



COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019 – 2023

REFRESHED FOR 2022



Bedfordshire
Fire & Rescue Service

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OUR MISSION

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

general note: certain graphics were redone (maps/strategy digitalisation etc) due to the need for accessibility

FOREWORD

Thank you to everyone who took part in our latest consultation on the most important plan we work to. We have had our most successful Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and budget consultation yet.

We received overwhelming support for our proposals and have a rich baseline of comments and insight which we will draw on over the next 12 months in line with our Service Value 'Every Contact Counts'.

Last year you told us that our consultation was too long and complicated. This year we simplified the survey splitting it into two parts the budget and the proposed CRMP 2022-23 action plan. This seemed to work much better and we think this helped encourage more people to respond.

A total of **746** responses were received. Highlights included:

- 🔥 **86%** of those responding said "yes" to the 1.99% increase of Council Tax;
- 🔥 **78%** of those responding said yes to the £5 increase;
- 🔥 **214** respondents gave us a wealth of comments and suggestions for further collaborations and in making efficiencies.
- 🔥 A variety of comments related to suggestions for saving money or generating income, such as collaboration with other services including more site sharing and in boosting organisational productivity.
- 🔥 **627** (85%) said that they support us prioritising

investment in our property based on changes to housing, economic and social change, and the impact of Covid-19 on how we work;

- 🔥 **92%** support us in innovating our fleet and testing different ideas;
- 🔥 **71%** completed the Equality Diversity and Inclusion section and we can demonstrate we received a much more diverse range of responses including more from young people.

You told us to do even more to listen to and understand our communities, to tell you what we are doing on environmental management, and in continuing to ensure safe systems of work for our staff. You said we need to do more to demonstrate our ethical governance credentials and we are currently working towards the national Fire Standard's Board Code on Ethics. We already have a strong set of corporate values that are now integrated into day to day thinking and action.

All these issues take a stronger focus in 2022-23 and in developing our next CRMP from 2023-24 and onwards.

INTRODUCTION

by the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority

Our Community Risk Management Plan 2019 – 2023 (CRMP) sets out how we intend to deliver our mission of providing outstanding fire and rescue services by further improving:

- How we assess and analyse the risks faced by the communities we serve.
- The effectiveness of our prevention, protection and emergency response services.
- How efficiently we use our assets and resources to reduce and respond to the risks faced by our communities; and,
- How we value, support and invest in our best asset, our staff. We have revised the CRMP for 2021 to reflect the progress already made against the 2020/21 action plan and the achievements of the Service in the past year. A summary of the progress made against the 2019/20 CRMP action plan can be viewed [here](#). We are proud of so many achievements big and small across the Service over the past year. We would like to tell you about some of them:
- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been awarded overall good in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS's) **Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22 inspection** which was published on the 15 December 2021. You can read the [full document here](#).

- Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service collected second place in the national award for excellence in board leadership in equality, diversity and inclusion, sponsored by Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) and presented by the National Centre for Diversity.
- The Service continues to demonstrate strategic and operational awareness and understanding of how to challenge, promote and advance equality, diversity and inclusion at senior levels of the organisation. In doing so, stimulating change, demonstrating visionary leadership, capacity, capability and a strong commitment to making things happen.
- Since 2019 the Service has led nationally on the procurement of new Mobile Data Terminals. This important procurement process ensures that BFRS and other services will continue to be able to access vital risk information at the incident ground in a quick and accessible format.

Unfortunately, due to COVID we were unable to celebrate the achievements of our staff in the same way. We held an awards event in November to recognise those staff who had completed long service. We are planning a wider awards event in June to recognise staff's achievements.

This year has still given us some challenges with COVID affecting our normal ways of working. We have overcome these challenges by enabling our staff to work from home where they can and providing them with the equipment to do this effectively. We have made our offices and our operational areas COVID safe and have provided additional PPE and other equipment to ensure that our staff have safe working environments.

In addition, to aid the multi-agency response to COVID 19 we provided a valuable command and support role for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We continue to strive to be an 'employer of choice' with a highly skilled and motivated workforce that understands and reflects the diversity of our communities, and who see our Service as an engaging, positive and rewarding place to work.

We are working to ensure that we have enough resources and capacity across the system to deliver improvements. Some of the foundation work has already been completed including data analysis, user experiences and customer insight or engagement with stakeholders. As a result, we have a clearer idea of how we want to position the Service in the future.

The Chairman of the FRA (Fire Rescue Authority) and members have been key in enabling us to get on with delivering against our ambitions. We are going to bring forward the following workstreams and projects - National Operational Guidance implementation, The A1 roaming pump trial and On Call availability.

We have continued our support for EEAST (East of England Ambulance Service Trust), who continue to face operational pressures, is also on our agenda and something we are leading on for the region.

We are feeling positive about our ability to respond to any future changes, this is an exciting time for the sector. There is an imminent White paper coming out for consultation, the new fire standards which, should drive improvements locally, regionally, and nationally. This will all make BFRS an outstanding place to work and which will add to our ability to deliver against our aims and objectives.

By being open and responsive to change, and through exploring and investing in new and innovative technologies and ways of working, we will continue to improve the safety and wellbeing of the diverse communities we serve. Each year we will publish an action plan summarising what we intend to deliver that year. We will report on progress by producing an Annual Action Plan (see Appendix A) and a review of progress against previous actions.



Andrew Hopkinson – Chief Fire Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'AH' followed by a long horizontal stroke.



Cllr John Chatterley – Chairman
Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style that reads 'John A. Chatterley'.

THE BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

The Bedfordshire FRA comprises elected councillors (Members) appointed to it from each of the three unitary authorities, whose numbers are proportional to the populations they represent:

- 3 Members from **Bedford** Borough Council;
- 5 Members from **Central Bedfordshire** Council;
- 4 Members from **Luton** Borough Council.

Additionally, the **Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner** has a non-voting seat on the Authority.

Once appointed to the Authority, Members represent the whole community, not just the area they serve as a local councillor. They serve as a valuable link between communities and the Fire and Rescue Service.

Members are collectively responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of the Service, including the setting of its budget, promoting its core values and ensuring that the Service is effective, efficient and provides value for money. The full Authority meets periodically throughout the year and more information is available on our website.

KEY FACTS ^{21/22}

	477	sq miles of service area
	1520	fires attended
	14	stations
	40	appliances
	64	animal assistance incidents
	287	wholetime workforce
	102	on call workforce
	165	support staff
	24	control (staff)
	6038	total number of incidents
	342	primary dwelling fires
	6808	safe & well visits

BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

We employ around 580 staff consisting of:

- 🔥 Wholetime (fulltime) firefighters and officers;
- 🔥 On-call (retained) firefighters;
- 🔥 Control staff;
- 🔥 Corporate (support) staff.

We provide our services from 14 fire stations and our Fire Control mobilising centre at our headquarters site at Kempston which also hosts our training centre and technical services hub. We operate a range of duty systems to ensure we have the right number of firefighters available at the right time and place to respond to emergencies.

- 🔥 24-hour shift – immediate 24-hour response using full-time firefighters;
- 🔥 Day-crewed – immediate daytime response using full-time firefighters Monday to Friday with an on-call firefighter response at night and weekends;
- 🔥 On-Call/Retained – on-call firefighters providing a response within six minutes.

Our fleet includes:

- 🔥 22 front-line fire engines;
- 🔥 2 aerial ladder platforms;
- 🔥 16 specialist vehicles;
- 🔥 66 support vehicles.

We work to **PREVENT** fires and other emergencies from occurring in the first place.

Our firefighters and other front-line staff undertake more than 6,000 safe and well visits each year, carry out fire and road safety talks in schools, and work with partner agencies to inform our communities about fire and road safety.

We work to **PROTECT** people when emergencies do happen. Our firefighters and fire safety officers undertake inspections of workplaces, engaging with and educating owners and occupiers, taking enforcement action where necessary.

We **RESPOND** to emergencies including fires, road traffic collisions, air and rail crashes, water rescues and flooding, hazardous chemical incidents and many other types of emergencies. Our firefighters regularly train, maintain and test equipment to ensure they always remain operationally ready to respond to emergencies. We also work closely with our partners such as Bedfordshire Police, the East of England Ambulance Service, local councils and our neighbouring fire and rescue services to ensure we can respond effectively and competently to any emergency.

Northamptonshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Cambridgeshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Buckinghamshire
Fire & Rescue
Service

Hertfordshire
Fire & Rescue
Service



	Ampthill	 On Call
	Bedford	 Wholetime/On Call
	Biggleswade	 On Call
	Dunstable	 Wholetime
	Harrold	 On Call
	Kempston	 Wholetime/On Call
	Leighton Buzzard	 Day Crew/On Call
	Luton	 Wholetime
	Potton	 On Call
	Sandy	 On Call
	Shefford	 On Call
	Stopsley	 Wholetime
	Toddington	 On Call
	Woburn	 On Call

	Wholetime/On Call
	Wholetime
	On Call
	Day Crew / On Call

 WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

 WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

 EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

 WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

OUR MISSION, AIMS & PRIORITIES

Our **Mission** is simply to provide outstanding fire and rescue services that make Bedfordshire safer, and we are committed to doing everything we can to achieve this within the resources we have available to us.

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



PREVENTING

... fires and other emergencies from happening.



EMPOWERING

... our people as we work together to make Bedfordshire safer.



PROTECTING

... people and property when fires happen.



UTILISING

... our assets and resources efficiently and effectively.



RESPONDING

... to fires and other emergencies promptly and effectively.



MAXIMISING

... the use of data and digital solutions to drive improvements.

We focus our resources on achieving these aims and use them to develop and deliver the key priorities we set out to achieve through our Annual Action Plan. We use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure how we are performing against our priorities, report these on a quarterly basis to the FRA and publish an Annual Performance Report.

OUR VALUES – WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

Our Values are the qualities that we believe are the most important to us, and describe the expectations the public have of us, and that we have of each other. Our values have been developed with our staff and our communities.

We use them every day to influence how we work to achieve our mission and priority objectives, and to guide the professional behaviours we expect of our staff in everything we do:

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

We also fully support the **National Fire and Rescue Service** core values of:

- 🔥 Service to the community;
- 🔥 Valuing all our employees;
- 🔥 Valuing diversity in the Service and the community;
- 🔥 Valuing improvement.



COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships may either be Statutory or non-Statutory in nature.

'Statutory' partnerships are those where there is a legal duty for Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to be collaborate with other agencies to achieve certain goals, such as Community Safety Partnerships established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

'Non statutory' partnerships are entered voluntarily in order to support achieving organisational targets and goals. We aim to evaluate our partnerships regularly to ensure that they are effective in delivering the expected benefits and outcomes. More information on our partnerships can be found on our website.

We work closely with our blue light colleagues in Bedfordshire Police and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST), as well as our local authority colleagues in Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council.

We view collaboration as an opportunity to reduce costs and improve services to the public, so we continue to explore new opportunities to work together through the Blue Light Collaboration Strategic Board chaired jointly by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Constable.

We also work in partnership with other fire and rescue services on both front line and support services, such as our shared strategic operational command arrangements and shared Information and Communications Technology (ICT) service with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service. These arrangements have not only improved services but allowed the Authority to make efficiency savings.

Currently Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service are collaborating with Bedfordshire Police and the EEAST on several projects. These include:

- 🔥 Co-locating police officers and police community support officers at Ampthill, Bedford, Leighton Buzzard, and Toddington community fire stations;
- 🔥 Co-locating paramedics at Dunstable, Luton, Sandy, Shefford, Stopsley and Bedford community fire stations;
- 🔥 Assisting Bedfordshire Police with searches for vulnerable missing persons;
- 🔥 Assisting paramedics to gain entry to premises where there is suspected risk to life of the occupant;
- 🔥 Emergency medical response supporting EEAST to attend urgent medical emergencies supported by Leighton Buzzard, Harrold and Potton community fire stations.



- 🔥 We launched a new Falls Service responding to vulnerable people who fall in their homes. This new service enabled us to support Eeast, helping relieve added pressures from the NHS. Our teams were trained by Eeast, with the skills required to the level of Community First Responders.
- 🔥 A new Technical Support Unit has been set up, based at Dunstable Fire Station. This was the first of its kind in the country. This vehicle responds to Bariatric and complex patient incidents where emergency removal of a patient is required to support Eeast. This dedicated vehicle carries specialist equipment including a bariatric stretcher which, enables crews to provide the best possible care to the patient. They can then be handed over to Eeast for further care.

- 🔥 We came together with East of England Ambulance Service (Eeast) last year to provide support during the COVID crisis. BFRS worked with Eeast by providing over 30 seconded firefighters to drive ambulances across Bedfordshire keeping more ambulances on the road.

Our website has more information about our [collaboration initiatives](#).

INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING

This CRMP helps us meet the responsibilities placed on us by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. This framework requires us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that identifies and assess all the foreseeable fire and rescue related risks and challenges which may arise. It also requires us to set out how we plan to mitigate these risks using our available resources.

Integrated risk management planning gives fire and rescue services the flexibility to use their resources in the most effective way to save lives, improve public safety and reduce the impact of emergency incidents. The first and key component of our IRMP process is the analysis and understanding of the risks to the communities we serve, and the risks to our organisation and our ability to deliver our core functions, both locally and nationally. The better we understand the risks the more effectively we can target our resources and activities towards reducing them.

We use a range of quantitative and qualitative analysis, the outcomes from which are detailed in our Community Risk Analysis (CRA) document. Our CRA directly informs what we, and our partners, are doing to ensure we are doing the right thing, using the right people and resources, provided in the right place and at the right time to help make Bedfordshire safer. Our CRMP should be read in conjunction with the CRA.

We play an active part in the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF); a multi- agency partnership formed to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The BLRF compiles a Community Risk Register (CRR) which identifies the wide range of risks and emergencies we could potentially face within Bedfordshire. It draws upon the National Risk Register which gives a national perspective of the risks and emergencies that could occur and would result in major impact on all, or significant parts of the UK. These inform priorities for planning, training and exercising so we can effectively manage emergencies when they arise. Outlined below are the local risks considered to be of relatively high consequence.

We maintain robust business continuity plans to ensure the critical services we provide can continue to operate, should serious incidents or issues occur that might otherwise interrupt them. Our planning is also influenced by other legislation such as the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004; Fire and Rescue Service (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007; Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

OUR COUNTY & COMMUNITIES

Bedfordshire occupies a geographically central position within the UK. Bordering four other counties and covering an area of 1,234.45 square kilometres (476.94 square miles), Bedfordshire is split by three unitary authority areas:

- 🔥 Bedford Borough: 476.4 km² (183.9 sq. miles);
- 🔥 Central Bedfordshire: 715.7 km² (276.3 sq. miles);
- 🔥 Luton Borough: 43.35 km² (16.74 sq. miles).

Bedfordshire is, in land use terms, largely rural and agricultural, including areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Most people (over 70%) live in its larger towns including the two major towns of Luton and Bedford, but also in several smaller market towns. These towns lie within often picturesque rural settings which also includes many villages that add to the area's diversity of places to live, work and play.

Over recent years the local economy, like many throughout the UK, has moved from traditional manufacturing and heavy industry to one based more upon the service industry. These industries include logistics and air transport, higher education, research and development, tourism and hospitality, creative and cultural businesses, construction, and business services. Bedfordshire is growing as a national distribution hub and has several large industrial sites and warehouses.

The county has two successful universities; the post-graduate Cranfield University, and the University of Bedfordshire, together with strongly performing further education colleges

based in Bedford, Luton and Dunstable. There are several significant and internationally linked research locations at these universities and at Colworth Science Park, Cranfield Technology Park and the Millbrook Vehicle Proving Ground.

Within our area we have a significant stock of heritage buildings and environmental sites of special interest. Countywide rivers present us with special problems during spate flooding conditions. There are also iconic visitor attractions in the county, such as Woburn Safari Park, Whipsnade Zoo and Center Parc's fifth UK village at Woburn.

There are major growth plans that will see 66,850 new homes built across Bedfordshire in the next decade, including a new town at Tempsford, along with continued expansion in the number of industrial and commercial sites that will create an extra 53,400 jobs. The road, rail and waterway infrastructure include the M1 and A1 main arterial roads, and three major rail routes, including one of the busiest commuter rail links in the country running south from Bedford to London and beyond. The international London Luton Airport, which already handles circa 17 million passengers a year, is also expanding to accommodate this growth. Town centre redevelopment is underway in many of the county's towns, and in Luton and Bedford.

It is essential that the Service continues to keep abreast of this emerging and changing risk profile and ensures our resources and capabilities continue to be aligned to the areas of greatest need.

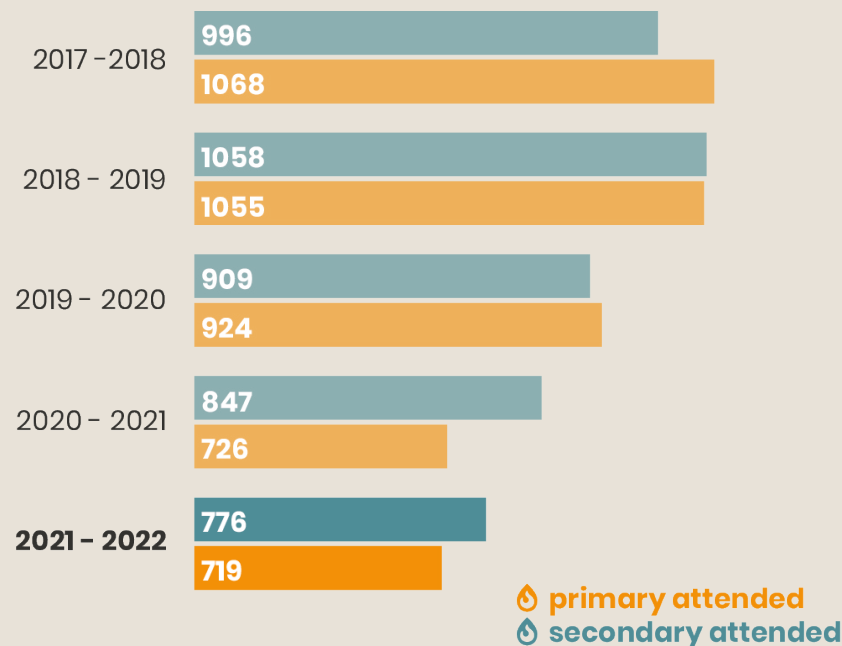
SUMMARY OF RISKS WITHIN BEDFORDSHIRE

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FIRES

The national incident recording system maintained by the Government categorises fires as either Primary or Secondary fires;

- **Primary fires** are serious fires affecting property such as buildings, caravans or trailers, vehicles and other methods of transport, those involving casualties or rescues, or fires attended by five or more fire appliances.
- **Secondary fires** are less serious fires confined to outdoor locations such as in fields, grassland or heathland, or that involve rubbish, derelict buildings or abandoned vehicles and which do not involve casualties or rescues.

In 2019/20 Bedfordshire rate of primary fires (per 10,000 population) was higher than the national average for England (13.57 compared to 12.03). However, the rate of secondary fires (per 10,000 population) was lower than the national average for England (13.41 compared to 14.50).



Dwelling Fire Risk



Fires deaths and injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires have reduced significantly over the past decade. We are aware Bedfordshire has a growing and ageing population with the 65+ age group predicted to increase more steeply over the next decade putting pressure on most public services.

In 2020/21 the rate of accidental dwelling fires (per 10,000 population) in Bedfordshire was marginally higher than the national average for England (4.35 compared to 4.30). In 2020/21 the rate of accidental dwelling fire non-fatal casualties (per 100,000 population) in Bedfordshire was lower than the national average (4.98 compared to 7.58).

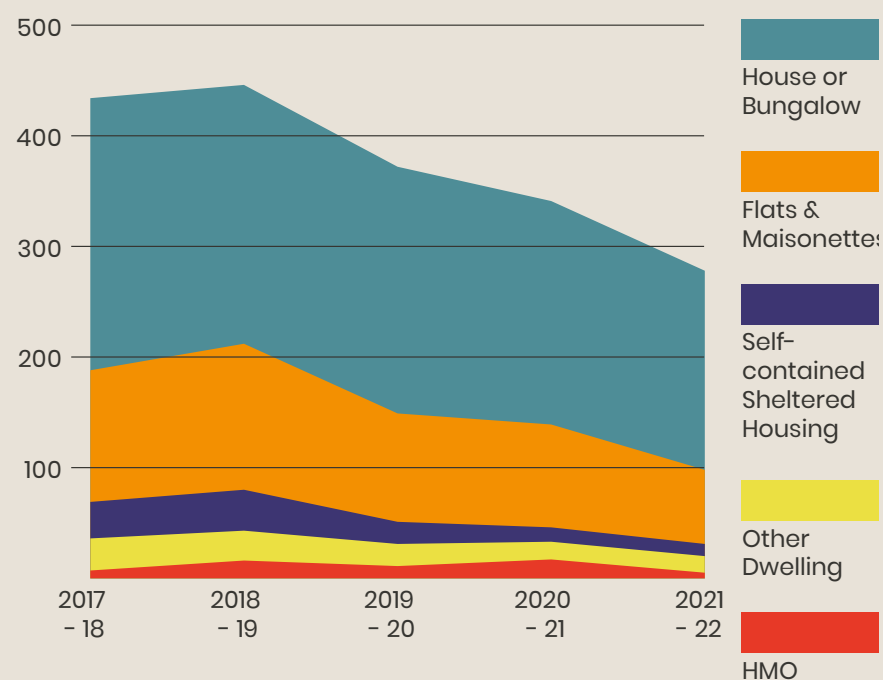
Our analysis tells us that the people most at risk of dying in a dwelling fire include older people, smokers, people who live alone, those with some form of mobility or mental impairment, those who use alcohol or drugs and households without a working smoke alarm.

We use a range of data, including health data, to identify people who most need our prevention services and to make sure those people get support. Deprivation is also a recognised factor that increases risk from fire. The English

indices of deprivation measure relative deprivation in small areas in England called lower- layer super output areas (LSOA). Although, Central Bedfordshire has none, both Luton and Bedford each have 4 LSOA in England's 10% most deprived neighbourhood's.

To better target our Prevention interventions effectively we work with commercial providers, analysing five years of our incident data and five years of Home Fire Safety Check data profiled against demographic insight data to produce a bespoke risk profile; this classifies each household in the county into risk groups.

ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES ATTENDED 2017 – 2022



Non-Domestic Fire Risks



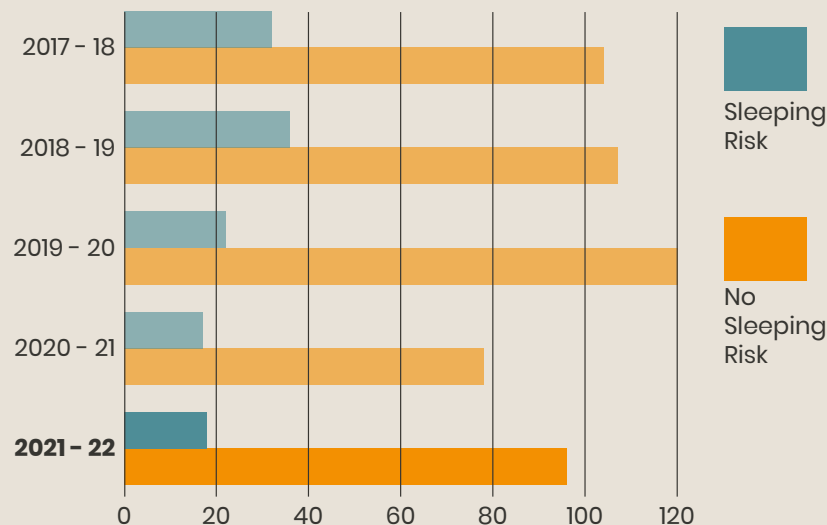
Non-domestic premises include those premises not regarded as dwellings such as hospitals, schools, care homes, offices, shops, leisure facilities, factories, airports, transport hubs and other premises or places defined by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

There are more than 17,000 commercial or non-domestic buildings in Bedfordshire. These include hospitals, care homes, hotels, offices, shops, night clubs and other locations such as chemical plants and factories. Although fires in non-domestic buildings have declined in recent years, we recognise the impact that a fire can have on the local economy if a business is disrupted by a fire.

In 2019/20 the Bedfordshire rate of non-domestic fires (per 1,000 non-domestic properties) was slightly higher than the national average for England (7.57 compared to 5.58) Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) suggest that fires in industrial and commercial buildings cost the UK economy £1.4 billion in 2011.

The downward trend is encouraging, and we will continue to work to reduce these fires.

FIRES IN NON-DOMESTIC PROPERTY ATTENDED 2017 – 2022



Heritage Fire Risk

We also work hard to protect the heritage of Bedfordshire. There are 114 Grade I and 143 Grade II* listed buildings in our area. Heritage buildings were usually built in an era when fire safety was not a priority and as a result, they can be more vulnerable to fire.

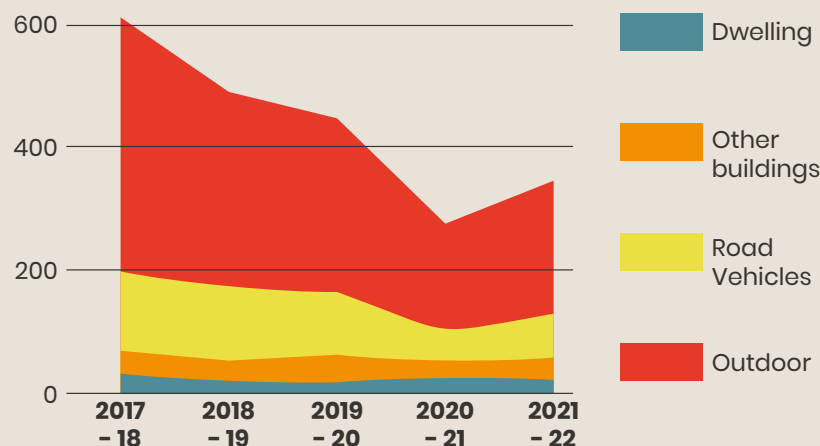
Our fire safety officers work with the owner/operators of these sites to ensure they comply with fire safety legislation and our operational firefighters gather on-site risk intelligence to inform tactical plans. These plans assist with effectively extinguishing any fires and with protecting and preserving these important buildings and their often-valuable contents.

Deliberate Fire Risk

Due to the specific legal definitions associated with the term 'arson' the FRS generally refers to fires which are not accidental in nature as 'deliberate' fires.

In 2020/21, 27% of all fires attended by Bedfordshire FRS were determined to be deliberate, this compares favourably to the national average for England of 42%. The 2020/21 rate (per 10,000 population) of deliberate primary fires (2.48 compared to 2.70) and deliberate secondary fires (3.83 compared to 8.56) was also considerably lower than the national average for England.

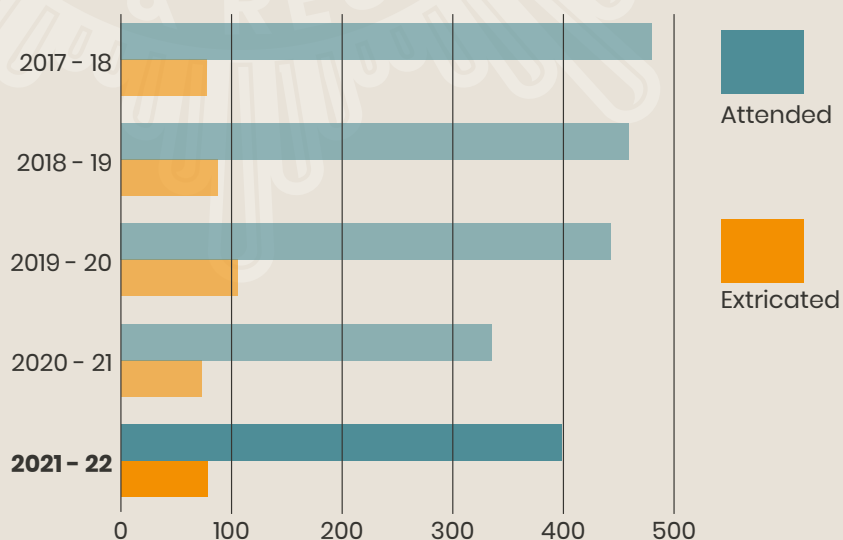
DELIBERATE FIRE BY PROPERTY CATEGORY ATTENDED 2017 – 2022



Special Services & Road Traffic Collisions

We have several major road networks running through our area with increasing volumes of traffic. These present a risk of road traffic collisions (RTC's) occurring. Collisions also frequently occur on the many rural roads that exist across Bedfordshire. We work to mitigate these risks through our prevention and response activities. The chart below shows trends for RTCs attended by BFRS. After a fall in 2015-16 there has been an increase.

ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ATTENDED 2017 – 2022



Risk Of Extreme Weather



Extreme weather is an increasing risk; this includes wildfires during hot weather and wide area flooding. In recent years the number of severe localised flooding events in Bedfordshire has increased and we have deployed our flood rescue capability both locally and to support incidents in other areas as part of national planning and preparedness arrangements.

RTC Incidents Attended Extrication Performed River Flooding and Surface Flooding are amongst the highest risks identified by the National Risk Register. Flooding is identified as a high risk by the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum (BLRF). A Multi-Agency Flood Plan has been prepared by BLRF to ensure an effective coordinated response to significant flooding events.

There are several rivers and water courses that run through the county of Bedfordshire. Although most of the above are small water courses, they all have the potential to flood and cause risk to the life, property and infrastructure.

National Risks Risk Of Terrorist Activity

This is a complex area due to the frequency of new threats being identified and enacted internationally. Events over the last few years, both at home and abroad, have increased the risk of terrorist or self-motivated attack activity impacting on our society. BFRS plays a major role in protecting the community in the event of such an incident, and along with the other blue light services contributes significantly to the planning and training for such events. A special team of firefighters have been trained to operate under the conditions of a terrorist incident.

Emergency services work closely with the Security Services and Government to identify threats and provide effective warning, informing and response planning. Our Service supports this with national incident liaison officers (NILO), who can work closely with emergency service partners, and currently provides a local and national capability for mass casualty injuries and decontamination processes.

HOW WE USE OUR RESOURCES TO MAKE BEDFORDSHIRE SAFER

Fulfilling our mission of providing outstanding fire and rescue services to make Bedfordshire safer requires us to make sure that everything we do is focused on improving the safety of our diverse communities. As the risk in Bedfordshire is constantly evolving our approach needs to keep pace with this change. Our CRMP is underpinned by our medium-term financial strategy, and specific strategies covering Prevention, Protection, Response, People, Assets, and Digital and Data.

Like many fire and rescue services we are facing the challenges of:

- 🔥 Reductions in government funding
- 🔥 Reducing levels of experiential learning amongst firefighters due to fewer incidents, which places a greater focus on simulation training
- 🔥 A retirement profile that is forecasting large numbers of senior and experienced firefighters retiring in the next few years
- 🔥 Recruiting and retaining a skilled and diverse workforce
- 🔥 A drive to diversify the range of services we provide to the public We continually analyse the risks within our communities and use this to allocate the right number of our staff to prevention, protection and emergency response duties.



WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE

WE DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

EVERY CONTACT COUNTS

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

PREVENTION STRATEGY

Aim: preventing fires and other emergencies from happening.

Our **prevention** priorities are to:

- 🔥 Continue to reduce the number and impact of fires within our diverse communities;
- 🔥 Improve our understanding of community risk through better and more innovative engagement with our diverse and hard to reach communities;
- 🔥 Continue to reduce the number and impact of deliberate (arson) fires;
- 🔥 Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads;
- 🔥 Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in water related incidents;
- 🔥 Work with partners to broaden our prevention role and capabilities.

Our **approach** will be to:

- 🔥 Use an intelligence led, risk-based approach to target the vulnerable and most at risk from fire;
- 🔥 Maximise capacity and reach through use of specialists, firefighters and partners;
- 🔥 Work collaboratively to make every contact count;
- 🔥 Positively engage with and educate young people;

- 🔥 Deliver an effective Safe and Well service;
- 🔥 Ensure continuous improvement through effective evaluation of prevention activities;
- 🔥 Actively support the Bedfordshire Road Safety Partnership.

Safe & Well Visits

The success of our traditional Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) has contributed to a reduction of risk and a significant reduction in the number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires in the home. Our Safe and Well programme, designed with our local health and social care partners to target the most vulnerable, extends our HFSC approach to include risk factors that impact on health and wellbeing, such as, falls risk assessment, alcohol consumption, crime prevention advice, and referrals to specialist services.

We also work with other public sector organisations, such as housing providers and health services, to exchange relevant information about people who need support and make sure they receive a visit from the person best placed to help them. In 2020 we launched a new on-line safe and well portal to enable the public and partners to easily request a safe and well visit.

Arson Reduction Strategy

Deliberate fires account for a large proportion of the emergency incidents we attend. Our prevention strategy is focused on working with partners including the police, local authorities and other agencies to understand where the areas of greatest risk are, and to work together to reduce the number of deliberate fires that occur, analysing data and investigating fire related crimes to ensure appropriate action is taken against offenders. We also deliver targeted educational activities to change the behaviours of those people who are likely to commit arson. Although the smaller fires we attend are, to some extent, linked to the prevailing weather conditions, there is a recognised link between deliberately set small fires and other forms of antisocial behaviour. It is apparent that young people start a large proportion of these fires so education and engagement with this group is key to reducing these incidents.

We aim to reduce deliberate fires through interventions in three key areas:



Environmental Interventions

These are multi agency initiatives involving teams of people from BFRS and other partners visiting designated areas to identify, process, and, where necessary, remove the opportunities and targets for arsonists such as fly-tipped combustible waste and abandoned vehicles. They also identify potential targets where improved security could deter arsonists, such as derelict or unused buildings and insecure outbuildings;



Investigation-based Interventions

We identify arson 'hot spots', patterns and trends and share this information with relevant partners to ensure a joint approach is taken in dealing with arson attacks; the sharing of data often reveals that the arson is part of a wider pattern of anti-social behaviour;



Educational Interventions

We aim to engage with every Year 2 pupil across the county to highlight the dangers of fire and the role of the Fire and Rescue Service within the community. Our staff and partner agencies also deliver 'Safety Squad' educational inputs to Year 5 and 6 pupils in Luton, which includes a session on the dangers of fire and the crime of arson. Secondary school students can engage in our newest programme, 'Fire Forward'. It is specifically designed to help improve young peoples' aspirations and promotes positive, safe decision making relating to fire, roads and water. Our SAFE (Safety Awareness and Fire Education) programme is a targeted programme for young people who present a risk around fire. This is delivered by specially qualified staff with the aim of changing behaviours.

Our Fire Cadets

We have four Fire Cadet Units based at Bedford, Leighton Buzzard, Luton and Sandy Community Fire Stations. We focus on teaching practical skills to young people and developing positive behaviours to create role models in society. As well as learning about the role of the fire and rescue service, Cadets support Fire Station Open Days, charitable events and fundraising, take part in civic events such as Remembrance Day and assist at ceremonial activities such as the Service Awards Evening and the Christmas Christingle Service. We are proud to nominate one Fire Cadet each year to be the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet.

Reducing The Risk Of Death Or Injury From Road Traffic Collisions

We are an active partner on the Bedfordshire Strategic Road Safety Partnership Board which brings together the key agencies with responsibility for safety on our roads. We undertake a range of interventions particularly targeting vulnerable road users. Many of these initiatives are delivered jointly with other partners including police and local authority.

Examples include:

- 🔥 'Biker Down' and 'Bike Safe' delivered by our Fire Bike team of Road Traffic Collision Reduction Officers (RTCRO);
- 🔥 Schools 'Year 5 Alive' programme;
- 🔥 '6th Form Safe' programme for new and learner drivers;
- 🔥 Supporting national and local road safety campaigns;

PROTECTION STRATEGY

Aim: protecting people and property when fires happen.

Our **protection** priorities are to:

- 🔥 Focus our resources on engaging and educating local businesses to reduce the risk of fire and comply with fire safety legislation;
- 🔥 Through inspection and audit, continue to reduce the risk from fire in buildings to both the public and firefighters.

Our **approach** will be to:

- 🔥 Use an intelligence led, risk-based approach to audit and inspection;
- 🔥 Actively engage and educate local businesses, supported by fair and proportionate enforcement;
- 🔥 Work together with other regulators and stakeholders to reduce risk;
- 🔥 Maximise capacity and firefighter safety by utilising operational crews to undertake fire safety audits;
- 🔥 Ensure we maintain a highly skilled and sustainable specialist fire safety team;
- 🔥 Ensure continuous improvement through effective evaluation of protection activities;
- 🔥 Work with the NFCC to actively support and respond to learning from the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and the Independent Review of Building Regulations.

In discharging our statutory responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we provide education and business support and, if necessary, use our enforcement powers to make premises safe. This helps to protect people, property and the environment by either preventing fires from occurring in the first place, or by limiting the effects of fires when they do occur. We maintain a comprehensive database of premises that are categorised from high risk to low risk. Our risk-based audit programme ensures that those premises most at risk of fire are prioritised by our protection activities. To increase capacity, our full-time firefighters undertake basic fire safety checks on lower risk buildings. We are also in the process of qualifying some firefighters to undertake fire safety audits on lower risk buildings. Our dedicated fire safety inspectors focus on premises that are more complex and which represent a higher risk. This makes the most appropriate use of resources we have available, enabling us to ensure we allocate resources according to risk.

We have taken proactive activity within education to improve compliance and community safety. We engage and share information with businesses and the public through:

- 🔥 Business action days;
- 🔥 NFCC Safety Weeks;
- 🔥 Social media;
- 🔥 Our website;
- 🔥 Attending business, residents and landlord forums.

RESPONSE STRATEGY

Aim: responding to fires and other emergencies promptly and effectively.

Our **response** priorities are to:

- 🔥 Ensure we always provide an effective and timely response to fires and other emergencies;
- 🔥 Work with Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum partners to effectively plan and prepare for local and national emergencies;
- 🔥 Work with partners to broaden our response role and capabilities;
- 🔥 Ensure our response resources and crewing arrangements are aligned to current and future risks.

Our **approach** will be to:

- 🔥 Have effective operational policies and procedures aligned to National Operational Guidance;
- 🔥 Provide firefighters with fast access to relevant and timely operational risk information;
- 🔥 Maintain a positive Health and Safety culture, ensuring we continuously learn from incidents;
- 🔥 Continue to invest in the best appliances, equipment, training and development to ensure our crews respond safely and effectively;
- 🔥 Review our emergency cover ensuring our resources align with current and future risks;
- 🔥 Continue to test and maintain effective business continuity plans;
- 🔥 Proactively collaborate with the NFCC and multi-agency and cross-border partners;
- 🔥 Continue to develop and maintain our national resilience assets and capabilities.

Our Emergency Response Standards

Prior to 2004, targets for response times to fires and other emergencies were based on a prescriptive framework of national standards. Since then, we have established our own local emergency response standards that set out how quickly we aim to respond to key emergencies within our area. The standards relate to the time it takes to get the first fire appliance to the scene from the time it is alerted by our Fire Control Centre. This standard is now subject to review by the NFCC following recommendations from the HMICFRS.

For **emergency calls**, we will:

- 🔥 Answer 90% of 999 calls within 7 seconds or less; and
- 🔥 Mobilise required resources within 60 seconds or less on 80% of occasions.

For **critical fire incidents**, (threaten life, structures or the environment), we will provide an initial response of:

- 🔥 2 fire appliances (total 9 riders) on 90% of occasions; and
- 🔥 Arrive within 10 minutes on 80% of occasions.

For **road traffic collisions** (RTCs), we will:

- 🔥 Arrive within 13 minutes on 80% of occasions.

For **secondary incidents** (non-life risk), we will provide an initial response of:

- 🔥 1 fire appliance with 5 crew; and
- 🔥 Arrive within 20 minutes on 96% of occasions.

Our response strategy is designed to provide a resilient emergency response if an incident does occur. The type of incidents responded to by BFRS can broadly be split into three areas:

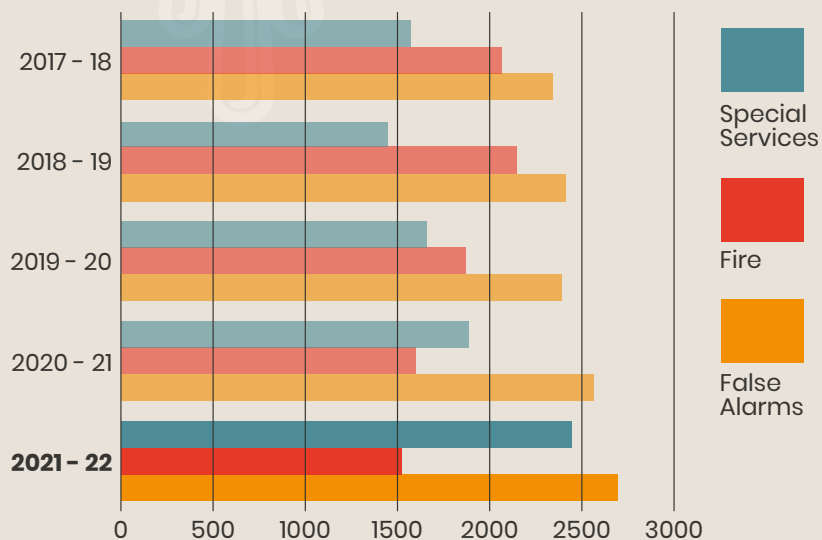
- 🔥 **Fires**
Defined as either primary or secondary (see below);
- 🔥 **Non-fire**
Covers a wide range of incidents including road traffic collisions, rescues from height, from water, providing medical assistance, flooding, incidents involving hazardous materials and other calls to protect life, property and the environment;
- 🔥 **False alarms**
This includes false reports of all incidents types originating from both automatic fire detection systems and by human error.

The number of incidents attended by the Service has fluctuated over the five years and had been showing a three-year downward trend.

The number of incidents has now increased, this was anticipated to increase as more collaborative activity expands our capabilities (e.g. forced entry for medical emergencies, Co-responding and falls, and assisting the Police with missing persons).

BFRS continues to target the reduction in False Alarms from Automatic Fire Alarm Systems and has been applying measures to support this, however we are investigating some small increases recently. Domestic dwelling fires have decreased compared to the five-year average which can be linked to an increase in prevention activity and maybe some effects of the global pandemic, we will continue to monitor this.

ANNUAL INCIDENTS ATTENDED 2017 – 2022



We have implemented a range of improvements to maintain operational availability more flexibly and efficiently including:

- Introducing lean 24-hour shift system arrangements in 2012 (10% reduction in posts);
- Implementing a revised officer rota in 2015 (20% reduction in officer posts);
- Introducing a shared Strategic Command rota with Cambridgeshire FRS in 2016;
- Better availability of on-call fire appliances through new ways of working (strategic reserve, standby schemes, dual contracts, self-rostering and phased alerting);
- On-call availability management improved through use of new software system, and trialing use of pro-rata retainers and flexible leave arrangements in 2020/21.

PEOPLE STRATEGY

Aim: Empowering Our People As We Work Together To Make Bedfordshire Safer

Our people **priorities** are to:

- 🔥 Be an employer of choice, recruiting, retaining and developing a highly skilled and diverse workforce who uphold and model our values;
- 🔥 Ensure our people understand our strategic direction and their role in achieving it;
- 🔥 Embed a positive and inclusive learning culture where all staff have a voice;
- 🔥 Provide a safe and healthy working environment with low absence, accidents and injuries;
- 🔥 Develop our managers to value, lead, motivate, develop and empower their staff to be the best they can be;
- 🔥 Continue to invest in providing all our staff with the best training and development opportunities.

Our **approach** will be to:

- 🔥 Work with our communities and our partners to better engage, understand and recruit a truly inclusive workforce reflective of our diverse communities;
- 🔥 Work with our staff to update and embed our values, ensuring all our leaders are visible role models;
- 🔥 Work with our trade unions to maintain an effective employee relations environment, promoting and investing in the health and wellbeing of our people;
- 🔥 Continue to recognise and reward our people for the excellent work they do;
- 🔥 Build confidence, resilience, capability and capacity, providing a range of effective, high quality learning, development and assessment pathways that support our strategic objectives;
- 🔥 Ensure our promotion processes are transparent and consistent;
- 🔥 Seek more effective means of communicating and engaging with our staff in ways that empower them and encourage innovation, agility and continuous improvement in the services we provide;
- 🔥 Continue to develop and embed our values-based performance management framework.

The retirement profile of the Service shows a high number of staff are likely to retire in the next few years. This profile presents a risk around potential loss of skills and experience and therefore robust workforce planning is essential. However, it also presents an opportunity to reform our ways of working to ensure that the Service can attract and retain a more diverse workforce equipped with the skills to deliver a modern fire and rescue service.

We will be working to align our existing staff development programmes with the new NFCC leadership framework whilst maintaining career pathways that are underpinned with technical skills, knowledge and understanding, giving our staff the confidence and opportunities necessary. Since 2019 our new wholetime firefighters have benefited from attending initial training through an apprenticeship standard, developed by the sector to meet our expectations and externally accredited by Skills for Justice. We will explore further opportunities to benefit from modern apprenticeship standards to support a range of staff development.



ASSETS STRATEGY

Aim: Utilising Our Assets And Resources Effectively

Our assets **priorities** are to:

- Continue to provide the best facilities, vehicles, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE), to enable our staff to respond and support the range of emergency incidents and other activities that we attend in ways that are professional, effective and efficient;
- Ensure any investment is mindful of our duty to collaborate and the national procurement agenda wherever there is a clear business case to do so;
- Always specify, procure and maintain our assets under the principles of protecting our operational capability, improving firefighter safety, and providing value for money. Our approach will be to:
- Produce sustainable capital and revenue budgets aligned to our strategic objectives;
- Adopt the whole life cycle approach to asset management, engaging with end users, utilising innovative new technologies, and actively pursuing collaboration opportunities with partners and to reduce our waste products through an effective asset disposal programme to generate income opportunities where assets would normally be regarded as waste.

- Implement effective and sustainable asset management plans and systems providing assurance that our fleet, equipment, estates, ICT and training resources support current and future needs;
- Ensure we have compliant and collaborative procurement processes, so we purchase the right products and services at the best price and when we need them. We procure a range of professional services and provide and maintain a wide range of vehicles, equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and IT hardware and software. This enables us to provide our prevention, protection and training services, as well as respond professionally to the significant range of emergency incidents we are called to attend.

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

DIGITAL AND DATA STRATEGY

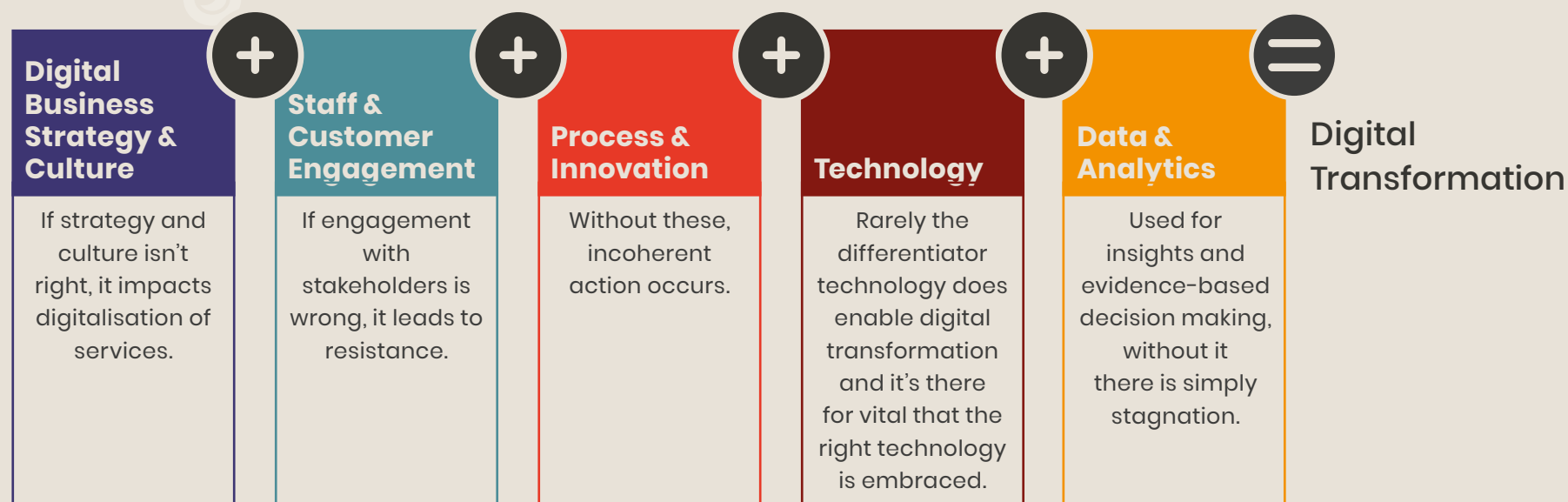
Aim: Maximising Use Of Data And Digital Solutions To Drive Improvement

Like many public services, it can be challenging to keep pace with the changing digital environment. Feedback from our staff and recent HMICFRS inspection tells us that some of our IT systems and processes are hindering our productivity.

We know we can also improve how we collect, store and utilise our data so our staff have greater insight into how we are performing and the risks we are working to reduce. Giving staff access to more information, supported with digital literacy training, will enable us to empower them to take greater ownership in driving improvements in everything we do, whilst allowing proper evaluation against our objectives.

Digital technologies available today can act as real enablers, not only speeding up our processes but also generating intelligence through analysis that allows evidence-based decisions to be made about where best to utilise our resources.

Digital transformation means the integration of digital technology into all areas of an organisation, fundamentally changing how we operate and deliver value to customers. True digital transformation will improve the ways in which we work, how we interact with partners, the public and each other.



This transformation requires some organisational culture change; to accept and embrace the use of new technologies, systems and processes to facilitate organisational improvement where we can all work smarter.

Our digital and data **priorities** are to:

- 🔥 Embark upon a programme of digital transformation, using data and technology to enable not hinder improvement;
- 🔥 Become a 'fast follower', adopting industry best practices in key areas through collaboration, whilst building capacity to be a fire sector leader;
- 🔥 Improve overall staff engagement and digital literacy by offering a more flexible, collaborative and mobile working environment;
- 🔥 Create a paper-lite workforce, eradicating re-keying of data to central systems;
- 🔥 Build a more visible brand with the creation of digital services;
- 🔥 Enable better access to data and performance insight.

Our **approach** will be to:

- 🔥 Maximise the value of digital solutions and invest in them to support collaboration and make better use of existing data;
- 🔥 Develop our approach to understanding, and utilising, open data;
- 🔥 Expand our data analysis capabilities, collaborating within and across sectors;
- 🔥 Using data across fire and rescue services and partners to support service delivery;
- 🔥 Create a culture and environment where data analytics can add value to service delivery, whilst allowing outcomes to be properly evaluated against objectives;
- 🔥 Ensure our digital transformation is underpinned by strong governance and effective cyber security procedures;
- 🔥 Influence and support delivery of the national NFCC Digital and Data Strategy.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The settlement figures for 2022/23 were the third single year settlement. A three-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was carried out over 2021, however a single year's funding information has again provided by to Local Government. It is hoped that figures will be released for 2023/24 and 2024/25 at this time next year.

However, we have been proactive in identifying changes that ensure continuity of our professional services whilst delivering the required efficiencies.

Future financial settlements are likely to remain difficult. As such, we continue to plan for a range of financial scenarios that may emerge in the next few years.

Our ability to mitigate our risks and realise opportunities is directly impacted by our resourcing and budgetary make-up. Our current budgetary plans and assumptions determine the speed at which we will deliver our action plans.

More information is available on [our website](#).

Our financial **priorities** are to:

- 🔥 Ensure we deliver 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 Plan whilst maintaining a prudent level and utilisation of our reserves.

Our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a document that sets the Authority's financial strategy for the next four years. It focuses on the 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, but also sets the scene for future years. It covers national events such as the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and then breaks down how this impacts locally on the Authority.

The MTFS details our reserves policy, planning assumptions behind the budget figures and other considerations that must be considered when setting the strategy, such as the tax base, efficiencies and shared services.

Efficiency Savings

An efficiency saving occurs when the cost of an activity is reduced but its quality and effectiveness remains the same or improves. The Fire and Rescue Authority continues to focus on finding new ways to deliver the highest quality services at lowest possible cost.

A three-year Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was carried out over 2021, however a single year's funding information has again provided by to Local Government for 2022/23. It is hoped that figures will be released for 2023/24 and 2024/25 at this year.

Some of the key areas where the Authority has been achieving its planned efficiency savings include:

- 🔥 Savings in managerial and support staff costs through shared service arrangements, organisational restructure and improvements to working systems;
- 🔥 Savings in firefighter crewing arrangements;
- 🔥 Savings to the public through collaborative work with Blue light partners;
- 🔥 Savings through joint Procurement such as Firefighters Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- 🔥 Savings in the Service Vehicle Replacement Programme through improved asset management and maintenance.

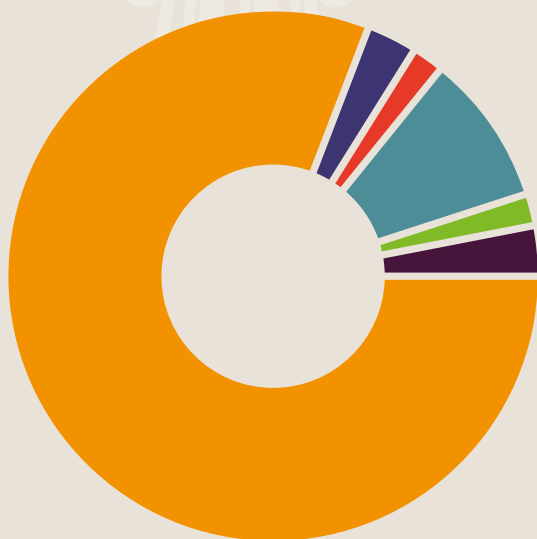
Revenue Budget

Our revenue budget sets out the money necessary for the day to day running of the Service. Our efficiency measures have allowed us to continue with key service improvements whilst restricting the increase in this year's council tax to 1.99% (equivalent to an increase of just 3.9 pence per week for a Band D household).

This has been achieved despite the impact of inflation which is forecast to increase our costs this year by £1.077m.

Where Does The Money Come From

	2022/2023 (£m)	2021/2022 (£m)
Gross Budget	35.8	34.2
● Income	-2.5	-2.5
Budget Requirement	33.3	31.7
● Central & Local Government Funding	9.9	9.5
● Council Tax	23.4	22.2
Total	33.3	31.7



What The Money Is Spent On

	2022/2023 (£m)	2021/2022 (£m)
● Employees	27	25.1
● Premises	0.9	0.9
● Transport	0.7	0.6
● Supplies & Services	2.5	2.8
● Agency & Contracted Services	0.7	0.7
● Capital Financing	1.6	1.0
Total	33.4	31.1
Reserves Funding	- 0.1	0.6
Budget Requirement	33.3	31.7

Capital Budget

Our capital programme highlights spending on assets such as our fire stations and fire engines. Each year the Authority draws up a rolling four year programme of capital projects. The capital projects for this year total £1.357m and these are being funded by contributions from the revenue budget and reserves utilisation.

Projects for this year include:

- 🔥 Investment in our vehicle fleet, to maintain effective, economic and efficient fire appliances;
- 🔥 Investment in IT;
- 🔥 Replacement Mobilisation system;
- 🔥 Investment in the modernisation of our buildings.

Accountability

Our Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for overseeing the effective delivery of the key projects and programmes that underpin delivery of our CRMP and ensuring project risks and resources are properly managed.

The Fire and Rescue Authority sets us challenging targets for a range of performance indicators which help them to monitor and scrutinise our performance, both in terms of activity outputs and outcomes, ensuring the Service is functioning efficiently and effectively and delivering on our CRMP.

To support the delivery of our CRMP, we have a range of measures known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are aligned to the strategies underpinning the CRMP and are reported to the FRA every quarter. You can view these, and the targets set by the FRA on our website.

We publish an annual Statement of Assurance that seeks to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, showing that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own CRMP.

In 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue We publish an annual Statement of Assurance that seeks to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, showing that Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver the expectations detailed within both the National Framework and our own CRMP.

In 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue service. They now assess and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and people of the 45 fire and rescue services in England. You can find more information about our most recent inspection on their website.

Each year the Service conducts several audits in specific areas to provide assurance to our processes and identify further areas of improvement. We are also required to periodically respond to national audit and self-assessments on specific areas of our service, such as specialist response capabilities for flood rescue (conducted in 2019).

In October 2020 we were inspected by the Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) on our response during the COVID-19 pandemic from last March. Here is the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's HMICFRS full report.

Consultation & Engagement

The purpose of consultation is to understand the effects of a proposal on different stakeholder groups. We regularly consult with local people and organisations on a range of issues. There may be several reasons to consult such as gathering views and opinions on our plans.

We always seek to engage in real discussion with stakeholders to help us make informed decisions, and how we consult will vary depending on the nature of the proposal. Our main consultation method is Beds Fire Alert our Community Messaging system. With over 20,000 subscribers this system allows us to directly engage with members of the public. We also use Beds Fire Alert to send out regular safety information and advice.

Find out more at bedsfirealert.co.uk

OUR 2021/22 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

Each year, we prepare an Annual Action Plan that outlines what we intend to do during that particular year to support the delivery of our CRMP and our mission to provide outstanding fire and rescue services that help make Bedfordshire safer.

To help make it easier to follow, the actions are aligned to our CRMP 'Aims'. Our Annual Performance and Statement of Assurance Report will explain how well we did in delivering our plans.

Aim 1: Preventing Fires & Other Emergencies From Happening

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
1	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) will develop a more comprehensive profile of risk by engaging with national and local partners and our communities and use these results to update our Community Risk Analysis (CRA) that supports our new Community Risk Management Plan for 2023-24 and onwards.	The population of Bedfordshire presents a broad and complex range of diversity and vulnerability. By engaging with partner agencies and groups within our community we will build a better understanding of community needs so we can target and deliver our service more effectively.
2	We plan to make a success of our new paperless home fire safety visit system which has been developed in line with the latest national guidance on the person-centred approach to home fire safety visits.	Our new paperless system is designed to collect more detailed information which will improve our understanding of home fire risks in our community. This will improve our ability to evaluate how effective our service is and help us to continually improve our targeting of those most at risk.
3	We will improve our quality assurance processes for home fire safety visits to ensure that prevention work is effectively targeted, carried out and then evaluated to the highest standards.	Quality assurance involves making regular checks that our service is being delivered consistently and effectively to make sure we get it right first time. This will help us to continuously improve our service to the community.

Aim 2: Protecting People & Property When Fires Happen

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
4	We will continue to invest in expanding our protection team and developing the competence of those undertaking protection work.	New legislation is being introduced to improve building safety. The Government is providing targeted funding to support improvements in our fire safety capability. To ensure that buildings in Bedfordshire are safe we need to both increase our capacity to deliver fire safety enforcement work & ensure those carrying out this work are qualified in line with the national competency framework.
5	We will improve our quality assurance processes in order to demonstrate that protection work is consistently carried out to the highest standards.	Our risk-based inspection programme is reducing risks and supporting the economic wellbeing of our communities. Improving quality assurance processes will help us to ensure that our work to promote compliance with fire safety law is delivered consistently and effectively.
6	We will continue to refine our processes for effectively targeting protection activity towards higher risk people and places, based on our Community Risk Analysis (CRA) and in line with the latest national guidance.	There are over 20,000 premises in Bedfordshire to which the Fire Safety Order applies. We need to deliver our enforcement responsibilities and focus our resources on those premises that represent the greatest risk to life in case of fire.

Aim 3: Responding To Fires & Other Emergencies Promptly & Effectively

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
7	We will aim to improve On-Call availability including ensuring we are using our on-call crews effectively to respond to incidents based on risk, and by empowering more autonomy and decision making to on-call station.	Many of our fire appliances are crewed by 'On-Call' firefighters who live or work close to their local fire station. Like many other fire and rescue services, we find it challenging to recruit & retain people so need to develop new innovative ways of working to improve the availability of our On-Call appliances.
8	BFRS will use the outcomes from our emergency cover review to match emergency response cover with current demand and future community risks in line with our new Community Risk Management Plan for 2023-24 and onwards. We will integrate findings from all other relevant reviews that relate to our emergency services.	We will develop our planning process by using a simulation model of our service to predict the impacts of potential changes. This enables us to ensure that we have the right resources in the right places at the right times to respond effectively and efficiently. Some of the questions this will address include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is the optimal location for a station? • What is the ideal balance between on-call and wholetime resources? • How will housing or infrastructure changes affect response?
9	We will launch the National Operational Guidance Implementation Group to consist of key stakeholders and departments. As a result, we will be in a better position to adopt the relevant National Operational Guidance including the integration of appropriate regional policy guidance.	We will continue to adapt, integrate and rationalise operational policy in line with appropriate national guidance.

Aim 4: Empowering Our People As We Work Together To Make Bedfordshire Safer

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
10	We will ensure safe systems of work by further improving Compartment Fire Behaviour Training, and in dealing with contaminants.	<p>To further develop our safety critical training and ensure we are up to date with the latest techniques whilst following National Operational Guidance and best practice.</p> <p>With research indicating an emerging risk to firefighters and to the Organisation, provide strategic direction and ownership for the reduction of risk associated with exposure to fire effluents and the work streams identified through the CWG.</p>
11	BFRS will recruit and retain talented people and support managers to develop and make the best use of their staff by main-streaming and communicating updated policies, procedures and guidance.	Our workforce is truly our biggest asset, so it is important we look after them and support them to continuously develop. We will improve performance and commitment by involving staff in shaping and delivering our plans and policies, treating them fairly and consistently, and recognising a job well done. Collaboration with staff on health and wellbeing will help identify workplace risks, finding practical solutions, and increase their sense of value. We will embed the learning from how we adapted our approach to recruitment & selection, and new ways of working during the Covid19 pandemic, devising a new offer to promote BFRS as an Employer of Choice within our diverse communities.

Continued...

Aim 4: Empowering Our People As We Work Together To Make Bedfordshire Safer

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
12	<p>We will further embed equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging into everything we do. An area of focus is identifying the challenges of neurodiversity and enabling managers to offer on-going support and reasonable adjustments, signposting to specialist services where appropriate, and helping staff to help themselves due to each being affected differently, often over a long period, and frequently having developed their own effective coping strategies.</p>	<p>There is an ever-increasing understanding around neurodiversity. BFRS are committed to continuously developing our approach to neurodiversity through a steering group and several interlinked initiatives.</p> <p>Alongside the need for signposting to more formal support and training, many immediate needs could be understood and met simply by line managers regularly listening to their staff and applying better coping mechanisms.</p>

Aim 5: Utilising Our Assets & Resources Efficiently & Effectively

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
13	We plan to update and develop our policy on fleet, its management and its procurement, and improve how we report its performance which includes effective consideration of greener options and practices.	<p>We need to demonstrate we have the right fleet and equipment in the right place with the right capabilities that suit local risks. This includes developing a replacement plan and supporting project team for type B and other Fire appliances based on the completed review of specialist appliances and equipment.</p> <p>In addition to our standard fire appliances, we maintain a range of specialist appliances and equipment across Bedfordshire including aerial ladder platforms, water carriers and heavy rescue & water rescue boats. We intend to review the disposition and capabilities of these specialist appliances to ensure they continue to meet the risks & demand within Bedfordshire.</p> <p>We need to monitor our performance and response to vehicle and equipment defects ensuring that we reduce the time that vehicles and equipment is unavailable.</p>
14	We will ensure financial resilience by anticipating potential funding pressures resulting from the Covid19 pandemic and the 2021 Comprehensive Spending Review and identify a range of potential efficiency options to maintain front line services. This includes improving procurement options and demonstrating ethical investment. As a result, we will continue to develop medium-term financial planning and long-term thinking.	<p>To ensure we can deal with new funding pressures, afford bids, and maintain financial resilience in the longer term. determining financial resilience is not an exact science but what we do know is that fire and rescue services need a sound strategic approach to inform decision-making.</p> <p>To ensure that there is a robust, balanced, medium term financial plan with efficiency options, appropriate reserves & an Authority that is providing value for money.</p>

Continued...

Aim 5: Utilising Our Assets & Resources Efficiently & Effectively

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
15	BFRS will continue to develop opportunities to collaborate more with other public sector and community partners including sharing sites and improving community access to our buildings, and in maximising the commercial opportunities of our estate to improve value for money from our property.	<p>By working collaboratively, we can share information and expertise and in doing so maximise our resources. Emergency Services have a strong track record of working together in immediate emergency situations. However, communities are changing and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on communities is significant. We need to be more agile and smarter in spotting these changes.</p> <p>In addition, we must navigate a complex partnership landscape and a clearer strategic approach will help us understand how our communities are changing and identify any gaps in community engagement. As a result, we can work with any new partnerships that might help us deliver services better.</p>
16	We will make a step change in the way we consider and deal with climate change. This includes developing policy and creating an accurate baseline of energy and water use, waste, of working habits, and travel so we can reduce our carbon footprint.	<p>We see a clear public interest in reducing carbon emissions. Our Horizon Scanning workshops from July 2021 identified the environment as a key future risk and opportunity to reduce carbon emissions. This baseline should identify the sources of the Service's emissions such as consumption from energy, fuel and water and establishes a baseline target derived from year 2021/22 against which progress will be measured. This will form a key part of the Service's Environmental Management System and identifies key actions to take in order to meet carbon emission targets.</p> <p>Our new website will showcase what we will do on environmental management and it is planned that funds will be allocated towards our green/environmental initiatives.</p>

Aim 6: Maximising Use Of Data & Digital Solutions To Drive Improvement

Action	What we want to do	Why we want to do it
17	We will integrate data quality, risk management, benefits realisation, and resourcing requirements into complex ICT projects to assure ourselves our ICT systems are resilient, reliable, accurate and accessible.	We need to make it as easy as possible to work effectively. To ensure that we consider the demand for remote working and to seek opportunities for efficiencies and productivity gains.
18	We will continue to increase the safety of our operational staff by delivering new technological capabilities including operational debrief software and new digital fire ground communications.	<p>To ensure that the learning outcomes from operational debriefs are captured and recorded in the most effective manner, in order to assist in developing new operational policies, equipment, audit processes and improving firefighter safety.</p> <p>To improve Firefighter safety by enhancing the communications on the fire ground, ensuring that messages are exchanged seamlessly and constantly received.</p>
19	We will ensure there is a step change in data quality, performance reporting and insight. This includes integrating and fully utilising the Business Management Information System (BMIS) across the organisation and use it as a tool to support data quality and transformational change in readiness to support our new Community Risk Management Plan for 2023-24 and onwards.	<p>BMIS represents a step change in how we understand and manage performance and will assist in improving accountability and in supporting new ways of working. BMIS has been an important investment by the Service, and we need to develop the internal capacity to support its integration.</p> <p>Further strengthen our data insight & analysis capabilities through the introduction of an updated business management information system.</p>

Please Note: Performance data is collected from the Incident Recording System (IRS) and internal databases such as iTrent, Protection and Safe and Well databases. For a variety of reasons some records take longer than others to upload to the IRS and other databases and therefore totals are constantly being amended (by relatively small numbers). The performance reports included within this document therefore represents a 'snapshot' based upon the best information available at the point in time this report was prepared.

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