

Integrated Risk Management Plan 2009-2012



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1 Foreword

Since 2003, every Fire and Rescue Authority within the United Kingdom has been charged with producing an Integrated Risk Management Plan. This new plan for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes identifies those areas that we will give renewed focus to and the activities that we are attempting to introduce into the organisation. Much progress has been achieved in recent years, particularly in relation to driving down the number of fires and accidents that occur in the county, for which Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has principal responsibility for dealing with.

Since 2004, the Fire and Rescue Service has been given statutory responsibility for enhancing its prevention and protection provision. What this means is that staff within the brigade are working jointly with colleagues from other organisations to reduce accidents and injuries within our society. A huge amount of success has been achieved through effective collaborative working. Now, with budgets getting ever tighter, greater innovation is needed to ensure that the work we will do for the future has the greatest impact on our communities. While it is unlikely that there will ever be a time when there are no fires, no road traffic collisions or other incidents that the Fire and Rescue Service are responsible for attending, we will work tirelessly to drive down the level of risk in the communities we serve to ensure that they are as safe as is reasonably possible.

This document sets out our aspirations for the next three years and identifies the areas that the organisation is going to focus on. The statistical information contained within the report shows that our progress has been steady over recent years. However, sustaining this rate of improvement is likely to be very challenging given the pressures on our budget.

We must reduce our operating costs if we are to avoid budget deficits and continue to invest more in the reduction of risk in the communities we serve. A range of measures for improving the efficiency of our services that, in our view, can be implemented without compromising the safety of the public or our staff, are outlined in this document.

The plan is designed to ensure that everybody understands the direction that this organisation is taking. We hope you will embrace opportunities to work with us so that collectively we can make a difference.

Damian M Smith
Chief Fire Officer
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service

Councillor David Rowlands
Chairman
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes
Fire Authority

2 Introduction

The Government requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan covering at least a three-year time span which:

- Is regularly reviewed and revised and reflects up-to-date risk information and evaluation of service delivery outcomes
- Has regard to the risk analyses completed by Local and Regional Resilience Forums, including those reported in external Community Risk Registers and internal risk registers, to ensure that civil and terrorist contingencies are captured in the document
- Reflects effective consultation during its development and at all review stages with representatives of all sections of the community and stakeholders
- Demonstrates how prevention, protection and response activities will be best used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities in a cost-effective way
- Provides details of how Fire and Rescue Authorities deliver their objectives and meet the needs of communities through working with partners
- Has undergone an effective equality impact assessment process¹

What is integrated risk management planning and how do we do it?

In simple terms, integrated risk management planning is about:

- Identifying who or what is most at risk of fire and other emergencies
- Determining where they are and how best to reach them
- Identifying the best way to reduce and manage the risk
- Ensuring our resources are deployed in proportion to the magnitude of the risks

We have access to a range of tools and sources that help us to understand the nature and scale of the risks faced by the communities that we serve. These include:

- The Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) toolkit which helps us to:
 - Assess the risk of death, injury and other damage arising from different types of emergency incident
 - Determine how best to deploy our resources based on the risk profile of our communities

- Predict the effects of changes to our resource deployment pattern (for example, the impact on risk to life of moving a fire appliance from one location to another)
- The Mosaic population profiling tool and the Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI) which enable us to evaluate the risk of fire by socio-demographic group and across our the many different types of community that we serve
- The Site Specific Risk Register which contains details of buildings and installations regarded as presenting or being vulnerable to particular types of risk (such as difficult access, presence of explosives or other hazardous materials, dangerous construction etc.). These include industrial sites, entertainment complexes, water courses, water supplies and parts of the transport infrastructure such as significant motorway junctions
- Our own Corporate Risk Register which captures and evaluates risks to the organisation and the people that work for it that may impact on our ability to deliver the service safely and effectively
- External Community Risk Registers such as that maintained by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum which identifies and evaluates potential hazards faced by the wider Thames Valley area which includes Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes²

Integrated risk management planning process



Consultation

This Plan has been the subject of an extensive consultation process embracing our staff, partner organisations, local communities affected by specific proposals in the IRMP, and, the general public. Full details of the consultation and its outcomes are contained in a separate report prepared by Opinion Research Services and available on our website:

http://www.bucksfire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4F3A441D-A4D4-442D-8B83-9BEA33139A5C/0/IRMP_report.pdf

3 Vision

The context

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is an authority that has been, and remains to be, improving. After a “weak” Corporate Performance Assessment, the past four years have seen the authority take huge leaps forward. Decisions are now made with a better evidence base – a result of a great deal of hard work on performance management, governance arrangements, capacity-building efforts, better information management and usage, and better engagement by the elected members.

However, these improvements haven’t happened in a vacuum. With greater member engagement have come greater ambitions for the authority. Better information usage – such as the Fire Service Emergency Cover modelling system mentioned on pages 4 and 5 – has helped identify a gap in response provision to some rural communities.

The national agenda is driving change too. Central government is pushing a number of initiatives, such as regional control centres, FireLink and centralised procurement (FireBuy). These initiatives, together with reduced funding, are forcing authorities to examine efficiency measures and ways to provide a continually high quality service at reduced cost.

Why a new vision?

The authority’s lead members, who have responsibilities for specific workstreams, have been discussing the agenda that the authority will be facing over the next few years, with a view to building a platform upon which a new vision would be formed. This section of the Integrated Risk Management Plan aims to:

- Develop a clarity of roles and relationships between members, member structures and officers
- Give officers a mandate, with a clear direction of travel and clear indications of member expectations

Scrutiny of outcomes is crucial.

The three themes

We have identified the main themes, or ‘trunks’, of our vision for the authority which have been discussed by members at a number of briefings. These themes are:

1 Equality and Diversity

Fire and Rescue Authorities nationally are far behind other sectors (both blue light services and private industry) with regard to this agenda. Bluntly, they are populated by white men. We believe that Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire

Authority should be an employer of choice to everybody, irrespective of disability, age, culture, creed, ethnicity, gender or sexuality.

- We aim to have achieved level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by December 2009, which will require:
 - Targeted activity in communities
 - Internal culture change
 - Member development commitment
 - A People Strategy
 - Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority being an authority with an inclusive attitude

There's some controversy and disagreement surrounding targets, and whether they are appropriate in the equality agenda. Members are clear that the authority must employ on merit.

2. Community Protection

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority must be proactive in preventing fire, by engaging with other public bodies, business and residential communities, and provide an available and top quality emergency response service. Our continually improving performance management must target community engagement efforts as an important part of prevention.

There are many benefits of successfully engaging with our many communities:

- Improve our decision making and evidence base – understand our communities
 - Find out why certain black and ethnic minority communities are at greater risk
 - Find out why our workforce is not representative of the community it represents, and what barriers exist
 - Find out how we ensure we effectively crew our Retained Duty System fire stations at all times
- Prevention before response
 - Educating business and residential communities at higher risk of fire is both morally good and financially sound.
- Reconcile activity
 - Understanding which communities are at risk, and being able to engage meaningfully with them, will help us target and save scarce resources.

- High quality emergency response in a dangerous environment
 - We must provide the highest possible standard of emergency response that is continually available to serve the public.
 - The firefighting operating environment is inherently dangerous and we must equip, train, and support our operational staff to the highest possible standards.
- Build smart partnerships
 - The public like firefighters – this is a useful partnership lever.
 - The authority engages in a vast range of partnerships. Are they all necessary?
 - Partnerships can become procedural – but they can also add real value. We must build upon the latter.
- Comprehensive Area Assessment
 - We know that critical judgements from the Audit Commission are not without consequence. Heavier auditing regimes, less flexibility when negotiating with government and lower public confidence all matter, so being prepared for the Comprehensive Area Assessment is crucial.

3. Resource management

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is in a very tight – and worsening – financial climate, due to the reduced support from the Government.

There are local, national and unique opportunities and threats that the authority must be addressing, if we are to manage today and tomorrow's budgets as our taxpaying residents expect.

The Government's efficiency targets remain a challenge for Fire and Rescue Authorities. However, our efficiency ambitions go much further:

- A three-year budget
 - A three-year budget strategy is important, if we are to maintain a sustainable plan for capital, reserves and revenue – and build operational and financial resilience.
 - Member input in building the action plan for the authority is crucial.
- Procurement
 - The government continues to pursue FireBuy, the national, centralised procurement project. Fully evaluating the threats and opportunities presented are crucial.
 - FireControl and FireLink both present procurement and revenue challenges.

- Capital
 - Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes is a changing landscape. The Aylesbury Vale growth agenda may, unless addressed, leave a gap in provision in the north of the county.
 - The capital programme is under immense pressure. Many stations require immediate and unaffordable attention. Getting more for less is an absolute must.
 - The property industry is making it harder to achieve 'turnkey' asset swaps with industry. An example from recent years was our agreement to relocate from Cambridge Street, Aylesbury, to nearby Stocklake, which enabled the retail park at Cambridge Street to be completed and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority to have a brand new HQ and fire station provided by the developers. New capital solutions must be achieved if we are to develop a sustainable strategy.

- Core activity
 - Maintaining a balanced service to the whole county requires changes in resource allocation.
 - The Government continues to rely on support from the Fire and Rescue Service with regard to flooding and regional terrorist response, but has yet to back these expectations up with cash.
 - County and district councils in Buckinghamshire are joining together in exploring their procurement arrangements for the built environment. Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority should continue to evaluate the opportunities presented.
 - Shared service schemes may provide opportunities to make our back office functions more efficient, allowing the authority to focus upon core activities.
 - Non-core activities should be ratified by members.

The vision

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority keeps **all** of its communities **safe from harm** through **proactive prevention** and **high quality operational response** with **ambition and efficiency**

4 Values

Underpinning everything we do is a set of values to which we aspire to meet in all our dealings with the public, partner agencies and our own staff. These values embrace:

Service to the community – by:

- Working with all groups to reduce risk
- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Striving for excellence in all we do
- Being answerable to those we serve

People – by everyone practising and promoting:

- Fairness and respect
- Recognising commitment and the achievement of excellent service
- Honesty and trust
- Opportunities to develop and learn
- Co-operation and inclusive working

Diversity – we value diversity in our service and in the community by:

- Treating everyone fairly and with respect
- Challenging prejudice and discrimination
- Creating opportunities to meet the different needs of people in our communities
- Promoting equal opportunities in terms of recruitment, promotion and retention

Improvement – we value improvement at all levels of the service by:

- Accepting responsibility for our performance and actions
- Being open-minded and receptive to alternative approaches
- Learning from our experiences
- Supporting others to enable them to achieve their goals
- Encourage innovation and creativity

5 Our performance

The government has established a framework which allows the performance of all Fire and Rescue Services in England to be compared after making certain allowances for factors like social deprivation, which make some areas more at risk of fires than others. Performance against each indicator is ranked and placed in one of three categories:

“Above upper threshold”, equating to a top quartile performance

“Between thresholds”, which is between the top and lower quartiles

“Below lower threshold”, which is a bottom quartile performance.

The last assessment against this framework was for the 2006/07 financial year and our results are shown below.



The framework indicates that we do well in relation to fire fatalities, confining fires to room of origin and reducing deliberate fires (arson). However, overall performance in terms of reducing numbers of primary, accidental dwelling and non domestic fires was poor in the three years to March 2007 compared with fire authorities in England as a whole, although significant improvements were made against almost all the indicators including these during last year (2007/08).

The following sections provide a brief overview of performance against our key objectives. A more detailed evaluation of last year's performance can be found in our 2007/08 Annual Report³.

Making people safer in their homes

Most fire-related deaths and injuries result from accidental fires in the home. In recent years the number of accidental domestic fire deaths in the areas we serve has remained at a very low level compared with national averages. In the last two years we have also started to see significant reductions in the number of accidental fires in the home and in serious injuries arising from them as shown in the table below. These improvements have coincided with our increasing investment in domestic fire safety and our improving ability to target those most at risk.

Table 1: Accidental dwelling fire trends

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incidents	378	466	472	381
Injuries	54	54	28	27
Deaths	0	2	1	2

Making people safer at work and in public places

In the last five years we have recorded no fire deaths in non-domestic buildings. The number of serious injuries has remained static for the last two years although last year saw a significant reduction in the number of non domestic fires for the first time in four years coinciding with the implementation of new fire safety regulations for commercial and public buildings⁴.

Table 2: Non domestic building fires

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incidents	409	369	392	302
Injuries	11	6	14	14
Deaths	0	0	0	0

Making people safer on the roads

Although we have a statutory duty to provide an emergency response to road traffic collisions, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is not the lead agency for road safety. However, we are playing an increasing role alongside the police, highways authorities, council road safety teams and the Thames Valley Safer Roads partnership

to encourage safe driving. Our efforts are particularly focused on raising safety awareness among groups at greater risk of accidents such as young drivers.

Historically our road traffic collision reporting has been based on statistics compiled from incidents that we have actually attended. However, these only represent a small proportion of the total number of incidents that actually occur and are therefore insufficient as a basis for profiling the risk associated with road traffic collisions. Therefore we are now widening our statistical base to include all road traffic collisions recorded by the police. The table below shows this wider perspective for the three years to the end of March 2007 (the most recent financial year for which statistics are available):

Table 3: Road traffic collisions (Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes)⁵

Figures in brackets are incidents attended by BFRS

	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07	
Incidents	2,536	(631)	2,613	(627)	2,572	(605)
Minor injuries	3,051	(604)	3,391	(482)	3,284	(531)
Serious injuries	444		379		412	
Deaths	70	(28)	51	(21)	46	(17)

Making people safer in their communities

In recent years, much of our effort in relation to this objective has been focused on reducing levels of fire-related crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly in relation to arson. This has led to a significant reduction in the number of serious injuries resulting from deliberate dwelling fires and, in the last year, the number of incidents themselves:

Table 4: Deliberate dwelling fire trends

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incidents	83	81	94	61
Injuries	4	14	6	7
Deaths	0	1	0	0

In the last year we have also seen a significant reduction in the number of deliberate non domestic fires but this has been accompanied by a rising trend in serious fire injuries:

*Table 5: Deliberate non domestic fires**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incidents	114	131	128	100
Injuries	4	3	6	11
Deaths	0	0	0	0

* N.B. These figures are included in the overall totals for non domestic fires shown at Table 2 above.
Integrated Risk Management Plan *31 March 2009*

Rubbish fires are a serious social nuisance in some areas, reducing the quality of life and local environments. We have made considerable progress in driving these down in recent years as a result of targeted campaigns to clear up litter in affected neighbourhoods:

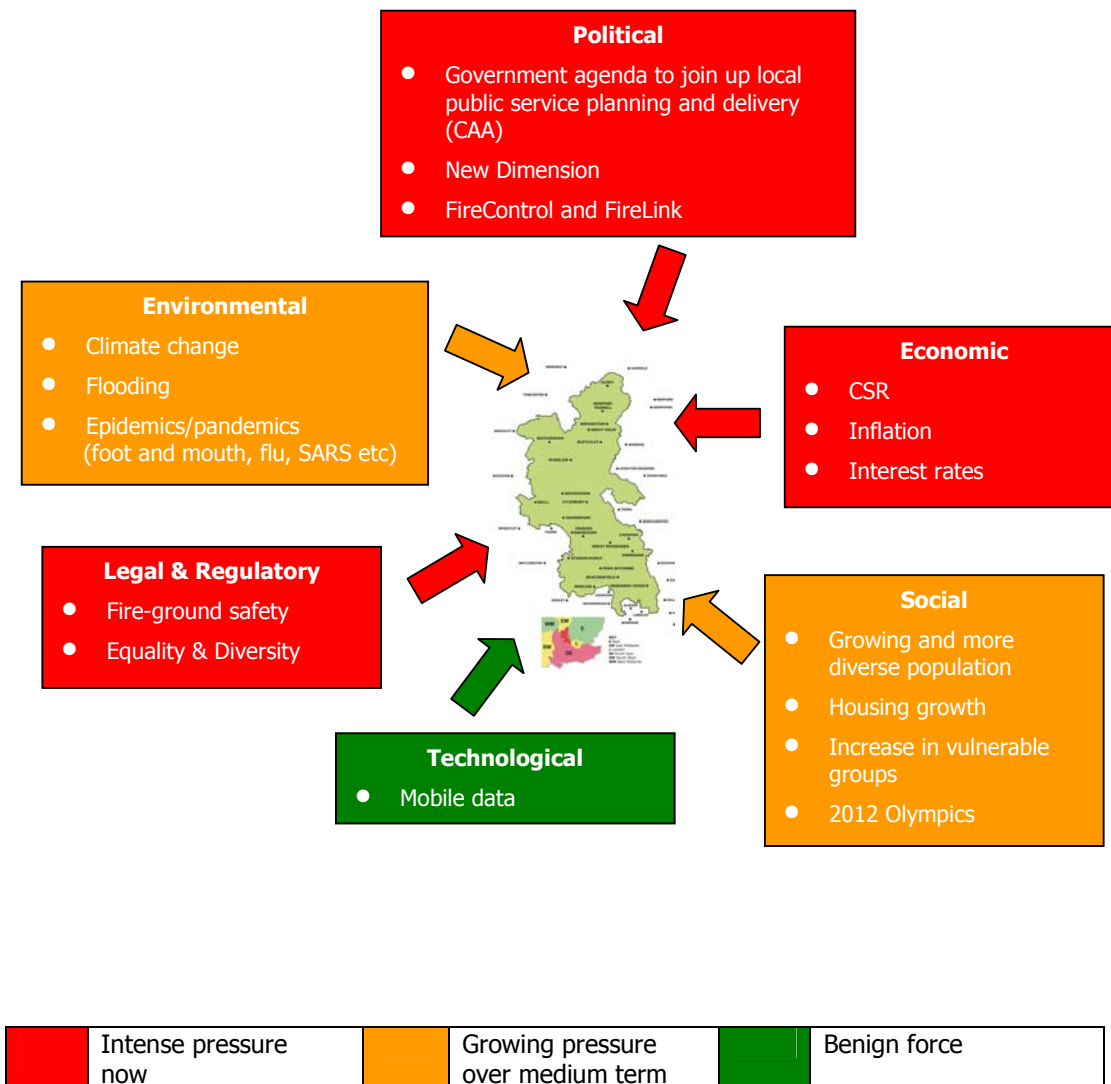
Table 6: Rubbish fires

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Incidents	1,416	1,299	1,307	1157

6 Community and brigade risk profile

This section of the plan identifies existing and potential risks both to the communities we serve and to our ability to deliver the service on a reliable and sustainable basis. It considers the implications of a range of national as well as local factors for the way we approach the management of risk in the community. The PESTEL* model in figure 1 below identifies a number of national and global trends that have implications for our approach to the management of risks to the communities we serve and for the provision of the service itself.

Figure 1: PESTEL analysis



* PESTEL = Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal
Integrated Risk Management Plan

Political

Comprehensive Area Assessment: From 2009 the Government is introducing a new approach to assessing the performance of local government agencies, known as Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This replaces the old Comprehensive Performance Assessment process which assessed local authorities on an individual basis. Instead, the CAA will seek to assess the collective performance of local government and other public services, whether provided directly by authorities themselves, or via other public or voluntary sector organisations, within the particular areas that they serve in terms of the resultant "outcomes" experienced by the public. In particular it will focus on assessing performance against objectives and targets set in Local Area Agreements. We welcome this development and see this as an opportunity rather than a risk. We already work very closely with a range of other public and voluntary sector bodies through a variety of arrangements such as the Local Strategic Partnerships which operate at county and district levels within Buckinghamshire and with the unitary authority in Milton Keynes and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. We believe that CAA will encourage closer alignment of service planning and delivery between the various agencies responsible for providing public services and have already been configuring our service planning processes in readiness for the new approach.

New Dimension: New Dimension is part of a Government programme to improve national resilience in the face of major emergencies such as natural disasters, industrial accidents or terrorist attack. Although incidents of these kinds are rare, the impacts would, in many cases, be extreme. The Government requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to make appropriate preparations in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act Emergencies Order. The latter places a statutory duty on Fire and Rescue Authorities to make provision for those emergencies most likely to arise in the event of a terrorist attack, major incident or natural disaster. Recent examples of incidents of this kind that have required a response from us include the Buncefield oil depot fire in Hemel Hempstead in December 2005, the Jurys Inn scaffold collapse in Milton Keynes in April 2006 and the widespread flooding experienced in the summer of 2007.

FireControl and FireLink: These are also part of the Government's national fire resilience programme and involve the migration of local fire control room functions to new regional centres and the introduction of new radio terminals, GPS units and mobile data terminals in fire appliances. These developments present us with a series of risks including potential disruption to the continuity and resilience of our existing control room functions during the transitional period which lasts until the planned cutover in 2011 particularly given the risks associated with maintaining our existing control systems. There is also a financial risk, as the contribution we will be required to make to the cost of running the new control and communication arrangements is as yet unknown but expected to be higher than at present.

Economic

Comprehensive Spending Review: Our financial resources are under extreme pressure as a result of an unfavourable Government formula grant settlement. 41 per cent of our funding comes from central Government and the current settlement provides an increase of only 0.5 per cent for the each of the next two years. These are very significantly below the current rate of inflation and there is only limited scope to offset the effect of these by increasing local council tax given current "capping" restrictions. Even if we increase council tax by five per cent a year over the next two years we will still need to find efficiency savings of around £1.4 million over the same period if we are to balance our budget. This presents a considerable challenge given that we are already the lowest spending Combined Fire Authority (a Fire and Rescue Authority with an area spanning more than one county or unitary council area) in the South East Region⁶ per head and given the growing demands on our services.

Inflation: The inflation rate is currently 3.2 per cent* per annum although it is expected to fall further as the economy slows. In the short term this will relieve pressure on some of our costs which rose significantly in some areas such as fuel during 2008. However the longer term outlook for inflation is unclear given uncertainties about the effects of steps being taken at national level to increase the money supply.

Interest rates: Interest rates have now fallen to an historically low level and while this will reduce some of the costs associated with funding our capital programme it also reduces the income received on our reserves.

Social

Growing and more diverse population: Milton Keynes is at the centre of one of the fastest growing regions in Europe and, notwithstanding any impact from the current economic slowdown, is expected to increase its population by over 120,000 people by 2026⁷. The population is becoming more diverse as black and minority ethnic (BME) communities grow. The 2004 population estimates indicated that 13 per cent of Milton Keynes' population was BME⁸. However, the proportion is likely to be significantly higher now and likely to grow further given current patterns of international migration.

Buckinghamshire's population is also forecast to grow from the current (2008) estimate of 487,500 to 526,000 by 2015. Most of the growth will take place within the urban parts of the Aylesbury Vale. Buckinghamshire's population here is also becoming more diverse with around eight per cent BME currently, mostly concentrated within the urban areas of High Wycombe and Aylesbury⁹.

These changes are expected to increase demand for our services and present new risks particularly in relation to new entrants to the country from cultures with different attitudes to risk and safety.

* Based on the Consumer Price Index for February 2009
Integrated Risk Management Plan

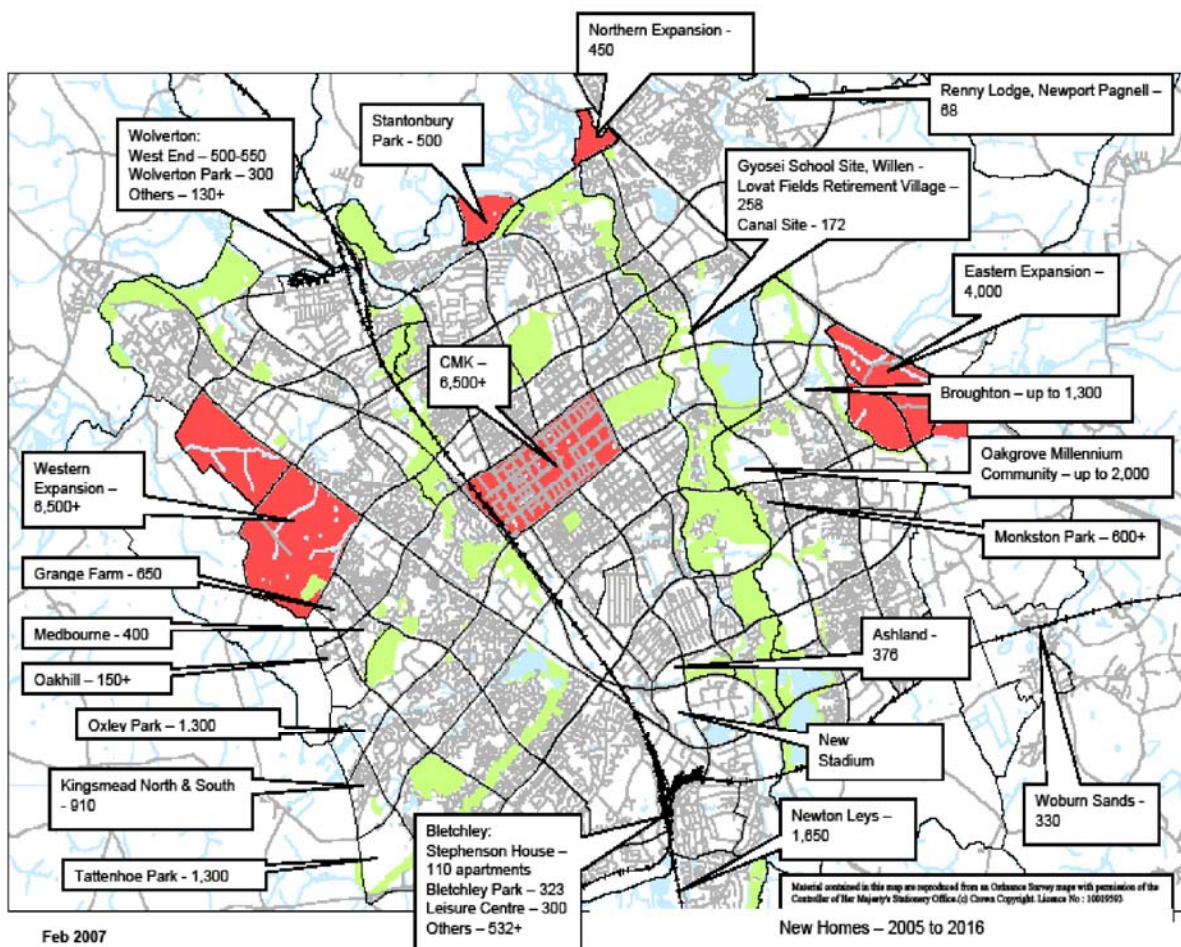
Housing growth: The South East Development Plan envisages a significant growth in the number of houses within the areas that we serve in order to accommodate the growing population. Current estimates indicate an additional 52,350 homes within Milton Keynes by 2026¹⁰. Figure 2 below shows the pattern of housing development associated with the first phase of this growth to 2016.

Significant housing growth is also expected in Buckinghamshire, mostly within the urban parts of the Aylesbury Vale where an additional 21,200 homes are forecast by 2026¹¹.

The long term implications of the current recession for these plans are as yet unclear but at this point we must base our plans on the assumption that the anticipated growth will occur.

While these developments create opportunities to engineer safer homes and safer environments, they also create new risks such as alterations to road and other transport networks and increased volumes of traffic. They will also create the need for provision of additional fire cover and associated infrastructure such as hydrants.

Figure 2: Milton Keynes housing growth (phase 1)



Increase in vulnerable groups: While the population is growing, its composition is also changing. In addition, we are experiencing a trend towards more single occupancy dwellings (i.e. people living alone, especially those in higher risk groups) and houses in multiple occupation with a higher propensity to fire risk. In Buckinghamshire the population is ageing as the table below shows:

Table 7: Age profile projections for Buckinghamshire¹²

Age	2001	2015	% change
0-19	123,000	115,900	-6%
20-39	127,200	135,200	+6%
40-59	135,600	130,600	-4%
60-79	75,200	113,900	+51%
80+	18,100	30,400	+68%
Total population	479,100	526,000	+10%

The picture for Milton Keynes is slightly different. Again a significant increase in the number of elderly people is expected, but in contrast with Buckinghamshire and the national trend, all age groups are expected to grow:

Table 8: Future changes in the Milton Keynes population¹³

Age group	2001	2016	% change
0-4	14,350	19,200	33.8%
5-16	36,630	41,560	13.5%
17-24	21,650	24,240	12.0%
25-34	35,380	39,280	11.0%
35-59	75,670	95,460	26.2%
60+	29,030	52,060	79.3%
Total population	212,710	271,800	27.8%

These trends could significantly change the fire risk profile of the communities we serve. This is because the risk of death from fire increases substantially with age. A recent national study¹⁴ found that people between the ages of 70 and 80 are twice as likely to be killed in a house fire than would be expected from their prevalence in the population (16 per cent compared with seven per cent). People over 80 are five times more likely to die in a house fire (19 per cent of fatal fires compared with four per cent of the population nationally).

The substantial growth of the 17-24 population in Milton Keynes is also significant as statistics show that it is this group that is most at risk of being killed or seriously injured in a road traffic collision (23 per cent of all killed and seriously injured in the Thames Valley area came from this group in 2007)¹⁵.

2012 Olympics: In 2012 Buckinghamshire will host the flat water canoeing and rowing at Eton-Dorney. The venue will be used for both the Olympics and the

Paralympics and will therefore be in use for over 30 days. With the potential presence of more than 30,000 spectators a day, and worldwide media coverage, this presents a special risk that will need to be specifically addressed by all of the emergency services.

Technological

Mobile data: The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires all Fire and Rescue Services to obtain information to support the extinguishing of fires and protection of life¹⁶. In particular we are required to identify specific sites that are considered to present specific or significant risks and in relation to these:

- Identify and categorise the risks
- Collect relevant information
- Formulate, test and disseminate plans for dealing with these risks

Historically the collection and dissemination of this information has been paper based. However we are now implementing a new electronic data collection system, known as "FREEDOM", which will act as a single portal for all community risk related information including site specific risk information. We also intend to provide fire crews and community safety staff with direct access to this database via mobile data terminals so that relevant information is readily available to them. This will reduce the risks to fire crews when attending emergency incidents and assist with the efficient and effective resolution of them. We currently have 113 sites that are considered to present high levels of risk and this new development will also improve our ability to manage the overall risk presented by these sites.

Legal and regulatory

The regulatory framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities has grown in recent years. Their primary duties are defined by two key Acts of Parliament – the Fire and Rescue Services Act and Civil Contingencies Act, both of 2004. The former is supplemented by a National Framework in which the Government periodically defines its key priorities and strategy for Fire and Rescue Services.

Fire ground safety: The Fire and Rescue Services' operational environment is, by definition, extremely hazardous as tragically demonstrated in recent years by a number of firefighter fatalities in other parts of the UK. Scrutiny of these tragic events, both within the Fire and Rescue Service and from external organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive, is justifiably high at present. We are committed to providing high standards of operational safety and training, and will consider carefully wider national developments, e.g. the lessons learned from fatal incidents elsewhere.

Equality and diversity: In the 2008-11 National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service, the Government has made improvement of workforce diversity a key priority.

In particular it has set specific targets for recruitment, retention and progression to be met by 2013. These include:

- By 2013, a minimum of 15 per cent of new entrants to the operational sector to be women
- By 2013, recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population
- By 2013, parity in rates of retention and progression between minority ethnic and white employees, and between men and women

These targets present a considerable challenge. Like many brigades we have had limited success in increasing the very low levels of female and minority ethnic representation in our operational workforce (currently only three per cent of our firefighters are women and only one per cent are minority ethnic compared with 8.7 per cent in the local workforce¹⁷). Our approach to meeting these challenging targets will be addressed separately in our People Strategy.

Environmental

Climate change: Emergency services are being briefed to expect more extreme and volatile weather conditions in the future. These may increase the frequency and severity of certain types of emergency incident as shown in table 9 below:

Table 9: Climate change risks¹⁸

Trend	Risks
Higher summer temperatures/ heatwaves	More transportation accidents from damage to road surfaces and rail tracks
Periods of drought leading to drier ground coupled with high winds	More heath and forest fires
More frequent and heavier winter precipitation	More widespread flooding
Less summer rainfall but more intense convective storms	Flash flooding

The Government has also included inland flooding and severe weather as being amongst the most serious threats to national security in its newly published National Risk Register (see figure 3 on page 23).

Flooding: We are experiencing an increase in the numbers and types of waterside incidents as water-related leisure activities increase and the impact of climate change

produces more flooding incidents. The Fire and Rescue Service in England has no statutory duty to undertake water-related rescues, but Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service currently responds to incidents on request. Where any response is made, a clear duty of care exists to our personnel under Health and Safety and associated legislation.

The floods in the summer of 2007 in parts of England affected nearly 50,000 homes and 7,000 businesses, as well as schools, roads and hospitals. They caused 13 deaths, trauma and disruption to many thousands of people and billions of pounds worth of damage.

Much of the flooding last summer was due to drains and sewers being unable to cope with the sudden and extreme rainfall. The Environment agency has developed detailed flood risk mapping for coastal and river flooding (fluvial flooding) over a number of years and in September 2008 similar flood mapping was made available to members of the Local Resilience Forum addressing surface water flooding (pluvial flooding).

A number of reviews and reports have been compiled including most notably "Facing the Challenge"¹⁹ and the "Pitt Review"²⁰. Research commissioned for the Pitt Review places the flooding firmly within the context of climate change and the increased likelihood of more extreme weather, which we will all need to plan for and adapt to. The report says that the country should have been better prepared for the flooding last summer and calls for urgent and fundamental changes to the way the country adapts to the risk of flooding.

Significant risks that would require a multi agency approach to deal with are identified within the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum's risk assessment process. The Thames Valley Community Risk Register has been prepared and is now available on the Internet²¹. The register identifies that risk from major flooding in the Thames Valley area is very high with the potential impact ranging between severe and significant.

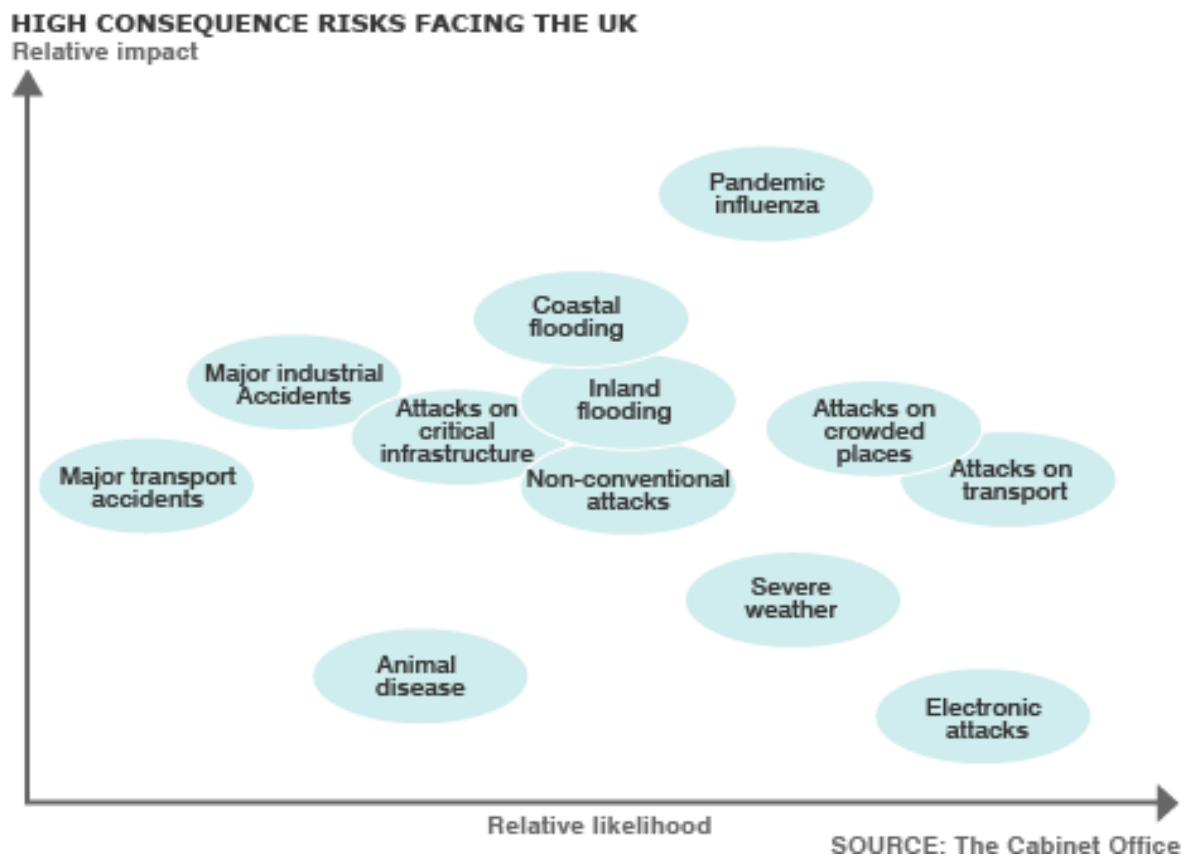
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service currently provides a water rescue capability at two locations, Newport Pagnell in the north of the county and Marlow in the south. Specialist crews at these locations are trained and equipped to carry out water rescues. All other operational staff have received "awareness" training only, which limits them to carrying out any rescue work near to, but not in, water. This distinction is important as while this approach is broadly acceptable for routine water rescue work, it would not be adequate to deal with wide area flooding as experienced last summer.

Enhancing our water rescue capabilities would mean re-allocating resources from elsewhere as we do not currently receive any specific funding for this type of work. In the absence of additional funding, developing a capability to deal with wide area flooding would require the diversion of significant levels of resources from other duties. The Government is currently reviewing the issue of flooding in response to the Pitt Review and it is possible that funding may be provided in line with, or without, an associated statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Services.

Epidemics/pandemics: The National Risk Register has identified pandemic influenza as the most serious threat to national security (see figure 3 below), estimating that this could take between 50,000 and 750,000 lives (the last major outbreak of pandemic flu, 90 years ago, is estimated to have caused 20-40 million deaths worldwide, of which 228,000 were in the UK). Clearly such a catastrophe would have a serious impact, not only on the communities that we serve but also on our ability to serve them given the likely implications for our own workforce and their families.

Animal disease is also included among the more serious risks, and protection zones requiring special precautions on the part of firefighters and others have already had to be established in and around Buckinghamshire following isolated outbreaks of diseases potentially fatal to animals such as bluetongue and foot and mouth.

Figure 3: National Risk Register



A major outbreak on the scale of the last foot and mouth epidemic would again be potentially damaging and disruptive both to the communities we serve and to our ability to serve them as resources are potentially diverted to help deal with the consequences.

Community risk analysis

Socio demographic factors

There is a well established link between deprivation and the risk of fire. People living in more economically and socially deprived areas tend to be at greater risk of fires than those in more prosperous communities.

Although Buckinghamshire is one of the most prosperous counties in England and the county ranks 143 out of 150 in the Government's indices of deprivation (where 1 = the most deprived) there are nonetheless pockets of deprivation where some residents experience higher levels of unemployment and crime, and poorer educational attainment, health and housing than in other parts of the county²².

Milton Keynes has high levels of economic activity across the population and low unemployment, but it also has small pockets of intense deprivation with around 9,000 people living in neighbourhoods that are amongst the nation's 10 per cent most deprived areas. A further 11,000 are amongst the 20 per cent most deprived.

Our own analysis, using the Mosaic population profiling tool, shows that certain socio-demographic groups attract a disproportionately high risk of fire. This is illustrated in tables 10 and 11, which compare the incidence of fire with the representation of each group within the population, broken down into Milton Keynes Council and Buckinghamshire County Council areas. The three groups attracting the highest risk of fire are highlighted.

The top three groups from the point of view of fire risk are the same in each area and are characterised by low incomes and dependency on social housing. Older people living in social housing with high care needs are particularly vulnerable to fire and, as the national research referred to earlier indicates, at much greater risk of death or serious injury from fire.

Table 10: Buckinghamshire – incidence of fire by Mosaic group

Mosaic social group description	Accidental dwelling fires	% of total	Number of households	% of total
A Symbols of success: Career professionals living in sought-after locations	143	25	69,934	36
B Happy families: Younger families living in newer homes	63	11	24,759	13
C Suburban comfort: Older families living in suburbia	66	12	31,006	16
D Ties of community: Close-knit, inner city and manufacturing town communities	50	9	10,407	5
E Urban intelligence: Educated, young, single people living in areas of transient populations	43	8	10,810	6
F Welfare borderline: People living in social housing with uncertain employment in deprived areas	9	2	1,725	1
G Municipal dependency: Low income families living in estate-based social housing	6	1	927	0.5
H Blue collar enterprise: Upwardly mobile families living in homes bought from social landlords	53	9	17,077	9
I Twilight subsistence: Older people living in social housing with high care needs	55	10	4,131	2
J Grey perspectives: Independent older people with relatively active lifestyles	50	9	10,946	6
K Rural isolation: People living in rural areas far from urbanisation	28	5	10,431	5
Z Unclassified	1	0	0	0
Total	567	100	192,153	100

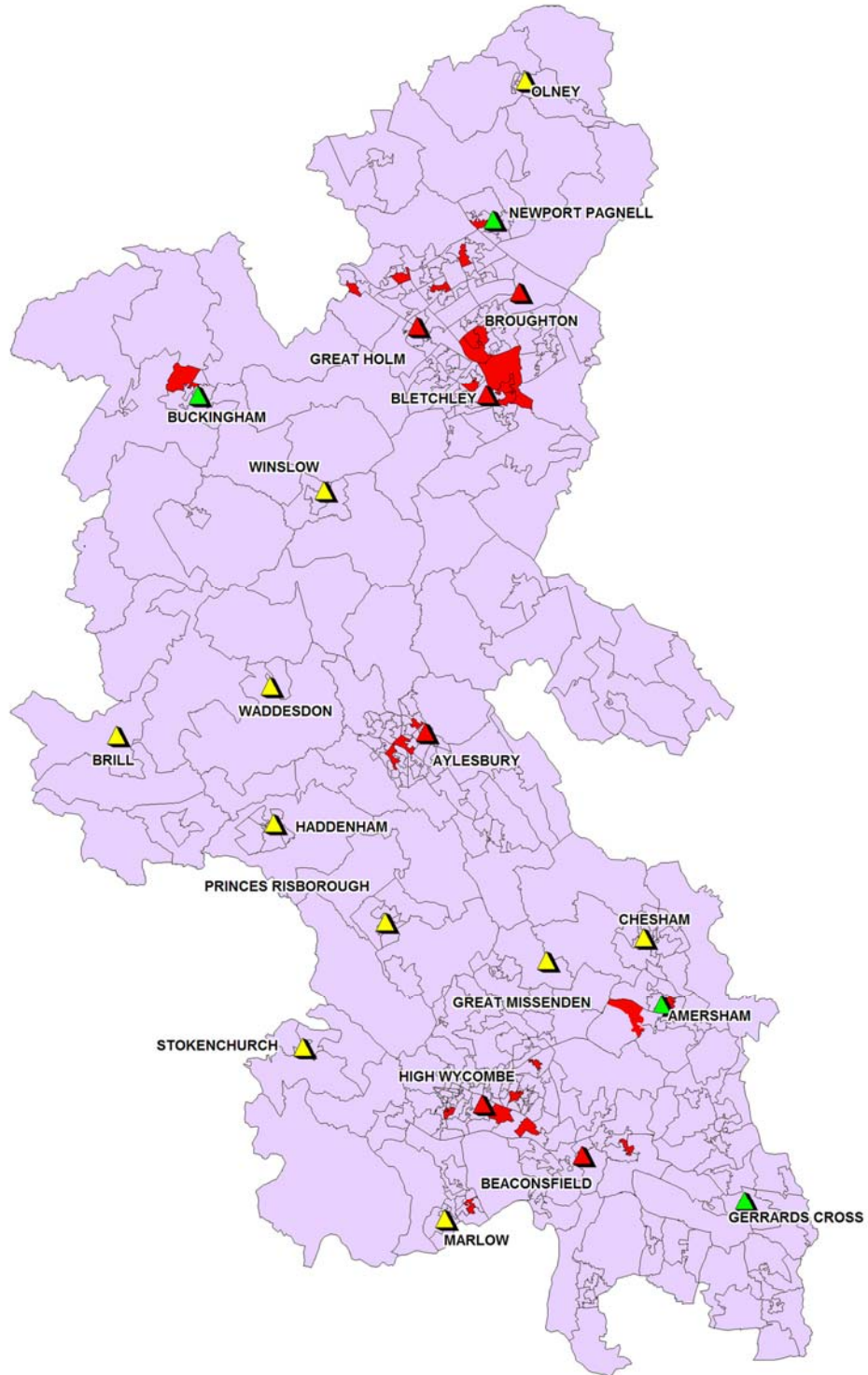
Table 11: Milton Keynes – incidence of fire by Mosaic group

Mosaic social group description	Accidental dwelling fires	% of total	Number of households	% of total
A Symbols of success: Career professionals living in sought-after locations	25	7	9,749	11
B Happy families: Younger families living in newer homes	74	21	33,287	36
C Suburban comfort: Older families living in suburbia	20	6	8,525	9
D Ties of community: Close-knit, inner city and manufacturing town communities	32	9	8,575	9
E Urban intelligence: Educated, young, single people living in areas of transient populations	11	3	5,293	6
F Welfare borderline: People living in social housing with uncertain employment in deprived areas	40	11	3,048	3
G Municipal dependency: Low income families living in estate-based social housing	34	10	4,410	5
H Blue collar enterprise: Upwardly mobile families living in homes bought from social landlords	72	21	13,958	15
I Twilight subsistence: Older people living in social housing with high care needs	30	9	2,426	3
J Grey perspectives: Independent older people with relatively active lifestyles	7	2	2,243	2
K Rural isolation: People living in rural areas far from urbanisation	4	1	1,010	1
Z Unclassified	0	0	0	0
Total	349	100	92,524	100

Fortunately many of the higher risk groups tend to be concentrated in areas that can be reached most quickly by fire crews as they are within a 10-minute response range of our wholetime fire stations which are crewed 24/7 by full-time shift staff. The map in figure 4 on the next page shows the distribution of more deprived communities based on the Vulnerable Localities Index, which takes into account a range of deprivation-related factors that generate higher fire risk and complements the work done using Mosaic. The map is colour coded, with red representing the areas most at risk.

Figure 4: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Vulnerable Localities Index

This map indicates the top 25 priority neighbourhoods in urban areas and also shows our 20 fire stations.



The Vulnerable Localities Index (VLI) is a widely recognised method of quantifying community risk. It was originally developed for the use by Police forces in calculating community tensions. The VLI is a flexible approach which our service has modified to include the occurrences of fire incidents. The formula includes data related to criminal damage, indices of multiple deprivation and other police statistics. We describe fire cover arrangements as either being for urban or rural areas. For the purpose of the IRMP, urban is an area within a 10 minute response time of any whole time, day crewed or retained duty system station

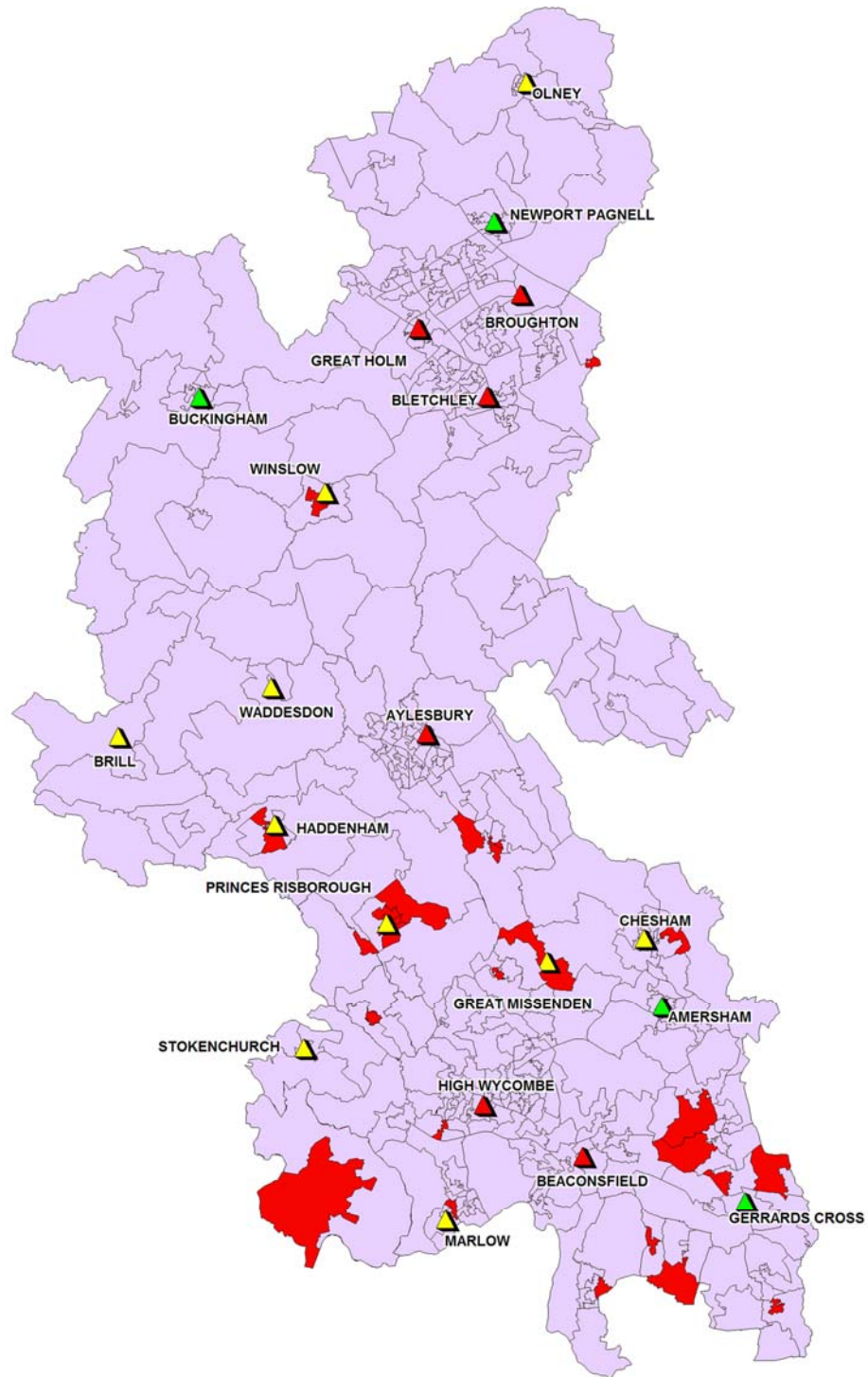
Rural risk: Although many of those at greatest risk of fire tend to be located in urban areas served by our wholetime crews there are also significant numbers of people who are at high risk from fire, were it to break out, who are located in rural areas that take longer to reach (typically in the range of 10 to 20 minutes) from wholetime fire stations or fire stations crewed using the Retained Duty System.

People over the age of 70 are at particular risk as the national research discussed above shows and the map in figure 5 below shows the distribution of people over 70 graded according to their representation in the local population outside of our 10 minute response "envelope". The areas shown in red are those with the greatest concentrations of 70+ people outside the 10-minute response time.

In addition to the above, significant parts of Buckinghamshire's economy are located in rural areas. As table 12 below shows the Aylesbury Vale, in particular, has a very large proportion of its businesses in rural area, relative to national averages. Some of these businesses are located outside of the areas that we can reach within 10 minutes, potentially placing them at greater risk than those located within urban areas.

Figure 5: Rural risk hierarchy

This map indicates the top 25 rural localities of highest risk and also shows our 20 fire stations.



To calculate rural risk we use notional attendance times based on FSEC calculations and information related to the number of residents aged over 70 years concentrated in small geographical areas called output areas. This allows us to arrive at a hierarchy of risk areas based on all pumping appliances being able to respond. This hierarchy alters when a pump becomes unavailable due to crew deficiencies or simultaneous demand on resources.

Table 12: VAT registered businesses in rural areas (2007 figures)

District	%
Aylesbury Vale	65.03
Chiltern	34.77
South Bucks	33.81
Wycombe	28.77
Milton Keynes	19.97
England and Wales	30.66

Other fire life risk factors

The national research into fatal fire incidents²³ also showed that a strong correlation between risk of death from fire and homes in single occupation with 67 per cent of the fires taking place in single households, with single elderly householders being at greatest risk. Physical or mental disability was also shown to be a significant factor with some 30 per cent of fatal casualties suffering from a physical impairment and 15 per cent a mental impairment of some kind. 46 per cent of victims were also found to be impaired by some form of substance with alcohol being the most common (33 per cent) followed by prescribed drugs (12 per cent). Overall nearly 80 per cent of the fires researched involved victims who were impaired in some way either by substance use, mental or physical impairment, whether related to age or not, or a combination of these factors. These factors either contributed to the cause of the fire and/or impeded the victim's ability to tackle or escape from the blaze.

Non domestic fire risk: Last year (2007/08) there were 302 primary non-domestic building fires, equating to just over 40 per cent of all primary fires. However, non domestic buildings only account for around six per cent of the total building stock, the remaining 94 per cent being made up of domestic dwellings of one kind or another. Therefore they present a level of fire risk that is disproportionate to their representation in the overall stock of buildings. Government benchmarking has also indicated that we experience higher than expected levels of non domestic building fires than would be expected given the type of area that we serve, albeit that last year marked a significant improvement on previous years as shown in table 2 on page 12. Table 13 below shows the distribution of these fires across different building types together with the probability of injury based on incident records and the vulnerability to arson (which is twice as high for non domestic compared with domestic buildings).

Table 13: Non domestic building fires

Premises type	% incidents over three years	% injuries over three years	Injury probability	Incident/deliberate %
Other sleeping accommodation (prisons)	4.2%	22.2%	1 in 3	85.7%
Care home	16.9%	23.6%	1 in 11	4.6%
Licensed premises	7.7%	6.9%	1 in 18	20.2%
Schools	5.4%	4.2%	1 in 21	40.3%
Hospitals	5.9%	4.2%	1 in 23	17.6%
Other workplace	12.9%	6.9%	1 in 30	53%
Factory or warehouse	14.6%	6.9%	1 in 33	30.3%
Shop	13.3%	4.2%	1 in 51	17.6%
Office	6.6%	1.3%	1 in 76	18.4%

As the analysis shows, care homes represent a very significant risk with the highest number of incidents and the second highest probability of injury. Prison fires, while representing a small proportion of incidents, nonetheless present a very high risk of injury and are typically caused by arson. Other premises generate a significant number of fires (factories, warehouses and shops) but a low level of life risk.

Transportation risks: Although Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes contain a number of rail links including a section of the West Coast mainline, an extensive canal network and are extensively over-flown given the proximity of Heathrow and Luton airports, the incidence of non road-related incidents has remained low in recent years as table 14 below shows. The aircraft incidents shown typically involve light aircraft at or from local airfields.

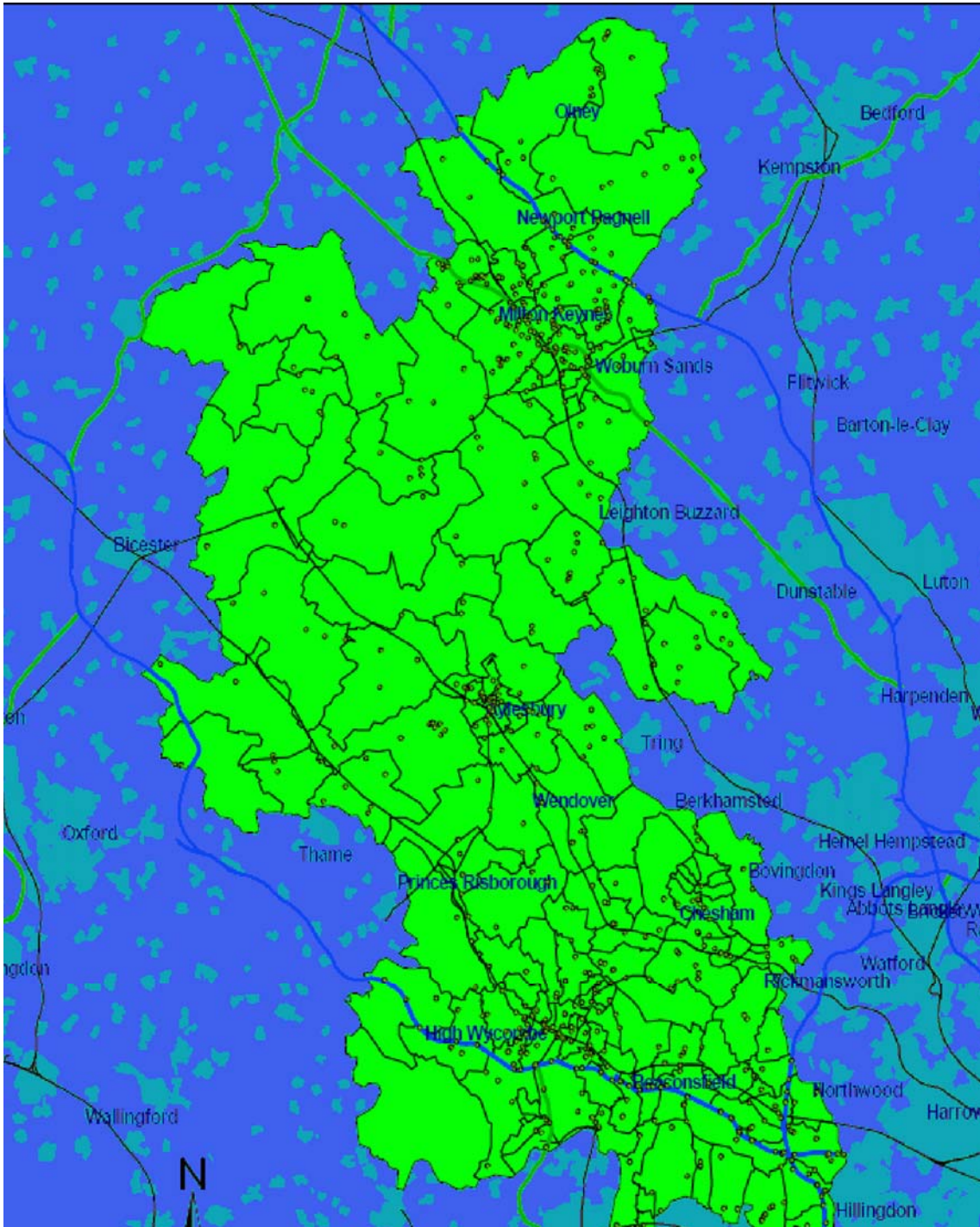
Table 14: Non road-related emergency incidents

Type	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Aircraft	4	2	7	0
Rail	0	0	0	0

The most serious risks are presented by Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes' extensive road network which includes major trunk routes and sections of the M1, M25, M4 and M40.

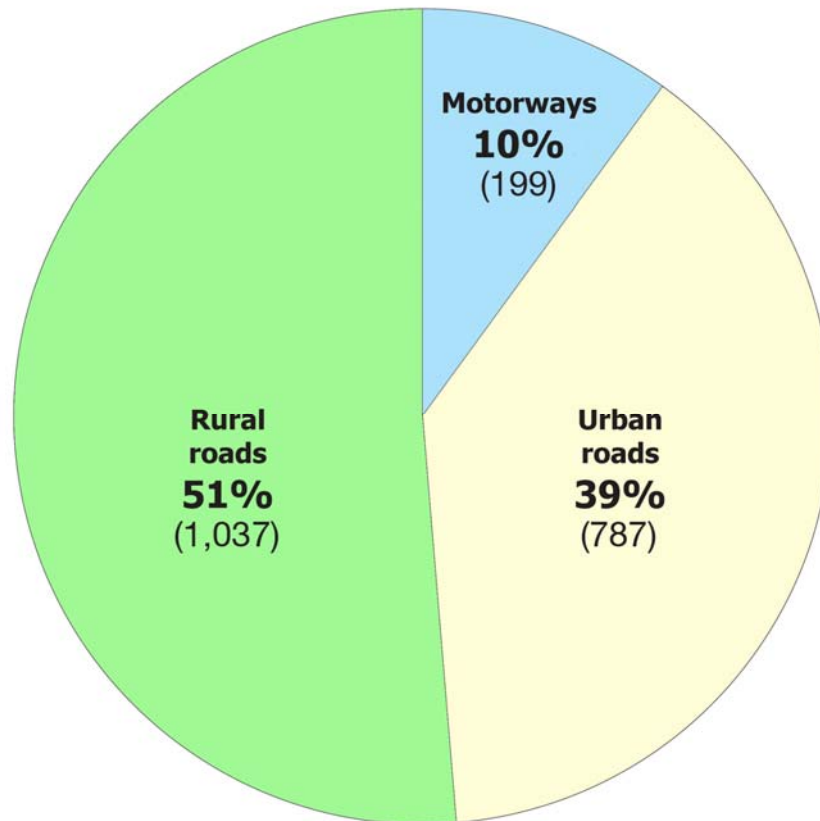
As figure 6 below shows, road traffic collisions (RTCs) are distributed extensively across the road network with significant concentrations in and around urban areas but with significant numbers taking place on rural roads as well.

Figure 6: Distribution of road traffic collisions that led to death or serious injury – 2005-07



Data collected by the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership enables us to show the distribution by road type of incidents that led to death or serious injury (KSI) by road type in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The chart below shows the proportion of incidents over the period 2002/06 and highlights the risks associated with rural roads:

Figure 7: Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes KSI by road classification.



In addition to the risks associated with younger drivers (17-24), noted on page 19, the Safer Roads Partnership Report also identified some other high risk groups including:

- Riders of 500cc+ motor cycles who accounted for 46 per cent of motorcycle accidents involving injury or death to the rider in 2007
- Foreign registered large goods vehicles (7.5 tonnes+) which accounted for 41 per cent of all crashes on motorways in the Thames Valley area involving vehicles in this category (the figure for the M25 only was 60 per cent).

Fire-related crime and anti-social behaviour

As tables 4 and 5 on page 13 show, significant progress is being made in reducing levels of deliberate fire-setting. However, arson remains an ever-present risk. Arson levels tend to be higher in areas of social deprivation and the distribution of incidents tends to mirror that of accidental dwelling fires, although certain types of non domestic building are particularly vulnerable to arson, as table 13 on page 31 shows – particularly prisons, schools, “other workplaces” and factories and warehouses.

According to the Arson Prevention Bureau²⁴, people living on the lowest incomes are 31 times more likely to suffer an arson attack and 16 times more likely to die in a fire. 40 per cent of those prosecuted or cautioned for arson are aged between 10 and 17* and nearly all juvenile fire-setters are male. Arson attacks by children excluded from school are almost double that of those still in mainstream education. 20 per cent of arsonists are thought to have mental problems.

* Based on Year 2000 figures
Integrated Risk Management Plan

7 Integrated Risk Management Strategy

In this section we set out how we intend to address the risks and opportunities identified in the Community and Brigade Risk Profile.

Firstly we have reviewed the strategic objectives which we set in our 2008/09 IRMP Action Plan and believe that no fundamental change to these is required as a result of our analysis of the risks facing the community. They therefore remain to make people safer:

- In their homes
- At work and in public places
- On the roads
- In their communities

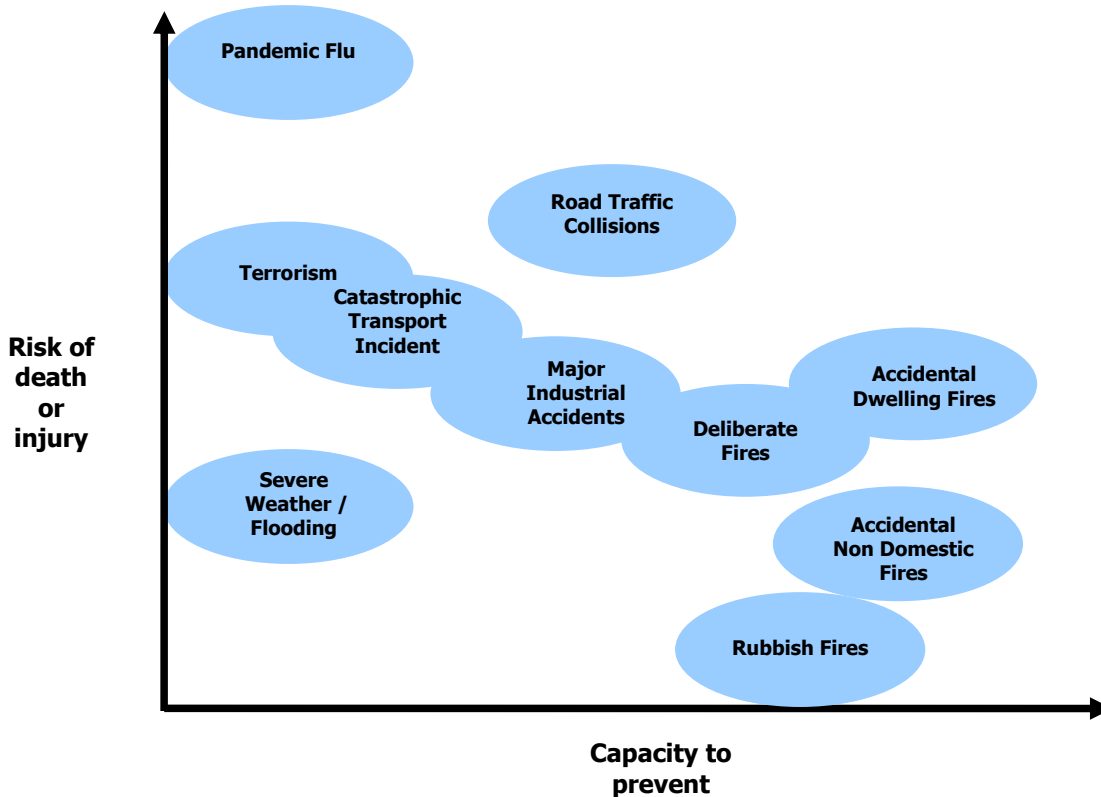
In our view the best way to make the public and our own staff safer is to prevent emergency incidents from happening in the first place. We therefore intend to put prevention at the heart of our strategy followed by measures to protect the public from the effects of emergency incidents should they arise. However, as the preceding analysis of risk will suggest, there are events that we cannot or only have limited ability or capacity to influence. Therefore we must always remain ready to respond effectively to a wide range of emergency incidents.

The pressures on our financial resources, such as the real terms reduction in our funding, means that we need to reduce our expenditure in real terms over the lifetime of this plan. In doing so we wish to minimise the effect of any cost saving measures on the safety of the public that we serve and have therefore looked first at opportunities to reduce our administrative and support costs and relieve pressure on our revenue budget by rescheduling provisions for the repayment of loans used to fund our capital projects. However, the scale of the required savings means that we have also had to look at the way we organise and deploy our front-line emergency services for further efficiencies. The details of these changes are set out in the section dealing with the optimisation of our response function below.

Prioritisation

Given our current financial outlook it is more important than ever that we prioritise the allocation of our resources in favour of tackling those risks that present real and present dangers to the communities we serve, particularly in the form of risk of death and serious injury. We have therefore assessed the implications of the various risks, changes and trends described in the preceding chapter for the frequency and severity of the types of emergency incident that present some risk of death or injury and considered these in relation to our capacity or ability to do something about it. The outcome of this assessment is figured over the page:

Figure 8: Risk assessment



Although we have seen a welcome reduction in the number of accidental dwelling fires in the last year, we believe that left unchecked the number and severity of these is likely to increase over the medium term due to:

- The effects of an ageing population and in particular the rapid growth of the high risk 80+ age group
- The general growth in the population and increase in the size of the housing stock
- The more transient nature of the population in certain areas due to the impact of migration trends
- Potential increases in levels of social deprivation associated with the current economic downturn (for example more people living in houses in multiple occupation)

The latter factor could also increase levels of fire-related crime and anti-social behaviour (e.g. arson and rubbish fires) although we consider this less certain than the likely impact on accidental dwelling fires.

We expect the overall trend in non domestic fires to continue downwards as a result of the impact of factors such as the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order which imposes greater legal responsibilities on building owners. However, the risk could increase in certain types of building such as care homes (we anticipate that the number of these will need to grow significantly over the next few years given the rapidly expanding 80+ population). Overcrowding in the prison system may also increase the risk of arson in prison buildings.

The most serious risk to life in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes is from road traffic collisions. Last year road traffic collisions claimed 46 lives and seriously injured 412 people. By comparison there were two deaths and 27 serious injuries caused by accidental dwelling fires. Although good progress is being made towards achieving the national targets for road safety (see page 44), the significant growth of the 17-24 age group expected in Milton Keynes suggests a potential for a rising trend in numbers of killed and seriously injured on local roads, emphasising the importance of continuing efforts to educate young drivers.

Figure 8 also identifies a range of other relatively infrequent but severe or catastrophic incidents which we have little or no capacity to prevent, including the impact of severe weather. We are not the lead agency for flood risk management although we will continue to pilot some protective measures for the most vulnerable households at risk of flooding in this year's IRMP Action Plan. However, our approach to these incidents is largely oriented to dealing with their effects. Some, such as pandemic flu, would also present a serious risk to our ability to continue to deliver our services to the public. These risks are addressed in our business continuity plans.

We therefore propose to concentrate our prevention and protection efforts on reducing:

- The risk of death and injury from accidental dwelling fires
- The number of accidental dwelling fires
- Fire-related crime and anti-social behaviour
- Non domestic building fires (with a particular focus on premises presenting a higher risk of death or serious injury from fire such as care homes, licensed premises, schools, hospitals and prisons)
- Road traffic collisions particularly among high risks groups such as the 17-24 population, riders of powerful motorcycles (500cc+) and drivers of foreign-registered lorries.

Community safety strategy

Making people safer in their homes

Our Safe Homes initiative is based upon the Home Safety Check procedure that provides advice and the fitting, where appropriate, of free smoke alarms.

Although the ultimate aim of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is to ensure that all domestic properties within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes have working smoke alarms, it is important that a methodical approach is taken in achieving our aims. Consequently, our resources will initially be targeted in the areas of greatest need.

Our statistics show that older people are a group needing our immediate attention, with 67 per cent of all accidental dwelling fire fatalities and 34 per cent of all accidental dwelling fires casualties over the past five years coming from people aged 50 and over.

Plans are in place to deal with issues specifically relating to elderly people. A number of partnerships with appropriate agencies have already been established. Current ongoing initiatives include:

- Referrals from other agencies' home safety checks and Age Concern/Help the Aged and Social Services
- Operational crews prioritising home safety checks with elderly occupants
- Information roadshows using the Community Safety exhibition unit
- Provision of specialist smoke alarms, i.e. alarms for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- 60+ Initiative, which is a scheme that encourages young people to identify elderly relatives and family friends who would benefit from a home safety check
- Presentations to older people's forums

Other work currently being carried out as part of our risk reduction initiative:

- The fitting of domestic sprinkler systems to properties with high-risk occupants
- Supply of flame retardant bedding and deep fat fryers
- Increased work with the Black and Minority Ethnic groups to identify any particular areas of concern and address them accordingly
- Fitting of smoke alarm systems for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing

Reducing the risk of death and injury from accidental dwelling fires

We intend to accomplish this by targeting those most at risk of death or serious injury, specifically those over the age of 80 and people with limited mobility and other disabilities, with priority given to those living in rural areas that cannot be reliably reached by our fire crews within 10 minutes. Over the next three years we intend to target the 50 most at risk rural "super output" areas (see map on page 29).

To support this we intend to roll out the new Single Assessment Home Safety Check (HSC) process that we successfully piloted in Chiltern District right across the county and continue our support to Age Concern, who are leading the introduction of the process in Milton Keynes. The Home Safety Check is operated on a multi-agency basis and considers a wider range of risks to vulnerable people than fire and includes considerations such as crime reduction, home security, adequacy of heating and insulation, risk of falls and other hazards in the home. Cases are then referred to the relevant agency for action. We consider that this process will not only reduce the risks from fire but also support the wider social objectives enshrined on our Local Area Agreements of enabling vulnerable elderly and disabled people to live in their own homes.

We intend to accomplish this by doubling the number of Home Safety Checks we carry out to 10,000 a year over the next three years (the targeting of vulnerable people in rural areas is included in this total). These will be initially targeted at the socio demographic groups most at risk of fire identified in tables 10 and 11 above. Specifically:

- Welfare borderline (about 4,700 households)
- Municipal dependency (about 5,300 households)
- Twilight subsistence (about 6,500 households)

Any remaining capacity will be used for repeat visits and to extend the programme to other risk groups with slightly lower but still disproportionate levels of fire risk.

To accomplish this we will need to:

- Double the number of HSCs carried out by our fire crews from one per wholetime shift per day to two.
- Use the capacity of partner organisations, e.g. via the Home Safety Check process.

Both of these initiatives will be funded from our existing budgets and from reward monies we have secured for achieving our LPSA II targets.

Making people safer at work and in public places

The delivery of service from the statutory fire safety/protection to the 'non-residential' sections of the community is fundamental to the aims and objectives of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) places statutory duties and responsibilities on the fire service to enforce fire safety requirements and to deliver its service in such a manner that it contributes to the central aims and objectives set by the authority.

The fire service is responsible for enforcing fire safety provisions in all premises, with the exception of single private dwellings. In addition, we are obliged under the RRO, and corresponding sections of the Building Regulations 1985, to respond to all plans and submissions for these premises.

Because the proper investigation of fires is considered as integral to reducing risk and helping to prevent fires from occurring in the future it is also an integral part of risk reduction.

In preparing these strategic objectives, the fire safety department has taken account of all the differing demands expected of it.

The changes introduced will enable us to deliver the most effective fire safety service to the communities and stakeholders of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Different types of premises have different levels of risk, so it is essential that high risk buildings are given greater priority than those of a lower risk. To reflect this we have devised a risk-based inspection programme that targets premises according to risk.

Higher risk premises are those where there is high life risk coupled with poor management practices, history of previous fires, storage and process risks.

Management practices relate to the procedures and facilities in place to prevent and protect the building from fire and causing loss of life, property and damage to the environment.

These are the essential elements that our officers will be looking for during an audit of premises.

The issues addressed during the audit are:

- Occupancy – maximum number of occupants in a building
- The potential loss or risk involved if a fire occurred
- Environmental risk – effect on the environment or loss to the community

- Property loss – in terms of a breakout of fire in one room spreading to other areas
- Risk to firefighters
- Firefighting facilities and fire protection measures available
- Size of the building – height, area, basements etc
- Arson reduction

We are committed to helping to reduce the burden of legislation and working with the business community to reduce the risk from fire in the workplace and make sure that people can safely escape

The introduction of the RRO replaces other fire safety legislation with one simple order. All premises, with the exception of single private domestic dwellings, now have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with the regulations. A programme of audit inspections has been organised that focuses primarily upon premises where there is a high 'life' risk. In addition it contributes to the Integrated Risk Management Plan and links directly with other activities.

To achieve this objective we will:

- Optimise the contribution of all information to the risk-based inspection programme so that the audit of premises is prioritised and carried out according to risk.
- Inform, educate and advise to develop best practice and an understanding of fire risk assessment
- Utilise the most effective and user-friendly methods to communicate with commerce, including local and national web-based systems, seminars and the various business based forums available.
- Work with other enforcing authorities to reduce risk and minimise the burden of regulation.
- Continue to reduce the number of false alarms we receive from commercial premises so that we can redirect resources to areas of greater need.
- Link with external partners to reduce the incidence of arson and help promote safer and more cohesive neighbourhoods.

Promote the installation of fire sprinklers in all types of buildings

A fire in a building obviously causes both serious disruption to the trade or business carried out, and a significant loss to the local community. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is committed to promoting the use of appropriate fire suppression systems. Fire sprinkler systems have been proved to be the most effective form of suppression in a wide range of buildings.

By raising the profile of sprinkler systems at the planning and design stage of any developments, we are able to promote their installation in all types of buildings.

To accomplish this we must ensure that we have the processes in place that can deliver the message to the people involved.

To achieve this objective we will:

- Promote the use of sprinklers in buildings and in particular in all school buildings.
- Provide a point of contact for people seeking information and advice on fire sprinklers.
- Provide financial and technical assistance to install domestic sprinklers in premises identified as being at risk from fire. (HFRC)
- Continue to engage with national and regional organisations to develop best practice in the promotion of fire sprinklers in buildings.

Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS):

A UFS incident occurs when a signal is transmitted by an automatic fire detection system falsely reporting a fire in premises.

The UFS officer is tasked with formulating local actions plans to deal with problem premises in the brigade. Initially this is by writing to or visiting the premises concerned and, in conjunction with the responsible person, agreeing a course of action to eliminate the problems identified.

Since the advent of the Regulatory Reform Order our role has become principally one of inspection and enforcement which limits the kind of active interventions that we can make. However, we can assist owners of non domestic premises with the fight against fire-related crime (a major cause of non domestic fires) through our arson audit programme. We will target these at those premises at greatest risk from arson such as prisons, factories, warehouses and schools. We will also review our approach to care homes given the likely impact of demographic change on the numbers of these institutions.

Making people safer on the roads

Although historically the Fire and Rescue Service has always attended road traffic collision incidents, the 2004 Act now places a statutory duty on us to make provision for rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions. We have also become actively involved in multi-agency preventative work in an effort to drive down the number of incidents.

We work with the Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council road safety teams, the police and other key stakeholders as part of the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is also part of the Chief Fire Officers' Association National Road Safety Forum.

Our strategy for reducing road traffic casualties is based upon the five "Es":

- Educate the public about the importance of driving at appropriate speeds
- Engineer out the problems
- Encourage drivers to adopt safer driving practices
- Evaluate the measures annually
- Emergency response – make sure that our firefighters have the appropriate equipment and training to deal effectively with road traffic collisions.

As part of our proactive education strategy we have developed the "Impact Roadshow", a road traffic collision reduction package targeted at young people who have committed motoring related offences. We also take part in the multi-agency "Safe Drive Stay Alive" roadshow that is presented to large audiences in set venues.

Targets for safer roads

National road casualty reduction targets have been set by the Government, which all agencies involved in road safety are aiming to achieve by 2010. The targets for reductions are comparisons against the average figures for 1994-98:

- A 40 per cent reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road collisions
- A 50 per cent reduction in the number of children (under 16s) killed or seriously injured
- A 10 per cent reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres

The Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership Collision/ Casualty Report for 2007 notes that: "Progress towards the Government's road casualty reduction 2010 targets is

positive, with the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in 2007 being 34 per cent below the 1994-98 average. Child KSI targets and 'slights per 100 million vehicle kilometres' are both below the 2010 target value."

Though this progress is encouraging, it is important that we and our partners continue our road safety efforts to give us the best chance of achieving the 2010 targets. We must also be ready to address any new road safety issues which may be highlighted by the national road safety strategy beyond 2010.

We will continue to focus particular effort on the high-risk road users, including:

Young drivers: Our 'Learn & Live' presentations to 16 and 17 year olds at schools and colleges will continue and we will continue to support the Thames Valley-wide "Safe Drive Stay Alive" campaign.

We will develop new road safety programmes for schoolchildren in Key Stages 1 to 4 to complement the existing work with sixth formers. Some of these new programmes will be delivered by firefighters.

Motorcyclists: We will support the development and delivery of the local authority rider training and assessment schemes by providing them with venues across our area. Our own biker drop-in events, first trialled at Winslow Fire Station, will be rolled out to other fire stations where appropriate.

Driving for work: We will work with our partners to make local employers aware of the significance of this issue, and provide them with advice and guidance on how to address it. We will lead by example and introduce our own driving for work policy.

We will explore regional opportunities to deliver road safety, including a joint campaign with other Fire and Rescue Services in the South East to reduce the high level of motorway incidents that involve foreign-registered lorries.

We will investigate the potential for joint Fire and Rescue Service road safety initiatives across the Thames Valley, and the opportunities and benefits of joining the Strategy Group of the Safer Roads Partnership.

We will continue to support national road safety campaigns such as drink-driving or seatbelts. Where possible we will involve firefighters in road safety events such as road traffic collision demonstrations.

We will deliver, in partnership with the Youth Offending Service, more Impact Roadshows for young people who have committed motoring-related offences.

Making people safer in their communities

We recognise the importance of youth engagement, diversion and education activities.

The Fire and Rescue Service has an established tradition in delivering fire safety education and broader risk education to children and young people, both in schools and other locations, i.e. the Safety Centre in Milton Keynes (age normally 4-19). It undertakes a wide range of successful initiatives for young people, especially disadvantaged young people and young offenders (age normally 11-21). The service also has a unique role, building on its professional skills and experience, in working with young firesetters and arsonists (age normally 3-18).

The National Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People is a four-year high level strategy intended to deliver effective reduction of fire risk and fire crime. It seeks to draw together and build on the strengths of the Service in all these areas.

The strategy aims to ensure excellence in work with children and young people, especially those in deprived communities, supported by effective partnership working and early intervention.

The strategy covers all aspects of Fire and Rescue Service involvement with children and young people. It sets two overarching goals – the prevention of fire crime and anti-social behaviour and the prevention of accidental injury and death. It is organised around six aims:

Aim 1 is to involve young people, especially those at risk, to ensure that all work meets their needs.

Aims 2, 3 and 4 focus on the three main areas of work by the service – interventions with the small group of young fire-setters, youth diversion for the wider group of children and young people at risk of offending, and finally fire safety education for all, but with a focus on those most at risk.

Aims 5 and 6 are concerned with supporting delivery, through workforce development, and research and evaluation.

This work is central to the service's statutory duty to promote fire safety and to the Public Service Agreement targets for 2010 to reduce accidental fire deaths in the home and incidents of arson. It also contributes to tackling disadvantage, reducing health inequalities and preventing crime.

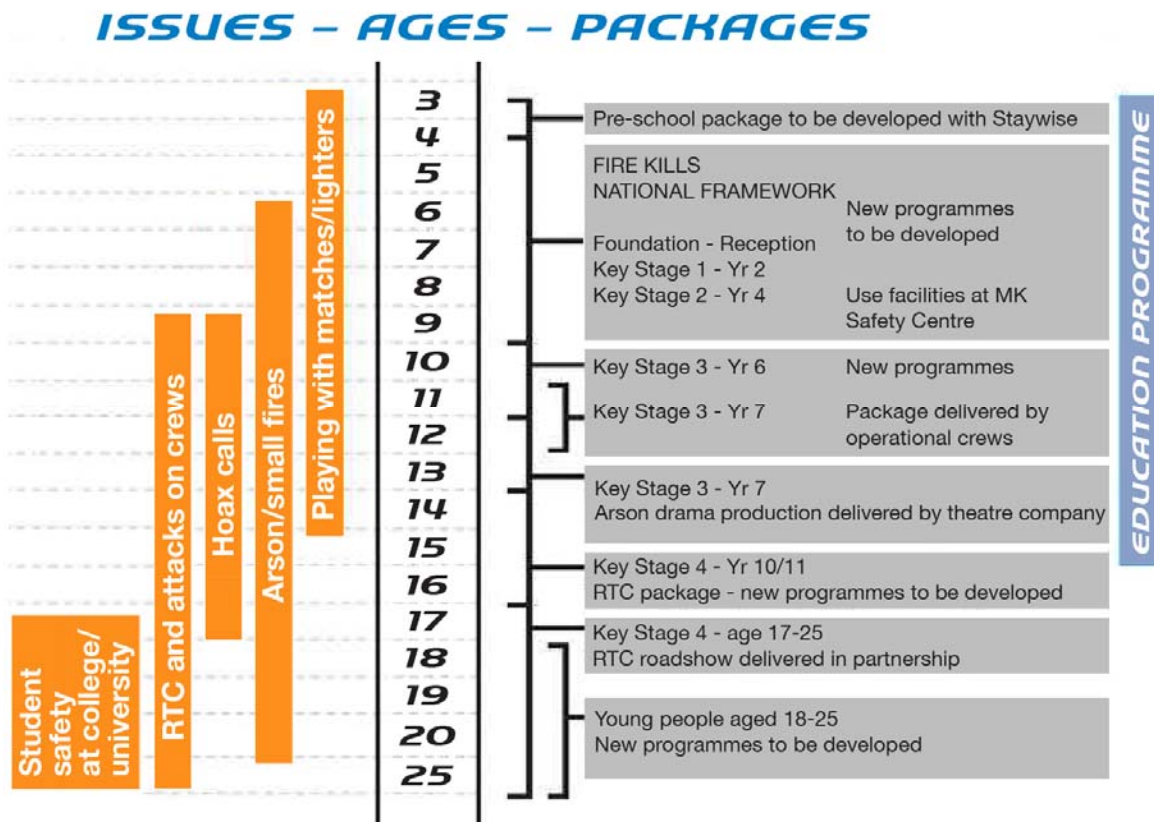
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service believe that the provision of proactive education is key to achieving the challenging targets set in the medium to longer term. Our education plan will ensure that every child within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes receives high quality safety education from fire service personnel throughout their school years with the input changing to suit their development.

Arson

Arson reduction is one of two main national targets and aims to achieve a 10 per cent reduction of deliberate primary fires by the year 2010. Local reduction targets are also set through Best Value Performance Indicator 206 which measure primary and secondary arson. Reducing arson is also a key delivery objective as set out in our Integrated Risk Management Plan. We will continue to set challenging targets for these areas.

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's arson strategy identifies the scale of the problem and prioritises our resources to be most effective. Analysis of national and local incident data indicates that we should provide proactive and reactive programmes to deal with arson in the following areas: Residential property, schools, industrial and commercial buildings, unoccupied buildings, vehicles and rubbish/waste.

The illustration below shows examples of behavioural tendencies for children and young people, and some interventions available.



The second strand of the strategy is the identification of the arsonist, the perpetrator of the crime. This reactive approach deals with identifying offenders.

Our strategy categorises age groups in line with those used by other agencies that have a role in crime reduction such as the police and social services. They are:

- Adult (18 and over)
- Young offender (10 to 17)
- Child (under 10).

The third phase of our arson strategy is to detail the actions we will undertake to achieve our targets.

Implement and enhance protocols for the joint investigation, information exchange and detection/deterrent initiatives in regard to deliberately started fires: We will continue to liaise with Thames Valley Police and other agencies monitor and review internal mechanisms in order to provide accurate intelligence and information on deliberately set fires. We will continue to develop an integrated and coordinated approach.

Develop and implement multi-agency initiatives for the removal of opportunities for deliberate fire setting involving vehicle removals and clearing outdoor locations: We will continue to support abandoned vehicle schemes, provision of community skips, and expansion of the 'Clean and Tidy' initiatives to reduce the opportunities for fire setting.

Reduce the opportunities for arson in schools, community and commercial premises: We will establish an arson reduction programme for schools, other local authority, community, and commercial sites. We will work with education authorities, community groups, and businesses to assess risks and advise on arson prevention measures. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service will carry out a new risk assessment of vacant/void buildings initiative. Operational crews will identify potential arson attack sites and, in conjunction with Community Safety Team, action preventative measures with the local authority.

Develop multi-agency schemes for delivering youth intervention schemes: We will develop multi-agency intervention programmes for delivery to identified groups/individuals. We will revise and develop the brigade's own intervention packages to increase the age range to which the programme can be delivered and provide any additional training necessary to the appropriate personnel.

Deliver safety education to target groups within Buckinghamshire: We will develop schools education programmes with the education officer in conjunction with outside agencies, highlighting the dangers and consequences of deliberate fire setting. We will use and develop the 'Staywise' learning package for schools.

Safer and more cohesive neighbourhoods

False alarm malicious (FAM): Working in partnership with Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and mobile phone service providers, Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has launched a campaign that disconnects mobile phones used to make hoax calls.

We will continue to raise awareness of this initiative and the consequences of making false alarms through education in schools. Increasing use of call challenging by Control Room operators is also having a positive effect on the number of malicious calls Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service are attending and we will ensure all new Control Room personnel continue to receive the training as part of their induction course.

We will continue to tackle arson and other fire-related anti-social behaviour through support for youth diversion schemes and targeting of areas with high levels of deprivation with environmental clean-up initiatives.

We will also seek to improve our engagement with hard-to-reach vulnerable groups both in urban and rural areas such as migrant workers, gipsies and travellers.

Optimising our response function

1. Review of fire cover provision

1 (a) Strategic issues

One of the challenges that we will be required to contend with over the coming years is the substantial population growth in a number of areas. At the same time we need to make considerable savings due to the financial pressures discussed at sections 6 and 11 of this document. Fundamentally, however, a first class operational emergency service must be maintained despite these challenges.

In order to meet these challenges we have considered carefully in recent years how best to provide our operational response service, for example by reviewing response standards that are summarised in section 2 below.

Recent developments such as the FSEC toolkit also enable us to assess with greater certainty those areas of the brigade where modifications to fire cover will have the most positive or negative impact on overall public safety across the county.

Historically we have provided fire cover which was, in theory, consistent across the 24 hour period, i.e. the same number of fire appliances and crews were available all of the time. In reality, however, the number of crews available varies quite considerably, due mainly to Retained Duty System (RDS) stations being unavailable - often for long periods of time. Despite recent proactive measures to enhance RDS availability, we are committed to providing a much more balanced approach to fire cover in the future. This may involve us accepting that slightly fewer appliances may be available on either a permanent or immediate basis than would have been the case in the past, but managing much more tightly the availability of these appliances to the times we need them via a range of means, and equipping and training them better. In addition, making greater use of RDS staff and appliances than we do currently is likely to be a key requirement. These developments, together with more accurate assessments of actual community and operational risks, are believed to be the basis for a more effective and balanced operational strategy for the future.

We have also considered in significant detail the long-term development of Milton Keynes, including, specifically, our probable fire station location requirements in future years. Taking account of current forecasted growth, our recent submission to the planning authorities²⁵ indicates that between now and 2026, between two and four additional fire stations may be required in the north of the county.

Despite these long-term developments which should ultimately provide some increased financial revenue, the current financial position facing Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Authority, summarised in section 11, is severe. While we might wish to maintain all of our current resources without change, the cost of doing so is not politically acceptable locally or nationally. This has led to officers and elected members considering a range of potential savings options during 2008, with the aim of maintaining the most effective service possible within our available resources.

In operational terms, the current distribution of fire cover from 20 fire stations remains the authority's intention, as this currently provides the basis for our local attendance standards. In certain areas, however, it is believed that effective operational outcomes can be achieved despite some changes in the resources currently used.

Consideration has also been given to the number, type, and location of our specialist appliances such as turntable ladders and water rescue units. This has concluded that our previous approach of locating at least two of both of these appliances in the north and south of the county remains appropriate.

As described above, for many years we have found it particularly difficult to maintain the constant availability of many of our RDS units, which represents an unacceptable risk to our communities, especially in rural areas. The authority is committed to overcoming this and achieving full availability of appliances. This will mean enhancing resources allocated to RDS units, and where appropriate this may be achieved via some reductions in wholetime personnel, or by a more effective interchange between both duty types.

In recent years a number of positive changes to risk critical operational training have been introduced, e.g. improved Incident Command and Breathing Apparatus training. Despite these, operational training remains under-developed in some key areas, e.g. fire appliance driver training, and require further resources for these to be effective, safe (for both our staff and the public) and legally compliant.

Taking account of the factors described above together with our limited resources, and by assessing carefully the optimum way to provide an effective operational service, we plan to implement modifications to operational fire cover in the following areas during 2009:

1 (b) Crewing of appliances at Great Holm Fire Station

Great Holm Fire Station, in west Milton Keynes, currently operates three fire appliances. Two of these are crewed by wholetime personnel, and the third by RDS personnel. The second of the wholetime pumping appliances was added in 2003, and in 2006 this was converted to a combined aerial/pumping appliance providing a dual operational role, providing in one vehicle the characteristics of both a traditional fire engine and turntable ladder for high-reach rescue or firefighting.

This form of combined appliance and crewing is conceptually very effective, as it eliminates the need for two separate appliances and crews. However, the specific vehicle currently utilised has been beset with various mechanical problems over the last two years. While the aerial capability has been unavailable due to mechanical problems, the other aerial appliance located at High Wycombe has been temporarily located to Aylesbury so as to give the most effective strategic cover possible to the whole county.

While a recent review of aerial appliance provision confirms the need to maintain an aerial appliance provision in both the north and south of the county, the number and

distribution of standard pumping appliances is at its highest in the Milton Keynes, with eight appliances available across Great Holm, Bletchley, Broughton and Newport Pagnell fire stations.

Assuming that the mechanical issues with the current combined vehicle can be overcome, and a sustained period of reliability is achieved, we propose to reduce the wholetime staffing, and increase the RDS staffing, at Great Holm to provide on a 24/7 basis:

- One rescue pump, wholetime crewed (i.e. no change to current provision)
- One combined aerial/pump, with two wholetime crew, supplemented when necessary by RDS staff
- One RDS pump, (i.e. no change to current provision)

The effect of this change would be to provide an immediately available aerial appliance, which could also be mobilised as a pumping appliance utilising additional RDS staff on a delayed turnout basis. Pumping appliances from adjacent stations would provide support to incidents on Great Holm's station area when needed, i.e. when two or more appliances are mobilised to incidents. It is likely that this change would result in a reduction of up to 12 wholetime posts at Great Holm, offset by increases to both the numbers and the operational activity of RDS personnel. Some increases to the operational activity of RDS units at adjacent stations may also result.

This change has been modelled within the FSEC toolkit, which estimates an extremely small detrimental impact on community safety, namely 0.00019 lives per year.

1 (c) Introduction of a "five watch" duty pattern

For a considerable period of time we have explored how staffing and duty pattern arrangements in the brigade can be optimised. Considerable discussion has been undertaken with staff and their representative bodies on modifying existing wholetime shifts – to shorten the night shift and lengthen the day shift – and on the potential adoption of a "five watch" duty pattern, to replace the current "four watch" arrangement. A wide variety of organisational benefits result from altering shift lengths which, in summary, comprise increasing the number of positive hours spent on proactive work, e.g. operational training and community fire safety activities, as well as enhancing support to RDS stations which can frequently be unavailable during the working day.

The current "four watch" system, although having operated for many years, is relatively inefficient in that it requires a very high number of staff attached to each watch and station to take account of expected absences such as leave, training and other absences etc. The adoption of a "five watch" duty pattern builds in an increase in the number of actual watches (i.e. teams of staff) yet reduces the number of staff allocated to each watch, resulting in an overall reduction in the operational workforce of about 20 posts across the whole brigade. This can be achieved without any

alteration to the number of fire appliances available to the community. BFRS intends to work actively towards the adoption of a "five watch" system for implementation in early 2010, together with the most effective shift length possible and associated working arrangements.

1 (d) Modification of standard appliance crewing

We have traditionally aimed to provide a crew of five firefighters on the majority of its pumping appliances, in particular the first appliance at each station. This has historically originated in the normal operational tactics that would be employed on a single fire appliance arriving at an operational incident, e.g. a property fire that would require a Breathing Apparatus crew.

While this has been a long-standing approach, it is not achieved consistently and effective and safe operational tactics can be employed in the early stages of incidents with a crew of four personnel only. This is particularly the case when the distribution of wholetime crews across the county results in single appliances being in attendance at property fires for only a very limited time. In many cases the two appliances normally forming the first attendance to such incidents arrive simultaneously, or a very short time apart, e.g. at stations where two wholetime appliances are located or when appliances from adjacent stations reach incidents quickly.

Furthermore in the last 18 months various mobilising changes have been introduced with positive effects, e.g. additional appliances are now frequently sent to specific types of incident depending on the nature of the call, whereas in the past a standard deployment of two appliances would be sent irrespective of information received. It is considered that given these changes and the distribution of crews across the county, when viewed collectively, it is appropriate and operationally safe for a standard wholetime appliance to be crewed routinely with four operational firefighters at stations that currently operating two wholetime appliances, together with those one-appliance stations where normal attendance times from adjacent stations make this appropriate, e.g. in Milton Keynes. The change will enable the operational establishment to be reduced across the whole brigade by up to 20 operational posts. This saving will result in much needed resources being diverted into other key areas such as operational training and safety, and RDS pump availability, thus better providing the overall balanced approach outlined in section 1 above.

1 (e) Further review of fire cover

During 2009, we will continue to assess fire cover and operational deployment across the brigade, always seeking to ensure that an optimal Fire and Rescue Service is provided having regard to the risks within the county and the available resources. The Fire Authority cannot ignore the fact that the financial settlement from the Government over the coming three years clearly implies the requirement for efficiencies to be achieved and therefore other modifications to fire cover in other parts of the county may be necessary, and may feature in future IRMP action plans. Wider operational developments that will take effect in future years, e.g. the South East Regional Control

Centre and the national Fire Service radio scheme FireLink, will inevitably draw additional financial resources.

2. Review of operational response standards

Following the removal of the national standards of response which were contained within the 1947 Fire Services Act and the introduction of integrated risk planning by the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act, we have been reviewing and amending speed and weight of response to emergency incidents. Following an extensive trial undertaken during 2007, the following standards are now proposed for formal adoption:

- Attendance of the first operational resource for all emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75 per cent of occasions
- Attendance of the first operational resource for all emergency incidents within 20 minutes on 98 per cent of occasions
- Ensuring that all pumping appliances required at an incident where a pre-determined attendance standard applies are present within 20 minutes on 80 per cent of occasions.

In addition, we are currently mid way through a trial of increased “weight of attack”, namely altering the number and type of appliances we send initially send to certain types of emergency – in most cases this results in an increase in appliances to those traditionally mobilised. The results of this trial will be considered and formal recommendations made to the authority in the future.

3. Response standards for special appliances

There is currently no formal standard of response for special appliances such as Turntable Ladders or Command Units, appliances being located in such locations that met the previously recommended national standards. We are reviewing, and will continue to review special appliance provision and will identify if there is any effective scope for the sharing of resources on either a regional or sub-regional basis. The review will also seek to identify an appropriate speed of response standard to apply to special appliances. The recent review of aerial appliances provision undertaken suggests a 30-minute attendance standard to any part of the county be adopted, and will feature in a formal recommendation to the authority in the near future.

4. Development of our Retained Duty System capability and staff

We are now some three years into a proactive development plan for firefighters on the Retained Duty System, after many years of under-investment. We will continue to increase wherever possible establishment levels to maximise appliance availability with targeted and ongoing recruitment campaigns at key locations. Modifications to fire cover described in section 1 above may also require enhanced Retained Duty System resources and availability at key locations. We will continue to explore and adopt a variety of positive enhancements to our training, development and retention activities that are applied to this critical group of operational staff.

5. Officer cover review

Work has recently been undertaken to identify a set of brigade planning assumptions and these have then been used to consider the type and number of officers required to achieve a minimum availability level for effective incident command and support. The current disposition does not meet the stated minimum identified by the planning assumptions so a review will therefore be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate number of officers are available at all times to meet the planning assumptions.

6. Long-term capability management strategy for New Dimension equipment

As a result of the Government's New Dimension programme, the brigade now has a mass decontamination unit known as an Incident Response Unit, and an Urban Search and Rescue Unit. Further work is now underway with the Department for Communities and Local Government to ensure that these resources are suitably maintained with replacement possible at an appropriate time in the future.

7. Development of new crewing patterns

In order to meet our statutory duties and to provide a level of service that meets the expectations of the people who live, work and travel through Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, the authority remains committed to achieving staffing numbers and appropriate skills. It will be developing new crewing patterns to ensure that Retained Duty System crewed appliances are available for 95 per cent of the time and wholtime appliances for 99 per cent. This may involve a more flexible interchange of different duty patterns than those traditionally utilised, e.g. mixed crewing, and Retained Duty System personnel working wholtime shifts when suitably trained and available.

8. Review operational training provision

Firefighting is clearly high risk and therefore significant time and resources must be allocated to the effective and continuous training of all of our operational staff. We will continue to enhance our operational training facilities in areas such as Incident Command and continually review all areas of the operational training programme. Forthcoming legal changes to emergency driver training will in particular require improvements to our current arrangements with increased costs. The review will also seek to ensure that the operational skills programmes are suitably quality assured and the most effective level of collaboration with other brigades is achieved.

9. Review of staff development programmes

In order to ensure that the staff development programmes within the brigade continue to meet service delivery and individual needs a review is underway. This will support work being undertaken to introduce a robust staff appraisal scheme within the wider "Effective Manager Programme" – the programme that supports all non-operational training across the brigade.

10. Review of water rescue provision

The Government-sponsored Pitt Review, into the response to the floods in summer 2007, made a number of recommendations to improve emergency response to this type of incident and supports further refinement of our already high quality water rescue capability. As a result of this and other significant reports and events, a full review of this provision is being carried out.

11. Development of replacement programme for special appliances

The brigade is committed to continuing to replace pumping appliances when they reach 12 years old, while in most cases special appliances will be replaced at 15 years old unless reviews of any specific vehicle suggest otherwise. Over the next three years we will undertake reviews of a number of specialist vehicles. This will include investigating the possibility of sharing some of these resources with our neighbouring brigades. The brigade's New Appliance Working Group will also be looking in to the current four-wheel drive appliance capability within the brigade, as well as the replacement of the Operational Support Unit. A longer-term review will also look at our Command Unit capability which is mobilised to large-scale incidents to support the Incident Command System.

12. Review of standard equipment provision

For the past year the brigade has been introducing an asset tracking system to ensure that the management of equipment is carried out in such a way as to ensure that testing and replacement at end of life is on time. This will also make it possible to quantify location and condition of assets at all times. We are currently very successful in reducing purchasing costs through rigorous procurement processes and we will continue to strive for the most cost effective way of providing necessary equipment.

13. Replacement programme for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Officers will be undertaking research and trials to identify the next generation of Personal Protective Equipment and to begin a replacement programme. This is likely to be on the basis of a phased approach and may see a period where some staff have new Personal Protective Equipment while others remain equipped with the older style. Risk assessments will be reviewed to ensure that a suitable and safe approach is also taken in the mixing of old and new Personal Protective Equipment where this is required.

14. Upgrade mobilising system to VisionFX

Since 2004 central government has required all brigades nationally to support work to move towards regionalised control centres. While Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service continues to support a change to the South East RCC located in Hampshire, it will not transfer to the regional control centre until mid-2011 at the earliest and as such the brigade must continue to discharge its duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 in terms of emergency call handling. To support this, the brigade has begun a project to replace our current mobilising system with an upgraded version of our current system known as VisionFX. This will provide an improvement in both reliability and call handling speed and will also include an upgrade of the current secondary control room facility.

15. Promote use of station facilities to aid community cohesiveness

Many of the fire stations we own are centrally placed within towns and villages. These provide a useful community meeting venue and encourage the community to understand the work that the brigade does in Protection, Prevention and Response. The brigade will continue to offer its facilities to local community groups in support of local need. We will also continue to raise awareness of community safety issues by

carrying out regular and widespread station open days and other on-station community safety activities.

16. Prepare for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics

We have already begun close working with neighbouring brigades and other emergency services to assess the risks and ensure public safety during these high profile events. During the lead-up to the Olympics we will continue this work to ensure safe and enjoyable events at Eton-Dorney.

17. Further develop business continuity plans

The Civil Contingencies Act requires all category 1 responders to assist in the development of robust community contingency arrangements. It is also of considerable importance that an emergency responder has measures in place to ensure it maintains its ability to deliver services even under the most difficult of circumstances. We continue to develop our business continuity arrangements and to implement plans to deal with the foreseeable but undesired outcomes of large-scale events. Involvement within the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum ensures involvement with other responders within our region and continues to inform and support our own planning arrangements.

18. Introduction of inter-agency liaison officers

The emergency incidents that we have attended in recent times have increasingly included a multi-agency response. To enable the brigade to provide the best possible response the authority will begin a programme of identifying and training suitable staff to become inter-agency liaison officers. Through their greater understanding of the needs and resources of other agencies, officers trained to carry out this role have proved to be very successful in supporting inter-agency emergency response in London for example, providing support to incidents of all sizes where other responders are involved.

19. Introduce mobile data terminals

All Fire and Rescue Services are required, under Section 7(2)d of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to make arrangements to obtain information for the purpose of extinguishing fires and protecting life. This Site Specific Risk Assessment process is being progressed within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service supported by an electronic data collection system known as FREEDOM, which links data collection processes for prevention, protection and response. It is intended that this will be via an electronic in-cab data system known as a Mobile Data Terminal. Work will be undertaken to prepare for the provision of Mobile Data Terminals and to ensure that the data held within the Site Specific Risk Assessment database is available in an appropriate format when the Mobile Data Terminals become available.

20. Progress funding arrangements for water hydrants

The 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act require brigades to make provision for water for fire fighting. We own and maintain more than 14,000 water hydrants in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. Officers will continue to pursue arrangements with local authorities to secure funding from local authority grants and "developer pays" schemes to provide hydrants in new developments at no cost to this authority.

21. Review support arrangements with neighbouring brigades

Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act require brigades to enter in to arrangements with neighbouring authorities to provide reinforcement and support when demand so requires. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has begun a programme to review all previous arrangements made under the previous Fire Services Act and aims to have all of these reviewed during the period of this document.

22. Continue to support the Regional Management Board

Regional Management Boards have been a part of the Fire and Rescue Service for a number of years. We take an active part in progressing regional working and are a leading exponent of Assessment Development Centres for example and chair the Regional Response and Resilience Group. The brigade will continue to work with its partner services in the South East to develop areas such as the South East Fire Improvement Partnership, and will utilise wherever possible the benefits of shared working and collaboration.

8 2009/10 performance targets

Each year we set a series of performance targets which set out how much we are seeking to improve by during the year. The targets are linked to our objectives and are designed to provide a measurable basis against which we can monitor progress towards their achievement. The community safety related targets are generally based on improvement against the average performance achieved over the most recent three years for which we have complete data. Targets for the 2009/10 financial year will therefore be based on the three years to the end of March 2008.

Our proposed performance improvement targets for 2009/10 for our emergency response and community safety functions respectively are:

Emergency response

- 5.1** Zero Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service staff deaths or serious injuries arising from work-related activities.
- 5.2** To achieve attendance with the first operational resource for all emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75 per cent of occasions and 98 per cent of all emergency incidents within 20 minutes.
- 5.3** To ensure that all pumping appliances required at an incident where a pre-determined attendance standard applies are present within 20 minutes on 80 per cent of occasions.
- 5.4** To achieve 99 per cent availability of all whole-time pumping appliances.
- 5.5** To achieve 95 per cent availability of all RDS (part-time) pumping appliances.
- 5.6** To meet appliance and staff resourcing levels required by operational planning assumptions 99 per cent of the time.
- 5.7** To maintain fully operational and resilient local mobilising and Control Room capabilities.
- 5.8** To maintain an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery rating of at least 3 or equivalent.

Community safety

Objective 1: Make people safer at home

- 1.1** Reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008.
- 1.2** Reduce the number of injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008.
- 1.3** Reduce the percentage of fires attended where no smoke alarm was fitted by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008.
- 1.4** Confine at least 93 per cent of fires to room of origin.

Objective 2: Make people safer at work and in public places

- 2.1** Reduce the number of fires in non domestic properties by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008.
- 2.2** Reduce the number of call outs to false alarms in non domestic buildings caused by automatic fire detection by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008.
- 2.3** Reduce the number of call outs to sites generating repeat false alarms by 10 per cent compared with 2007/08.
- 2.4** Reduce economic losses from commercial property fires as measured by the incidence of insurance claims recorded by the Association of British Insurers in the under £50,000 category by £500,000.

Objective 3: Make people safer on the roads

- 3.1** Reduce the number of road traffic collisions involving the following age groups by five per cent compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008: 0 to 16, 17 to 24 and over 65s.
- 3.2** Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads by five per cent in each of the following age groups compared with the average recorded over the three years to 31 March 2008: 0 to 16, 17 to 24 and over 65s

Objective 4: Make people safer in their communities

4.1 Reduce the number of deliberate vehicle fires by five per cent compared with the 2008/09 LAA target.

4.2 Reduce the number of deliberate dwelling fires by five per cent compared with the 2008/09 LAA target.

4.3 Reduce the number of rubbish fires in the 15 "Super Output Areas" with the highest levels of deprivation in the council areas we serve by five per cent compared with 2008/09.

4.4 Reduce the number of malicious false alarms by five per cent compared with the average achieved over the three years to 31 March 2008.

4.5 Reduce attendances to malicious fire alarms by five per cent compared with the average achieved over the three years to 31 March 2008.

4.6 Deliver enhanced Single Assessment Home Safety Checks (incorporating flood protection measures) to 100 of the 500 most vulnerable households in areas of high flooding risk.

9 2009-12 Action Plan

Prevention and Protection

Making people safer in their homes

Initiative	Target risk groups	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Roll out Single Assessment Home Safety Check process to rest of the county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ties of community • Welfare borderline • Municipal dependency • Twilight subsistence 	✓	✓	
Single Assessment Home Safety Check/Home Fire Risk Check programme focused at 80+ population in 50 most at risk rural super output areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twilight subsistence • 80+ population. 	✓	✓	✓
Thatch properties safety campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thatched property owners 	✓		
Develop and implement strategy for risk reduction in Houses in Multiple Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses in multiple occupation • Migrants 	✓	✓	✓
Promote the installation of domestic fire sprinklers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with mobility problems 	✓	✓	

Making people safer at work and in public places

Initiative	Target risk group	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Arson audits for business	Warehouses/factories Care homes Shops Other workplaces	✓	✓	✓
Implementation of protocol with Gang Masters Association for inspection of workplace employing migrant workers.	Migrant workers		✓	
Workplace sprinkler promotional campaign	Schools Warehouses/factories	✓	✓	✓
Improve targeting of thematic audits through analysis of real fire data (local and national)	All commercial/public buildings	✓	✓	✓
Integrate FREDOM with Single Assessment Home Safety Check and other key external agency partners (e.g. Police Community Support Officers)	All external fire risks	✓	✓	✓

Making people safer on the roads

Initiative	Target risk group	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Develop road safety education programmes for all key stages	5-17	✓	✓	✓
Continue support for the "Safe Drive Stay Alive" campaign	16-17	✓	✓	✓
Continue to work with our partners to develop and deliver "Driving for Work" programmes and encourage employers to put DFW policies in place	People who drive for work Local employers	✓		
Develop education campaign to reduce high level of motorway incidents involving foreign LGVs via Regional Management Board/Chief Fire Officers' Association	Foreign-registered LGV drivers	✓	✓	✓
Continue supporting and delivering rider education/training schemes, and bike related road safety events	All riders of powered two-wheelers	✓	✓	
Scope for potential for Fire Service co-operation within the Thames Valley Safer Roads Partnership	All	✓		

Make people safer in their communities

Initiative	Target risk group	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Develop initiatives to support Local Area Agreement themes using new and existing partnerships	65+/twilight subsistence Young people/young families (municipal dependency, welfare borderline)	✓	✓	
Youth diversion – continue to support established activities for youth diversion (cohesion through sport)	Marginalised young people	✓	✓	✓
Improve engagement with hard to reach and BME (including gipsy and traveller) communities	BME	✓		
Continue to target high IMD areas with environmental clean initiatives	High VLI localities			
Improve evaluation of community safety initiative effectiveness using RMB/CFOA protocols (currently in development)	All risks	✓	✓	
Review partnership protocols to ensure best value	All risks	✓	✓	✓
Develop adult fire setter programme (in partnership with CFOA).	Adult fire-setters	✓		
Develop arson auditing, prevention and detection practices.	Business owners, householders in vulnerable areas.	✓	✓	

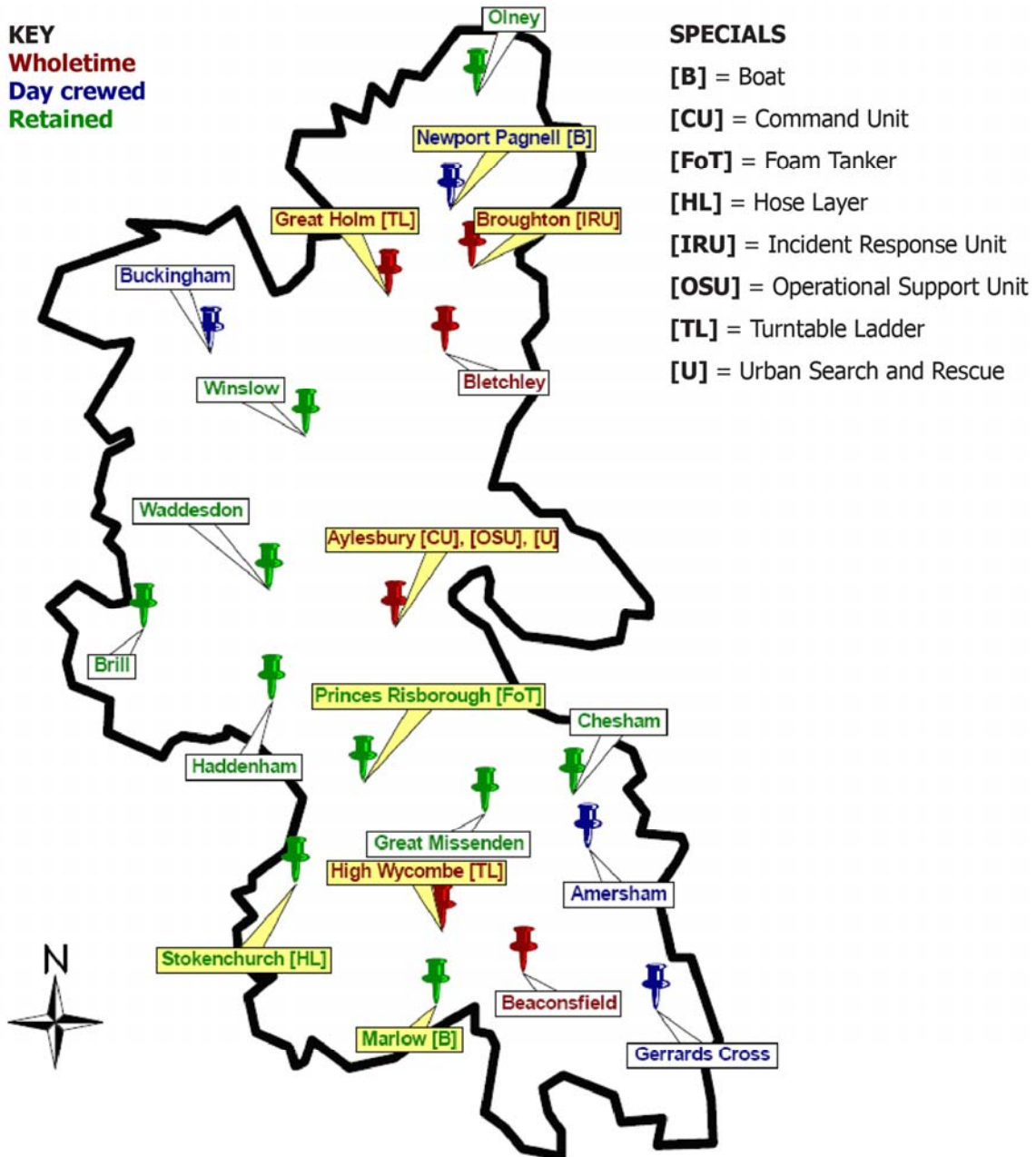
Response

Initiative	Target risk	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Review of water rescue capability in light of Pitt Review	Flooding	✓		
Replace current mobilising system with VisionFX	RCC migration	✓		
Conduct further scoping with London Fire Brigade and other category 1 responders to assess risks arising from Olympics and potential sources of funding.	2012 Olympics (Eton-Dorney)	✓	✓	✓
Prepare SPD for adoption by the Fire Authority to cover all fire infrastructure (capital and revenue) including fire cover, buildings/ installations, hydrants, access standards and water supplies	MK/AVDC Expansion	✓		
Review fire cover in terms of appliance and station location, staffing levels and crewing patterns	MK/AVDC expansion	✓	✓	✓
Pilot, trial and adopt the following speed of response standards namely: 1. First appliance to reach emergency incident within 10 minutes on 75 per cent of occasions 2. First appliance to reach emergency incident within 20 minutes on 98 per cent of occasions 3. Where a pre-determined attendance (PDA) involves pumping appliances then BFRS will aim to have all PDA pumps in attendance within 20 minutes	Speed of response	✓		
Develop, pilot and record speed of response standards for special appliances such as aerial and command units	Speed of response	✓		
Review of officer cover to ensure that an appropriate number of officers are available at all times to meet operational planning assumptions	Operational planning assumptions	✓		

Initiative	Target risk	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12
Develop a long term capability management strategy for the maintenance and replacement of New Dimension equipment	New Dimension programme	✓	✓	✓
Develop and adopt more flexible crewing arrangements to ensure that RDS appliances are available for 95 per cent of the time and wholetime appliances for 99 per cent	Duty patterns	✓	✓	✓
Review of operational training provision to ensure firefighters are equipped to meet future service delivery requirements	Training provision	✓		
Review quality assurance standards for Operational training provision	Training provision	✓		
Review appliance replacement programme including four-wheel drive, Operational Support Unit, Command Unit and water rescue towing capabilities	Fleet replacement	✓		
Review of standards of equipment for use on appliances working in alignment with initiative above	Equipment replacement	✓	✓	✓
Undertake research and trials to identify the next generation of Personal Protective Equipment.	PPE provision	✓	✓	
Promote use of station facilities by wider community to aid community cohesiveness	Engagement with local communities	✓	✓	✓
Ensure the continued development and testing of Brigade Specific Business Continuity Plans	Resilience	✓	✓	✓
Undertake a programme of identifying and training suitable Brigade staff to become Inter Agency Liaison Officers	Effective Partnership working	✓	✓	
Prepare for adoption of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) to ensure that data held in Site Specific Risk Assessment database is available for access by operational staff at emergency incidents	ICT systems		✓	✓
Review arrangements with neighbouring Fire Authorities to provide reinforcement and support when demand so requires	Resilience	✓	✓	✓
Continue to support the development of regional working via Regional Management Boards	Regional activities	✓	✓	✓

10 Our resources

This map shows the location of our 20 fire stations and our special appliances.



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11 Medium term financial plan

As discussed earlier in this Integrated Risk Management Plan, we are experiencing severe financial pressures, mainly as a result of the effects of the unfavourable three-year government grant settlement which provided us with an increase of only one per cent in the last financial year (2008/09), falling to 0.5 per cent for the next two years after that (41 per cent of our funding comes direct from the government with the balance raised from the council tax).

If we do nothing to cut our costs, we face a rising budget deficit even if we increase our council tax by five per cent, the maximum the Government currently allows before invoking its "capping regime", as shown in the table below:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Government grant*	£11,337,283	£11,394,553	11,451,526	11,508,784
Council tax	£15,913,283	£16,792,492	£17,720,277	£18,699,323
Contribution from reserves	£202,000			
Total revenue	£27,453,147	£28,187,045	£29,171,803	£30,208,107
Annual budget requirement	£27,453,147	£29,120,657	£30,348,803	£31,557,206
Funding gap		£(933,612)	£(1,177,000)	£(1,349,099)

Clearly this is an unsustainable position and will quickly drain our reserves if no action is taken to find savings.

To reduce the size of the deficit we are considering deferring budgeting for the provision that we make for the repayment of loans used to fund our capital programme. Unfortunately, while this measure reduces the size of the funding gap in the short term, it is insufficient to close it completely. Moreover it is undesirable for us to defer provisioning of loan repayments over a prolonged period.

* The figures for 2008/09 to 2010/11 have been set by government at 1%, 0.5% and 0.5%. We have assumed that in 2011/12 the figure will also be 0.5%.

	2009/10	2010/11	20011/12
Deferral of loan repayment provisions	£346,938	£490,588	£565,588
Funding gap	£(586,674)	£(686,412)	£(783,511)

Therefore we propose to make cost reductions in our back office and support functions and have had to search for ways of reducing our operational costs leading to the proposals shown at pages 49 to 53. Some of these savings cannot be achieved immediately and the table below demonstrates the part and full year effects of implementation.

Back office and support savings	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Modifications to crewing arrangements at Great Holm	£200,000	£400,000	£400,00
Changes to standard crewing model	£455,000	£665,000	£700,000
Five watch bank		£500,000	£500,000
Surplus	£218,326	£528,588	£966,489

Were we to implement them all, the combined effect of these measures would lead to a small surplus which could be used to meet other organisational pressures and/or re-invested in improved community safety provision.

One of the most significant effects on the revenue budget for the authority is the cost of borrowing for its capital programme. With 20 fire stations located around the county, over 40 response vehicles which require replacing on a 12- to 15-year cycle, and specialist equipment as well as ICT hardware, there is constant pressure for capital spend.

Our revenue budget supports the cost of this borrowing, but as we have no capital receipts in the "pot", our entire capital spend depends on borrowing funds from the Public Works Loan Board. Therefore, prudent and judicious planning is required to ensure we achieve the optimum benefits from any capital spend.

The Government has recently consulted with Fire and Rescue Authorities about a distribution methodology for some capital grant for 2009/10 and 2010/11. We are awaiting the outcome of this consultation and are hoping to receive some capital grant in the next two years.

12 Equality impact assessment

Date of assessment: 7 October 2008

Completing officer's title/position: Area Manager, Performance & Planning

Responsible directorate/service area/designated officer: Risk Directorate

Summary of findings: The aim of this three-year plan is to document for the public, partners and stakeholders our aims and objectives, strategies and processes through which we will deliver improvements in terms of making our whole community safer. The very nature of an IRMP is to identify risks across all sections of the communities within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes with the focus being on ensuring that risk is minimised. This takes into account social, economic, ethnic, age and disabled groups and assesses the impact of the risk to all.

This document is available on the internet via our website and is available in other formats upon request.

Specifically the following findings have been listed against each of the six strands:

Race: The IRMP document and the consultation questions are written in English. It is our intention to hold focus groups with various representative sections of the community to ensure key messages are delivered and opinions sought.

Disability: No.

Gender: None, although we are currently working with our partners to assess how gender impacts on an individuals propensity for risk through the greater sharing of data and information.

Religion: No

Age: Our research has indicated those within certain age groups are at higher risk than the rest of the community and as such specific initiatives are planned with the elderly of pensionable age in terms of single assessment home safety checks and campaigns directed at younger drivers (17-24). Initiatives in working with young fire- setters to minimise incidents of arson are also ongoing.

Sexuality: No

Summary of recommendations and key points of action plan: Place a statement in the front of the IRMP document offering different formats (ie larger print and Braille version for use by blind or partially sighted people) and translation into other languages if required.

13 Glossary of terms

Aerial appliance

Any fire vehicle with a high rise capability above the reach of standard ladders (13.5 metres).

Areas of Multiple Deprivation

Neighbourhoods considered to be deprived in terms of income, employment, health and disability, skills and training, barriers to housing and services, crime and the living environment.

Arson

Deliberate fires

BME – Black Minority Ethnic

People or groups.

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA)

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service's governing body. It comprises 21 elected representatives nominated by Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council.

CCA – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Legislation requiring Fire and Rescue Services to plan and test their arrangements for dealing with major disasters.

CFOA – Chief Fire Officers' Association

CIU – Central Intelligence Unit

Internal department within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service tasked with analysing and interpreting statistical information to maximise risk reduction.

CLG – Communities and Local Government

The Government department that sets UK policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue.

Community Risk Register

This is a "live" document detailing risks within Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. A "risk" for the purposes of the Community Risk Register is one that can lead to a major emergency.

Community safety

A Fire and Rescue Service and partnership activity aimed at reducing the incidence and limiting the effects of fires and other emergencies through informing and assisting the public, commerce and local communities. This focuses on vulnerable individuals, areas suffering from deprivation and groups at risk.

Corporate Risk Register

A risk assessment process that prioritises and registers organisational and operational risks.

Day crewed

Firefighters are available at the fire station for eight hours out of 24, and during the remaining hours they respond from their homes on a similar basis to Retained Duty System firefighters.

DOT – Direction of Travel

An assessment of improvement or deterioration in performance.

Fire appliance

Popularly known as a fire engine. Also referred to as a “pump” or “pumping appliance”. It carries between four and six firefighters to emergency incidents along with a range of equipment including pumps, breathing apparatus, hoses, foam, hydraulic cutting equipment, ladders, gas-tight suits, thermal imaging equipment and resuscitators.

FRS – Fire and Rescue Service

FSEC – Fire Service Emergency Cover

The Fire Service Emergency Cover toolkit is based upon a geographical information system that utilises bespoke software to calculate the probable losses based on a particular set of response strategies in terms of lives lost and property costs.

The FSEC software calculates the time that each fire appliance would take to arrive at each Census output area and then uses mathematical relationships to predict the impact upon loss of life, property and the environment across a broad range of incident types. Separate “runs” of the software can be used to quantify the predicted impact of any changes in resource allocation in advance of them being implemented, such as adding or removing fire appliances, changes to shift patterns or alternative response strategies.

GPS – Global Positioning System

A system that enable Global Positioning System receivers to determine their current location on the planet to within a few metres, using multiple satellites in earth orbit.

Hoax call

A malicious 999 call to a fictitious incident.

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

IRMP – Integrated Risk Management Plan

Sets out a Fire and Rescue Authority's assessment of local risks to life from fire, and uses this to identify how its resources should be deployed to tackle these risks and improve the safety of local people.

IRS – Incident Reporting System

Enables the data on all incidents attended by the Fire and Rescue Service to be collected electronically and verified at source, improving on the timeliness and accuracy of the current manual collection.

KSI – Killed and Seriously Injured. Used in reference to numbers involved in road traffic collisions.

LAA – Local Area Agreement

An agreement between the Government, the local authority and its major partners in an area, (working through Local Strategic Partnerships), and structured around children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities and older people.

LRF – Local Resilience Forum

The purpose of the Local Resilience Forum is to ensure that the emergency services and other key agencies are prepared to respond to any emergencies that may have a significant impact on our communities.

Mosaic

A commercially available population profiling tool to segment people into a number of groups with common characteristic in terms of demographic, life stage, housing and income types.

PESTEL

Acronym for reviewing the external **P**olitical, **E**conomic, **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **E**nvironmental and **L**egislative pressures facing our organisation.

PPT

Internal department responsible for Property, Procurement and Transport.

Public consultation

A regulatory process by which the public's input on matters affecting them is sought. Its main goals are in improving the efficiency, transparency and public involvement in large-scale projects or laws and policies. It usually involves notification (to publicise the matter to be consulted on), consultation (a two-way flow of information and opinion exchange) and participation (involving interest groups in the drafting of policy or legislation).

RDS – Retained Duty System

Firefighters who respond to calls on a need-only basis, and are often fully employed in other occupations.

RRO – Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

A statutory instrument which places the onus on building owners to carry out risk assessments on certain types of property and submit them to their local Fire Authority.

RTC – Road Traffic Collision

We call them collisions rather than accidents because the word accident suggests they are all unavoidable.

Standard

A response time for fire appliances to reach an incident.

Unitary authority

A single council, such as Milton Keynes Council, providing services typically offered by both a county and district councils.

UFS – Unwanted Fire Signal

A false alarm triggered by an automatic fire alarm.

VLI – Vulnerable Localities Index

Method for quantifying community risk and mapping it based on an index score.

Vulnerable person

Term used to indicate a disadvantaged group within the population that may be at greater risk within our communities.

Wholetime

A fire station that is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by full-time firefighters working to a shift system.

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