



Intervene
Effectively

Improve
community
safety

Build
resilience



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority
MAKING YOU SAFER
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING
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Annual Report 2007/08

Incorporating the out-turn performance against
the Best Value Performance Indicators

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Vision & Values

Our Vision

Our vision is to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes safer by working together with the other emergency services and our national and local government partners to reduce death, injury and damage to property, the environment and our heritage from fire and other emergencies. We will do this by appropriately balancing the provision of prevention, protection and response services.

Our Values

Underpinning everything we do is a set of values to which we aspire in all our dealings whether they are with the public, partner agencies or 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 practicing 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 and the 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

Introduction

Welcome to our 2007/8 Annual Report which sets out the progress we have made over the last year towards achieving our vision of making the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes safer.

This report reflects last year's performance from 1st April 2007 through to the end of March 2008. It aims to offer a clear picture of the services and activities that we have undertaken through 2007-08, incorporating our performance against the Best Value Performance Indicators (Appendix A) and our achievements against our 2007-08 Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP).

To assist you further in understanding our performance, this Annual Report has been aligned to the three strategic aims we set ourselves in the 2007-8 IRMP Action Plan:

Intervene effectively - To respond effectively, efficiently and safely to emergency incidents

Improve Community Safety - To reduce the incidence and severity of fire and related risks facing the communities we serve

Build Resilience - To develop a sustainable, efficient and effective Fire and Rescue Service for the communities we serve.

We hope you find this Annual Report informative. A copy of our Integrated Risk Management Action Plan 2008-09 can be obtained by visiting our website at www.bucksfire.gov.uk/publications. Alternatively, if you would like to comment on our plans, or you would like it in a different format, please contact our **Communications Manager on Tel: 01296 744477 or email: enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk**

Performance Framework 2007

Following the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority was judged to be a “weak” authority. A major drive for improvement has been underway in the intervening period and the Authority has been subject to a further assessment conducted by the Audit Commission during 2007. The assessment focused on the effectiveness of our service delivery. There are three distinct elements to the assessment;

- **Direction of travel** – an assessment of improvement or deterioration in performance which is informed by findings from the following two assessments;
- **Use of Resources** – this assesses our performance across a range of financial themes including our arrangements for providing value for money (VFM) and
- **FRS Service Assessment** – which has an emphasis on service delivery and includes a performance information element and an operational assessment of service delivery (OASD)

Table A. summarises the collective outcome of the 2007 performance assessment for the Authority as reported by the Audit Commission.

Table A. Performance Assessment 2007 – Summary Results			
CPA 2005 Judgement	Direction of Travel	Use of Resources	Service Assessment
Weak	Improving Well	Operating at minimum requirements	Adequate Performance

Direction of Travel

The direction of travel assessment was a key element of the 2007 performance assessment and provides a concise statement on a fire and rescue authority's improvement, or deterioration since the baseline fire and rescue CPA of 2005. It states how well the authority has performed since the original CPA and whether or not it is considered that it will continue to improve.

The 2007 Direction of Travel judgement is that the authority is "improving well". The narrative supporting this judgement highlights that;

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority has made good progress over the last year in improving its key priority areas and in delivering wider community outcomes. Community safety initiatives have been effectively targeted at areas of most need and are having demonstrable impact. As a result there has been a reduction in primary, accidental dwelling and deliberate fires. There also has been a significant reduction in fatalities and casualties. Effective action has been taken to reduce unwanted fire signals. The quality of services for hard to reach and minority groups have been actively improved. Good value for money is provided by the service and costs compare favorably. There are ambitious plans in place to further improve value for money. The authority has continued to build on its well established approach to working with its community partners. Plans to address identified corporate weaknesses and build capacity have been executed in a timely and effective manner and this is a notable achievement. Good progress is being made in moving towards a more outward focus to further improve outcomes for local people.

Use of Resources

The use of resources element provides a scored assessment across a broad range of financial issues. It includes a judgement on the authority's arrangements for securing value for money and focuses on the importance of sound, strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the authority's priorities and to improve services.

The 2007 Use of Resources judgement is that the authority is "operating at minimum requirements".

Service Assessment

The objective of the service assessment is to provide a view of the authority's performance in delivering fire and rescue services as defined in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Focusing on delivery, the assessment considers the effectiveness of the service as experienced by recipients.

The service assessment 2007 was constructed from two elements;

Operational Assurance of Service Delivery (OASD) element covering the following key areas:

- Risk analysis
- Prevention and protection
- Operational preparedness
- Call management and incident support
- Emergency response

The 2007 OASD element of the service assessment for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority was scored at "3" – performing well. Each area was scored separately on the basis of 1 – 4 following which an overall score was compiled.

Performance Information Element based upon a range of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI). To distinguish between relative levels of performance, the result for each BVPI was compared against a pre-determined upper and lower threshold and determined the performance information element score.

The 2007 performance information element of the service assessment for Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority was scored at "1" – inadequate performance. The distribution of BVPIs around the thresholds determined the performance information element score on the basis of 1 – 4.

Overall Summary on 2007 Performance Assessment

- Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is providing better fire and rescue services, and is improving well.
- It has continued to make good progress in improving its key priority areas and in delivering wider community outcomes.
- It is responding effectively to emergency incidents and is achieving better levels of service performance.
- It has shown strong performance in again reducing primary and accidental dwelling fires, and adopting a local risk-based emergency response to incidents where lives are at risk and road traffic accidents (as a result there was a 42 per cent fall in casualties and fatalities)
- More joint initiatives with other organisations are under way, and the Authority responded well to the widespread flooding in the summer of 2007 by assisting two other services in other parts of the country.
- Overall costs compare well with other authorities and are well-managed.
- The Authority continues to build on its strong base of previous success in working with partners in the community and other fire authorities.
- A targeted recruitment campaign to fill capacity gaps at retained stations exceeded the targets set.
- More capacity to deliver community safety initiatives have been created through partnership and better quality joint information. Further opportunities are being pursued through the Buckinghamshire Pathfinder project, which aims to bring about closer working between the different local authorities in the county.
- The Authority continues to ensure that it is fit for purpose to meet both current priorities and future community needs. The recent Senior Management Team review led to the service reconfiguring functions and realigning senior manager responsibilities in line with the focus on prevention and community safety activities, and so that the service can contribute to wider community partnerships.

Last Year's Performance

The table below provides a summary of performance against the three strategic aims we set ourselves in the 2007-08 Integrated Risk Management Action Plan. Overall, 76% were achieved, 12% were marginally achieved, with 12% failing to reach their target. A detailed review of progress against each of the targets is detailed overleaf.

Status codes:

Green:	2007-08 targets achieved – positive trend
Amber:	Marginally achieved 2007-08 target – positive trend
Red:	Failed to reach 2007-08 target – negative trend

2007-8 IRMP Action Plan Status Report, 31st March 2008

Strategic Aim 1: Intervene Effectively		
Objective 1: Optimise the deployment of emergency personnel and resources based on the risk profile of the community we serve.		
1.1	To deploy all operational responses according to risk by 2009.	✓
1.2	To reduce unwanted commercial fire signals from the top 50 sites by 10 per cent by 2008	✓
1.3	To have evaluated the implications of the Government's South East Development Plan for the number, type and location of Fire Stations by March 2008	✓
1.4	To maintain a fully operational local control facility pending establishment of the proposed Regional Control Centre.	✓
Objective 2: Minimise the harmful effects of emergency incidents to life, the environment, property, the economy and our heritage.		
2.1	To achieve a year-on-year reduction in the death and injury rate at accidental domestic, commercial and public building fires	!
2.2	Maintain an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery rating of 3	✓
2.3	To optimise our ability to respond effectively to large scale regional and national emergencies	✓
Strategic Aim 3: Improve Community Safety		
Objective 3: Minimise the number of deaths and injuries arising from fire, transport and other civil emergencies.		
3.1	Support our local authority and emergency service partners to achieve the government target of achieving a 40 per cent reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions, excluding motorways and trunk roads that are the responsibility of the Highways Agency, by 2010 compared with 1998.	X
3.2	To achieve a year on year reduction in the number of fire-related injuries in accidental domestic, commercial and public building fires.	✓
3.3	To reduce deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires to zero.	X

3.4	To reduce fire deaths outside the room or area of origin arising from fires in public and commercial buildings and structures to zero.	✓
Objective 4: To reduce the number and impact of fire and other emergency incidents.		
4.1a	Work with our Local Public Service Agreement partners to: Reduce the number of deliberate primary fires, excluding any type of vehicle fire, by 7 per cent in 2007-08.	✓
4.1b	Work with our Local Public Service Agreement partners to: Reduce the number of deliberate secondary fires by 15 per cent in 2007-08.	✓
4.1c	Work with our Local Public Service Agreement partners to: Reduce the number of deliberate primary vehicle fires by 20 per cent in 2007-08	!
4.2	To achieve a year on year reduction in the number of hoax calls.	✓
4.3	To 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 April 2008.	✓
Objective 5: To contribute to the development of stronger, more self sufficient and cohesive communities.		
5.1	To reduce the number of (code 5) rubbish fires in the three council wards with the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for each of the councils we serve.	✓
5.2	To increase the number of 14 to 19-year-olds taking part in diversion schemes organised or delivered by us and to increase the number 14 to 19-year-olds from Black Minority Ethnic backgrounds taking part in diversion schemes organised or delivered by us.	✓
5.3	To increase the number of people over the age of 65 who apply for/receive Home Fire Risk Checks.	✓
5.4	To achieve an 80 per cent compliance rate for schools, colleges, community centres and libraries in terms of risk assessment and arson audit initiatives.	✓
5.5	To have evaluated the implications of the government's South East Development Plan for community safety infrastructure and installations by March 2008.	✓
Strategic Aim 3: Build Resilience		
Objective 6: Develop and maintain a healthy, competent, highly motivated and flexible workforce that appropriately reflects the community it serves.		
6.1	Zero staff deaths or serious injuries from work-related activities. Serious injuries are those resulting in long-term sickness absence from work (a period greater than 28 days).	✓
6.2	To support effective staff resourcing and achievement of ridership performance indicators.	✓
6.3	To ensure that by December 2007 all staff operate to clearly defined roles that support the strategic aims and their performance and development needs are formally reviewed on an ongoing basis.	!
6.4	To ensure that the gender and ethnic profile of new recruits enhances the diversity of our workforce. For trainee firefighters, this means 15 per cent female and BMEs (black, minority ethnic) by March 2009.	X

6.5	To have developed improved engagement with, and support for, Retained Duty System staff and their primary employers.	✓
6.6	Deal effectively with the outcomes of the National Joint Council 2007 pay and conditions agreement.	✓
6.7	To implement a Service Level Agreement and Quality Assurance system for the HR function by December 2007.	X
Objective 7: To ensure that the service delivers value for money to the community it serves by ensuring that financial and other resources are properly deployed and accounted for.		
7.1	Achieve a Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating of "Good" by 2010.	✓
7.2	To achieve FRS Performance Framework "Use of Resources" and "Value for Money" scores of 3 by 2009.	✓
7.3	To achieve year on year efficiency savings of 2.5 per cent in 2007-08 and 3 per cent a year thereafter.	!
7.4	To contain the borrowing cost of our capital programme to within 1.59 per cent of our net revenue budget by 2009-10.	✓

Strategic Aim 1: Intervene Effectively

Objective 1: Optimise the deployment of emergency personnel and resources based on the risk profile of the community we serve.

1.1 To deploy all operational responses according to risk by 2009



During 2007-08, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority undertook a fundamental step forward in its response to emergency incidents. Our highest priority is and has always been to respond as quickly as possible to any incident that presents a risk to human life and we will always mobilise the nearest/fastest resources to life-risk incidents. This normally results in an attendance time of only a few minutes.

We have recently completed a trial of the revised standards of response to incidents we set ourselves for 2007, as directed by the National Framework document which focused on life risk incidents. These focused primarily upon our speed of response, ensuring we reached all life risk incidents within ten minutes on at least 75 per-cent of occasions.

During the trial, the quantity of statistical data available was limited and subject to vast variations which had a subsequent affect upon our ability to monitor our performance. As a consequence, we have reverted back to the previous standards of cover - to achieve attendance time targets of five minutes in urban areas, 10 minutes in sub-urban areas and 20 minutes in rural areas on 95 per-cent of occasions, with a view to assessing and analysing alternative standards through 2008.

What we have changed during this current year is our response to all incidents in terms of weight of response that is, ensuring we have the appropriate type and number of appliances attending at the outset. This has taken our focus away from solely concentrating on speed, to that of identifying risk sufficiently to enable enhanced Health and Safety and Incident Command capabilities on the fire-ground.

1.2 To reduce unwanted commercial fire signals from the top 50 sites by 10 per cent by 2008



In previous years, we have experienced a year on year increase in the number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment. This was due to the level of growth in the number of commercial properties throughout Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. To counteract this trend, we trained our fire-fighters in providing a systematic approach to dealing with unwanted fire signals and continued to target the top 50 offenders through 2007-08.

As a result, we have managed to reverse the trend this year with an overall reduction in the total number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection equipment of 24 per cent and a 25 per cent reduction from the top 50 sites.

1.3 To have evaluated the implications of the Government's South East Development Plan for the number, type and location of Fire Stations by March 2008.



Throughout 2007-08 we have continued our dialogue with Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council in identifying the resources that will be needed for us to maintain our high level of service to you in light of the Governments plans for housing in the region.

To enable us to predict expansion requirements, we have utilised the Governments FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit) modelling software and supported this further, through the investment of two further systems which together, support FSEC in identifying the potential risk and resource requirements in our communities. This has led to Milton Keynes incorporating our proposals into the MK Core Strategy for autumn 2008 and Wycombe District Council accepting our model to predict cost and number of fire hydrants in new developments within the local development framework.

In 2008-09 we will continue to work closely with other emergency service agencies and maintain the successful dialogue with our local planning departments to take account of the significant changes that are emerging within our operating environment – not just housing and population growth, but more volatile and unpredictable weather conditions.

1.4 To maintain a fully operational local control facility pending establishment of the proposed Regional Control Centre.



Our emergency control centre employs 23 people who ensure 24/7 availability to receive emergency calls and carry out a broad range of related duties. During 2007-08, we have managed to maintain our establishment despite the pending establishment of the proposed regional control centre for 2011.

It is critical that we maintain our ability to mobilise emergency crews and appliances effectively during this interim period. However, this is becoming increasingly challenging given the pressure that this places on our ability to retain experienced staff and recruit and train new people. Our current mobilising system is now reaching the end of its useful life. We are continually reviewing options to sustain this during the interim as set out in our 2008-09 IRMP Action Plan.

Objective 2: Minimise the harmful effects of emergency incidents to life, the environment, property, the economy and our heritage.

2.1 To achieve a year-on-year reduction in the death and injury rate at accidental domestic, commercial and public building fires.



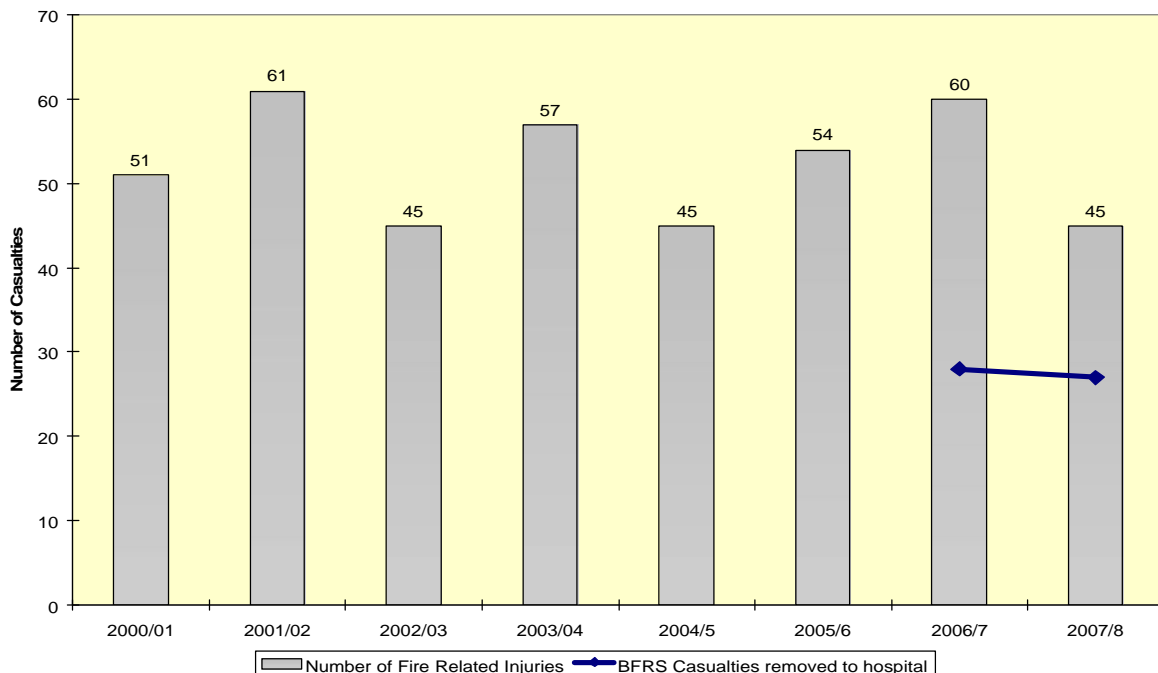
For 2007-08, we set ourselves an action plan to;

- Identify the most vulnerable groups for pro-active risk reduction activity.
- Introduce single format multi-agency risk checks.
- Undertake enforcement of the Fire Safety Order on a risk prioritised basis as required by Fire Safety Circular 1/2004.

This target is amber (target marginally achieved – positive trend) due to the unfortunate experience of 2 fatalities from accidental dwelling fires during 2007-08.

We completed 3,896 Home Fire Risk Checks – basic assessments of the fire risks in people’s homes – and installed 6,496 smoke alarms. Furthermore, we received 3,493 referrals from the single referral scheme in Chiltern District (a simple process which gives vulnerable people access to a wide range of public services, including safety checks and free smoke alarms) which we administer. Figure 2.1.1 below, indicates the reduction in injury rates at accidental domestic fires achieved over the year.

Figure 2.1.1.



Source: Central Intelligence Unit/FIRES/RAPID.mdb
Base Figure: based upon 381 accidental dwelling fires 2007-08

2.2 Maintain an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery rating of 3.



The government assesses the fitness and effectiveness of our operational processes using an inspection process known as an Operational Assessment of Service Delivery. This rates performance on a scale of 1 to 4 (low to high). We are currently rated 3, which is considered "good".

During 2007-08 we set about reviewing and implementing processes to address the areas for improvement that were identified following the 2006 Operational Assessment of Service Delivery. These included our ability to forecast the availability of our resources and the inclusion of Health and Safety as part of our incident debriefings and station audit processes. We have made some significant progress during 2007-08 and through the utilisation of existing resources have developed appropriate systems to address these concerns.

2.3 To optimise our ability to respond effectively to large scale regional and national emergencies.



The Government has imposed new statutory duties on the emergency services to deal with large-scale and catastrophic emergencies. This includes emergencies arising as a result of natural disasters, as well as the deliberate and accidental catastrophes arising from human agency.

To improve the nation's ability to mount a co-ordinated response to catastrophic events the Government established the New Dimensions programme. This is designed to ensure that;

- Agencies such as the police, fire service, paramedic, military and National Health Services are able to plan, prepare and act in a co-ordinated and effective manner.
- Relevant agencies are properly equipped and resourced to deal with large-scale emergencies.

During 2007-08 we participated in a number of multi-agency exercises which prepare us in the likelihood of such an event occurring. These exercises were based on scenarios that put our cross-functional working practices to the test and included such likely events as: a plane crash, flu pandemic, business continuity (run by the National Counter Terrorist Office), tornado and an electrical blackout in SE England.

Furthermore, we continue to enhance our capabilities for responding to major incidents such as building collapse, major transport accidents, industrial accidents, other similar natural disasters and terrorist attack through the procurement of specialist equipment, ensuring our staff are sufficiently trained and ensuring that we have our resources in the right place at the right time to respond effectively. As a consequence, plans are in place to site our Urban Search and Rescue facility in a central location within the County to further enhance the resilience and security of our communities.

Strategic Aim 2: Improve Community Safety

- 3.1 Support our local authority and emergency service partners to achieve the government target of achieving a 40 per cent reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions, excluding motorways and trunk roads that are the responsibility of the Highways Agency, by 2010 compared with 1998.**



The targets set for the years 2006/7 to 2009/10 have been determined using information provided by Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire County Council. For 2007/8, the target was to reduce the number of persons killed or seriously injured below 369.

During 2007-08, we attended 620 road traffic collisions, a 2.4% increase on the previous 12-month period (614 in 2006-07). We recorded 493 casualties (including minor injuries) in 2007-08, of which 17 resulted in a fatality. This was a decrease of 10 per-cent on the previous year's figure. We have been looking closely at the data collected from these incidents and conducting further analysis via FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit) to identify opportunities to improve our response to these kinds of incident

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is not the lead agency for road safety. However we are playing an increasing role alongside the police, Highways Agency, council road safety teams and 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.

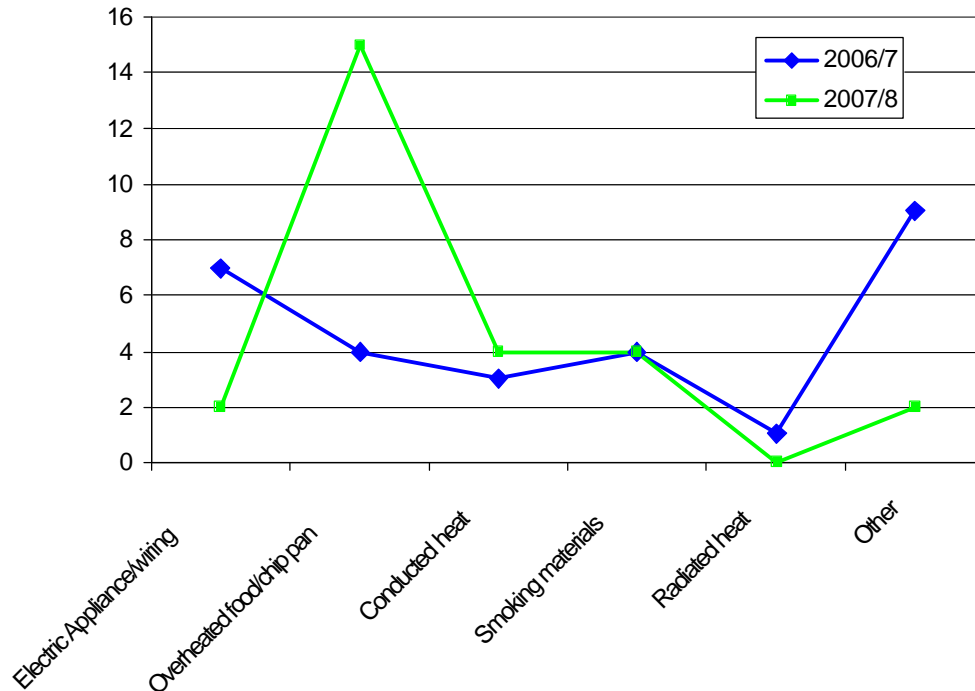
- 3.2 To achieve a year on year reduction in the number of fire-related injuries in accidental domestic, commercial and public building fires.**



During 2007-08, we recorded 27 injuries (casualties taken to hospital by ambulance) related to accidental dwelling fires.

We have broken the information down into greater detail to pick out specific areas of concern. For example; injuries arising from overheated food and chip pans increased in 2007-08 compared to the previous 12-month period, whereas significant decreases were seen in other areas.

Figure: 3.2.1 Accidental Dwelling Fire Injuries by cause



Source: Central Intelligence Unit/FIRES/RAPID.mdb
Base Figure: 27 2007/08 – 28 2006/7

Through-out 2007-08 we have worked closely with social housing authorities to install sprinklers as part of the new building specification for social housing schemes and schools etc., and retro fit into older premises. Furthermore, through HFRC (Home Fire Risk Check) referrals, we have identified two vulnerable domestic properties where sprinkler systems have now been installed.

During 2008-09, we will continue our efforts in these areas with particular emphasis on reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires and non-domestic fires happening in the first place, so reducing the risk of injury and making you safer at home, your place of work and in public places.

3.3 To reduce deaths arising from accidental dwelling fires to zero.



Unfortunately, we experienced 2 fatalities from accidental dwelling fires in 2007-08. We continue to analyse the risk in our communities with particular focus on the vulnerable members of our communities. From our experience in 2007-08, we are working much closer with external agencies that are able to provide us with time relevant information which helps us focus our efforts on the vulnerable groups in our communities.

Overall, accidental dwelling fires have been reduced as a result of our Home Fire Risk Check policy, which provides advice and, where appropriate, the fitting of free smoke alarms. It focuses on specific vulnerable groups through an evidence-based approach and hard targeting of the relevant communities using leafleting and the Community Safety team and operational crews completing the checks.

We receive referrals from various agencies such as Social Services, charities and we in turn refer clients to other agencies. We have developed a process for the provision of a signposting service through which public sector and voluntary agencies can identify three predetermined areas of need within the homes of vulnerable people at an early stage (e.g. fire prevention, accident reduction and crime prevention). Each service using this process identifies the needs to be referred on to partner agencies, enabling the appropriate advice or intervention to be offered.

3.4 To reduce fire deaths outside the room or area of origin arising from fires in public and commercial buildings and structures to zero.



We continue to analyse those fires confined to room of origin as part of our performance framework towards seeking improved performance in this area on previous years. What this measure highlights is the effectiveness of the Community Safety activities that we undertake.

One of the key messages we continue to communicate via the media and other channels is to encourage the general public to close doors at night, test smoke detectors and practice an escape plan. This message is conveyed via the BFRS website, after the fire leaflet and visits by our protection group to commercial premises.

During 2007-08, we experienced no such fatalities. As mentioned in 3.2 above, we will continue our efforts in these areas with particular emphasis on increasing the number of fires confined to room of origin and overall reducing the number of accidental dwelling fires and non-domestic fires happening in the first place, so reducing the risk of injury and making you safer at home, your place of work and in public places.

4.1 Work with our Local Public Service Agreement partners to:

During 2007-08 we have rolled out an initiative to help reduce the number of deliberate fires and other criminal activities at empty and insecure buildings in Buckinghamshire. It allows police and fire personnel who attend an incident at an unoccupied building to seek the help of their local council to deal with the problem by using a simple electronic form. The council then takes responsibility for contacting the owner of the building and, where necessary, orders them to sort it out by securing the premises.

In order to support this work further, we have appointed to a number of specialist posts namely; a dog handler on a full time basis thus improving availability of hydro carbon search dog at incidents and Thames Valley Arson Liaison Officer to help derelict building initiative which promotes Local Authority intervention with Landlords/owners. Furthermore: we have implemented a pilot scheme in South Bucks District Council (SBDC) which will provide Police intelligence & forensic evidence for stolen vehicles found in SBDC areas; initiated a programme of business audits for commercial premises which are affected by deliberate fire setting; and, implemented a number of initiatives including Fire Setting training for additional counsellors.

4.1a Reduce the number of deliberate primary fires, excluding any type of vehicle fire, by 7 per cent in 2007-08.



Overall, 2007-08 saw a 12 per-cent reduction in the number of deliberate primary fires, exceeding the target we set for 2007-08 of 7 per-cent considerably.

4.1b Reduce the number of deliberate secondary fires by 15 per cent in 2007-08.



During 2007-08 we achieved a 16.4 per-cent reduction in the number of deliberate secondary fires, exceeding the target we set ourselves for 2007-08 of 15 per-cent.

4.1c Reduce the number of deliberate primary vehicle fires by 20 per cent in 2007-08



This year saw a 7.1% reduction in the number of deliberate primary vehicle fires. Whilst we were unable to achieve the challenging target of 20 per-cent, we achieved an overall reduction on the previous 12 month period.

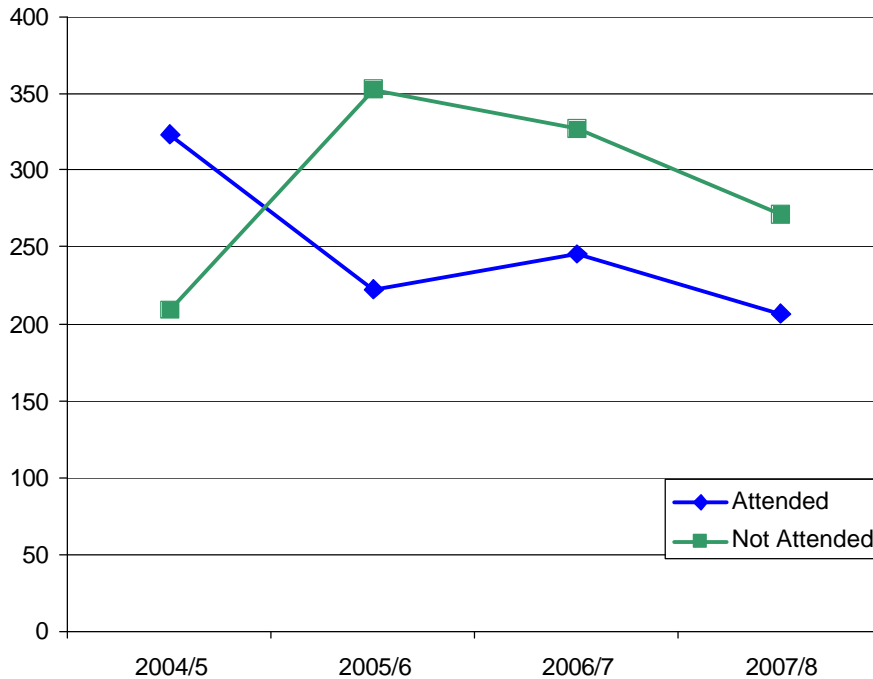
Those vehicles which are stolen and then set alight are the subject of evaluation by the Thames Valley Police Arson Reduction Officer and our own Arson Task Force. This work has produced a trend of criminal activity which is being evaluated against the crime types involved. This will result in better tasking and deployment of Police resources to continue this favourable trend.

4.2 To achieve a year on year reduction in the number of hoax calls.



As a result of our rigorous call-challenging process in the event of a suspected malicious call, along with the development and implementation of a hoax call reduction education package during 2007-08 (this forms an element of the schools Key Stage 3 safety education activities), we attended only 207 malicious false alarms in 2007-08 compared with 245 in the previous period (2006-07).

Figure 4.2.1



Source Data: Central Intelligence Unit/FIRES.mdb

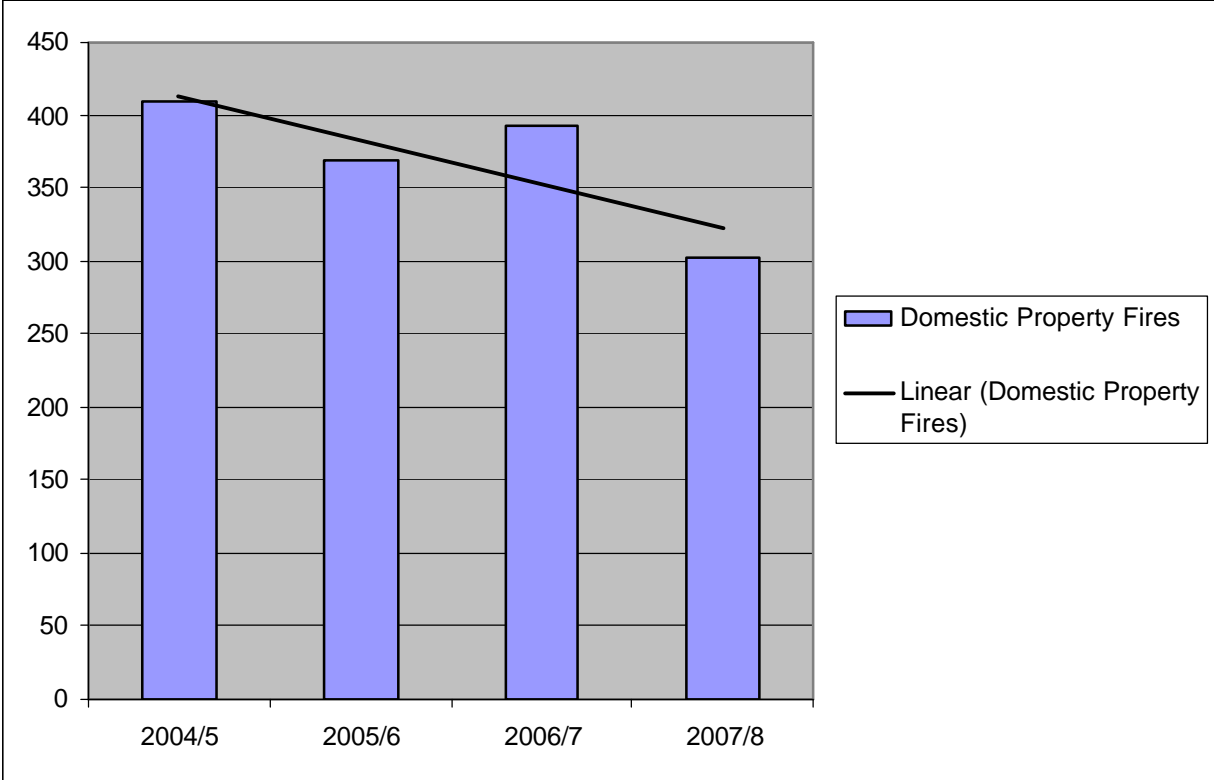
4.3 To reduce economic losses from commercial property fires, as measured by the incidence of insurance claims recorded by the Association of British Insurers in the under £50,000 category, by April 2008.



Much work has been initiated through the year both locally and nationally. In BFRS, we have adopted a nationally agreed process for the auditing of very high risk premises and continue to analyse tangible and realistic mechanisms to affect actual fire losses utilising existing resources within our Protection group.

As a consequence, in 2007-08 we experienced a 23 per-cent reduction in the number of commercial property fires, resulting in a positive trend towards reducing the economic losses in this area as figure 4.3.1 highlights below.

Figure 4.3.1 Commercial Property Fires



5.1 To reduce the number of (code 5) rubbish fires in the three council wards with the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for each of the councils we serve.



This target is designed to measure the impact of our partnership interventions in the wards with the highest Index of Multiple Deprivation. These initiatives are designed to improve the environment and the perception of such localities. Across the Brigade area we have seen an encouraging decrease in the overall numbers of deliberately set Primary and Secondary fires. During 2007-08 we have succeeded in reducing the number of rubbish fires in the targeted areas to the level required to achieve the target.

In the latter part of 2007-08 we recognised that to reduce these types of fire, we needed to improve our ability to identify the streets and roads where the greatest risks exist. This is now being done by giving individual streets, or parts thereof, a numerical risk rating. This rating combines data from several recognised sources with historical fire incident records. This information is being provided to our Fire Stations as part of the new neighbourhood planning process and will enable us to improve the targeting and evaluation of local partnership initiatives designed to tackle this problem.

5.2 To increase the number of 14 to 19-year-olds taking part in diversion schemes organised or delivered by us and to increase the number 14 to 19-year-olds from Black Minority Ethnic backgrounds taking part in diversion schemes organised or delivered by us.



2007-08 saw the appointment of a Youth Inclusion Officer to pilot, coordinate and control diversion scheme activity within the county. This has had a positive affect on the number of 14 to 19-year-olds participating within these diversion schemes. This past year, we set ourselves a target of increasing these numbers to 16. As a result of the actions that we have taken, we have increased these numbers to 120.

5.3 To increase the number of people over the age of 65 who apply for/receive Home Fire Risk Checks.



Our action plan for 2007-08 included the development and implementation of the “supporting people” strategy and use of targeted mailshots and the community safety vehicle to help promote Home Fire Risk Check referrals to the elderly. We had a target to achieve 1500 Home Fire Risk Checks and successfully completed 3896, of these 1673 related to the over 65 age group.

5.4 To achieve an 80 per cent compliance rate for schools, colleges, community centres and libraries in terms of risk assessment and arson audit initiatives.



During 2007-08 we rolled out a Fire Safety seminar for schools in the Milton Keynes Council area to facilitate use of online schools fire risk assessments throughout the county. We extended this seminar further to include libraries, youth centres and social service premises to promote the online fire risk assessment tool.

To date, we have a compliance rate of 89%.

5.5 To have evaluated the implications of the government's South East Development Plan for community safety infrastructure and installations by March 2008.



Throughout 2007-08 we have continued our dialogue with Buckinghamshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council in identifying the resources that will be needed for us to maintain our high level of service to you in light of the Governments plans for housing in the region.

To enable us to predict expansion requirements, we have utilised the Governments FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover Toolkit) modelling software and supported this further, through the investment of two further systems which together, support FSEC in identifying the potential risk and resource requirements in our communities. This has led to Milton Keynes incorporating our proposals into the MK Core Strategy for autumn 2008 and Wycombe District Council accepting our model to predict cost and number of fire hydrants in new developments within the local development framework.

In 2008-09 we will continue to work closely with other emergency service agencies and maintain the successful dialogue with our local planning departments to take account of the significant changes that are emerging within our operating environment – not just housing and population growth, but more volatile and unpredictable weather conditions.

Strategic Aim 3: Build Resilience

6.1 Zero staff deaths or serious injuries from work-related activities. Serious injuries are those resulting in long-term sickness absence from work (a period greater than 28 days).



Our operating procedures are designed to ensure that safe systems of working are in place for all staff and that no unnecessary risks are taken by our staff in pursuit of their duties.

During the past year we have maintained and continue to develop high quality, timely and risk based training alongside management training programmes in support of the Integrated Personal Development system, our activities in this area will continue during the forthcoming year to maintain our high level safe systems of working.

6.2 To support effective staff resourcing and achievement of ridership performance indicators.



The targets we set ourselves for the year 2007-08 were;

- Maintaining whole-time, control and support staff establishments between 98 and 102 per-cent and,
- Achieving 95 per-cent of retained duty system establishment

We achieved 100 per-cent of whole-time, control and support staff establishments and 98 per-cent of retained duty system establishment. These have been broken down further as follows:

	Number of Posts	Actual Strength
Whole-time	373	377
Control	23	25
Support Staff	112	106
Retained	226	221

Our ability to meet both our target response times and rider-ship performance indicators depends on maintaining a high level of readiness of people, appliances and other equipment at all our fire stations.

The target for the Retained Duty System is particularly challenging as changes in the population profile in many of the areas served by Retained Duty System stations have made it more difficult to recruit, and hold on to retained firefighters, and maintain the sufficient crewing levels to ensure that a local appliance can be deployed to all incidents.

6.3 To ensure that by December 2007 all staff operate to clearly defined roles that support the strategic aims and their performance and development needs are formally reviewed on an ongoing basis.



Our action plan for 2007-08 included the complete roll out of revised job descriptions to staff, and develop and introduce an effective performance review process for all staff within Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Much progress has been achieved in the development of an appraisal process that encompasses both operational and non-operational staff, and although the process is now available for all managers to utilise, the training and familiarisation has yet to be fully rolled out across the organisation. Training has been planned for 2008 to ensure that all managers are able and equipped to use the new process in readiness for appraisals undertaken from 2009 onwards. In implementing this, delays were caused by the loss of key staff from within the HR department.

6.4 To ensure that the gender and ethnic profile of new recruits enhances the diversity of our workforce. For trainee firefighters, this means 15 per cent female and 15 per cent ethnic minority representation by March 2009.



The target we were aiming to achieve was 15% of all new recruits to be women and 15% ethnic minority representation (BME); this was in response to the national framework target for all Fire and Rescue Services aiming for a similar figure. The actual figure achieved was 3.5% female and 3.5% BME, although it must be stated that the actual numbers of new recruits in 2007/08 has reduced dramatically, and the opportunity to recruit in the coming year will be reduced even further due to the low recruitment numbers we are expecting.

Furthermore, we are currently developing a Corporate Equality Strategy which will set out a series of objectives and activities to achieve a more reflective workforce of the diverse communities we serve.

6.5 To have developed improved engagement with, and support for, Retained Duty System staff and their primary employers.



We have made good strides through 2007-08, working with primary employers and members of the Retained Duty System. We have undertaken and completed a successful recruitment process and set about revising our 2008-09 action plan that will advance the Retained Duty System further.

6.6 Deal effectively with the outcomes of the National Joint Council 2007 pay and conditions agreement.



This was dealt with effectively and efficiently without any industrial relations issues being encountered.

6.7 To implement a Service Level Agreement and Quality Assurance system for the HR function by December 2007.



Although work on this target started in the early part of 2007, serious staffing shortages in our Human Resource department in the latter part of 2007 resulted in the activity stalling. An Interim HR Professional has since been appointed and is now conducting a full review of the HR function, involving stakeholders from across the organisation in the development of a more customer focussed HR service.

7.1 Achieve a Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating of “Good” by 2010.



The government assesses the fitness and effectiveness of our operational assessment processes using an inspection process known as an operational assessment of service delivery. This rates performance on a scale of 1 to 4 (low to high). We are currently rated 3, which is considered “good”.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be replaced in 2009 by a Comprehensive Area Assessment. This new form assessment will provide assurance about how well-run local public services are and how effectively they use taxpayers' money. It also aims to be more relevant to local people by focusing on issues that are important to their community. It will develop a shared view about the challenges facing an area, such as crime, community cohesion, a sustainable environment and will also create a more joined up and proportionate approach to public service regulation.

7.2 To achieve FRS Performance Framework “Use of Resources” and “Value for Money” scores of 3 by 2009.



During 2007-08 we are able to report an improvement in the use of resources score. This has resulted from the implementation of streamlined systems to aid the audit process.

7.3 To achieve year on year efficiency savings of 2.5 per cent in 2007-08 and 3 per cent a year thereafter.



The savings required to achieve the target figure of 2.5 per-cent efficiency was £659,000 efficiency savings in 2007/08. We actually achieved £368,000 in the year across a number of operational and organisation headings. Although this fell short of our target, we have exceeded the three year target that the organisation set in 2006 of £1.15 million by achieving a total of £1.24 million of cashable and non-cashable savings in the three year period.

7.4 To contain the borrowing cost of our capital programme to within 1.59 per cent of our net revenue budget by 2009-10.



The aim of the capital programme is to continue to provide an efficient, effective and sustainable service to the public by:

- Relocating and renewing key installations such as fire stations to ensure that they are in the right places bearing in mind future community risks and that our fire stations remain fit for purpose and compliant with all modern standards and building regulations.
- Replacing our fire appliance fleet and equipment.
- Investing in modern information and communication technology so that it is compatible with developments such as FIREControl, the plan to set up regional fire and rescue service control centres, and FireLink, the new national radio system for fire and rescue services.
- Continued investment in the latest operational equipment.

Throughout 2007-08, no additional borrowing was required.

Finance

Annual efficiency gains and improvements

Category	Description			2007/8			
				Annual Cashable	Cumulative Cashable	Annual Non-cashable	Cumulative Non-cashable
Other IRMP savings	Savings generated by Arson reductions	R	Y		50		5
	Mobilising changes (revised mobilising to AFAs, animal rescues, local flooding, and lift rescues)	R	Y		20		50
	Cross-border south of county	R	y	30	40		0
	2 special appliances not replaced (avoidance of capital charges)	R	y		18		0
Collaboration	Joint training with Oxon, Beds& Luton, Cambs at FSC	R	y	4	24		
	Attendance at courses paid by Region			2			
Reduced ill-health retirements (firefighters)	Savings against budget		y	150	454		0
Sickness reduction							
Other HR savings	Rationalisation of fleet workshops staffing levels	R	Y		60		0
	Regrading of Community Education post	R	y		6		0
Better Procurement	Use of online recruitment facility	R	y				
	Energy contracts	R	y	40	56.5		0
	IT Comms maintenance costs reduced	R	y		19		0
	Sale of houses at Beaconsfield reduced energy costs	R	y		10		0
	Sale of houses - reduced management time	R	y		0		8
	Firebuy - software licences	R	y		1		0
	Use of Bluelight tendering facility	R	y		1		0
	Procurement of Smoke alarms (Firebuy)	R	y	10	14		0
	Appliance purchasing - avoidance of OJEU (£5k per appliance)	R	y	15	40		0
	Insurance premium renewal	R	y	51	51		0
	Staff reduction in Finance, better systems	R	y	25	25		
	New stationery contract			2.5	2.5		
	Fuel tender process -OGC contract			2	2		
	Use of Supply2Gov tender process			7	7		
	Better management of stock in warehouse			5	5		
Various equipment purchases - improvements			24.5	24.5			
Corporate Services	SLA with BCC	R	y		17		0
	Re-arranged PR services (delivered in house rather than external contract)	R	y		10		0
	New HQ - avoidance of debt charges of £3.9m build	R	y		195		0
Other	Change of management re Aerial sites		y		33		0
TOTALS				368	1185.5	0	63

In 2007-08, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority set itself a cumulative efficiency saving to be achieved by March 2008 of 2.5 per-cent. Efficiency is about raising productivity and saving can be either cashable or non-cashable. Cashable efficiencies release cash while maintaining outputs. The direct financial saving or benefit released can be spent elsewhere or recycled within a Fire and Rescue Authority to deliver better results.

The efficiencies realised at the end of March 2008 from 2006, show a cumulative cashable saving of £1.18m and a non-cashable cumulative total of £63k. Overall, the organisation has exceeded the three year target it signed up to in 2006 of £1.15 million, by achieving a total of £1.24 million of cashable and non-cashable savings in the three year period.

Financial Statements 2007-08

	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
Community fire safety	2,880	-243	2,637
Firefighting & rescue operations	23,634	-818	22,816
Corporate and democratic core	2,772	-1,944	828
Non distributed costs			-216
Net cost of services	29,286	-3,005	26,065

BVPI 150 (cost per head of population): £38.34. Total population according to ONS mid-year estimate: 712,200

These figures show the costs prepared in accordance with statutory accounting practice. These exclude FRS17 charges and capital charges.

Central services are distributed to community fire safety and firefighting and rescue operations using a variety of basis. The residual amount charged to corporate and democratic core is allowable under accounting practice.

These figures are provisional and are subject to further amendments until they are signed off by the auditors.

Further Information

Statement of Responsibility

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is responsible for the preparation of the performance plan and for the information set out within it and the assumptions and estimates on which they are based.

The authority is also responsible for setting in place appropriate performance management and internal control systems from which the information and assessments in the performance plan have been derived.

The authority is satisfied that the information and assessments included in the plan are in all material respects accurate and complete and that the plan is realistic and achievable.

Equal Opportunities Statement

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes contain a diverse mix of communities, religions and cultures. Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority acknowledges the importance of providing appropriate access to information and services for all its communities.

Statement of Contracts

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is required to state and certify that all individual contracts awarded during the past year involving a transfer of staff comply, where applicable, with the requirements in the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts. This authority certifies that no such contracts were awarded during 2006-07.

Feedback

If you would like to comment on our plans, you can do so by:

Email: enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk

Fax: 01296 744600

Post: Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Brigade Headquarters,
Stocklake, Aylesbury, HP20 1BD

Appendix A

Outturn Performance 2007-08 - Best Value Performance Indicators		2007-08 Actual Vs Target	2007-08 Target	2006-07 Actual	2006-07 National Average
	Performance on target				
	Performance below target				
BVPI 2a	The level of the equality standard for Local Government to which the authority conforms	2	3	2	2
BVPI 2b	The duty to promote race equality	74%	84%	79%	78.5%
BVPI 3	Public Opinion Survey			54%	
BVPI 8	% of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	97.1%	98%	98.1%	93.9%
BVPI 11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are women	19%	17%	17%	6.4%
BVPI 11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are from black and minority ethnic communities	0.00%	>0%	0.00%	1.56%
BVPI 11c	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are disabled	0.00%	N/Av	0.00%	1.13%
BVPI 12i	Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence for wholetime staff	6.4	5.3	5.3	8.34
BVPI 12ii	Proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence for all staff	7.8	6	6.06	8.6
BVPI 15i	Wholetime firefighter ill-health retirements as a percentage of total workforce	0.26%	0.3%	0%	0.4
BVPI 15ii	Control and non-operational ill-health as a percentage of total workforce	0%	0.3%	0%	0.18
BVPI 16i	The percentage of wholetime and retained firefighters meeting the Disability Discrimination Act 1995	0%	>0%	0.0%	0.57
BVPI 16ii	The percentage of control and non-operational staff meeting the Disability Discrimination Act 1995	0.66%	0.3%	0.3%	2.51
BVPI 16iii	The percentage of economically active disabled people within the Fire Authority area	7.9% (i)			10.95
BVPI 17i	The percentage of ethnic minority uniformed staff	1.0%	3.2%	1.2%	1.5%
BVPI 17ii	The percentage of ethnic minority persons of working age within Fire authority area	8.7% (ii)			5.4%
BVPI 142ii	Number of calls to primary fires per 10,000 population	21.6	24.0	25.7	25.2
BVPI 142iii	Number of calls to accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 dwellings	13.0	13.5	14.5	15.6
BVPI 143i	Number of accidental fire related deaths per 100,000 population	0.28	0.00	0.14	0.38
BVPI 143ii	Injuries arising from accidental fires in dwellings per 100,000 population	3.8	5.5	4.1	6.1
BVPI 144	The % of accidental fires in dwellings confined to room of origin	93.7%	92%	87.6%	91.2%
BVPI 146i	Number of calls to malicious false alarms not attended per 1,000 population	0.38	0.44	0.47	0.4
BVPI 146ii	Number of calls to malicious false alarms attended per 1,000 population	0.29	0.30	0.35	0.4
BVPI 149i	False alarms caused by automatic fire detection per 1,000 non-domestic properties	93.1	120	126.2	93.3
BVPI 149ii	Number of those properties with more than 1 attendance	263	330	350	540
BVPI 149iii	The % of calls which are to a property with more than 1 attendance	57.9%	64%	60.1%	64%
BVPI 150	Expenditure per head of population on the provision of fire and rescue services	£38.34	£36.18	£35.13	£41.00
BVPI 206i	Number of deliberate primary fires (excl. deliberate primary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population	3.6	4.2	4.3	4.8
BVPI 206ii	Number of deliberate primary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	5.6	6.0	6.4	6.5
BVPI 206iii	Number of deliberate secondary fires (excl. deliberate secondary fires in vehicles) per 10,000 population	16.3	18	18.3	29.8
BVPI 206iv	Number of deliberate secondary fires in vehicles per 10,000 population	0.4	0.59	0.4	0.5
BVPI 207	The number of fires in non-domestic premises per 1,000 non-domestic premises	15.2	16.7	16.7	12.6
BVPI 208	The % of people in accidental dwelling fires who escape unharmed without FRA assistance at the fire	94.4%	97.2%	95.7%	92.0
BVPI 209i	The % of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm had activated	46%	50%	41.9%	42.0%
BVPI 209ii	The % of fires attended in dwellings where a smoke alarm was fitted but did not activate	12%	9%	11.9%	13.4%
BVPI 209iii	The % of fires attended in dwellings where no smoke alarm was fitted	42%	40%	46.2%	44.6%
BVPI 210	The % of Women Firefighters	3%	11.1%	2.2%	3.1%

(i) Defined as persons aged 18-64. Source: aggregated from ONS Census Table S16.

(ii) Defined as persons aged 18-64. Source: aggregated from ONS Census Table S101