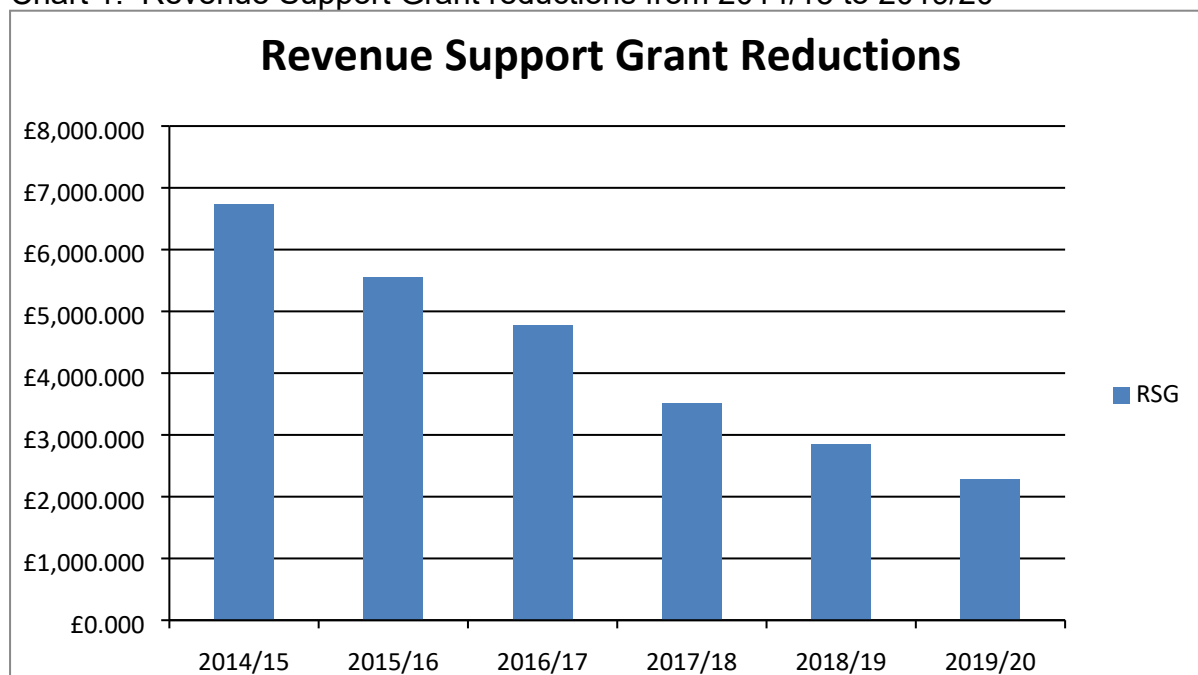
| | 2018/19 £m | 2019/20 £m | % change |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Revenue Support Grant (RSG) | *2.664 | 2.283 | (14.3%) |
| Business Rates baseline funding | 5.716 | 5.847 | 2.3% |
| Settlement Funding Assessment | 8.380 | 8.130 | (3%) |

* The settlement figures for 2019/20 are the last of the four year funding deal that the Authority accepted. Therefore the years 2020/21 onwards are current forecasts. The 2019/20 RSG shown in Table 1 above is £0.191m lower than previously forecast. Although this shouldn’t change as part of the four year funding deal, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) has contacted the Authority advising that an error occurred in the funding calculations between our Authority and another. They MHCLG has reduced our RSG for 2019/20 but is not seeking any reimbursement for prior years. The figure in Table 1 above for 2018/19 is also showing this amended figure for comparison purposes.

As detailed above, the funding reduction between 2018/19 and 2019/20 is 3% over both grant and business rates income.

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

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



* The table above shows the actual Revenue Support Grant (RSG) received by the Authority between 2014/15 and 2018/19 with the figure for 2019/20 being the revised figure for the 4th year of the Settlement after the reduction noted above.

The Authority's Business Rates baseline funding level has been assessed at £5.847m by the MHCLG for 2019/20 and a business rate baseline estimated at £2.068m (the Government's estimate of the Authority's 1% share of locally collected business rates). As our business rate baseline is lower than the baseline funding level, we are therefore a 'top up' authority and will receive the payment of £3.779m from central government (to get back to the £5.847m baseline funding level). All fire and rescue services are top up authorities. The total funding of £8.130m shown above for 2019/20 will be split between £2.283m Revenue Support Grant funding and £5.847m Business Rates. The £2.068m was the estimate by the MHCLG, this has now been confirmed by the local authorities at £2.158m, therefore £90k more than the Government had assumed. The split of this between local authorities is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Local Business Rates income.

| Authority | 2019/20 £'000 | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bedford | 640 | 653 | 666 | 679 |
| Luton | 670 | 683 | 697 | 711 |
| Central Beds | 848 | 913 | 963 | 991 |
| Total | 2,158 | 2,249 | 2,326 | 2,381 |

The above figures are fed into the MTRP. As are the Section 31 Business Rates Grants of £192,000 in total from the three Unitary Authorities.

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

The Chancellor has previously announced that by 2020, authorities will be funded by Business Rates and Council Tax, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will cease. The final details of this are expected before the provisional 2020/21 settlement in December 2019.

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

Table 3: Detailed income split

| | 2018/19 £m | 2019/20 £m | Change £m |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Budget Requirement (£m) | 29.437 | 29.702 | 0.265 |
| <u>Funded by:</u> | | | |
| Precept Requirement (£m) | 19.972 | 20.971 | 0.999 |
| Central and Local Gov Funding (£m) | | | |
| Section 31 Business Rates grant | 8.717 | 8.220 | (0.497) |
| Collection Fund surplus/(deficit) | 0.187 | 0.192 | 0.005 |
| Use of reserve (Collection Fund) | 0.291 | 0.229 | (0.062) |
| Business Rates Levy redistribution | 0.270 | 0.000 | (0.270) |
| | 0.000 | 0.090 | 0.090 |
| Funding Total (£m) | 29.437 | 29.702 | 0.265 |
| TaxBase (Band D equiv. properties) | 208,933 | 213,017 | 4,084 |
| Band 'D' Council Tax | £95.59 | £98.45 | £2.86 |

The above income lines are further explained below:

- The Government Grant funding for 2019/20 is as per the provisional settlement figures provided by the MHCLG, with the exception of the local business rates. For business rates, as noted below, the more up to date local authority information is used.
- The Precept Requirement is the total of council tax income to the Authority.

- The local business rates for 2019/20 are the figures provided by the three local authorities, as reported in their NNDR 1 returns, which are due to be submitted to the MHCLG by 31 January 2019. The years 2020/21 to 2022/23 have been increased by using the MHCLG's figures for the top up grant and the unitary authority figures for the local share. The Section 31 grant included in the table above are for the following reliefs; Multiplier Cap, Small Business Rate Relief and financially minor reliefs.
- The Business Rate top up is the figure calculated and provided by the MHCLG. This is fixed until the next revaluation. A revaluation took place with impacts included within the 2018/19 budget, a further revaluation is expected from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) in 2019/20.
- Council Tax Taxbase, is the Band D equivalent number of properties. For six years there was a lower figure than in 2012/13 and prior years due to the changes in the benefits system, which has reduced the taxbases. This reduced council tax income was offset by the Council Tax Support funding that was separately identifiable in 2013/14 but from 2014/15 has been included in the general Government funding calculations. The taxbase for 2019/20 is now higher for the first time than the 2012/13 levels.

3.4 Damping:

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

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

3.5 Other Revenue Grants:

In addition to the formula funding, the Government provides specific revenue grants. For the two grants listed below, these are forecast to total £220,000 in 2019/20.

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

The total and split of the 2019/20 funding is yet to be received from the MHCLG.

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

3.6. Fire Capital Grant Allocation:

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

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

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

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

The Authority's base budget revenue contributions to fund capital commenced in 2012/13 to support capital expenditure funding in future years. From 2019/20 there is a base budget revenue contribution of c.£1.3m per annum. This is with the assumption that capital grants are not forthcoming. It has been confirmed that there will not be a capital funding bidding round for 2019/20, which is consistent from the prior 3 years too.

The Capital Programme, as per the approved timetable, has followed the same robust challenge/scrutiny route as the revenue budget. The Capital Strategy Team has also reviewed and assessed the bids made, approving the schemes that are attached at Appendix 3 as the 2019/20 Capital Programme.

Key items of note in the proposed 2019/20 Capital Programme of £1.736m are:

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

4. The Medium-Term Revenue Plan

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

The Medium-Term Revenue Plan (MTRP), attached at Appendix 1 of the 2019/20 budget report, sets out the Authority's revenue budget strategy for the next four years and the predicted impact on council tax. It captures all of the revenue budget implications of the forecasts and assumptions set out throughout this document, including the impact of the capital budget on revenue.

A key feature of the Authority's overall revenue budget strategy is the decision to set a budget for 2019/20 which involves a 2.99% increase in council tax on 2018/19 levels. This 2.99% council tax increase is combined with strategies for council tax, efficiency savings and the use of reserves, which together are aimed at delivering significant and sustainable savings over the four year period and beyond, whilst supporting continuing improvements in the quality of service in line with the Authority's strategic priorities.

The council tax strategy, based on current assumptions and estimates, involves increases at 2.99% for 2019/20 and 1.99% for the following 3 years until 2022/23. The 2.99% increases are currently built into the MTRP based on need. This is supported by a strategy for efficiency savings and the utilisation of the 'transformational reserve' in 2019/20 onwards. The support provided to the revenue budget by the planned use of the reserves in the years 2019/20 to 2022/23 is aimed at smoothing the impact of formula grant reductions.

The 2020/21 financial year will be a significant one in terms of funding for the Authority. With the funding formula review, Business Rates Retention and the Spending Review all to take place over 2019, the 2020 settlement could have a material impact on the forecast figures within the current 2019/20 to 2022/23 medium term plan. The 2019/20 is the final year of the four year settlement.

4.2 Components of the Medium-Term Revenue Plan:

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

4.2.1 *Base Budget*

The net revenue budget for running the Service in 2018/19 was £29.676m. After adjusting for an amount of £239,000, which was a contribution from reserves to balance the budget, this decreased the budget requirement to £28.437m.

For the 2019/20 budget, the net revenue budget is £30.328m, with a budgeted use of £0.626m from the Transformational reserve decreasing the budget requirement to £29.702m.

4.2.2 *Impact of Pensions Funding Changes*

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

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

4.2.3 *Forecast Variations*

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

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

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

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

4.2.4 *Inflation*

Staff Pay: Direct employee costs amount to circa £24.0m or 81% of the revenue budget and as a result the annual pay awards in the latter years of this current budget setting process have a significant impact on future expenditure levels. Specifically for 2019/20, there is an increase in pay forecast at 2% for non-uniformed officers and an estimated 5% for uniformed officers from July 2019 until July 2020

and 2% from July 2020. For uniformed officers, this pay award may be linked with a review on conditions of service.

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

Prices Inflation: This includes all non-pay items, from indirect employee costs such as recruitment, insurance, occupational health and health and safety related provision and operational training, through to premises, transport, supplies and services. Non-pay inflation of 2% for general supplies and services has been incorporated into the MTRP for 2019/20. This is lower than current RPI and CPI, but deemed manageable. There is a separate line for an inflation provision for gas, electricity, water and diesel.

4.2.5 *Budget Pressures*

This line of the MTRP refers to proposed items of new or additional expenditure brought forward by managers during the process of budget setting, which have been approved for taking forward into the budget. These are known as 'FMS 3' projects (after the number of the business case template used for submission) and all have been subject to rigorous scrutiny. Within the process for 2019/20, these pressures have also been kept to a minimum through the extensive efforts of managers to identify efficiency savings in order to meet the costs of many of the service improvements to be implemented over the coming year.

4.2.6 *Estimated Net Revenue Expenditure*

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

4.2.7 *Contributions to/from General Reserves*

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

4.2.8 *General and Earmarked Reserves, below*

This line of the MTRP shows how the Authority plans to use the Transformational Reserves, as per the strategy, in years 2019/20 to 2022/23. This strategy is supported by the Authority's efficiency savings plans and the proposed council tax strategy over the four years of the MTRP and is aimed at smoothing the impact of the estimated reductions in formula grant in 2019/20 to 2022/23, thereby allowing

adequate time for longer-term efficiency savings measures to deliver sustained reductions to base budget requirements, whilst maintaining levels of service delivery.

4.2.9 Collection Fund

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

For 2019/20, the respective estimated Collection Fund position of each of its constituent authorities (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton) has resulted in a net collection fund surplus of £229,000 for this Authority. This means that the Authority's net funding from council tax for this year only is effectively increased by that amount. This is detailed on an individual authority basis in Table 4 below.

Table 4: 2017/18 Collection Fund estimated outturn

| Authority | Council Tax £'000 (surplus)/deficit | Business Rates £'000 (surplus)/deficit | Net £'000 (surplus)/deficit |
|------------------|--|---|--|
| Bedford | (93) | 9 | (84) |
| Luton | (121) | 35 | (86) |
| Central Beds | (71) | 12 | (59) |
| Total | (285) | 56 | (229) |

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

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

4.2.10 Budget Requirement and Increase

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

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

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

| | Strategic Objective | 2019/20 £000 | 2020/21 £000 | 2021/22 £000 | 2022/23 £000 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Community Safety | 1 | 1,388 | 1,388 | 1,388 | 1,388 |
| Firefighting and Rescue | 1 & 2 | 14,538 | 15,567 | 15,915 | 15,854 |
| Emergency Response Support | 1 & 2 | 2,686 | 2,683 | 2,651 | 2,651 |
| Training and Development | 2 | 1,660 | 1,578 | 1,578 | 1,578 |
| Human Resources | 2 & 3 | 1,485 | 1,479 | 1,485 | 1,479 |
| Corporate Support | 2 & 3 | 6,369 | 6,049 | 6,328 | 6,481 |
| IT and Communications | 2 & 3 | 1,792 | 1,632 | 1,588 | 1,588 |
| Strategic Management | 3 | 905 | 820 | 770 | 757 |
| Transformational Efficiency Savings | | (495) | (127) | (373) | (85) |
| Net Revenue Expenditure | | 30,328 | 31,069 | 31,330 | 31,691 |
| Contribution to/(from) Reserves | | (-626) | (941) | (482) | (7) |
| Budget Requirement | | 29,702 | 30,128 | 30,848 | 31,684 |

4.2.11 *Financed By*

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

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

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

The taxbase used in the MTRP projections represents the number of Band D equivalent properties in the three constituent local authorities that BFRA precepts upon (ie Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Luton). The taxbase for 2019/20 has been set at 213,017 Band D equivalent properties, based on the information that has been supplied by these authorities. The split per authority is shown in Table 6 below. This is an increase of 1.95% compared to the 208,933 taxbase in 2018/19. The increase is due to various factors including the levelling out of benefits, exemptions and discounts and incentivised new housing developments.

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

Also shown is the percentage increase in council tax projected for each year of the MTRP. As explained previously, these equate to 2.99% for 2019/20 with 1.99% each year until 2022/23.

Table 6: Taxbase – Band D Equivalents

| Authority/Year | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bedford | 60,010 | 61,204 | 62,422 | 63,664 |
| Luton | 50,645 | 51,151 | 51,663 | 52,179 |
| Central Beds | 102,362 | 104,256 | 106,184 | 108,149 |
| Totals | 213,017 | 216,611 | 220,269 | 223,992 |

4.3 Efficiency Savings Strategy

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

The Authority's MTRP for 2019/20 to 2022/23 shows the level of budgeted efficiency/savings planned for each of the four years, which form an integral part of the overall revenue budget strategy. In addition, the Authority's efficiency savings/initiatives during 2018/19 are on track to deliver an underspend which will be used, subject to the approval of the FRA, to contribute to the Transformation Reserve.

As well as making significant savings in previous years, from 2010/11 to 2019/20 £6.588m has been reduced from budgets through budget scrutiny and savings/efficiencies, the Authority's plans for 2019/20 and beyond include making significant efficiency savings through:

- Further operational and non-operational reviews
- Efficiency improvements from investments in ICT
- Procurement savings from new contracts such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Collaboration savings
- Income generation

4.4. General and Earmarked Reserves:

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

The required level of reserves for the period 2019/20 is consistent with previous years. The external auditors have also commented favourably on the current financial position of the authority, in terms of reserves and financial strategy.

General Reserves are a working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary borrowing and as a contingency to cushion the impact

of unexpected events or emergencies. The Authority's General Reserves are detailed in the Reserves Strategy at Appendix 5 to the 2019/20 Budget Report.

Earmarked Reserves, in accordance with the Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) Bulletin 77, can be set up where there are known or predicted requirements. As is common with most other Fire and Rescue Authorities and public sector bodies, BFRA has set up a number of earmarked reserves which have been separated out from General Reserves. These are also detailed in Appendix 5, the Reserves Strategy.

At the time of writing, the forecast year end underspend for 2018/19 is circa £0.465m, this does not include £0.090m relating to extra income from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, following a recalculation of business rates from prior years which was unbudgeted and has already been moved to the Transformational Reserve. The General Reserve of £2.6m, at c.9% of net revenue expenditure, is in line with the current overall average Combined Fire Authority average amount at 9%. This is based on reserves figures at 1st April 2018 available via CIPFA Statistics. As the S151 Officer I am comfortable with the level of reserves and do not deem it too low or high.

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

The Transformational Earmarked Reserve that was specifically set up for budget setting purposes is estimated to total £4.655m at 31 March 2019. As detailed in the MTRP, it is forecast that this will be allocated to offset the budget gap in the years 2019/20 to 2022/23.

5. The Medium-Term Capital Programme

5.1 **The Capital Programme**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The buildings programme for 2019/20 onwards has been developed on the basis that at present there are no further plans to change the type or location of fire stations and therefore the bulk of investment in premises is directed towards enhancement and the provision of new facilities for training and enhanced national resilience. However, it is an area that may change due to joint working/collaboration.

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

The Capital Programme for 2019/20 is fully funded by revenue contributions, with a contribution from the Capital reserves of £340k.

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

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

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

6. Other Considerations

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

2019/20 Budget Process- Assumptions/Uncertainties

Current Assumptions:

- Fire Fighters Pension Scheme Revaluation from 2016, which comes into effect from April 2019, has an estimated average increase of 13% (circa £1.2m). This will be supported by grant via the Home Office in 2019/20. From 2020/21 this will be included within the funding from the Comprehensive Spending Review. There is a forecast budget pressure of £650k in 2020/21 until further information is known.
- Green Book pay award 2% April 2019 onwards (overall average is more due to NJC increases to certain grades)
- Grey Book pay award 5% July 2019 and 2% thereafter (2018 pay award was budgeted at 4%, pay award agreed at 2%. The u/s will be held as a reserve in case backdating of pay award agreed)
- That the additional 1% to council tax will not continue after the two years announced (2018/19 and 2019/20).
- Taxbase in line with previous indications (amended where info supplied)
- Business rates in line with previous indications (amended where info supplied)
- No Capital Funding (bidding round not announced)
- Fire Grant/Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) funded (see below) – ***Potential large funding risk here***
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) grant reductions in line with four year funding deal and continuing at this rate for RSG in 2020/21 to 2022/23 (although RSG ceasing from 2020/21 and included within business rates, this element is still split out for transparency)
- Estimated Collection Fund surplus of £229k in 19/20 (final confirmations due)
- New Dimensions Grant will continue
- Marauding Terrorist Firearms Team (MTFA) funding continuing
- Apprentice budget of £60k per annum remains to fund new posts (training fees to be drawn down from levy paid)
- Agreement by FRA of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) early repayment, with the benefit of reducing earmarked reserves and also revenue pressures in future years.

Uncertainties:

- Impact from Business Rates Retention (no Revenue Support Grant) from 2020/21
- Impact from Spending Review for 2020/21 onwards
- Impact from formula funding review 2020/21 onwards
- Recruitment profile/establishment/retirements – associated recruitment/training costs (20 FF in 2019/20, 15 per annum thereafter)
- New savings/efficiencies in the medium term to address the budget shortfall, subject to work and approval by FRA
- Collaboration (PCC, Ambulance, Police etc) – and associated costs/savings
- Medium term property strategy (One Public Estate bid, sharing etc)
- Contingent Liabilities/Assets included in the Statement of Accounts
- EU directives/legislative changes/Brexit impacts
- Implications arising from Fire Brigades Union (FBU) discriminatory claims relating to transitional pension protection
- Strike expenditure potential
- Outcomes of new digital strategy
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) work area
- Pay Scale review – Green book (Hay review pay line) – being finalised, budgeted £150k in MTRP should be sufficient
- Interest and inflation rate fluctuations (post Brexit too)
- Outcomes of Retained Duty System project (budget increase/decrease)
- Outcome of Grey book pay review – broader role

6.2 Equality Impact:

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

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

6.3. Data Quality:

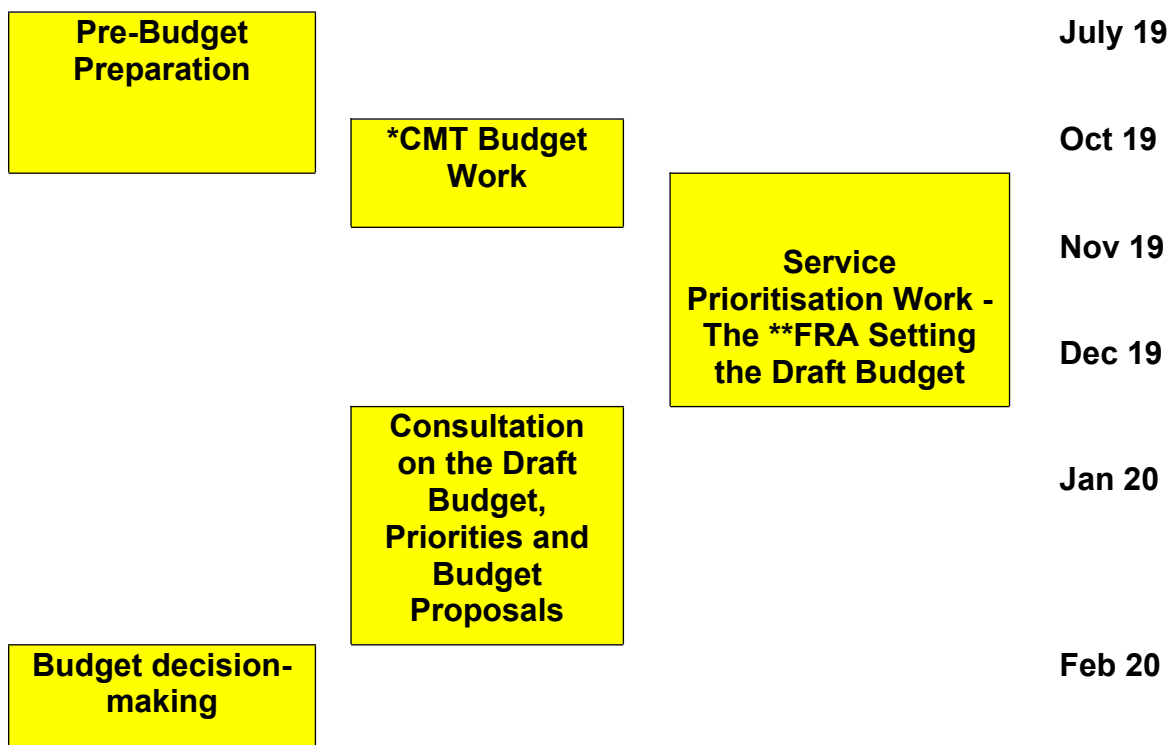
The Authority is committed to achieving and maintaining fit for purpose, quality data enabling sound decision making and informed planning. This is vitally important with key documents, such as this MTFs and the Authority seeks to continually improve the quality characteristics of such data with particular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

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

6.4. Budget Setting Process for Future Years:

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

Diagram 1: The budget setting timetable



*CMT= Corporate Management Team

**FRA= Fire and Rescue Authority

Reserves Strategy – Budget 2019/20 to 2022/23

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Reserves are an essential part of good financial management. They help the Authority to cope with unpredictable financial pressures and plan for future spending commitments. The level, purpose and planned use of reserves are important factors for the Authority to consider in developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and setting the annual budget.

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

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

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

1.3 In setting the budget, the Authority decides what it will spend and how much income it needs from limited fees/charges and the council tax to supplement government funding. The Authority may choose to fund some of its spending from its reserves, or set aside some of its income to increase reserves for future spending.

Having the right level of reserves is important. If reserves are too low, there may be little resilience to financial shocks and sustained financial challenges.

1.4 Authorities are free to determine the reserves they hold. Members are responsible for ensuring that the Authority's reserves are part of the MTFS and need to be appropriate for circumstances. The Chief Finance Officer has a duty to provide members with advice on the level of reserves.

1.5 Fire and Rescue Authorities face significant challenges. The unprecedented reduction in government funding since 2010/11, rising costs and growing demand for many services are all testing the Authority's financial management and resilience. The position is set to become tougher with the Spending Review, Funding Formula changes and Business Rates Retention all scheduled for 2020/21.

- 1.6 Current and future financial challenges pose significant, and increasing, risks for the Authority. The Authority may consider using reserves to balance competing pressures, for example:
- Using reserves to offset funding reductions and protect services – although this can only be a short-term strategy as reserves are a one-off funding resource – and/or invest in making changes that reduce the cost of providing services in the longer term.
 - Increasing reserves to strengthen resilience against future, uncertain cost pressures. A feature of the previous budget strategy and MTFs, was that reserves were built up to be used to support the budget and fund investment in delivering savings through transformation and improving services. The Transformational Budget Reserve is now being utilised to offset the budget gap as strategically planned and invest in service transformation.

2. The approach to setting the Reserves Strategy

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

3 Why the Authority holds reserves

- 3.1 We use different terms to refer to the reserves depending on why they are held. Terms we use in this report have the following meanings:
- *General* – the main balance that the Authority wishes to set aside. This is the £2.6m and is compared annually to other Combined Fire Authorities.
 - Available *earmarked reserves* – funds we hold set aside to meet known or predicted future spending or ring-fenced by previous Authority decisions (such as the Collaboration Reserve)
 - *Other reserves* the Authority holds but which are not available to fund their general spending; some reserves with statutory restrictions on how they can be spent, such as capital receipts or specific revenue grants
 - Total reserves – the sum of earmarked, other and General

- 3.2 Available earmarked reserves include funds for contingent spending that is hard to predict (risk-based reserves) – for example property or vehicle damage, or reserves to cover shortfalls in investment income, pay award projections and so on.
- 3.3 Reserves are distinct from provisions. Provisions are funds set aside for probable future liabilities where the timing and amounts are uncertain

Delivering a balanced budget

- 3.4 There are a number of reasons why a Fire and Rescue Authority or Local Authority might hold reserves, these include to:-

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

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

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

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

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

- 3.7 The 2019/20 to 2022/23 MTFS assumes that there will be utilisation of the Transformation Reserve for budgeting and transformation/innovation purposes. It forecasts that this reserve will be predominantly used by 2022/23. However, with the proposed strategy to reduce both General and Earmarked Reserves once the Authority knows the outcome of the funding for 2020/21 onwards, this will increase the longevity of the Transformational Reserve for another couple of years. The MTRP details the utilisation of General Reserve (line 78) and also Earmarked Reserves (line 77, for the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) holiday. £1.2m used over 6 years enabling revenue budget support of £200k per annum over this period).

4 Reserves and the management of risks – Annual Review

- 4.1 With regard to the Authority's financial stability, reserves are used to manage risks. There are certain earmarked reserves that have been set aside for specific risks, for example: insurance/protection, ill health and early retirement, HR matters, Health and Safety matters, grant loss, the collection fund (in the past) and budget pressures. These reserves and the potential pressures that need to be managed are reviewed as part of the budget setting process. The review for the 2018/19 budget process recommended that the Collection Fund reserve of £270k was used as part of the budget process. This reserve had not been required over recent years and each year sees a Collection Fund surplus for council tax from the Unitary Authorities negating the requirement for this reserve. This position may change in the future and it may be deemed appropriate to reinstate this reserve.
- 4.2 The Authority also manages unforeseen financial shocks by maintaining a General Fund/Working Balance. The Authority's agreed policy is to maintain working balance at £2.6m. Some Authorities set a minimum desired percentage and although the Authority has not done this, the policy would maintain general balances at approximately 9% of the net budget. This level of working balance is kept under review and the Chief Finance Officer has expressed a view that the level is reasonable as part of the budget setting process. Note the planned change though in 2020/21 detailed in para 3.7.

Increasing Financial Risks

- 4.3 The risk environment for local government has significantly increased. This strategy identifies the following issues that have increased risk:
- Continued reductions in Government funding as indicated in the four year settlement offer (2019/20 is the fourth and final year)
 - Changes in the grant funding methodology from 2020/21 onwards – Formula Funding Review and Spending Review
 - Significant movement and growth in resident population numbers brings pressures to a range of services and requires more investment in infrastructure – could have impacts on hydrant and operational provision

- Localisation of business rates presents a collection rate risk, an economic downturn risk and a risk in respect of backdated appeals – From 2020/21, Business Rates Retention Scheme and no RSG
- Welfare reforms including the benefits cap and the impact of Housing Benefit as part of the introduction of Universal Credit which could impact on rent collection for local authorities.

On-going risks in the current strategy

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

5 Budgeted Reserves – Risk Assessment

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

5.2 The forecast value of General Fund Reserves as at 31 March 2019 is £2.6m as detailed in Table 1 below.

5.3 The earmarked reserves are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Risk Assessed General Reserves

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

5.4 The reserves below have been set aside for foreseen circumstances that may necessitate usage. They are annually reviewed and if not deemed necessary, released to support the revenue budget. Some have been set up as a result of

base revenue budget scrutiny, where budgets in the past were held for just in case events necessitated their use. Where this was so, these have been removed from base revenue budget and an earmarked reserve created. The large items, such as ESMCP, Hydrants and the Replacement mobilising system, are where the spend is unknown so these amounts have indicatively been set aside to avoid budget pressure in the medium term and to assist with the Medium Term budget setting. The items listed below are not contractually or legally committed, at this point in time. All are clearly linked to supporting the Authority's service delivery plans.

Table 2: Earmarked Reserves

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

5.5 Other Reserves for noting:

- Collaboration Reserve £1.906m (includes 2017/18 year end additional contribution of £498k from Home Office Pensions refund)
- Capital Receipts Reserve £697k

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

The following reserves held at year end 2017/18 were used as part of the 2018/19 budget process:

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

Annex 1 – Extract from National Framework reference reserves

Reserves

1.1

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

1.2

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

1.3

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

1.4

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

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

1.5

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

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

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is an annual review of the level of reserves. The detail on the level and strategy for both General and Earmarked Reserves is included within the Reserves Strategy. The levels are currently £2.375m for general earmarked reserves and there is a risk assessed General Reserve of £2.600m. No changes are proposed to these reserves levels for 2019/20, but as detailed in the Strategy and MTRP, from 2020/21 onwards reductions are proposed. The level of general reserves was compared with those of other fire authorities and compared favourably with the average percentage. The Transformational earmarked reserve, used for budget setting purposes, is forecast to be £4.655m at the 2018/19 year end in line with the Authority's financial strategy. This excludes the 2018/19 year-end underspend, currently forecast to be £0.555m.

The reserves are fully detailed in the Reserves Strategy.

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

Gavin Chambers CPFA
Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2018
Item No. 9

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: ENHANCING OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE THROUGH THE SHARING OF BRIGADE MANAGERS WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

For further information Andrew Hopkinson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel No: 01234 84 5112

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To advise the Fire and Rescue Authority on opportunities to extend the existing collaboration between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) for sharing Area Commanders to also include the sharing of Brigade Managers, thereby further enhancing the resilience of the strategic operational command structure within both services.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Authority agrees to establish formal arrangements to share Brigade Manager operational cover between Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services and delegates the development and implementation of these, including any appropriate legal agreements, to the Chief Fire Officer.

1. Background

- 1.1. To discharge the Authority's duties under both the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) and Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA), BFRS is required to plan for, and respond to, all reasonably foreseeable events and emergencies. In addition, the Authority has legal duties to secure the provision of suitably trained personnel to carry out its core functions including responding to emergency incidents.
- 1.2. The Incident Command System (ICS) constitutes the doctrine of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in the context of emergency incident management and is recognised as the 'nationwide safe and effective system for managing incidents'. The system effectively enables all FRS to not only manage their own operations and when working with other FRS to resolve emergency incidents, but also allows them to operate as part of a multi-agency incident management team as required under the CCA. In adopting the ICS, each FRS must also ensure an effective incident management structure and arrangements are in place.

- 1.3. To fulfil the requirements of the ICS at the strategic level, the Authority employs suitably trained and experienced operational officers at both Area Manager (Area Commander x4) and Brigade Manager (Principal Officer x2) levels.
- 1.4. Like other FRSs, Bedfordshire has experienced a long term reduction in incident demand, but is cognisant of its requirement to provide a safe and effective operational command structure in the event of an incident. It is therefore appropriate to explore alternative models that provide this level of assurance whilst affording the Service greater flexibility with regards to senior management posts. In August 2014, following a review of operational command requirements, and the areas of responsibility of each Principal Officer (PO), the Authority realised efficiency savings through removing the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) post and elevating the responsibilities of the Area Commanders to include the provision of strategic level command operational response.
- 1.5. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) provide Brigade Manager level operational cover and both are conditioned to work a continuous duty system meaning they are available 24/7 to respond to the needs of any emergency incident or urgent Authority business, and one or other must always be in the country and within 6 hours travelling time of the Bedfordshire county area.
2. Improving resilience in Brigade Manager level cover – collaboration opportunity
 - 2.1. Since the removal of the ACFO post in 2014, these arrangements have been suitable and sufficient to meet all requirements allowing for rotation, rest and recuperation during long and complicated incidents and whilst maintaining normal business as usual activities.
 - 2.2. However, there are a number of foreseeable scenarios where the resilience of these arrangements may not meet the legislative obligations placed upon the Authority. For example, either the CFO or DCFO could be incapacitated due to illness and/or injury. Another example could see either one more than 6 hours travel away from the County area on holiday or Authority business and whilst they would make immediate plans to return, this would result in a significant delay in their physical involvement with a major operational and/or organisational incident. Either example would leave just one of the operational POs (with delegated authority) to deal with a long, complex and protracted incident, as well as business as usual activities, which would be unsustainable. Whilst the likelihood of these scenarios occurring is low, the risk it presents the Authority is very high.

- 2.3. Our colleagues in Cambridgeshire face the same issue and risks as those outlined above. In 2016, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) also reduced the number of operational POs from three to two. Brigade Manager level cover is now fulfilled by the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.4. Members will be aware of the existing collaboration with CFRS that has successfully established a shared Area Commander rota, greatly enhancing the resilience and flexibility of the operational command arrangements across both services. Both Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire always have at least one AC available but the shared rota allows for either AC to be deployed to and, if required, take command of operational incidents in either County.
- 2.5. Recent discussions between the senior management teams of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire FRSs indicate there is mutual benefit in exploring the opportunity to extending this collaboration to include the sharing of Brigade Manager level cover across both Services.
3. Implications
 - 3.1. Under the proposed arrangements, the four operational POs from BFRS and CFRS would only provide operational cover across both Authority areas. Normal functional managerial duties and responsibilities would not be affected.
 - 3.2. In order, to fulfil the strategic and delegated functions of a Brigade Manager at either an operational incident or an SCG in another Authority area, the individual must be legally empowered to do so.
 - 3.3. Initial legal advice suggests that the existing Scheme of Delegations for both Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire and the respective Section 13/16 agreements may need to be amended to allow for this and/or to protect either Authority from legal challenge. An appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will also need to be drawn up to provide further clarity of any such arrangements.
4. Next Steps
 - 4.1. The Cambridgeshire Fire Authority has already given approval to establish arrangements for sharing Brigade Managers with Bedfordshire.

- 4.2. It is proposed that, under the guidance of both Chief Fire Officers and in consultation with the respective Monitoring Officers, an appropriate legal operating framework will be established to enable the extension of the existing collaboration with CFRS to include the sharing of Brigade Manager level operational cover.
- 4.3. At this stage, it is considered sensible to move towards a shared rota in an incremental manner, building upon the success of the shared AC rota. The existing strategic operational training and familiarisation programme will also be expanded prior to any arrangements coming into effect.
5. Recommendation
 - 5.1. The Authority agrees to establish formal arrangements to share Brigade Manager operational cover between Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services and delegates the development and implementation of these, including securing any appropriate legal agreements, to the Chief Fire Officer.

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

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For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2018
Item No. 10

REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR A 'NO DEAL' BREXIT

For further information Andrew Hopkinson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel No: 01234 84 5112

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To advise Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) on the work Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) have been undertaking in preparation for a 'no deal' Brexit, both internally and working with the multi-agency partners of the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF).

RECOMMENDATION:

The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to minimise the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit as well as raising any further issues of concern of which they have become aware through their work in other areas.

1. Background

- 1.1. In September 2018 instruction was given by Central Government via the BLRF to begin work on planning for a "no deal" Brexit. This was to be done by individual agencies as well as on a multi-agency level.
- 1.2. As a Category 1 responder, under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), BFRS has a duty to work in collaboration with other Category 1 responders to support the Bedfordshire's response to, and recovery from, potential incidents.

2. Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum Planning

- 2.1. The Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF) has engaged with key local partners to discuss the potential impact of the UK's exit from the EU and assess the risks relevant to Bedfordshire. BFRS representatives have participated in a number of national seminars and tele-conferences.
- 2.2. A multi-agency EU Exit scenario-based workshop, facilitated by the Resilience and Emergencies Division (RED) of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was held on 20 December 2018, exploring the issues and impacts of Brexit covering three phases:
 - 4 weeks before exit;
 - 2 days after exit; and
 - 8 weeks after exit.

- 2.3. The outcomes from this workshop have influenced the development of a number of identified Reasonable Worse Case Scenario (RWCS) planning assumptions considered applicable to the Bedfordshire area and covering the following areas:
- Travel, Freight & Borders;
 - Disruption of Services & Supply Chains;
 - Information & Data Sharing; and
 - Demonstrations and Disorder.
- 2.4. In the lead up to and beyond the 29 March (the date scheduled for the UK to leave the EU), the BLRF has activated its command and control arrangements and has established a rolling programme of Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups (SCG and TCG, respectively) with the first SCG meeting held at BFRS Headquarters on 7 January.
3. BFRS Business Continuity Planning
- 3.1. Internally, members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have been reviewing their Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans through the lens of a 'no deal' Brexit and a specific risk has been established on the Corporate Risk Register to help co-ordinate the review and mitigation of the potential impacts.
- 3.2. The work undertaken internally takes account of the BLRF planning assumptions and guidance received from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) that has a nominated national lead to co-ordinate the Brexit planning and preparations across the sector.
- 3.3. The NFCC guidance emerged following their participation in a Home Office led workshop on 30 October that specifically considered 3 different aspects:
- Any possible procurement or supply chain issues;
 - Potential operational impacts on the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS); and
 - Support which may be provided to assist Police Forces.

Procurement or supply chain issues:

- 3.4. The NFCCs Strategic Commercial Board (SCB) has sought to identify any potential risks to the sector following Brexit, engaging with the Fire Industries Association (FIA) who, from a practical perspective, have identified the effects of delays on EU imports of products and components as the biggest potential practical impact on the sector although they suggest normal business continuity plans should enable the sector to deal with this kind of delay.
- 3.5. A review of the BFRS and BLRF fuel business continuity plans has been undertaken to take account of border disruptions and possible customer behaviour (panic buying) causing localised issues.

Potential Operational Impacts for the FRS:

- 3.6. Increased demonstrations and a rise in public disorder could potentially impact on the FRS from an operational perspective. At present Bedfordshire Police have no intelligence that significant levels of civil disorder are likely in any Brexit scenario, nor would any evidence to the contrary typically appear until much closer to an actual event. However, BP have advised they are planning for providing mutual aid reinforcements to other parts of the UK.
- 3.7. Planning for an unknown level of threat around civil disturbances is extremely challenging and therefore some effort to try and quantify a reasonable worst-case scenario has been made. While the police intelligence does not anticipate disruption on the scale seen in the widespread civil disturbances that took place across 10 police force areas in summer 2011, those events exemplify the sort of issues which can arise during public protest.

Support for Police Services:

- 3.8. The NFCC has suggested that FRSs and police forces should consider and agree what, if any, support could be provided at a local level. The support that would be available to police forces from FRSs may differ significantly in each service depending on local arrangements, capacity and capability. BFRS already work closely with BP across a number of areas and will continue to do so. BP have not made any specific requests to increase support from BFRS.

4. Next Steps

4.1. This is a fast-moving issue and a great deal more work may be required as more information becomes available but the BLRF is well placed to receive and respond to any emerging issues. BFRS will continue to review its business continuity management plans and provide effective support and leadership to the BLRF.

5. Recommendation

5.1. The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to minimise the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit as well as raising any further issues of concern of which they have become aware through their work in other areas.

ANDREW HOPKINSON
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: LOCALISM ACT 2011 – PAY STATEMENT FOR 2019

For further information on this Report contact: Ms Denise Clarke
Head of Human Resources
Tel: 01234 845048

Background Papers:

- Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector March 2011 (available on request)
 - DCLG Openness and accountability in local pay: Draft guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act November 2011 (available on request)
 - Localism Act 2011 Chapter 20 Part 1 Local Government, Chapter 8 Pay Accountability (available on request)
 - Localism Act Pay Policy Statements guidance for Local Authority Chief Executives November 2011 (available on request)
 - Policy on Principal Officer Salary reviews – March 2009 (available on request)
 - 2018 Pay Policy Statement (available on request)
 - Localism Act 2011 – Pay Policy Statement FRA paper February 2018 (available on request)
 - Local Government Association Pay Policy and Practice in local authorities 2013 (available on request)
 - Local Government Transparency Code 2015
-

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To advise the Fire Authority of the requirement to agree and publish an annual pay policy statement and its constituent parts for the financial year **2019/20**.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the submitted proposed pay policy statement for **2019/20** be approved.

1. Introduction

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

recommended to Fire and Rescue Authorities by the Head of Workforce at the Local Government Association via the principal negotiating officer of the National Joint Council for Fire and Rescue Authorities in November 2013.

2. Pay Policy Statement Content

2.1 Matters that must be included in the statutory pay policy statement are:

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

2.2 The Act does not require the pay policy statement to include numerical data on pay; the statement is about policy and not the actual pay of individuals.

2.3 Information that has changed since the last Annual Pay Policy Statement is highlighted in bold.

3. Process for Annual Adoption of a Pay Policy Statement

3.1 The Localism Act also prescribes that the pay policy statement must be approved formally by a meeting of Members. In the case of a Fire and Rescue Authority, it cannot be delegated to any sub-committee and must be approved by the end of March each year, and can be amended in-year. It must also be published on the Authority's website (and in any other way the Authority chooses) and must be complied with when the Authority sets the terms and conditions for a Chief Officer.

4. Information

4.1 Nationally negotiated pay increases for employees covered by the Green Book (National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions), are applied as advised by the National Joint Council. **In April 2018 the NJC announced agreement on a two year pay deal for 2018 and 2019. The first year of the pay deal provided a 2%**

increase for the majority of employees, with those on lower pay points receiving between 9% and 3%, this bottom loading of the pay award was primarily made to secure a bigger increase for lower earners and in order to meet the obligations of the National Living Wage. In the second year of the pay deal Green Book employers are required to implement a new pay spine, which entirely replaces the current pay spine. The Service is currently preparing to assimilate employees from their existing spinal column point to their new spinal column point on 1 April 2019. This will result in a bottom rate of £9.00 per hour and a 2% pay award for most employees.

- 4.2 Nationally negotiated pay increases for employees covered by the Grey Book (National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services) are applied as advised by the National Joint Council. **In October 2018 the NJC announced a pay award of 2% backdated to 1 July 2018 for grey book employees whilst negotiations continue to put in place a longer term deal. Any longer-term deal is contingent upon a successful conclusion to negotiations regarding broadening the role of the fire and rescue service and securing additional funding from government.**
- 4.3 In accordance with nationally negotiated pay awards advised by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services **in July 2018 a two-stage approach to the 2018 pay settlement was made to Gold Book employees (the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer) providing a 1.0% increase effective from January 2018, rising to a 2.0% increase on 2017 basic salary levels from July 2018.**
- 4.4 The Fire Authority is asked to consider and approve the proposed pay policy statement at Appendix 1.

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

ANNUAL PAY STATEMENT OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

1. Introduction and Purpose

This is the Pay Statement of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service covering the period April 2019 to March 2020.

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

This pay statement has been approved by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and is effective from 1 April 2019. It will be reviewed annually and in accordance with new or proposed legislation to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

2. Accountability and Decision Making

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

3. Responsibility and Scale

The Service is directly responsible for a budget of £30.669m and for the employment of 580 staff.

4. The Service Pay Strategy

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

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

4.1 Firefighting Roles - Salary and Remuneration

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

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

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

4.2 Support Roles - Salary and Remuneration

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

The pay structure is aligned to the National spinal column point system. In 2005 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service applied the **Korn Ferry (formerly Hay)** analytical job evaluation process that systematically ranked each job objectively and fairly. This evaluation system is a recognised best practice non-discriminatory method of ranking jobs against a pre-determined scale. The system is used in over ninety countries and within the public and private sector. **In 2018 Korn Ferry were commissioned to quality assure the job evaluation scheme and reviewed the ranking of all Green Book roles against the pre-determined scale to ensure the job evaluation scheme was being applied correctly.**

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

In 2019 Green Book employers are required to implement a new National pay spine, which entirely replaces the current pay spine. The Service is currently preparing to assimilate employees from their existing spinal column point to their new spinal column point on 1 April 2019.

4.3 Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officer - Salary and Remuneration

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

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

Data on senior salaries is published in the annual statement of accounts and the most recently produced **are available at page 61 of the Bedfordshire Fire Authority Annual Statement of accounts 2017-2018 which can be accessed** on the internet at <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Finance-and-budget/Statement-of-Accounts-2017-18-FINAL.pdf>

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

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

When legitimately incurred in the performance of their duties all employees are able to claim a restricted range of legitimate expenses. These are reimbursed in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions specified in the Gold, Grey or Green Book. All expenses have the usual audit requirements with the requirement to produce receipts, authorisation of all expenditure and the requirement to retain records. Eligible employees have access to the car leasing scheme. Operational

officers can utilise pool cars to undertake their operational duties and responsibilities. Use of a pool car for non-official purposes will require reimbursement to the Service.

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

- Shift allowances for Green Book employees working unsocial hours;
- Flexible Duty System supplement for fire officers conditioned to the flexible duty system;
- Overtime allowances for employees required to work additional hours;
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) payments for Grey Book employees who meet the qualifying length of service criteria and are able to demonstrate and provide evidence of continuous professional development in four key areas prescribed by the NJC;
- Essential user car allowance or (Grey Book only) access to a lease car scheme for employees required to use their own vehicle on official business;
- Honoraria payments to recognise employees acting up to a higher role, special projects involving work outside the job role and outstanding contribution;
- Additional Responsibility Allowance to reward additional skills and responsibilities outside of the requirements of Grey Book job roles;
- Acting up and temporary promotion allowances for employees performing the duties of a higher role.

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

6. Severance Arrangements

Provision for severance arrangements exist in the Local Government Pension Scheme applicable to Green Book and Control employees. The Fire Authority has previously agreed policy in relation to The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Regulation 7 states that employing authorities must formulate, publish and keep under review discretionary powers that they apply in the exercise of their

discretionary powers under regulations 5 and 6. They provide the discretions that local authorities can use in awarding compensation to employees whose employment is terminated early as the result of redundancy, early retirement on the grounds of efficiency.

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

7. Pension Schemes

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

Employer contribution rates for each scheme are set by Actuaries and subject to regular review. As at 1 April 2018 the employer contribution rates are 21.7% for 1992 Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 11.9% for the 2006 New Fire Fighters Pension Scheme, 14.3 % for the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015, 21.7% for the Retained Modified Pension Scheme and **17.3%** for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Employee contribution rates are defined by statute and vary across the different pension schemes. Current employee contribution rates as at 1 April 2018 for the 1992 Firefighters pension scheme range from 11% –17%, contribution rates for the 2006 New Firefighter Pension Scheme are 8.5% - 12.5%, Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 contribution rates range from 10% - 14.5%, contribution rates for the Retained Modified Pension Scheme are between 11% - 17%. The employee contribution rates for the Local Government Pension Scheme are presently 5.5% to 12.5%.

8. Abatement and Re-engagement

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

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

9. Low Pay Definition

The lowest paid employees of the Service are employed on full time (37 hours) equivalent salaries in accordance with the minimum scale point in use within the Service grading structure. As at 1 January 2019, this is Grade 6, spinal column point 17 £9.68 per hour, £18672.00 per annum. The Service believe that this is the most easily understood definition of low pay as it is the lowest pay point routinely used for substantive roles.

10. Pay Multiples

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

The current pay multiple between the lowest paid employee and the highest paid Chief Officer is **7.93:1**. This ratio can be measured as being **lower than** the public sector averages of 8:1 to 12:1 identified by Lord Hutton in March 2011. **The reduction in the current pay multiple to below the public sector average is as a result of the Green Book pay award for 2018 which resulted in a salary uplift equivalent to 5.06% to the lowest paid employees spinal column point.**

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

11. Part-Time Employees

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

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

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

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

Data on senior salaries is published in the annual statement of accounts and the most recently produced **are available at page 61 of the Bedfordshire Fire Authority Annual Statement of accounts 2017-2018 which can be accessed** on the internet at <https://www.bedsfire.gov.uk/About/Finance-and-budget/Statement-of-Accounts-2017-18-FINAL.pdf>.

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

13. Risk Management Implications

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

14. Financial Implications

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

15. Legal Implications

The legal implications are set out in the paper.

16. Environmental Implications

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

17. Equality Implications

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

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2019
Item No. 12**

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUBJECT: HMICFRS INSPECTION UPDATE

For further information on this Report contact: Strategic Operational Commander Andy Peckham
Head of Service Development and Assurance
Tel No: 01234 84 5129

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) of the outcomes of the inspection process in 2018 conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

RECOMMENDATION

That the FRA acknowledges the content of this paper and:

1. Acknowledges the findings of the HMICFRS into Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and
2. Commits to supporting initiatives that provide a response to any recommendations to benefit further improvement across the Service.

1. Background

- 1.1 In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England. Between December 2017 and February 2018 HMICFRS ran a public consultation on its proposed methodology for inspection of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), which Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) responded to with the FRA support. The framework is based on the core measures of effectiveness, efficiency and workforce.
- 1.2 Three tranches of inspection will take place through 2018-19, after each tranche there will be a reporting process. BFRS were selected to be inspected in the first tranche in summer 2018.

2. Evidence gathering

- 2.1 As stated within 1.1, there are three core measures that are reported on; effectiveness, efficiency and workforce. Within each of these core measures are a series of diagnostics; five within effectiveness, two within efficiency and four within workforce.
- 2.2 The report is developed by the inspection team through a range of evidential gathering, which we are informed can contain up to 1,500 different evidence items. All evidence is triangulated to ensure that there is validity in the reporting.

2.3 The evidence areas have included; data submissions, document submission, discovery visits, fieldwork visits, focus groups, direct observations, individual interviews, written self-assessment submissions, strategic briefing, staff surveys and a reporting line (direct to HMICFRS). These have been detailed in previous papers.

2.4 It has been assessed that 1,200 hours (150 days, or 30 weeks) have been committed to supporting this inspection process.

3. Graded Judgements

3.1 The HMICFRS releases the reports for the first 14 FRSs at the same date; 20 December 2018. These will be made available to the public via their website and FRA Members can find further detail here:
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/>

3.2 Attached to this paper is a copy of the HMICFRS report for your consideration.

3.3 The table 1 (below) provides a summary of the graded judgements against the core measures and diagnostics; note that each diagnostic has been graded and each core measure has a summative judgement. There is no overall FRS judgement.

3.4 Good is an expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on having policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant national operational guidance or standards.

3.5 If the Service exceeds expectation it will be judged as Outstanding.

3.6 If there are shortcomings identified it will be judged as Requires Improvement.

3.7 Where serious critical failings of policy, practice or performance are identified, a judgement of Inadequate will be given.

3.8 BFRS has been judged as **Good** for our overall effectiveness. This is important as it reinforces the position that we are effectively keeping the public of Bedfordshire safe.

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Effectiveness | Good |
| Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies | Good |
| Preventing fires and other risks | Requires improvement |
| Protecting the public through fire regulation | Requires improvement |
| Responding to fires and other emergencies | Good |
| Responding to national risks | Good |
| Efficiency | Requires improvement |
| Making best use of resources | Requires improvement |
| Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future | Requires improvement |
| People | Requires improvement |
| Promoting the right values and culture | Requires improvement |
| Getting the right people with the right skills | Good |
| Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity | Requires improvement |
| Managing performance and developing leaders | Requires improvement |

Table 1: summary of the graded judgements

4. Areas for Improvement

4.1 HMICFRS provide areas for improvement and areas of concern within their reporting. BFRS received no areas of concern across all areas of the inspection.

4.2 In total, 23 areas for improvement have been identified. The report contains areas that have been raised within the hot debrief from inspectors immediately after the fieldwork week which has enabled the Service to make progress on some areas already.

4.3 The areas for improvement are listed below:

4.3.1 How effective is the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies

1. The Service needs to improve how it engages with the local community to build up a comprehensive profile of risk in the service area.

Preventing fires and other risks

2. The service should ensure it targets its prevention work at people most at risk.
3. The service should ensure staff carry out prevention work competently. This includes understanding how home fire safety checks help keep people safe. The service should ensure staff understand how to identify vulnerability and safeguard vulnerable people.
4. The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits better.

Protecting the public through fire regulation

5. The Service should ensure that it makes the best use of its specialist resources in implementing its risk-based inspection programme.

6. The Service should assure itself that its enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes a proportionate level of activity to reduce risk. It should also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation.
7. The Service should assure itself that its operational staff carry out fire safety audits competently.

Responding to fires and other emergencies

8. The Service should ensure that staff know how to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents.
9. The Service should ensure it has an effective system for staff to use learning and debriefs to improve operational response and incident command.

Responding to national risks

10. The Service should ensure that it understands national and cross-border risks and is well prepared to meet such risks.
11. The Service should ensure operational staff have a good access to cross-border risk information.
12. The Service should arrange a programme of over the border exercises, sharing the learning from these exercises.

4.3.2 How efficient is the Service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?

Making best use of resources

13. The Service should ensure it is making best use of the transformational reserve to improve how the service works.
14. The Service should ensure the workforce's time is being used efficiently and effectively. This relates specifically to the use of wholetime and fire control resources, and the potential use of on-call staff in the strategic reserve system.
15. The Service should ensure that it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any initiatives. This should include collaboration.

Making the fire and rescue Service affordable now and in the future

16. The Service needs to secure an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks now and in the future. Its future budget gap is increasing, but it has no plans to address and reduce it other than to use reserves. This is not sustainable.
17. The Service needs to make better use of technology to improve bureaucratic frontline working practices that rely on paper-based processes.

4.3.3 How well does the Service look after its people?

Promoting the right values and culture

18. The Service should ensure that its values and behaviours statements are understood and demonstrated at all levels within the organisation.

Getting the right people with the right skills

19. The Service should assure itself that its requirement for competent on-call staff who join as wholetime to complete a probationary training course is value for money and the best use of resources.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity

20. To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure diversity and inclusion are well-understood and become important values of the service, led by chief officers.
21. The Service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures.

Managing performance and developing leaders

22. The Service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high potential staff and aspiring leaders.
23. The Service should ensure its selection, development and promotion of staff is are open, transparent and fair.

5. Recommendations

5.1 The debrief with inspectors following fieldwork week provided opportunity to consider areas for improvement from their initial findings. From this feedback, consideration was given to priorities and those considered more significant have already been commenced.

5.2 Now that the report has been released, consideration will be given to ensuring progress is maintained on areas where we are reported as performing well and to developing the areas for improvement.

To do this we will:

5.2.1 Develop a plan of action that captures the current Service position against each area for improvement and consider appropriate actions and timescales for the delivery;

5.2.2 Rate the actions based on organisational risk to ensure that improvement is appropriately prioritised and achievable within business as usual;

5.2.3 Functional Heads will be responsible to ensuring suitable progress is maintained and evidenced and that outcomes are delivered;

5.2.4 Corporate Management Team (CMT) will monitor the progress; and

5.2.5 Maintain an effective relationship with our HMICFRS Service Liaison Lead (SLL) to continue to demonstrate our commitment toward improvement in relation to their highlighted areas and to other areas of Service performance where this adds further value.

5.3 Our evidence that has been collated and used to support this inspection process will be reviewed, categorised and maintained for future processes.

5.4 In concluding, it is important to recognise the involvement of every member of staff within our Service that has in some way affected the outcomes of the HMICFRS report. In total, 21% of staff directly met with the inspectors and many others have been involved in supporting data and document submissions, planning visits and writing reports.

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

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2019
Item No. 13

REPORT AUTHOR: SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/20

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

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To consider a calendar of meeting dates for the Fire Authority in 2019/20.

RECOMMENDATION:

That, the submitted provisional calendar of dates for meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority and its associated Committees and Groups for the forthcoming year be approved, subject to consideration of the Governance Review paper to be received in March 2019.

1. Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

- 1.1 A calendar for all meetings of the Authority for 2019/20 of the full Fire and Rescue Authority, including meetings of committees and policy and challenge groups, is submitted for Members' consideration.
- 1.2 The constituent Councils were contacted in the preparation of the proposed programme of meetings and their meetings were taken into account where available.
- 1.3 A programme of regular Members' visits to Fire Stations will be put in place, in due course, by the CFOs Strategic Staff Officer.
- 1.4 It will be noted that two Members' Development Days have been included for 2 July 2019 and 29 October 2019 and two Budget Workshop days have been included for 27 November 2019 and 16 January 2020.

JOHN ATKINSON
SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER

FRA Meetings Calendar 2019/20

Public Meetings noted in bold type

| | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| June 2019 | | |
| FRA Annual Meeting | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 6 June 2019 (10:00) |
| Efficiency and People Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 25 June 2019 (10:00) |
| Effectiveness Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 26 June 2019 (10:00) |
| July 2019 | | |
| Members' Development Day | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 2 July 2019 (10:00) |
| Audit and Standards Committee | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 10 July 2019 (10:00) |
| FRA | Dunstable Community Fire Station | 18 July 2019 (10:00) |
| September 2019 | | |
| Effectiveness Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 18 Sept 2019 (10:00) |
| LGA Fire Commission (<i>FRA Chair</i>) | LGA | 20 Sept 2019 (11:00) (Provisional) |
| Efficiency and People Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 24 Sept 2019 (10:00) |
| Audit and Standards Committee | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 26 Sept 2019 (10:00) |
| October 2019 | | |
| FRA | Dunstable Community Fire Station | 17 Oct 2019 (10:00) |
| Members' Development Day | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 29 Oct 2019 (10:00) |
| CFA Conference | Wyboston Lakes | tbc |

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Contact: Nicky Upton 01234 845149 democratic.services@bedsfire.gov.uk

FRA Meetings Calendar 2019/20

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| November 2019 | | |
| Effectiveness Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 20 Nov 2019 (10:00) |
| Efficiency & People Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 26 Nov 2019 (10:00) |
| Budget Workshop (no 1) | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 27 Nov 2018 (10:00) |
| December 2019 | | |
| Audit and Standards Committee | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 5 Dec 2019 (10:00) |
| FRA (Draft Budget) | Dunstable Community Fire Station | 12 Dec 2019 (10:00) |
| January 2020 | | |
| Budget Workshop (no 2) | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 16 Jan 2020 (10:00) |
| February 2020 | | |
| FRA (Budget Meeting) | Dunstable Community Fire Station | 6 Feb 2020 (10:00) |
| March 2020 | | |
| LGA Conference | TBC | TBC |
| Effectiveness Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 17 March 2020 (10:00) |
| Efficiency and People Policy and Challenge Group | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 19 March 2020 (10:00) |
| Audit and Standards Committee | Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters | 26 March 2020 (10:00) |
| April 2020 | | |
| FRA | Dunstable Community Fire Station | 30 April 2020 (10:00) |

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Contact: Nicky Upton 01234 845149 democratic.services@bedsfire.gov.uk

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2018
Item No. 15

REPORT AUTHOR: DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
SUBJECT: BLUE LIGHT COLLABORATION UPDATE

For further information Andrew Hopkinson
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel No: 01234 84 5112

Background Papers: None

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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

PURPOSE:

To provide Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) with a regular update on progress with key collaboration initiatives between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS), Bedfordshire Police (BP) and East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) as managed through the Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board (Blue Light CSB).

RECOMMENDATION:

The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to pursue collaboration with our blue light partners.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a statutory duty on the emergency services to collaborate, where the collaboration is viewed to be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness or where it will improve public safety. BFRS, BP and EEAS have a successful track record of collaborating together operationally on a number of initiatives in recent years.
- 1.2. Collaboration between the three primary emergency services within Bedfordshire is co-ordinated through the bi-monthly Blue Light CSB, jointly chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Constable.

2. Programme Governance

- 2.1. Due to a lack of availability of attendees, the last 2 bi-monthly CSB meetings were cancelled. However, all parties remain committed to supporting the various collaboration workstreams as evidenced by the updates later in this report. The next meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2019.
- 2.2. The work of the CSB is now supported by the sub-ordinate “Blue Light Collaboration Delivery Group” (note this was reported previously as Tactical Delivery Group) which met for the first time on 9 November 2018. With the exception of the Joint HQ project, all key projects and workstreams are being operationally managed by this group who will report to the CSB.

3. Estates Collaboration

3.1. Joint Headquarters:

- As previously reported, both BP and BBFRS have re-affirmed their commitment to working towards co-locating the functions based at our respective HQ sites.
- To move the project forward, it was agreed to establish a specific joint project team, reporting into the Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board. It was agreed in principle to appoint a dedicated project manager on an initial 6 month fixed term contract. Our Head of Finance and Treasurer, Gavin Chambers, is scheduled to meet in January with Assistant Chief Officer Philip Wells from BP to appoint from a shortlist of candidates. This appointment will allow progression of the key priority to revisit and finalise user requirements/specifications, drawing on the knowledge and experience of relevant stakeholders from each organisation.
- A 1 day workshop will subsequently be established to bring the key stakeholders, brief on requirements and use the time to review requirements and specifications.

3.2. Co-Location Sites with activity since last FRA:

- An evaluation of the shared use of Bedford Community Fire Station operating with six Police staff based there and the shared office operating as a 'drop-in' for members of other community policing teams will be shared at next Collaboration Strategic Board.
- The improvement works at Leighton Buzzard Community Fire Station to increase the number of female toilet units and shower facilities on site has commenced.
- An initial meeting with BP has been scheduled to explore the sharing of Toddington Community Fire Station with local police officers.
- The HFAT is meeting with the Head of Estates at EEAS on 30 January to explore further opportunities for co-locating EEAS assets at BFRS sites both in terms of ambulance response and support functions such as workshops.

3.3. Vehicle workshops / Operational Hubs:

- BFRS and BP have met to ascertain mutual needs for vehicle servicing, stores facility, Parking and Garaging and office space if a project to combine our respective workshops was pursued.
- There are ongoing discussions with EEAST to explore the feasibility of collaborating on fleet/workshops for maintaining ambulances including joining as a third party to a combined Blue Light workshops or whether a model based on more localised hubs would be a better option.

4. Response Collaboration

4.1. Effecting Entry:

- The current arrangements for BFRS being mobilised to effect an entry to premises where Medical emergencies are reported been evaluated and we will continue to support this initiative with BP and EEAST.

4.2. Co-Responding:

- This workstream remains on hold due to on-going national negotiations linked to pay and conditions.

4.3. What3Words:

- BFRS is currently working with BP and a commercial provider to explore use of a new Mobile Geo-Application which provides pinpoint location accuracy to 3m x 3m to aid in locating 999 callers. BP adopted this in December 2018 and BFRS Control is examining the process and how it relates to current work in progress with technical equipment. There is a mobile phone loaded with the App in each vehicle.

4.4. Drone (UAV):

- Training was completed in November and the Drone will be fully operational in early 2019. The Drone was successfully deployed to the Kimbolton Road fire in Bedford on 3 January. BP are leading on work to establish a Regional Fire/Police Memorandum of Understanding to provide joint regional support and interoperability.

4.5. Fire Service Control:

- Local inter-control room processes have been agreed which will offer improved communications when serious incidents occur and Police are routinely emailing all Control staff with details of any incidents which could impact upon BFRS mobilisation and passage.
- Station Commander Fire Control is working with Police Control to explore additional collaboration opportunities around capacity and peak demand management and shared space.

4.6. Red Routes:

- The first 3 months have operated as planned and only one issue has been identified, double parking down some Luton backstreets where large vehicles cannot pass through. This is being addressed with BP.

4.7. Motorcycle Deployment and Training:

- A scoping exercise is underway to explore opportunities for training Blood Bike Charity motorcyclists to help them expand their network. We are also considering the implications of providing response in that network. We now have permission from College of Policing to train Police motorcyclists for response under Blue Lights. Work is continuing to establish a cohort of Trainers which could enable an expansion of activities.

4.8. Response Driver training (cars):

- Work continues to identify ways in which BFRS could provide response driver training to Police to alleviate their lack of capacity and backlog. There is a possibility of using income from motorcycle training to pump-prime this arrangement. The scoping exercise includes consideration of recruitment or commissioning of additional trainers who are appropriately qualified.

5. Support Services:

5.1. Communications and Engagement/Public Relations:

- Work to explore the potential extent and options for collaboration between BFRS and Police Communications departments which were previously reported as starting in January has been deferred.

5.2. Procurement:

- BFRS and BP will meet in February to explore potential for benefits achievement in working together more closely at a local level. Police Procurement is a Tri-Force function for Beds/Cambs/Herts save for a limited range of in -county activities.

5.3. Estates and Facilities Management:

- There will be a meeting in February led by Bedfordshire Police to explore collaborative working regarding the management of space utilisation, estate scheme project management and contracts for building servicing and maintenance.

5.4. Training:

- As part of the Joint HQ project, work is underway to detail and map current BFRS and BP shared training provision. The second stage of the exercise will to review the capacity and usage of training spaces and facilities to seek further joint provision.

6. Blue Light Collaboration Workshop

- 6.1. Following on from the successful August Conference, a second workshop event is planned for Monday February 18th. The central theme will be “Managing Community Risk”. The purpose is to map the Community Protection and Prevention activities of BFRS and BP and to seek ways in which shared intelligence, time and capacity could produce benefits for the community and efficiency savings.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. The Authority acknowledges the content of the report and the continued efforts to pursue collaboration with our blue light partners.

ANDREW HOPKINSON
DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
7 February 2019
Item No. 16



Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Information Bulletin

Personnel

Statistics Covering Period 1 October – 31 December 2018

Wholetime Uniformed Staff:

Strength as at 31 December 2018 313

Firefighters on the Retained Duty System:

Strength
(Includes whole time retained) 152

Appointments:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Whole time Duty System | 3 |
| Retained Duty System | 2 |
| Support Staff | 5 |

Leavers:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Whole time | 5 |
| Retained | 2 |
| Support Staff | 5 |

Appointments:

Whole time:

Firefighter S Theodorou with effect from 8 November 2018

Trainee Control Firefighters V Bieron and L Watts with effect from 3 December 2018.

Retained:

Firefighter L Sisson with effect from 1 October 2018

Firefighter J Keane with effect from 8 November 2018.

Support:

M Statham-Clark (ICT User Support Team Leader) with effect from 1 October 2018.

Y Lawson (Software and Integration Services Engineer) with effect from 15 October 2018.

A Quinn (Station Cook - weekend) with effect from 27 October 2018.

D Robinson (ICT Service Engineer) with effect from 12 November 2018.

T Finn (ICT User Support Engineer) with effect from 19 November 2018.

Retirements:

Whole time:

Workplace Development Manager P Goddard (Training Centre) with effect from 9 November 2018 after 27 years and 3 months service.

Support:

RPE Technician T Keech (HQ) with effect from 10 December 2018 after 15 years and 8 months service.

Office Services Manager J Jackson (HQ) with effect from 8 October 2018 after 25 years and 4 months service.

Leavers:

Wholetime:

Firefighter R Barrow (Luton) with effect from 4 November 2018 after 5 years and 2 months service.

Firefighter S Theodorou (Leighton Buzzard) with effect from 23 November 2018.

Training Instructor A Doherty (Training Centre) with effect from 21 October 2018 after 15 years and 3 months service.

Firefighter R Daffey (Stopsley) with effect from 18 October 2018 after 9 months service.

Retained:

Firefighter J Brook (Amphill) left on 9 November 2018 after 3 years and 11 months service.

Firefighter M Hutchinson (Potton) with effect from 19 October 2018 after 7 years and 5 months service.

Support Staff:

N Marlton (ICT Support Technician) left on 7 October 2018 after 13 years and 4 months service.

W Mullett (ICT Service Desk Technician) left on 31 October 2018 after 2 years and 10 months service.

A Guerriero (ICT Support Technician) left on 31 December 2018 after 10 years and 7 months service.

(Contact Mrs S Green, HR Operations Manager, Tel 01234 845152)

Operations

Statistics for the Period 1 October – 31 December 2018

| Incident Statistics | 2018/19 Q3 |
|--|-----------------------|
| Total Incidents attended (Fires, Special Services and Fire Alarms) | 1335 |
| Total Fires Attended* | 368 |
| Primary Fires | 215 |
| Accidental Dwelling Fires | 89 |
| Non Domestic Property Fires | 23 |
| Chimney Fires | 6 |
| Fire Fatalities | 0 |
| Fire Injuries | 9 |
| Total Special Service Attended | 321 |
| Road Traffic Incidents | 108 |
| Road Traffic Accident – Number of Extrications | 20 |
| Total Fire Alarms Attended | 532 |
| Malicious False Alarm | 26 |
| False Alarm Good Intent | 182 |
| Alarm caused by Apparatus | 321 |
| OTB Mobilised To | 30 |

*Note: Total fires attended is not a total of the sub fire categories listed.

(Contact Mr A Turner, Service Performance Officer, Headquarters, Tel 01234 845022)

Incidents of Note

ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

RTC Persons Trapped **M1 Southbound Junction 14** **6 October 2018 - 1429 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Woburn and Buckinghamshire Fire Service and specialist rescue unit from Kempston attended incident involving two cars. One male casualty extracted by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

RTC Persons Trapped **A6 Wilstead Hill to Deadmans Hill** **9 October 2018 - 0850 hours**

Rescue Pumps and specialist unit from Kempston attended a RTC involving three cars. One casualty was extracted by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander D Hobbs, Kempston and Ampthill Fire Stations, Tel 01234 845024)

RTC Persons Trapped **Tennyson Road, Luton** **26 November 2018 - 1254 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Luton and Stopsley attended an incident involving two vehicles. One female casualty released using hydraulic rescue equipment by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

RTC Persons Trapped **Leagrave Railway Station, Luton** **26 December 2018 – 0237 hours**

Rescue pumps from Luton and Stopsley attended an incident involving two vehicles. One casualty extracted by the Fire Service using specialist rescue equipment.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

FIRES

Fire Outside **Manor Farm, Wilden** **10 October 2018 - 1555 hours**

Rescue Pumps from Kempston, Bedford and Ampthill attended a fire involving a large number of agricultural vehicles and equipment. All destroyed by the fire.

(Contact Station Commander D Hobbs, Kempston and Ampthill Fire Stations, Tel 01234 845024)

Barn Fire

Dovehouse Lane, Kensworth

31 October 2018 – 1910 hours

Rescue Pumps from Dunstable and Luton and specialist vehicles from Toddington and Leighton Buzzard attended a barn fire involving 15,000 bales of hay, animal feed and equipment. All destroyed by fire.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

House Fire

Baker Street, Luton

1 November 2018 - 2205 hours

Rescue pumps from Luton and Dunstable attended a fire in a private property. Significant damage to two floors and roof space. Property used for production of drugs. Fire and crime investigations completed.

(Contact Station Commander S Brereton, Luton and Toddington Fire Stations, Tel 01582 825218)

Shop Fire

Saffron Close, Bedford

4 December 2018 - 1518 hours

Rescue Pumps from Kempston attended a fire in a derelict shop over three floors.

(Contact Station Commander D Hobbs, Kempston and Ampthill Fire Stations, Tel 01234 845024)

House Fire

Huntsmans Way, Bedford

12 December 2018 – 0413 hours

Rescue pumps from Bedford, Harrold and Kempston attended a fire in a two storey private premises. One casualty rescued by brigade personnel from ground floor.

(Contact Station Commander I Finch, Bedford and Harrold Fire Stations, Tel 01234 245501)

RESCUES

Calf Stuck in Mud

Old Warden

5 October 2018 – 1330 hours

Rescue pump from Dunstable and specialist rescue unit from Kempston attended one cow requiring rescue from mud.

(Contact Station Commander D Evans, Dunstable and Woburn Fire Stations, Tel 01582 661223)

Rescue from Height

Bideford Green, Linslade

19 October 2018 – 1243 hours

Rescue pumps from Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable attended incident involving one male casualty, extricated from first floor flat roof by the Fire Service.

(Contact Station Commander S Auger, Stopsley and Leighton Buzzard Fire Stations, Tel 01582 459177)

Letters of Appreciation or Complaint

Complaint:

No complaints (past Stage I) have been received for this period.

Appreciation:

We continue to receive letters of appreciation from members of the public, schools and organisations that we visit and/or assist with charitable events.

The following is a selection:

Thank you from a **Member of the Public:**

.....'please pass on our thanks to the fire crews (I think it was Biggleswade and Kempston) who attended a house fire at our home. It was a distressing time for us and the crews were calm, professional and informative. They dealt with the situation in a kind and matter of fact manner which stopped us panicking'.....

A member of the public sent thanks for the assistance they received:

.....'I wish to thank the crews from Luton and Dunstable that assisted the Ambulance Service last night lifting my husband into the ambulance. The FRS personnel were so amazing and wonderful with my husband, I am very grateful'...

Thanks from **Residents of Oakway House:**

.....'please send our heartfelt thanks to the personnel who attended the North Wing fire on Thursday night to keep us safe. We were horrified but humbled'.

Thank you from a **Member of the Public:**

.....'I would like to compliment the crews who attended the fire at my neighbour's property in Sandy, they did an absolutely amazing job, the loss adjusters cannot believe we had so little damage to our own property and that was down to the excellent work carried out by the Firefighters'.....

Thank you from a **Member of the Public** for Dunstable Red Watch:

.....'Within 5 minutes of calling, the crew arrived, and with the kindest and gentlest approach, helped my dad to safety. They turned a traumatic experience into an event my father doesn't remember. I cannot express how grateful I am for the work the Fire and Rescue Service do in general and in this particular case you probably saved my father's life'.....

Forthcoming Events

7 February 2019, 10.00 am
FRA (Budget Meeting), Dunstable Community Fire Station

27 February 2019, 10.00 am
Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

7 March 2019, 10.00 am
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

18 March 2019, 10.00 am
Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

14 March 2019, 10.00 am
Audit and Standards Committee, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

26 March 2019, 10.00 am
FRA Briefing, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters

28 March 2019, 10.00 am
FRA, Dunstable Community Fire Station

(Contact Mrs N Upton, Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor, Headquarters, Tel 01234 845149)

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