EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY STRATEGY 2023-2027

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0.1	16th January 2023	Post Member budget workshop
0.2	19th January	Updated after CMT away day and budget workshop
0.3	8th February	Updated following FRA meeting on the 2nd February and discussion with ACO on 6th February 2023
0.4	10th February	Updated action plan with the addition of an Efficiency and Productivity Board
0.5	13th February	Updated following feedback from CFO and reference to the HMICFRS self-assessment
0.6	23rd February	Updated following discussion at CMT on 15th Feb
0.7	24th February	Updated and integration of the Home Office P&E Plan
0.8	27th February	Updated following Portfolio Member DDaT presentation
0.9	31st March	Updated formatting
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EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY STRATEGY
2023-2027

INTRODUCTION

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (BFRA) has an ambitious policy programme to enable us to work together to keep Bedfordshire safe. This is detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which covers the period 2023-2027.

This strategy integrates the Home Office requirements for a Productivity and Efficiency Action Plan submitted on 31st March 2023. As a result, the action plan at the end of this strategy is also our Productivity and Efficiency Action Plan for 2023-24. Budget information is contained in the Home Office's proforma spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1. BFRA is pursuing the sector wide Spending Review target of improving the productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3% although we recognise that the numbers of wholetime firefighters (287) is only half the workforce (578 FTE).

An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity is reduced but its quality and effectiveness remains the same or improves. Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority continues to focus on finding new ways to deliver the highest quality services at lowest possible cost. Productivity is related to the strategic priority and outcome of an activity and the time it takes to do it. There is a subtle difference between efficiency and productivity.

The meaning of productivity and efficiency still needs to be defined for Authorities to fully understand the inter-connectable nature of the subject and the tangible benefits that can be realised. While outputs are measurable with quantitative data, the outcomes measured by qualitative data tend to be context specific and are therefore difficult to measure when considering productivity and efficiencies in their activities, such as work in Prevention, Protection, falls reduction, and fire setter Intervention

Our mission is working together to keep Bedfordshire safe.

For us, delivering our mission means focusing on the following six strategic commitments:

We are:

- PREVENTING   ... fires and other emergencies from happening.

- PROTECTING   ... people and property when fires happen.

- RESPONDING   ... to fires and other emergencies quickly and effectively.

**We will do this by:**

- ENGAGING   ... and building closer relationships with our communities and businesses

- INVESTING   ... in our people to be the best they can be, to serve you better.

- MAKING   ... every penny count, using our resources in an environmentally sustainable way.

Our priorities for efficiency and productivity are:

- identify and deliver efficiency and productivity gains to support a balanced sustainable budget that provides value for money, aligns our resources to risk, and supports the delivery of our CRMP;

- Be innovative in developing and delivering on our Efficiency and Productivity Action Plan whilst maintaining a prudent level and utilisation of our reserves;

- We will conduct a review of all administrative roles and posts and seek to improve capacity, capability, consistency, efficiency, productivity and resilience.

- Involve staff, Members and key stakeholders in the process of identifying efficiencies;

- Identify and understand unit costs, spending patterns and trends, and operating costs; and

- Deliver the outcomes of the station productivity and service productivity assessments.

Therefore, this strategy document is focussed on making every penny count. Our approach to finding efficiencies and productivity is based on the Treasury approach and guidance provided by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

Figure 1 – Understanding public sector efficiency[1]
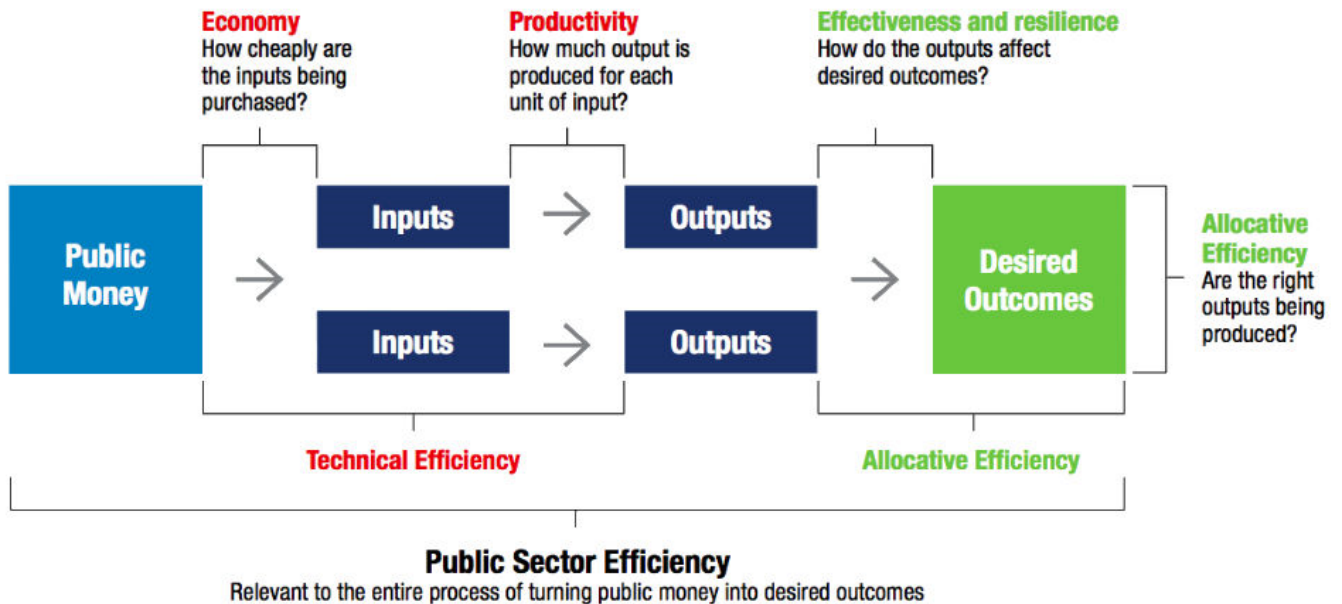
To understand this concept the Treasury makes a distinction between 'technical' and 'allocative' efficiency. Technical efficiency means doing what we do now, but better. Allocative efficiency means finding wholly different ways of achieving the outcomes Services want. It requires asking further, more difficult questions: Are we doing the right things? Does this policy really work?

Allocative questions have been asked during the CRMP development process culminating in a budget workshop for Members on 13th January 2023 and a Corporate Management Team (CMT) Away Day on 18th January 2023. Consultation results formed part of these discussions.

[1] Based on Improving public sector efficiency - Making organisations work well: UK Government Treasury Blog on 25th January 2016

Figure 2 shows how our policy work fits together. Points to note include the importance of the link between community risk, strategic risk assessment and our activity, and the importance of our service values in everything we do. Our action plan at the end of this strategy is written and reproduced under our service values.

Figure 2 – Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Strategy Components

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving efficiency and productivity is an important element in supporting our mission.

The process for finding efficiencies is as follows:

- Zero based budgeting starting in October

- Options appraisal

- CMT, staff and Member engagement

- Further refining and staff engagement

- Budget set by 31st March and ongoing monitoring

In the CRMP four-year period from 2019-2023 we found the following efficiency savings totalling £1.88 million:

- 2019/20 - £480k
- 2020/21 - £295k
- 2021/22 - £211k
- 2022/23 - £102k

A total of £172k has been achieved in procurement savings in 2022-23, a similar figure is expected in 2023-24.

In 2021 and 2022 we completed two detailed productivity assessments. This gives clear baselines of data for:

- how wholetime fire fighters spend their time over an average day and night;

- tasks undertaken by firefighters and service control staff;

- time spent on training and development tasks, and their recording; and

- time spent on response, prevention and protection activities.

According to these two detailed productivity assessments, the biggest opportunities for improving productivity on stations and in service control are:

- Blended ICT training including a mix of online and face to face;

- Integrated ICT systems, reducing double handling and multiple logins;

- Effective supervision of rostering;

- Reducing sickness absence;

- More effective station routines, handovers and vehicle checks; and

- Supervisory issues relating to breaks, meals, HR processes, and Gartan checks.

These issues were presented to and discussed at Corporate Management Team meetings on 24th November 2021 and 25th May 2022. These issues are actively being pursued and appear in our Productivity and Efficiency Plan at the end of this strategy.

In 2021 we said fire safety inspection work and community fire safety accounts for nearly 8% of total on call activity, and 10% of wholetime activity. If this is increased to 12% the potential social value added per quarter is at least £1.84 million. If this is increased to 12% the potential social value added per quarter is at least £1.84 million. This will largely be achieved in 2023-24 by:

- more effective use of the Gartan rostering system;

- closer supervision of watch handovers, break times, and operational training;

- integration of watch handover and post incident equipment and vehicle safety checks;

- introduction of station routines;

- improvements to mobile data terminals;

- introduction of single IT logins;

- better integration of PDRpro and LearnPro online learning systems;

- greater use of E-forms when completing prevention and protection work;

- access to superfast broadband; and

- reduction in long term sickness absence.

Engagement with station managers suggests current best estimates of reducing station administration by 2 per cent is improving operational productivity. We have nearly doubled the number of fire safety audits according to Q2 statistics[2], and increased the number of home fire safety visits from 8,000 in 2022-23 to nearly 10,000 by 2023-24. Better ICT training is included in our Digital, Data, and Technology (DDaT) Strategy 2023-27. In 2023 we will re-run the productivity assessment again to see precisely what impact improvements are having at station level.

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[2] See HERE

Staff engagement tends to result in comments on technical efficiency. Encouragingly, most community and public consultation and engagement provides ideas and commentary on allocative efficiency and this provides a rich source of information for further policy considerations, in particular for our Towards 2050 strategy work.

This is an agile document which will be periodically reviewed and updated to align to the CRMP and any new or emerging external factors.

WHERE ARE WE NOW

We have carried out a great deal of engagement and assurance work on efficiency and productivity. Much of this is to understand how best to support the investment made during the 2019-23 CRMP's four years across the Service. As a result, we have the following process in place to identify the following improvements in efficiency and productivity:

Efficiencies realised over the 2019-23 CRMP period

- Some of the key areas where the Authority has been achieving its planned efficiency savings include:
  - Savings through collaborative work with Blue light partners;
  - Savings through joint Procurement such as Firefighters Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Road Traffic Collision cutting equipment;
  - Rationalisation of cleaning contracts; and
  - Savings in the Service Vehicle Replacement Programme through improved asset management and maintenance.
  - Rationalisation of licenses, subscriptions and insurance; and
  - Efficiencies from equipment maintenance and vehicle servicing.

Community Risk Management Planning process

- The top 10 issues in our CRMP strategic risk assessment relating to this strategy are:
  - A challenging financial outlook caused by rising inflation and short-term funding settlements.
  - Growing cyber and digital security threat.
  - Needing to invest in more environmentally sustainable assets, goods, and services.
  - Potential damage to our brand and reputation caused by negative media coverage of FRS culture.
  - Challenges in recruiting, developing, and retaining an increasingly younger and more transient workforce.
  - Needing to keep pace with modern technologies and improve digital & data literacy.

- o Needing to invest in an ageing estate that has not kept pace with the needs of a modern and inclusive FRS.
- o Needing to keep pace with a constantly evolving risk and demand profile across a fast-growing county.
- o Social discontent and lack of trust in authority.

Fire and Rescue Authority Member engagement

- This is an annual process based on:
  - o Best data available;
  - o Regular and open discussion;
  - o Ethical principals and governance documentation;
  - o FRA reports published on our website; and
  - o No unwanted surprises for Members.

- Highlights for 2022-23 include:
  - o LGA governance independent review in September 2022 that included proposals for more efficient and effective decision making;
  - o Four Member development days;
  - o 1st FRA Budget Workshop 22nd November 2022;
  - o 2nd FRA Budget Workshop 13th January 2023; and
  - o FRA meeting on the 2nd February includes the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, Council Tax setting and CRMP covering 2023/24 to 2026/27. Efficiencies and commercial income projections are included. Note - All the efficiencies highlighted are being actioned

Staff engagement in identifying efficiencies

- Feedback from Station visits on progress with efficiency and productivity ideas includes:

    o On call staff used as Wholetime backup including standbys or covering other shifts;

    o On call staff doing more home fire safety visits and lower risk commercial building inspections;

    o Reducing the length of time that building defects take to be cleared by using the new online defects portal and prioritisation process;

    o GPS and Satnav features on rear Mobile Data Terminals;

    o Single logins and super-fast broadband access to all fire stations to address slow computer speeds and people struggling to login; and

    o Mobilising information and performance information on TV screens in stations.

    o Note – all these issues are currently being actioned.

- Twelve CRMP staff engagement workshops from October to November 2022, highlight the following efficiency and productivity issues including recognising the need to:

    o Maintain focus on improving resource availability;

    o Continue to support staff welfare and wellbeing including mental health support;

    o Evaluate and communicate the impact of prevention activity; and

    o Continuously improve blended ICT training.

- Three cross department manager's efficiency forums on 05/10/2022, 18/11/2022 and 23/01/2023 highlight:

  - The potential for centralising administrative posts;

  - Reduction in corporate email addresses and ICT licenses;

  - Rationalising some elements of back office functions;

  - More efficient use of office space and station community rooms; and

  - A review of the impact of the ICT shared service.

  - All these items have been included in our improvement objectives at the end of this strategy.

- Feedback from three Corporate Management Team away days in 2022 highlight the opportunity to integrate some specialist roles, multi skills, fire appliance utilisation, and rationalisation of some operational support vehicles.

- In June 2022 this resulted in a 'longlist' of proposals that included the potential for savings in the following areas:

  - Sharing specialist posts regionally;

  - Joint Protection Service (JPS) with council building control departments;

  - Rationalisation of special appliances and support vehicles;

  - Using volunteers in administrative and prevention functions;

  - Bringing Fire Behaviour Training at London Luton Airport back in house; and

  - Shared back-office functions including occupational health.

- After extensive staff engagement the efficiency shortlist was presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting on 2nd February 2023. This process was repeated at the CMT away day in February 2023 revealing productivity gains including:

  - Reduction in moving equipment from one pump to another during shift handovers, maintenance and backup manoeuvres.

  - Savings in maintenance schedules and less 'down time'.

  - Using E-forms for Home Fire Safety Visits. Staff now directly input data onto systems, avoiding double recording when transferring handwritten notes onto the HFSV database.

  - Upskilling crews to enable them to carry out low risk Fire Safety Audits, allowing specialist staff to carry out the higher risk audits.

- o Combining training courses such as Breathing Apparatus with Compartmental Fire behaviour and refreshers.
- o All recruitment processes now use iTrent online systems. iTrent will be linked to our new website to reduce any duplication and support self-help for applicants.

Public consultation feedback

- Word Cloud[3] results from January 2023 CRMP 2023-27 consultation are:

The most frequently mentioned way in which we can save money and make further efficiencies is through:

- o Collaboration with public sector partners
- o Reducing demand for services. A helpful comment in one comment box in the survey return is: *Demand management is a good approach to achieving efficiencies that reaches beyond the boundary of the organisation. By changing the nature of the FRS's role and relationship with customers, fire services*
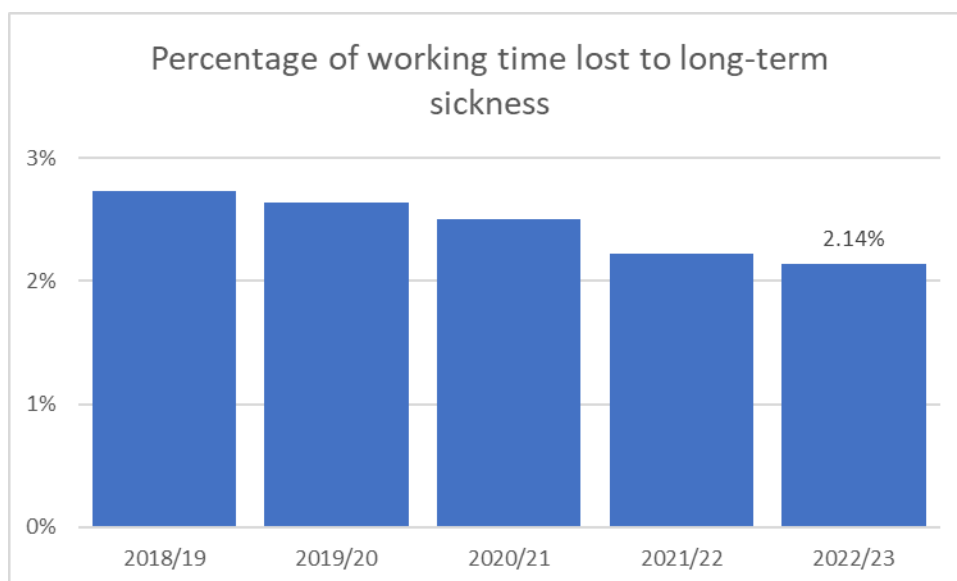
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[3] Word clouds are graphical representations of word frequency that give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in a source text. The bigger the letter font the more frequently the word appears

should seek alternative mechanisms to meet customer needs and thereby better manage demand.";

- o Merging council community safety services and other emergency services;
- o Cutting red tape and bureaucracy;
- o Sharing back-office functions; and
- o Reducing sickness absence and do more to support staff get back to work.

Reducing sickness absence

- In 2021-22 BFRS reported that an average of 1.7 days/shifts were lost by firefighters on long-term sickness, ranking it 5th of the 37 English FRSs reporting against the HMICFRS benchmarking metrics.

- In 2022-23 BFRS had 2.24% of working time lost to long term sickness absence.

- The Service moved from counting COVID related absence separately to part of the normal absence data for attendance management and pay occupational sick pay purposes on 1st June 2022. Despite this move attendance remains well below the targets set. HR have developed improved management information to support managers in their attendance management activity and will be providing additional managerial training, advice and support in 2023-24.

Percentage of working time lost to long-term sickness

Bar chart showing percentage of working time lost to long-term sickness by year: 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 (2.14%).

Productivity and efficiency gains from collaboration

- Sharing Training of fire fighter apprentices with Hertfordshire FRS resulting in more family friendly arrangements by not sending trainees to the Fire Service College, cheaper courses, and more flexible use of the Apprentice levy;

- Exploring gainshare and regional collaboration with Motorola on the new cloud-based Service Control mobilizing system;

- Collaboration between the BFRS Falls Team and East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST);

- Sharing a Data Protection Officer (DPO) with Bedfordshire Police

- Sharing a Monitoring Officer with Bucks FRS and Berkshire FRS;

- Shared ICT Service with Cambridgeshire FRS;

- Shared internal audit services with Cambridgeshire FRS and Essex FRS;

- Communications services backup support from Cambridgeshire FRS and Bedford Borough Council;

- Shared Translation and Interpretation services with Bedfordshire Police;

- Sharing Democratic Services support with Bedford Borough Council; and

- ACs and SOCs with Cambridgeshire FRS

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Income generation in 2022-23

Activity	Amount	Link to CRMP Strategic Commitments
Road Safety 50/50 funding for Virtual Reality with the PCC and National Highways Agency	£10k	PREVENTING fires and other emergencies from happening.
StayWise part funding a member our Digital/Comms Team	£17k	PREVENTING fires and other emergencies from happening.
FRIC – savings and surpluses, with money saved and invested in CRMP commitments	£40k	MAKING every penny count, using our resources in an environmentally sustainable way.
Dementia Funding via Bedford Borough Council	£82k per annum	PREVENTING fires and other emergencies from happening.
EEAST funding to draw down from, as we are the coordinators for the East of England	£140k	ENGAGING and building closer relationships with our communities and businesses
Local Resilience Forum (LRF) – we will receive this funding and manage this provision	£135k	ENGAGING and building closer relationships with our communities and businesses
Income from property sharing – Police, EEAST, St Johns Ambulance	£12k	MAKING every penny count, using our resources in an environmentally sustainable way.
Effective cash flow management and investments (including Green funds, inter authority loan options)	£130k	MAKING every penny count, using our resources in an environmentally sustainable way.
Income from servicing EEAST ambulances	£50k	MAKING every penny count, using our resources in an environmentally sustainable way.
Income from equipment servicing for Essex and Northamptonshire FRS	£27k	RESPONDING to fires and other emergencies quickly and effectively.
Income from training activities (FF training and driver training)	£30K	INVESTING in our people to be the best they can be, to serve you better.
Gainshare and license savings in developing PDRPro5 with supplier	£18k	INVESTING in our people to be the best they can be, to serve you better.
Sharing FF apprenticeship scheme with Hertfordshire	£35k	INVESTING in our people to be the best they can be, to serve you better.
Total	£726	

Procurement savings & efficiencies

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

- Consideration is given to the following areas to ensure value for money is achieved:

  - Whole life costs (not just initial cost of the contract)

  - Engaging in joint and collaborative procurement where possible and feasible. This is not always possible with contracts where there are complex requirements, significantly varying needs, or misaligned timelines.

  - Procurement via frameworks where available this offers the opportunity to purchase at a fixed or lower cost; frameworks will factor in social value and other environmental factors on a higher level than authorities can do individually. The framework allows a more streamlined procurement process to be undertaken which makes it easier for smaller organisations who do not have to keep repeating the same information for each tender opportunity.

  - Opportunities to contract with SME's and local organisations where permissible within the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

  - Conducting market engagement with suppliers prior to commencing any procurement activity to understand the market and any challenges that suppliers may face in meeting the requirements of the specification or in the delivery of the contract.

- Recent examples of where savings and efficiencies have been made include:

  o A total of £172k has been achieved in procurement savings in 2022-23, a similar figure is expected in 2023-24.

  o Saving of £9k through use of the NFCC Blue Light collaboration hub.

  o Purchase of Road Traffic Collision (RTC) equipment through the West Midlands framework led to underspend against indicative budget allocated and saving of £23k

  o Cleaning contract savings of £40k

  o We are working with Northamptonshire Police & Fire & Rescue Service supporting an Estates and Facilities framework which has involved a large number of SME's and local organisations. This will allow us to work with local suppliers in a more compliant manner.

  o We have conducted market engagement with many of our procurements – including heating oil, where we were able to liaise with suppliers on the ESPO framework 301/22. This allowed us to review our requirements for DERV and Heating Oil, that were previously provided by one supplier and achieving savings and better value for money by splitting the contracts over two suppliers. This resulted in Energy management savings of £5k

National engagement

- This includes supporting the Fire Finance Network Efficient and Productivity conference on 9th December 2021 and considering standardised efficiency templates;
- We attend the NFCC Efficiency and Productivity group and keep abreast of noteworthy practice; and
- We were the keynote speaker and organizer of the first NFCC Efficiency and Productivity Workshop held on 23rd February 2022.

Social value and return on investment

- We are seeing a growing body of research on the value the UK Fire and Rescue Service's contribute to their communities. A 2022 report by the University of Liverpool on the Economic Evaluation of Fire and Rescue Service Activities finds 23 studies that provide insight into economic modelling of fire and rescue service activity. The National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) report on measuring the Economic and Social Value of fire and rescue services is an additional useful methodology. Both reports point to high levels of social value that fire and rescue services can deliver that far exceeds the money invested. This is echoed in Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's 2021 report on the Return on investment from collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust which finds a return on investment of £5.09 million in social value, or £7 for every £1 invested.

- According to our 2021 return on investment report, people in Bedfordshire receive significant social value including health and economic benefits from the collaboration between Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) and the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST). Bedfordshire received the following benefits in 2020-21:
    - the return on investment and social value of the Service's support during the pandemic from firefighter secondments into EEAST is £0.448m.
    - the social value of the Service's Falls team in 2020-21 was £1.053 million.
    - bariatric complex patient rescue service has added social value to Bedfordshire of £0.384m.
    - co-responding has added social value to Bedfordshire of £2.244m.
    - effecting entry has added social value to Bedfordshire of £0.960m.
- This adds up to a return on investment of £5.090 million in social value, or £7 for every £1 invested.

Station Productivity assessment

- Reports on station productivity and service control were discussed and approved at Corporate Management Team (CMT) meetings on 21st November 2021 and 18th May 2022 respectively.

- Our Station Productivity Assessment results for 2021 show that improving productivity is increasing. Findings include:

  o We find a strong link between motivation, culture, attitude and productivity. A more diverse workforce can also be more productive according to research by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and by McKinsey.

  o In 2021 Wholetime staff spent 23% of their time doing administration. On call staff spent 25% of their time on administration, if we include completing Gartan entries.

  o Fire safety inspection and community fire safety work accounts for nearly 8% of total on call activity, and 10% of wholetime activity. If this is increased to 12% the potential social value added per quarter is at least £1.84 million. See HERE for calculations.

  o In addition, a 10 % reduction in basic administration across all shifts equates to a quarterly - 3 month - saving of 4704 hours.

  o Operational response accounts for 11% of wholetime activity, and 15% of on call activity. In addition, a further 17% of on call activity can be attributed to support to the East of England Ambulance Service Trust.

  o Encouragingly, wholetime staff are spending 26% of their time on some form of training and development.

  o Our comparative analysis with Lancashire, London, Humberside and Wales shows Bedfordshire FRS productivity is in line with other areas.

Service Control Productivity Assessment

- Highlights include:

  o The three options presented in the results paper were aimed at improving resilience as a high priority.

  o Significant opportunities exist in reducing watch related administration and after incident administration. More efficient rest and refreshment breaks may also be possible.

  o A reduction in administration could yield more time to spend on improving crewing and resource availability, staff training, and support for more community fire safety activity.

  o The three most frequently mentioned opportunities for improving service control productivity and capacity we were told about is in specialisation of daily tasks,

  o Improving the quality of data inputted by front line operational staff and reducing the number of manual processes.

- As a result, the findings were integrated into a review of resilience in service control and are resulting in recruitment, capacity building and role specialisation. Better forward planning and consistency between shifts is emerging. New management is also in place.

- In addition, the control room has been reorganised to improve workflow, specialisation of daily tasks, two more control operatives have been recruited, and the number of manual processes including reporting sickness absence and staff availability has improved. Service control processes are currently being mapped against the emerging Fire Standards.

Support services productivity

- Reviews of workflow in the Strategic Support and Assurance function finds a 20% saving in admin time due more efficient approaches to Subject Access Requests (SARs) and Freedom of Information Requests (FOIs). These savings are based on the introduction of the HALO software system, a more effective screening process based on good legal advice, and more efficient sifting processes. This is important because some detailed SARs take over 100 hours of time to deal with.

- The new system also allows for a sophisticated reporting tool to be used on requests of the service made by the public. This means that productivity can be tracked and reports are easily made for Senior Management and the Audit and Standards Committee to scrutinise.

- Past Freedom of Information request responses will also be published in an easy to navigate database that will be accessible from our website. We will have an intelligent chat bot installed on the 'contact us' page that will be able to signpost individuals to similar requests in an attempt to reduce the number of requests that make it to the team for processing and therefore freeing up capacity.

- In May 2022 we supported an internal review of how Group Managers (GM) productively use their time and the number of working groups they attend. This review resulted in:
  - Group Managers rationalising the number of external meetings, with GMs now deciding who will attend depending on the role and geography. Best estimates find this is saving 22 hours a month;
  - Health and Safety meetings are being rationalised saving 12 hours a quarter
  - OCT and ODT meetings are being integrated;
  - Station Managers now lead some technical meetings such as the Drone Consortium.

Digital Data and Technology

- We will align our data and ICT needs for efficiency and productivity with those in the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Strategy 2023-27 and DDaT Steering Group.

- Our Home Fire Safety Visit (formerly Safe & Well) upgraded system and new mobile app went live on 22/02/2023. This allows BFRA to evidence a person-centred approach to HFSV, ensuring comprehensive risk identification and interventions to address the health, behaviour and social needs of the person we visit. The system can automatically generate up to 8 referrals based on the risk profiles identified during the visit. It also eradicates the inefficient paper-based system, so data governance (GDPR) and data quality are all improved.

- Cadcorp GIS, Risk and workload modeller: The Post Implementation Review (PIR) took place on 16/02/2023 which discussed the learning opportunities from the project. Various mapping models have been published to present key interventions for prevention, protection and response, which the Head of Prevention and Protection (HPP) demonstrated at the FRA member development day on 23/02/2023.

- Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP): First iteration of the multi-faceted risk identification data warehouse was released on 10/02/2023. The data warehouse scoring enables properties to be risk scored based on many risk profiles, e.g., building type, use, location, CQC, VOA, Food Hygiene data etc. Agile development will continue in-line with the project requirements. Completion is expected Q2 2023.

- PDR Pro has been set up for the new appraisal system for 2023-24. This central system will bring efficiency and effectiveness, compared with the manual approach it replaces.

- RSM, Internal Audit report published 15th Dec for "ICT – Digitalised Systems User Proficiency" - assurance over the design and robustness of processes in place to support staff competence and proficiency in key digitalised systems. It was a favourable audit with a "Reasonable Assurance" rating.

- There is a Pan-Bedfordshire data summit planned for 29th March 2023 hosted by BFRS. The three unitary authorities are invited along with BLMK Integrated Care Board (ICB), police, prison service, universities, and EEAST. This will progress data sharing and insight opportunities.

- Data on efficiencies includes:
    - CIPFA benchmarking data
    - His Majesties Inspector for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) benchmarking data;
    - Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC) regional and national benchmarking data;
    - Other data we use Treasury Management; and
    - Other service-based data.

- Data on productivity is limited but includes:
    - Incident Recording System (IRS) data;
    - Quarterly data on key performance indicators;
    - Gartan and shift information:
    - Sickness absence data;
    - Qualitative and structured interview findings;
    - Prevention and protection work numerical outputs; and
    - Satisfaction data on home fire safety visits, fire safety audits, and after incident surveys, see HERE

- As a result of identifying what data is available, we are now using HMICFRS data to compare and improve target setting in our KPI dashboard, and we plan to use CIPFA data on operational comparisons. FRIC data is actively used to pinpoint specific driver training issues.

Key Performance indicators for Productivity and Efficiency

- Productivity and effectiveness are often wrongly used as if they are interchangeable. Effectiveness is actually a very different measure defined as the ratio of the outcomes which an organisation aims to achieve, divided by the total inputs. Thus, effectiveness in the public sector is a much more complex concept and is far more subject to measurement error and to influences from outside developments.

- Since the publication of the influential Atkinson Review in 2005, practitioners have started to measure public sector outputs directly. This is done by calculating a total output measure for a given department or public service and weighting different outputs according to their unit-costs. Unit costs are a proxy of how much administration costs are involved in producing each type of output. This cost-weighted output measure is then divided by the total costs

- Withing the ONS annual statistics for public order and safety (POS) service area there are four main components:
  - fire
  - courts, which itself has five further sub-components: magistrates' courts, county courts, Crown Courts, Crown Prosecution Service, legal aid
  - probation
  - prisons

- Fire output activities are categorised into three groups:
  - fire response (FR)
  - fire prevention (FP)
  - fire special services (FS)

- These groups all form part of the fire and rescue service (FRS). Activity measures for the FRS are based on the number of incidents attended for fire response and fire special services activities, and staff hours spent on fire prevention activity.

- Appropriate cost weights are based on the Economic Cost of Fire estimates for different fire incidents. The output measure combines the different activities into a single cost-weighted activity index (CWAI) using the associated unit costs as their weights, and an overall output index is then constructed as a chain-linked Laspeyres index using the previous year's prices.

- Fire response services (quality adjustment is not applied to these services) include fire response for dwellings, commercial premises, vehicle, chimney, false alarms, measured by the number of incidents attended and sourced from Home Office data.

- Special services response (road and non-road) is measured by the number of incidents attended and sourced from Home Office data.

- Prevention is measured by inspections, investigation, community safety, for example fitting fire alarms. It is measured by number of hours of workload and is sourced from Home Office data.

- KPIs for the Efficiency and Productivity will be decided by the Efficiency and Productivity Board and should include:
  - Spending Review target of improving the productivity of wholetime firefighters by 3%;
  - Reduction of administration in accordance with the station productivity review;
  - Time spent on training and development including time taken to record these events;
  - Impact on prevention and protection outputs;
  - Impact on prevention and protection outcomes;
  - Proportion of special services (FS)calls to fire response (FR) calls;
  - Impact of response standards of different shift patterns based on the outcome of the last phase of the Emergency Cover Review;
  - Impact of response standards of different station locations based on the outcome of the last phase of the Emergency Cover Review;
  - Impact of improved ICT training and data literacy (qualitative and quantitative);
  - Percentage of estate shared with others;
  - Total efficiencies made:
  - Estate utilisation;
  - Appliance utilisation;
  - Total income generated: and
  - Public participation in budget, efficiency and productivity processes (as defined by the FRA and Community Panel).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- Implications include:

    o Ensuring EDI issues will be considered in any change to shift patterns as a result of completing the Emergency Cover Review;

    o Productivity reviews found that our 24-hour shift system is more family friendly and helps with planned childcare, supports work life balance, is more environmentally friendly and is more covid secure than the traditional 4-2-2 shift systems. Any future reviews of shift systems will need to consider these issues carefully;

    o A more local focus on procurement rather than using national frameworks may positively favour local economic wellbeing;

    o Increased charges may have a disproportionate impact on those groups who are more likely to be reliant on services; and

    o Community Participatory budget setting will be considered in future years.

KEY DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

The key drivers that have shaped the direction of this strategy are below:

- Community Risk Management and risk assessment processes;

- Challenges of single year UK government spending reviews;

- Business continuity costs;

- Inflationary pressures including increases in costs of energy, utilities, and payroll;

- Uncertainties of some project final budget estimates such as the outcome of the FRS Reform White Paper, outcome of the Emergency Cover Review;

- Keeping up with advances in Technology, and need for vigilant cyber security;

- Equality, diversity and inclusion implications;

- An ever-changing external risk landscape;

- Government, Sector and Industry good practice.

- HMICFRS – ensuring our known areas of improvement are addressed.

- Internal and external audits and peer review.

Figure 3 – Fire Standards Board Key drivers
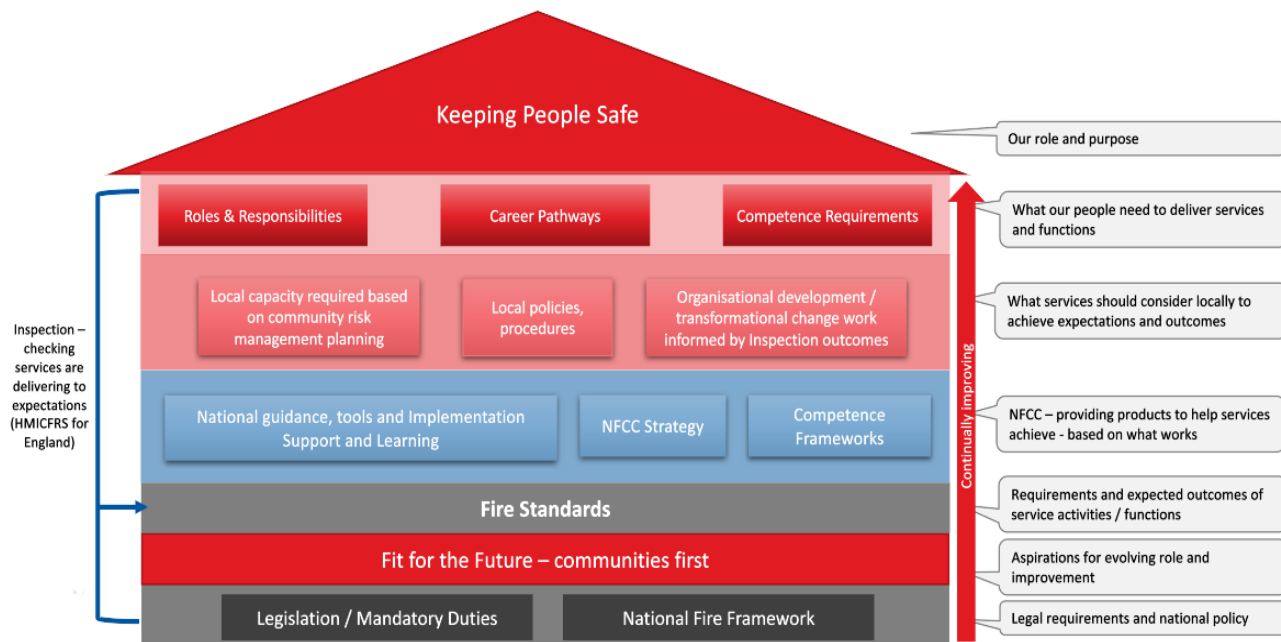
Fitting it all together…..

Keeping People Safe

Roles & Responsibilities	Career Pathways	Competence Requirements

| Local capacity required based on community risk management planning | Local policies, procedures | Organisational development / transformational change work informed by Inspection outcomes |

| National guidance, tools and Implementation Support and Learning | NFCC Strategy | Competence Frameworks |

Fire Standards

Fit for the Future – communities first

| Legislation / Mandatory Duties | National Fire Framework |

Inspection – checking services are delivering to expectations (HMICFRS for England)

Continually Improving

- Our role and purpose
- What our people need to deliver services and functions
- What services should consider locally to achieve expectations and outcomes
- NFCC – providing products to help services achieve - based on what works
- Requirements and expected outcomes of service activities / functions
- Aspirations for evolving role and improvement
- Legal requirements and national policy

Figure 4 - Fire Standards in development with Proposed Publication Dates

Fire Standards in development - Proposed Publication Dates

Dec 22

Fire Control

Mar 23

Commercial and Procurement

Sep 23

Asset Management

Leadership and People
- Leading the Service
- Leading and Developing People

Mar 23

Communications, Engagement and Consultation

Sep 23

Finance and Assurance

Sep 23
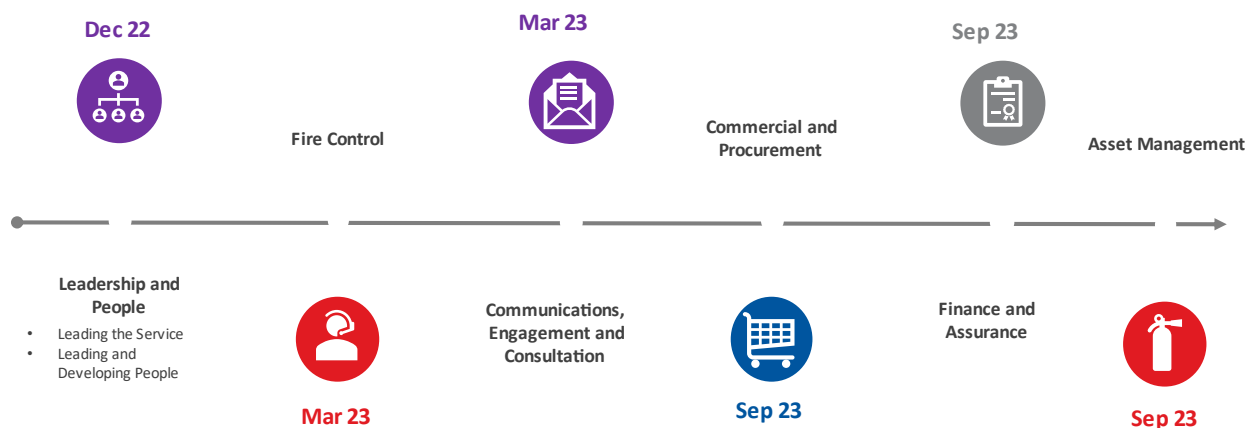
OUR VALUES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Values Alignment:

A - We are Accountable – We will continue to improve the openness and transparency of the budget setting process

B - We've got your Back – We will support managers identify efficiencies and opportunities for productivity gains

C - Every Contact Counts - We will improve how we use and share data and keep asking our stakeholders and partners for ideas and suggestions

D - We Dare to be Different – We will use innovative solutions to find further efficiencies and improvements in productivity

Strategy Classification: Restricted
Uncontrolled Document – valid only at time of printing 31/03/2023 12:18:00

FIRE PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY PLAN 2023-24

Our CRMP 2023-27 Action number 14 states we will: "Set out how we will deliver 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% by the end of 2024/25". The Action plan below states how we will do this:

Action	Aim and benefits	When will we do this by
We are accountable:		
We will create and support a cross functional Efficiency and Productivity Board.	• To provide effective direction, governance and oversight in identifying efficiencies and productivity gains. • To maintain the momentum in the success in identifying and delivery of efficiencies and productivity gains in recent years. • To establish links and synergies between functional areas in order to enhance teamwork. • To monitor the performance of the Service and where poor performance is identified to ensure it is challenged and addressed. • To develop plans and proposals for submission to the Authority and to oversee implementation through applying sound financial judgement. • To maintain appropriate ethical and professional standards, demonstrating and promoting the service's values and behaviours. • To systematically identify learning and national good practice.	May 2023

Action	Aim and benefits	When will we do this by
We will develop a suite of appropriate indicators to help measure the progress of this strategy	• Monitor and track progress. • Identify productivity gains in key areas • Support the Efficiency and Productivity Board	May 2023
Ensure effective scrutiny of progress	• Twice yearly updates to the FRA Audit and Standards Committee • Include an internal audit review of progress in 2024-25 • Involvement of the new Community Panel • Publish plans and update reports	July 2023
Maximise learning on efficiency and productivity from joint evaluation of the BFRS Trips and Falls project with EAAST	• Share insight • Potentially share more resources and expertise • Gain income	May 2023
We've Got Your Back		
Engaging and involving staff and their rep bodies in identifying and delivering efficiency and productivity gains	• We will regularly ask for feedback from our workforce to ensure our objectives are working. This will be achieved through our Staff Engagement Forums, managers forums, surveys, station visits and 1-2-1s	ongoing
Blended ICT training and improving staff data literacy	• We will invest in our people, with blended learning, so our workforce has the appropriate skills to use the digital tools we have invested in. We will support our colleagues in the training department so relevant training will be incorporated in the content management system (LearnPro). This will be complemented with virtual and classroom-based training and 1-2-1 training	April 2023 and onwards

Action	Aim and benefits	When will we do this by
Keep plans and governance frameworks up to date	• In such a fast-paced service and technology environment it is inevitable that needs and solutions will evolve during the strategy period, so we will keep this document up to date to respond to them	March 2024
Maximise efficiency and productivity gains from rationalising policies	• Improve our Service Information System • Integrate and rationalise policy • Empower middle managers to make decisions	June 2023
Work with Northamptonshire Police & Fire & Rescue Service supporting an Estates and Facilities framework which has involved a large number of SME's and local organisations	• This will allow us to support local suppliers in a more compliant manner. • Boost local economic wellbeing	May 2023
Every Contact Counts		
We will conduct a thorough review of all unit costs	• Understand unit costs	May 2023
We will re-run our station productivity assessment in 2023 to pinpoint exactly what has changed and improved	• Determine productivity gains and pinpoint any barriers to improvement	Launch in June 2023
We will conduct a strategic review of all administrative roles and posts in the service	• Improve capacity, capability, consistency, efficiency, productivity and resilience	July 2023
Complete review of Service Control Resilience	• Integrate efficiency and productivity in results and output measures	July 2023
Maximise efficiency and productivity gains highlighted in pan Bedfordshire cross partner Data Summit on 29th March 2023	• Share insight • Potentially share resources and expertise	Summer 2023

Action	Aim and benefits	When will we do this by
Maximise efficiency and productivity gains highlighted in pan Bedfordshire cross partner Volunteering and Estates workshops in March 2023	• Share insight • Potentially share resources and expertise	Summer 2023
Dare to be Different		
We will be re-running and expanding our social value research in 2023 and will reference the new NFCC toolkit due to be published later this year	• Understand the social value of our work and efficiencies and productivity gains through the lens of social value	August 2023
We will develop plans and options for a joint vehicle workshop	• Improve service standards • Increase turnaround times • Share risks	June 2023
Work with local councils to further explore opportunities to share in community infrastructure levies (formerly known as section 106 developer contributions)	• Maximise financial relationships with councils • Gain external funding	June 2023

Appendix 1 - Efficiency savings

	2021-22	Budget 2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Revenue Support Grant	-2,333	-2,405	-2,649	-2,705
Retained income from Rate Retention Scheme	-5,942	-5,942	-6,164	-6,394
Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) Total	**-8,275**	**-8,347**	**-8,813**	**-9,099**
Specific and special grants inside AEF	-399	-410	-231	-231
Appropriations to(+)/ from(-) reserves	355	41	-1,884	-1,308
Other Income (LA & Gov Funding above the SFA amount £)	-1,788	-811	-1,409	-1,240
Sub-Total	**-1,832**	**-1,180**	**-3,524**	**-2,779**
Collection fund surplus (-)/ deficit(+)	1,196	-378	598	0
Council Tax Base	216,704	224,040	228,807	233,383
Band D Precept (£)	102.41	104.45	109.45	112.72
Increase in Council Tax Base		3.39%	2.13%	2.00%
Increase in Band D Precept		1.99%	4.79%	2.99%
Council Tax Requirement	**-22,193**	**-23,401**	**-25,043**	**-26,307**
Total Income and Funding	**-31,104**	**-33,306**	**-36,782**	**-38,185**
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget		**31,104**	**33,306**	**36,782**
Investment/Cost Pressures				
Direct Employee				
Pay Awards		917	1,252	980
Employers Pension Contributions		9	-126	5
Increase in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff		226	513	-64
Increase in Support Staff		102	42	-121
Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)				
All Indirect Employee Costs		12	47	-53
Premises				
Utilities		24	130	-15
Rent/Rates				
Other Premises Costs				
Transport				
Fleet				
Fuel			70	
Other Transport Costs			14	
Supplies and Services				
Increased Usage/Enhanced Provision		319	232	10
Other Non-Pay Inflation (not included in other lines)			438	62
Capital Financing				
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital		400	914	715
Net Borrowing Costs				
Other				
Unbudgeted pay costs (Operational & Non-operational)		302	271	
Investment Income			-130	30
Salary Increments		88	75	71
Operational Over time		13	-15	-23
Total Cost Pressures		**2,412**	**3,728**	**1,597**
Efficiency Savings				
Direct Employee				
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/Response Staff		-7	0	-50
Reduction in Support Staff		-5	0	0
Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)				
All Indirect Employee Costs		-62	-44	-10
Premises				
Utilities		-5	-10	-10
Rent/Rates		0	0	0
Other Premises Costs		0	0	0
Shared Premises		0	0	0
Transport				
Fleet		0	-3	-109
Fuel		0	0	0
Other Transport Costs		0	0	0
Supplies and Services				
Procurement Savings		0	0	0
Other Technology Improvements		-5	-33	0
Decreased Usage		0	-45	-10
Capital Financing				
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital		0	0	0
Net Borrowing Costs		0	0	0
Other				
Collaboration Income		-61	-117	-5
Business Rates review		-66	0	0
Other Savings 3 (Please Specify)		0	0	0
Total Efficiency Savings		**-211**	**-252**	**-194**
Closing Revenue Expenditure	**31,104**	**33,306**	**36,782**	**38,185**
Check	0	0	0	0
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Revenue Expenditure		0.68%	0.76%	0.53%
Non-Payroll Budgets (please overwrite with correct figures)		5,599	5,995	6,621
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets		3.76%	4.20%	2.93%
Efficiency Savings Target		2.00%	2.00%	2.00%

Forecast Efficiency Savings
(Percentage of Non-payroll budgets)