

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Held on Wednesday 6 December 2016 at the rising of the
Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting (6.25pm)

Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot,
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7DS

Members:
(* present)

- * Councillor Alistair Auty
- * Councillor Christine Bateson
- * Councillor Adrian Edwards
- * Councillor John Ennis
- * Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge
- * Councillor Iain McCracken
- * Councillor Philip Mirfin
- Councillor Mohammed Rasib
- * Councillor Ishrat Shah

In Attendance:

Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOFF)
Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Moira Fraser (Clerk)
Mark Gaskarth (Temporary ACFO, Service Delivery)
Maria Grindley (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
Becci Jefferies (Head of HR and Learning Development, HHRLD)
Simon Jefferies (Head of Risk and Performance, HORP)
Dave Myers (Area Manager, East AME)
Nikki Richards (Interim Director of Support Services)
Megan Paramour (Internal Auditor, RSM)
Maria Grindley (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)

Action

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct there were no declarations of interest received from Members.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

32. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2016 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

It was noted that all actions in the minutes of the 28 September 2016 had been completed.

33. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE FOR DECISION

There were no matters referred to this Committee for decision.

34. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP), and Megan Paramour (Internal Auditor) informed the Committee of the outcome of audit activity during 2016/17.

RSM's Audit Progress report was attached as an appendix to the report. Two audit reports had been finalised and two had been issued in draft to management for comment and it was hoped they would be finalised in the next few weeks. The two finalised audits were in relation to Firefighter Pension Administration and Sickness Absence Management. The two audit reports issued in draft were on IRMP Consultation and IT Systems. The finalised audit in respect of the Firefighter Pension Administration would also be sent to the Pension Board for consideration.

The contract with RSM allowed for additional audits to be commissioned by the Audit and Governance Committee and Members were requested to identify any areas of activity that were not covered by the 2016/17 Audit Plan which could be subject to a call-off audit.

Ms Paramour noted that a request had been received to delay the Risk Management and Governance Audit from December 2016 to the 09 January 2017. The Key Financial Audit System audit would also be delayed from January 2017 to February 2017 so that relevant Officers would be available to participate in the audit.

In terms of the Firefighter Pension Administration it was noted that there were strong controls in place and there was good compliance both internally and with the new pension administrator. The audit had identified one low rated action was required in relation to the reconciliation of pension accounts to the general ledger. This issue had also been identified in the previous audit. It had now been agreed that an electronic signature would be used to evidence the independent reviewer's authorisation.

In terms of sickness absence management three medium and two low level actions were identified. In respect of the three medium level actions the auditors had identified three instances (out of a sample of 25) where Firewatch had not been updated on the first day of absence by the Line Manager.

(Councillor Ishrat Shah arrived at 6.45pm)

Auditors identified five instances (out of a sample of 25) where self certificates/ fit to work forms were not retained on the employees HR file. The review of the November 2015 staff survey identified that there were no questions in relation to staff absences due to sickness.

Management had agreed to undertake all the actions set out in the report.

Councillor Adrian Edwards commented that he was disappointed to see that there

had been a failure to comply with the requirement to complete the Firewatch element of sickness absence reporting. He suggested that when visiting fire stations the Corporate Management Team should raise this issue with station managers. Becci Jefferies commented that some of these issues would be picked up in the monthly reports and would also be addressed through education of line managers. In respect of the second medium action she noted that a meeting had taken place earlier that day to identify ways of strengthening processes to avoid this happening again in the future. Dave Myers noted that an email had already been circulated by HR offering sickness absence management training for all staff including those in the fire stations.

Councillor John Ennis noted that most absences related to musculoskeletal injuries and he was pleased that the majority did not relate to stress. It therefore appeared that initiatives around addressing stress in the workplace were having an impact. Officers noted that as part of the sickness performance monitoring regime the underlying causes for sickness absence were identified and initiatives were put in place to reduce occurrences wherever possible where trends were identified. These included signing up to the Blue Light Pledge, employing staff to work on reducing musculoskeletal injuries, various measures to improve rehabilitation time and general wellbeing of employees.

In terms of the two slots for call-off audits Councillor Philip Mirfin queried whether it would be appropriate to include an audit on the Joint South Central Ambulance Service. Officers explained that as this formed part of the national trial on co-responding it would not be appropriate to undertake an audit at this stage.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The Committee noted the report; and
- Considered any other call off audits that should be carried out in 2016/17.

35. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP), provided the Committee with an update from the External Auditors.

Maria Grindley (Ernst and Young) explained that the external auditors had concluded their audit for 2015/16 and produced the associated Annual Audit Letter. Regulation 20 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 required that an appropriate Committee of the Fire Authority considered the Letter as soon as practicable. The Letter was attached to the report at Appendix A. She commented that the report would not include any messages that had not already been reported to the September 2016 meeting and no significant issues had been identified.

Ernst and Young's Audit Progress Report was attached at Appendix B.

Councillor Iain McCracken noted that on page 51 a reference was made to the 'firm' and he queried if this should read Ernst and Young. Ms Grindley noted the comment and used this as an opportunity to remind Members that the auditors were required to confirm independence and if any of the partners had any issues they would have to be reported even if they did not impact directly on this audit.

Councillor McCracken referred to the faster close down time for the 2017/18 financial year and queried if officers were conformable they would be able to meet the foreshortened deadlines. The HOFP confirmed that he had recently met with

Ms Grindley to work through the revised timescales. They would both be using the close down of the 2016/17 accounts as a dry run so that any potential issues could be ironed out before the 2017/18 deadlines came into force.

Councillor McCracken queried what would happen to the sensitive data obtained from the RBFRS after the audit was completed. Ms Grindley explained that they had clear rules around data capture and all sensitive data was routinely removed via a file stripping process from their system although anonymous financial data was retained.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The External Audit update be noted and the Annual Audit Letter be considered.

36. EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP), informed the Committee of the national scheme for auditor appointments.

The HOFP stated that the external auditor for the audit of accounts for 2018/19 needed to be appointed before the end of 2017. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had specified that Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) could make audit appointments to local government bodies. PSAA would appoint an auditor for all opted-in authorities for each of the five years commencing 1st April 2018. It was believed that a collective procurement on behalf of all opted-in authorities would secure best prices without compromising on audit quality. Under the scheme the Fire Authority would avoid the need to:

- Establish an audit panel with independent members
- Manage the procurement process
- Monitor the independence of the auditor
- Deal with any replacement of the auditor if required

If the Fire Authority did not opt into the national scheme it would have to run its own process to appoint an auditor.

(Councillor Alistair Auty left the meeting at 6.50pm)

Councillor Adrian Edwards queried whether the new process would be more expensive. Officers stated that they hoped that it would not. They also commented that any additional costs would be offset against the costs the authority would incur should they wish to opt out of the national scheme.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted;
- It be agreed that the Fire Authority would opt into the national scheme for appointing local auditors.

37. ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18

Simon Jefferies, Area Manager Risk and Performance (AMRP), provided the Committee with an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Plan 2017-18. The Annual Plan would provide direction for the

organisation for the next year within the context of the Corporate Plan/IRMP 2015-19. It would define the scope of the organisation's activities in terms of what it would do. It would also match the activities of the organisation to the environment in which it operated so that it maximised opportunities and minimised threats and would synchronise the organisation's activities to its resource capacity.

The AMRP commented that the document followed the same format as had been agreed by the Committee the previous year and reflected the organisations strategic commitments. It would be published on the intranet and the website and would link together a number of other strategic planning documents.

Members then reviewed each of the 27 corporate measures.

Measure 1 – Number of Fire Deaths in Accidental Dwelling Fires

Target remained unchanged at 0.

Measure 2 – Number of Fire Casualties in Accidental Dwelling Fires

Target remained unchanged at 29

Measure 3 - % of Safeguarding Referrals Made to Local Authorities Within 24 Hours

This was a new measure which had been introduced as safeguarding was a critical area of risk. Target was set at 100%.

Councillor Iain McCracken queried which department within the local authority the referral would be made to. Officers explained that the referral would be made to the Safeguarding Triage Team. They would then in turn make referrals to the appropriate groups including potentially a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). It was noted that representatives from the fire authority attended the MASH as a responsible authority but they were not statutory consultees.

Measure 4 – Number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) Delivered to Those Who Are at Heightened Risk of Dying in the Event of an Accidental Dwelling Fire

The target had been changed from a percentage (100%) to a numerical figure (7000).

Measure 5 – Number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) Delivered to Those Who Are at Heightened Risk of having an Accidental Dwelling Fire and Being Injured as a Result

The target had been changed from a percentage (100%) to a numerical figure (2500).

Mark Gaskarth commented that in relation to Measures 4 and 5 there was a body of evidence which would help to identify conditions where people were more likely to die in a dwelling fire. Work was underway to understand the size of this group. It had also become apparent that there was another group of people who were more likely to be injured in a dwelling fire. The shift from percentages to numbers was as a result of the evidence base that had been collected. Officers were working with colleagues in the NHS and Public Health to get more refined data and as a result of the refining process it might be necessary to these targets in due course. Councillor John Ennis welcomed this link with the health service.

Measure 6 - % of Dwelling Fires Attended Where No Working Smoke Alarm is Installed, Against the Total Number of Dwelling Fires.

This was a new measure. Target set at 41% of 396 dwelling fires.

Mark Gaskarth commented that this was an issue he had followed for many years. It should be noted that getting more smoke alarms fitted would lead to a decrease in the number of fires the service was called to. Councillor Edwards commented that many residents did not know who to call for a home safety check as the number was not listed in the telephone directory. It was suggested that it might be useful to get this information included on the livery of the vehicles used by the Home Safety Teams and possibly on the four new appliances. Officers cautioned however that a targeted approach was being adopted in respect of home safety checks. They were being offered to vulnerable groups who were being identified through work with colleagues in Local Authority's GP Surgeries etc.

Measure 7 - % of Category 1 HSFC Referrals, Where There Had Been a Threat or Incidence of Arson, Completed Within 3 Days

Target remained unchanged at 100%.

Measure 8 – Total Number of Full Fire Safety Audits Carried Out

There had historically been some issues around double counting and therefore the target had been decreased from 1832 to 1400 safety audits. This measure and measure 9 would reflect a targeted approach based on risk analysis. The audits would focus on premises where fire related fatalities were more likely to occur such as sleeping quarters above catering establishments and homes of multiple occupancy.

Measure 9 – Total Number of Audits and Follow-Up Visits Carried Out

This was a new measure. Follow up visits would be conducted more frequently at high risk premises. Councillor McCracken queried whether the service worked with Trading Standards to identify high risk premises. Officers confirmed that they did work with colleagues in the local authorities and shared risk intelligence. This work was currently in an embryonic stage but Officers were seeking to make improvements.

Measure 10 - % of Audits where the Results were Satisfactory

The target had been reduced from 76% to 50%.

Measure 11 - % of Audits Requiring Informal Activity

Target had been increased from 23% to 45%.

Measure 12 - % of Audits Requiring Formal Activity

Target had been increased from 1% to 5%.

Measure 13 - % of Success Rate When Cases Go to Court for Non-Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Order 2006

Target remained unchanged at 95%. Councillor McCracken queried why the target was set at 95%. Officers noted that they always sought legal advice before deciding whether or not to prosecute but that there was always a risk that cases would not be successful.

Measure 14 - % of Occasions Where the First Fire Engine Arrives at an Emergency Incident Within 10 Minutes, From Time the Emergency Call was Answered

This was a new measure. Officers felt that this measure would be much clearer

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and more transparent and would be easier for residents to understand. Councillor Ennis queried what impact the relocation of any fire stations might have. Officers confirmed that all modelling was based on the new response standard.

It was noted that there were seven internal service measures that would be measured to underpin this measure

1. % of occasions where time to answer emergency calls within 5 seconds (target increased from 91% to 92%)
2. % of occasions where time to answer emergency calls within 10 seconds (target increased from 96% to 97%)
3. % of occasions where time to mobilise is within 60 seconds (target increased from 42% to 60%)
4. % of occasions where time to mobilise is within 90 seconds (target increased from 73% to 80%)
5. % of occasions where time to mobilise is within 120 seconds (target remained unchanged at 95%)
6. % of occasions where Wholetime Duty System Crew Turnout Time is in Under 90 seconds (New measure target 100%)
7. % of occasions where the RDS crew turnout time is under 300 seconds (New measure target 100%)

In addition, at the request of Members, the following two service measures would be recorded although they would not be published:

1. The number and percentage of occasions a second fire appliance attending a dwelling fire arrives within 2 minutes of the first appliance to arrive (new measure)
2. The number and percentage of occasions a second fire appliance attending a road traffic collision arrives within 2 minutes of the first appliance to arrive (new measure)

Measure 15 - % of Full Shifts Where There is Adequate Crewing On All Wholetime Frontline Fire Engines

Target remained unchanged at 100%.

Measure 16 - % of Hours Where There is Adequate Crewing on Retained Frontline Fire Engines (Based on 24/7 Crewing)

Target remained unchanged at 50%. Officers confirmed that this was a nationally agreed optimum standard. The RBFRS was struggling to meet this target. The authority was therefore looking to improve retention as well as recruitment of retained fire fighters. It was acknowledged that this was an aspirational target.

Measure 17 - % of Domestic Respondents Satisfied with the Overall Service

Target remained unchanged at 100%.

Measure 18 - % of Commercial respondents Satisfied with the Overall Service

Target remained unchanged at 95%.

Measure 19 - % of Commercial Respondents Satisfied With the Services With Regards to Their Fire Safety

Target was decreased from 97% to 90%. It was noted that as high risk premises

were targeted and more enforcement action was taken it was likely that satisfaction levels would decrease.

Councillor Edwards asked if the number of fire safety checks in care homes had increased and whether the fire authority had the opportunity to comment on planning applications for these types of premises. Officers stated that any planning applications for buildings of that type would come through the planning process and the fire authority was a statutory consultee. During the building control phase the authority once again had the opportunity to comment on provisions required. Once the building was in use they were an enforcing body. There were also issues around more older people staying in their own homes and prevention work was carried out to address risks associated with this.

Measure 20 - % of Working Time Lost to Sickness, Across All Staff Groups

Target decreased from 4% to 3%.

Measure 21 - % of Eligible Operational Staff Successfully Completing Fitness Test

Target remained unchanged at 100%.

Measure 22 - % of Eligible Staff With Personal Development Appraisals

Target remained unchanged at 100%. Members queried what the current performance level was. Officers confirmed that it was currently at circa 97%.

Measure 23 - % of Eligible Operational Staff in Qualification

This was a new measure. The LD team would be monitoring performance and key areas for performance were being identified e.g. breathing apparatus training.

Measure 24 – All Accident Related Injuries, Including RIDDOR (RIDDOR & Total)

Target changed from 6 RIDDOR and 82 accidents to 5 RIDDOR and 81 accidents.

Measure 25 - % of Spend Subject to Competition

This was a new measure. Conor Byrne stated that this would help to achieve value for money.

Measure 26 – Compliant Spend as a % of Overall Spend

Target changed from 70% to 100%. This related to spend which complied with the authority's Contract Standing Orders.

Measure 27 - % Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) Referred to the Information Commissioner

Target remained unchanged at 0%. Councillor McCracken stated that this was an area that had grown exponentially in his own authority and he queried if the amount of time and money spent on FOI was captured. Nikki Richards reported that up until the end of September £2,082 had been spent on FOI requests. Time spent was logged. Councillor McCracken queried if additional resources had been needed to deal with FOI requests. Ms Richards stated that the number of requests had increased initially but had then levelled out to around 39 or 40 per quarter requests and no additionally resources were required to deal with them. The complexity of queries had however increased. Wherever possible Officers tended to signpost questioners to previously published information.

Councillor Mirfin encouraged Officers to make representations to Central Government to change the rules pertaining to FOI requests. The DCFO commented that the organisation strove to be transparent and residents were

encouraged to find the information on the authority's website.

Councillor McCracken commented that in relation to the table on page 79 he would like to see an additional column setting out actual figures and a reason for column inserted where any reasons for differences between actual figures and targets could be articulated.

Councillor McCracken also requested that in terms of the Priority Programme he wanted to see a timeline inserted as well as have any output articulated where any was expected.

Councillor McCracken queried if there was a detailed project plan in place for Organisational Development. Nikki Richard commented that these were headline projects and that a detailed report would be drafted in due course. The Chairman requested that this Committee have site of the report. The DCFO explained that it would not take the form of a single project plan but that activity would be commenced through the Organisational Development Board and the highlights would be set out in the quarterly performance report. Councillor Mirfin stated that it would also be useful to have visibility of costs. Officers stated that until business cases were developed it would not be possible to estimate costs.

Councillor McCracken queried where data pertaining to training would be held and whether this information would be used to inform appraisals. Becci Jefferies explained that the Learning Management System would hold training packages but that the authority would need to specify other requirements. Most systems would be able to hold performance and training records for individuals as well as information for groups. Currently the link was made manually and it was therefore hoped that the new system would integrate the information automatically.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The content of the Annual Plan 2017-18 be noted;
- The Annual Plan 2017-18 be recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.

38. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY – PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning Development, sought the views of the Committee on the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 prepared for the Fire Authority to meet its obligation under Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 and recommended the draft statement to the Fire Authority subject to the comments of the Committee.

Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 required that relevant authorities in England prepared a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. Pay Policy Statements had to be approved by the full Fire Authority and subsequently published. The draft Pay Policy Statement for the forthcoming year 2017/18 was attached to the report at Appendix A. Whilst it had not been necessary to amend the format of the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 a number of updates had been included and were set out in the report in paragraph 3.3. Figures used for the statement were those as at 31st October 2016.

The Chairman noted that there was a slight issue with the figures relating to the number of employees and he asked that this be corrected prior to the report being considered by the Fire Authority.

The Chairman queried when Members were likely to have sight of the Market

Supplement Policy. Officers noted that the policy was currently with the Director for People and Organisational Development and once approved would make its way through the system for formal approval.

The Chairman queried the origin of the Continuous Personal Development Payment. Officers commented that it formed part of the grey book of employment conditions for uniformed staff. HR administered the process but it went through the line managers.

In response to a query about Senior Management Pay it was reported that the placement of individuals, below the CFO, was at the discretion of the CFO following performance reviews. The CFO's salary level was set by the Chairman and Vice Chairman following a performance review.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The draft Pay Policy Statement be considered and any further amendments made as appropriate;
- It be recommended that the Fire Authority approve the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 subject to Members' comments.

39. BUYING PROCESSES AND CONTROLS AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFPP), asked the Committee to note the completed actions and controls put in place following the recommendations in the Baker Tilly audit dated August 2015. Full details of the improvements had been set out in Appendix A to the report.

Baker Tilly carried out a review of the buying processes and controls at RBFPS in August 2015 after a large number of single tender actions (STAs) had been requested at an earlier Committee but there did not appear to be appropriate evidence to support why the supply or service could not be subject to competition. The review identified a number of missing internal controls that potentially created a risk to the Authority.

Appendix A set out the detail of the changes that had been put in place to address the recommendations. A number of additional controls had been put in place to ensure that Officers received appropriate training and understood their responsibilities in relation to the new Contract Regulations and UK Contract Regulations.

The HOFPP commented that most of the actions had been implemented and the rest would be enacted by January 2017 and his included updating the Contract Standing Orders. Purchases above £10k would only be signed off post a competitive process. Purchases above £50k would have to demonstrate how the money spent would relate to the authority's strategic commitments. The outstanding actions would be enacted by January 2017. These actions primarily related to contract management training including the management of risk. All contracts were now held centrally and were in a standard format. The HOFPP explained that there were issues around recruitment and it might therefore be necessary to find other ways to provide the expertise.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The actions delivered in support of the recommendations be noted.

40. TRANSITION FUND UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP), informed the Committee of bids which had been approved from the Transition Fund and expenditure to the end of Quarter 2 of 2016/17.

As part of the 2015/16 Budget, the Fire Authority had approved the setting up of a £2 million Transition Fund in order to redesign the service to achieve the new strategic direction and balance the budget in the medium term. There were various categories of possible expenditure and each bid for transition funding had been considered by the Corporate Management Team. Bid submissions and CMT's approval decisions were set out in Appendix A.

It was noted that some bids had been rejected by CMT as not suitable for financing from the transition fund as they did not meet the required criteria. However, where the proposed project had been felt to be of value, funding from existing budgets had been approved instead.

Since June 2016 eight new bids had been received and these were set out on page 112 of the agenda. There was still £466k left to be allocated. Any unallocated funding would be carried forward and some of the projects would span more than one year. Once all the funding had been spent there was no more funding available.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted.

41. MEMBER ATTENDANCE AND ALLOWANCE BI-ANNUAL UPDATE

Nikki Richards (Interim Director of Support Services) presented a bi-annual update on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Member Attendance and Allowances.

The attendance of Fire Authority Members from 29 June 2016 to 31st October 2016 was set out in Appendix A of the report. It had now been five months into the new committee structure approved by the Fire Authority on 25 April 2016. The Fire Authority had 20 Members each appointed onto either Management Committee (11 members) and Audit and Governance Committee (9 members). Appendix A did not include meetings that Members had attended in their capacity as Lead Member, Champion or as members of other committees outside the Fire Authority.

To date, the overall attendance at meetings had been good, with no meetings being inquorate and all business was therefore able to be conducted. Most absences had been a result of a meeting clash with unitary authorities or a holiday and apologies, when received, had been in good time.

This year the Fire Authority had worked hard in trying to avoid meeting clashes with unitary authorities and this approach would continue when scheduling meetings in 2017/18.

The Fire Authority had adopted a Scheme of Allowances at its meeting on 25 April 2016 and this would be reviewed on an annual basis. The Member allowances for the period of 29 June 2016 to 31 October 2016 were set out in Appendix B.

Councillor Adrian Edwards queried how Members attendance at this authority compared with attendance at other Fire Authorities. Officers stated that this issue had not been benchmarked.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted.

42. EMERGENCY SERVICE MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Dave Myers, Area Manager (East), provided the Committee with an update on progress of the Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

ESMCP was a national project which had an overarching programme and was governed through a network of regional co-ordinators, with each region having its own governance and project plan.

RBFRS was part of the South Central Region, and attended monthly meetings with Thames Valley Emergency Service Partners. Internally, the programme board met fortnightly and reviewed the risks against the internal risk matrix to those of the regional and national risk registers.

To provide some consistency to reporting, a project highlight report had been developed which mirrored that of other internal and IRMP project reports. The attached report showed a summary of progress against each discreet area of the programme work streams. It also identified the risks associated with the project which were being tracked and reviewed fortnightly. Some of these risks were nationally driven and as such RBFRS had little influence on the outcome, whilst others were within the Fire Authority's control. As risks were managed and reduced they would be removed from the matrix.

Officers commented that conversations had taken place earlier that week about putting additional funding away for the potential need to purchase equipment or additional resources. Members commented that they thought this was a prudent approach. The DCFO noted that during the budget preparation exercise a specific line was being inserted in the capital programme but that this could only be drawn down with specific member sign off.

Where equipment needed to be replaced Officers were trying to make an educated guess as to what would be able to be used post implementation.

The Chairman expressed, not for the first time his concern about the programme and the impact the compression on it would have on RBFRS.

Dave Myers noted that the North West would be the first adopters closely followed by London so the RBFRS would be an early adopter and there would not be much opportunity to learn lessons from others. Currently transition was scheduled for January 2018.

The Chairman asked if Officers had any indication about the number of telecommunications masts that would have to be replaced. Officers explained that a mapping exercise had been conducted recently in the London Area and it seemed that the current infrastructure would meet the need albeit that it might be necessary to piggy back onto masts used by other providers.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The updated progress of the programme be noted.

**43. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (2016/17) – QUARTER 2
(JULY-SEPTEMBER 2016)**

Simon Jefferies, Area Manager Risk and Performance (AMRP), provided the Committee with an overview of the RBFRS second quarter (July-September) performance for the 2016/17 financial year.

The AMRP noted that Members had requested some changes to the format of the report and these changes would be included in the Quarter 3 report.

In relation to measure 18 (page 157) % of category 1 HFSC referrals completed within 3 working days, Mark Gaskarth explained that he was working with colleagues in Thames Valley Police. Officers were looking at different arrangements for sharing risks and therefore it was likely that this measure would need to be changed.

In terms of the % of vulnerable people receiving a HFRA compared to total number of HFRA carried out the year to date figure was 79% and for this quarter it was at 84%. Work was ongoing with other agencies to refine the data as it appeared that Officers were still visiting some premises that were not a high risk.

In relation to measures 21 (Fire Protection number of premises requiring informal activity) to date 13.3% had been achieved against a target of 23%. Mark Gaskarth reported the Protection Team were running a pilot which focused on fire safety enforcement work on higher risk premises such as houses in multiple occupation, sleeping accommodation above catering establishments and fire engineered solutions. This work is in line with IRMP consultation proposals for Protection. It is intended that this will deliver greater safety improvements than our previous ways of working. A higher proportion of visits will require informal and formal activity. Each audit will require more time from our fire safety team and so a reduction in the total number of audits can also be expected.

In relation to measure 15 - For Retained Duty System % planned availability of appliance – work on recruitment and retention was ongoing. Whilst some RDS staff had been taken on there had been a commensurate number of staff who had left the service. The drop in quarter 2 related to a number of dual contract staff who were not available due to the summer holidays.

Councillor Ennis noted that on page 165 of the report it stated that 40% of staff had no sickness absence which he thought was remarkable and he thanked employees for their commitment. The DCFO stated that a lot of work had been undertaken to reduce sickness absence especially in relation to musculoskeletal injuries. The DCFO stated that the sickness absence figures were even more remarkable when considered against the background of organisation change that the service was going through. He thanked the HR Team for all the work they had undertaken to reduce sickness absence. Councillor Edwards asked that the excellent work undertaken by Helen Morbin and Paul Mortimer be highlighted.

Councillor Bateson asked that in future reports Officers should focus on exception

reporting and that it was not necessary to focus on measures reporting as green. Councillor Mirfin felt that it would be preferable to bring areas that Members needed to focus on to the start of the reporting

RESOLVED THAT:

- The performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2016/17 be noted;
- The progress made on the two priority programmes be noted;
- The position of corporate risk be noted;
- Any further actions be discussed and agreed.

44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 22 March 2017 at 6.30pm, Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

The meeting concluded at 8.37pm