



Our ref: MOAM 0009.24
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Date: 14th May 2024
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Dear Sirs,

Thank you for sharing your proposal to revise your approach to automatic fire alarm (AFA) responses within Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and contribute to enhancing emergency services across the Thames Valley.

After careful consideration, BFRS support the proposed changes for the following reasons:

Resource Optimisation:

The current approach to AFA mobilisation often diverts valuable resources to false alarms triggered by cooking fumes, dust, or inadequate maintenance. By refining the response criteria, you can ensure that valuable resources are mobilised more effectively.

This initiative will allow the Service to focus on genuine emergencies, improving resilience and ensuring that the community receives the timely assistance it deserves.

Reducing Unnecessary Disruptions:

Responding to false alarms disrupts important community safety work and operational training for crews. It also introduces environmental and road risks that are avoidable.

Limiting an emergency response to specific circumstances (such as residential premises, nursing and care homes, and premises subject to fire safety prohibition or enforcement notices), can minimise these disruptions.



Enhancing Efficiency and Productivity:

By reducing the number of unnecessary callouts, more hours can be dedicated to safety-critical training, skill development, and community engagement. This will also improve overall productivity, allowing teams to serve the public more effectively.

Legislative Duty and Business Responsibility:

Commercial premises must take ownership of false fire alarms within their facilities, as mandated by legislation. The new approach reinforces this responsibility.

The proposals remain committed to responding promptly to 999 calls when there is a confirmed fire, or there is deemed to be a high risk, ensuring public safety remains a top priority.

Control Room Efficiency and Safety:

The Thames Valley Fire Control Service plays a crucial role in coordinating responses across the Thames Valley. With a common set of principles across the three fire services, the control room can streamline operations, ensuring efficient deployment of resources.

A unified approach to AFAs allows the control room operators to work with consistency. They can follow standardised protocols, reducing the risk of errors and improving overall effectiveness.

Additionally, a shared model for responding to AFAs and other incidents will enable operators to become proficient in handling various scenarios, leading to quicker decision-making during emergencies.

In summary, these changes represent a proactive step toward optimising emergency response. We believe they will lead to safer communities, better-trained firefighters, and a more efficient service overall. As we look forward to our own pilot and consultation period, we look forward to collaborating with you to implement these improvements effectively.

Yours sincerely,

DCFO Mick Osborne
Chief Operating Officer