

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



Held on Thursday 26 July 2018 at 6.30pm

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

Members: Councillor Alistair Auty
(* *present*) Councillor Christine Bateson
* Councillor Paul Bryant (substitute in place of Councillor Smith)
* Councillor Colin Dudley (substitute in place of Councillor Auty)
* Councillor Adrian Edwards
* Councillor Jan Gavin
* Councillor Iain McCracken
* Councillor Satpal Parmar
* Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Councillor Dexter Smith

In Attendance: Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOFPP)
Becca Chapman (Data and Performance Analysis Manager)
Stephen Chard (Clerk)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Tamara Hack (Democratic Support Assistant)
Paul Jacques (Area Manager Protection and Prevention)
Tim Lo (Internal Auditor, RSM)
Jane Lubbock (Corporate Procurement and Contracts Manager)
Allison Kennett (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
Jacky Manning (HR Manager)
Ryan Maslen (Deputy Head of Finance)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Lloyd Palmer (Group Manager, Service Delivery EAST)
Anis Rafael (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead)

Action

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2018/19 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor Iain McCracken be elected Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2018/19 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor Adrian Edwards be elected Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Alistair Auty, Christine Bateson and Dexter Smith. Councillor Colin Dudley substituted for Councillor Auty and Councillor Paul Bryant substituted for Councillor Smith.

4. 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.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2018

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2018, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING

External Audit Update – Councillor Iain McCracken queried when the written disclosure of relationships would be provided to the Committee. The purpose of this was to assess the integrity, objectivity and independence of the firm and each covered person. Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOFP) confirmed Ernst and Young (EY) would provide this at the next meeting of the Committee.

EY to action

HMICFRS Update – Councillor McCracken repeated his question, asked at the last meeting, on what action would be taken by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) in the event of an 'Inadequate' judgement. He queried the Senior Leadership Team view on this, in particular whether recommendations could be disregarded. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) gave an assurance that recommendations for improvement would be taken on board by RBFRS and implemented wherever appropriate.

Annual Plan 2018/19 – Councillor McCracken reiterated his request made at the last meeting to be informed the membership of the Programme Board.

KM to action

Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme – Councillor McCracken highlighted the importance of the RBFRS having their voice heard on this concerning matter at the Major Projects Review Group. Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS) confirmed that a representative did attend from the Fire Group but not all regions were represented.

Councillor McCracken sought assurance that sufficient phone masts would be in place across Berkshire for the Emergency Services Network (ESN). The DSS advised that a mapping exercise had been undertaken and additional masts would need to be erected. Councillor McCracken noted that planning permission would be needed for new phone masts. Councillor Colin Dudley added his understanding that 5G requirements would result in the need for a larger number of smaller masts.

6. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE FOR DECISION

There were no matters to be considered.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, (HOF), presented the 2017/18 Annual Report and the findings from the payroll and pension audit reports that had been conducted since the last meeting.

Tim Lo (Internal Auditor, RSM) referred the Committee to the Internal Audit Opinion. This stated (in line with the Opinion for 2016/17) that “the organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.”

Councillor Iain McCracken had a number of points of clarification. Starting with the Annual Internal Audit Report he sought clarification on the implementation of internal audit management actions. The report referred to one medium and eleven low priority actions being agreed. Mr Lo confirmed that one medium and eleven low priority actions had been completed, these were the actions identified in 2016/17. Mr Lo added that by coincidence the same number of priority actions had been identified in 2017/18 following three assurance reviews being undertaken by RSM.

Councillor McCracken requested an update on the status of the internal audit work on Cyber Security and Timesheets/Time Keeping. Mr Lo explained that actions needed to be followed up. Nikki Richards (DSS) added that an update was provided within the Q4 performance report.

Councillor McCracken noted from the report that it was intended solely for the use of the RBFRS. He therefore queried whether it was appropriate that the document had been published. The Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS) confirmed there was no issue with doing so.

Turning to the review of the payroll provider (Dataplan), Councillor McCracken queried the one control design considered ineffective (Policies and Procedures). Mr Lo confirmed this to be included in error and corrected this figure to zero ineffective control designs.

Councillor McCracken noted that controls were not always complied with for data recorded on new starters, leavers and amendments. He asked that this be reviewed and reported back to the Committee in two meetings time (11 December 2018). The DSS confirmed this would be undertaken.

Review of Firefighter Pension Administration – the report highlighted one medium and one low priority issue in relation to the design of the control framework. Councillor McCracken queried this as the Internal Audit Report stated one medium and two low priority actions being agreed. Mr Lo clarified this point by explaining that the additional low priority action was in relation to the application of and compliance with the control framework.

Councillor Adrian Edwards noted that the medium priority issue was due to the system being unable to calculate the deferred benefits available to those

NR to action

who were leaving the RBFERS. He queried how this would be corrected and whether new software would be installed. The HOFP explained that it was currently necessary to complete calculations manually until an upgrade of the system could be completed that would enable an automatic calculation. The HOFP would advise when this had been resolved, the date was currently to be confirmed. In response to Councillor McCracken's request that an update be provided on this issue in two meetings time, the DSS explained that updates would be provided as a matter of course in the quarterly performance reports.

Councillor McCracken then requested that two additional audits be undertaken:

- Fleet disposal – specifically to assure the Authority that all RBFERS vehicles that have been disposed of in the last 24 months, have been disposed of properly and the audit includes how many vehicles have been disposed of, what type of vehicle they were, how they were disposed of and the prices achieved for these vehicles.
- Recruitment practices – specifically to ensure these were conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Councillor McCracken asked that this cover all permanent and temporary appointments in the last 18 months to provide the Authority with assurance that that they were appointed in line with existing policies and procedures.

CB to action

Councillor Jan Gavin asked how adherence to recruitment practices could be measured and queried the criteria in place. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) confirmed that a set of policies and procedures were in place and the audit would seek assurance that these were being followed. The DSS agreed that Terms of Reference for these two reviews would be brought to the next meeting for approval.

Councillor Gavin voiced a concern should these audits be particularly time consuming. In considering available resources, she queried whether audits should only be carried out to resolve a particular issue or problem. Councillor McCracken responded to this point and clarified that recruitment practices were last audited in February 2014, he therefore felt that it was timely to conduct a light touch review to ensure recruitment practices were still being adhered to.

NR to action

Councillor McCracken gave thanks for the reports.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The 2017/18 Annual Report and the payroll and pension audit reports be noted.

8. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), presented the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2017/18. She explained that the Fire Authority was responsible for ensuring that its business was conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and standards, and that public money was both safeguarded and properly accounted for. It also had a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure

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continuous improvement in the way in which its functions were exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority was responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions including arrangements for the management of risk. This was outlined in the AGS.

The document also highlighted the response to significant governance issues encountered in 2017/18 and significant governance issues anticipated for 2018/19.

The HCS drew attention to the amended version of the AGS, which had been tabled. The amendments, shown as tracked changes, made clear that the RSM Annual Internal Audit Report was no longer a draft and made reference to the advisory audit on Cyber Security.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried how the 2017/18 AGS compared with the 2016/17 document. Nikki Richards (DSS) confirmed that the two documents were not directly comparable. While they followed the same format, the information they contained and the issues they highlighted were different.

Councillor Colin Dudley referred to the actions to be put in place to improve cyber security following the audit that had taken place. He queried whether the officers assigned to this work were sufficiently qualified to do so. The DSS advised that as this expertise was not held in house, this would be brought in from an accredited supplier.

Councillor Iain McCracken then highlighted a number of minor points/typographical errors to be amended:

- The section on 'Partnership Working' should make reference to the One Public Estate.
- Paragraph 5.3 (second sentence) – 'This arrangement has **proved** to be effective in 2017/18, ...'
- Paragraph 5.11 – the DSS confirmed that Thames Valley Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner was co-located at the Newsham Court Headquarters.
- Paragraph 5.11 (final sentence) – 'Further opportunities for partnership working and sharing **premises** and services ...' – a change from posts. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) accepted this change but pointed out that consideration would be given to sharing posts.
- Paragraph 6.1 – Volatility of funding. Councillor McCracken highlighted the need to focus on capital borrowing moving forward.
- Paragraph 6.4 (third sentence) – 'Although not an inspection of the corporate governance arrangements of the Authority, the inspection will be shared around three core **themes** of ...'
- Paragraph 6.6 (second sentence) – 'Work commenced in 2017/18 to **begin** planning ...'
- Paragraph 6.6 (final sentence) – '... related risks faced in **the Authority's** communities ...'

KM to action

Councillor McCracken gave thanks for the production of the AGS.

Councillor Adrian Edwards referred to paragraph 6.4 – HMICFRS. The inspection of the RBFRS, to take place in the Autumn/Winter of 2018/2019, would be the first under this new regime and Councillor Edwards asked for further information on the inspection, its duration, the size of the inspection team and whether it would mirror the inspections already undertaken of the Police. The HCS explained that while the Police model could be learnt from, a specification had been developed for FRS and a number of set questions would have to be responded to by all FRS. Preparations were already underway by the RBFRS for the one week field work inspection that would take place in November 2018 or January 2019. An inspection team numbering between eight and ten inspectors was expected. Additional visits were anticipated from inspectors outside of this one week period.

Inspectors would be meeting with a large number of officers, which could encompass around one third of the RBFRS Establishment. On the subject of Member involvement, the HCS clarified that while the inspection was of the FRS, she anticipated that this would involve the Chairman, Lead Members and Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Edwards queried the involvement of the Police and Crime Commissioner or his deputy. Councillor Colin Dudley, as Chairman, commented that the only input, to this FRS inspection, would be to answer questions in relation to collaboration.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement be approved for publication.

9. AUDIT RESULTS REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2017/18

Conor Byrne(HOFP), presented the report, which asked Members to note the Audit Results Report and approve the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts.

Starting with Appendix C – the Statement of Accounts, the HOFP sought to assure Members that the Fire Authority was on a sound financial footing, when considering the financial pressures being faced by local authorities. He initially referred Members to the Authority's balance sheet. This showed negative reserves of £355m due to the firefighter pension liability of £391m. However, statutory arrangements with the Government for funding this deficit meant that the financial position of the Authority remained healthy.

The HOFP then directed Members to information on the Authority's usable reserves, which he considered as a better indicator of the Authority's financial position. As at 31 March 2018, these totalled £14.4m. This was largely formed by General Fund Balances (£2.3m), Earmarked Reserves (£7.7m) and the Capital Receipts Reserve (£4m).

Greater detail on the Earmarked Reserves was contained in section 8.4 of the Statement of Accounts. While some of these specific reserves had been utilised or partly utilised, the overall amount of earmarked reserves had increased over 2017/18 by £285k. Early delivery of some of the Authority's efficiency plan savings had contributed to this increase (by £577k to the Budget Contingency Reserve). The intention was to use this specific

reserve to support the Revenue Budget in 2018/19 and 2019/20 in order to offset cuts in Government funding.

In terms of the Authority's sustainability, the HOFPP felt that the Medium Term Financial Plan was based on firm foundations and maintaining this position would continue to be an area of focus. It was the case that substantial savings needed to be made, but, as already explained, good progress had been made with achieving efficiency plan savings and there was every confidence that this would continue. The HOFPP hoped that gave further assurance to Members that the Authority was on a firm financial footing.

Allison Kennett (External Auditor, Ernst & Young) explained that a revised audit results report had been tabled. This was in relation to a variance in the pension fund. She explained that this had arisen as a result of the variance between the value of the pension fund assets estimated by the actuary and the actual fund value. This issue was therefore one of timing and in no way of the Authority's making. The Authority's estimated share of the variance was £597k, this was not considered material and it was not therefore recommended that the Statement of Accounts be amended. The External Auditor confirmed that this was an issue for around 90% of Fire and Rescue Services nationally. However, she added that for some the amount involved was considered material and therefore their Statement of Accounts needed to be changed. For Royal Berkshire, a change was not recommended.

The External Auditor continued by highlighting the key points of the audit results report and its unqualified opinion:

- She commended Conor Byrne and his team for their timeliness in submitting the Statement of Accounts within the required timeframe.
- There were no unadjusted or adjusted audit differences arising from the audit.
- Two areas of generic risk had been reviewed: 'risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition' and 'misstatements due to fraud or error/risk of management override of control'. However, no issues had been highlighted in either case by External Audit.
- Other areas of audit focus included valuation of land and buildings where it was concluded that the valuation had been accurately processed and reflected in the financial statements; and pension liability valuation – as already explained the only issue was that caused by the timing difference between estimated and actual figures.
- A data snapshot was contained in the report on Journal Entry Data Insights. This provided an assurance that journals had been produced correctly.
- The report reaffirmed the independence of Ernst and Young in conducting this audit.

Councillor Iain McCracken thanked the external auditors for their attendance at the meeting.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The Audit Results Report in Appendix A be noted.
- The letter of representation in Appendix B be approved.
- The 2017/18 Statement of Accounts in Appendix C be approved and was signed by the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee.

FIRE APPLIANCE PROCUREMENT

Councillor Adrian Edwards queried if savings had been made from the procurement of new fire engines. Jane Lubbock (Corporate Procurement and Contracts Manager) advised that a saving of just under £10k had been achieved per vehicle. Savings would continue to be sought where possible for future procurement.

Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) explained that a paper on retendering this contract would go through Management Committee in due course. The CFO added that it was also the intention to procure the replacement of the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) within this financial year. This was outlined in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework that was being presented for approval at the Fire Authority meeting on 31 July 2018.

10. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROJECT UPDATE

Nikki Richards (DSS) introduced the report, which provided an update and assessment of the progress of the National Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that would replace the current Airwave provision.

The report addressed the current options appraisal being undertaken by the National Programme (NP) and the input to this from the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFERS) and ESMCP South Central (SC) Region. The report summarised the cautious welcome of the RBFERS of the likely change to an incremental approach of delivering the ESN and the extension of the current national Airwave system that ESN would replace. In this context, the report highlighted work taking place to inform options for the timing of when the RBFERS, alongside Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS), might adopt ESN.

Updates were provided in the report on the NP and its governance as well as the regional and service governance approach, and progress on work streams in the SC region.

The report also identified a recent request from the Home Office Fire and Resilience Directorate for provision of information on spending Section 31 grant provision by the RBFERS between 2015 to 2018 for ESMCP purposes.

The DSS explained that this was a phased national approach. She felt that the likeliest option for the NP was option “B” – product based incremental deployment with User Organisations free to take up products and capabilities in line with their individual requirements.

The DSS recommended that the contents of the report be noted and that the letter attached in Appendix E be sent jointly from the Chairman of the Fire Authority and the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to

highlight concerns about this process to the Home Office.

Councillor Paul Bryant voiced his concerns at the difficulties encountered and the impact of this on timeframes (as outlined in the draft letter). Trevor Ferguson (CFO) shared these concerns. To date, costs and timeframes were unconfirmed. This was particularly concerning when considering that this was for 999 services nationally. The CFO added that the RBFRS had regularly highlighted concerns at the lack of progress being made. Councillor Colin Dudley added that the RBFRS was one of only a few FRS who had sought to keep holding the Government to account on this matter.

Councillor Iain McCracken explained that the Minister had been challenged and a timetable had been requested in order to be assured and to enable budget planning etc. This was to have been confirmed in writing, but this had not been forthcoming to date. There was also a concern that if the current Airwave system was extended, then it could transpire that some FRS would remain on Airwave at the same time as others transferring to the ESN. Councillor McCracken also returned to his concern highlighted earlier in the meeting in relation to phone masts, their size and their need for planning permission.

Councillor Bryant queried whether, if the Airwave contract was extended, there would be ramifications on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS), i.e. would Airwave software be updated as necessary in the extension period. The DSS explained that the TVFCS technology could still be developed (some upgrades had already taken place) and its renewal was being considered, but discussions needed to continue with Airwave and ESN in order to resolve issues with this and the wider ESMCP. The cost of new equipment/upgrades and who met these costs was another consideration. Councillor Colin Dudley added his understanding that renewals had already been budgeted for the TVFCS by the FRS concerned. He was therefore confident that the necessary upgrades would be made.

The DSS voiced her main concern that as technology continued to advance, the specification for ESN could become outdated and this was a risk to be managed.

Councillor McCracken felt that revisions needed to be made to the Home Office letter. It should question what would happen in the event that ESN was no longer the future delivery model nor would it be Airwave after the extension period had elapsed. The cost of this potentially abortive project should also be questioned.

NR to action

Councillor McCracken thanked Officers for the report.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted.
- The proposed letter in Appendix E, subject to the revisions discussed, be sent jointly from the Chairman of the RBFA and the Chairman of the RBFA Audit and Governance Committee. It would need to be copied to Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State at the Home Office.

(JANUARY TO MARCH 2018)

Katie Mills (HCS), presented the report, which provided an overview of the performance of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) in the fourth quarter of the 2017/18 financial year, the key achievements of the RBFRS and the challenges being faced.

Successes were outlined on pages four and five of the performance report. These included:

- The annual target for delivering 2500 Home Fire Safety Checks to those at risk of having a fire and being injured was exceeded by 540.
- Only 0.8% of the workforce were not within qualification and the small number of individuals concerned were scheduled to be assessed during Q1 of 2018/19.
- Mental health absences had decreased during Q4 from the figure reported at Q3 (by 52 days). Several initiatives in the mental health action plan had also been implemented.
- The percentage of female firefighters had increased to 4.39%, exceeding the 4% target.

Areas of challenge/concern and plans for improvement were highlighted on page five. These included:

- An increase in the number of casualties requiring hospital treatment during Q4. Further prevention work was planned.
- The volume of full fire safety audits carried out reduced again in Q4. The shift in focus to risk based inspection had resulted in increased timescales when working with high risk premises. An evaluation of the protection function would be undertaken in Q1.
- There had been an increase in Q4 to the percentage of working time lost to sickness of 0.69%. This increase was attributable to an increase in short term sickness absence. Long term sickness absence had reduced in Q4.

Councillor McCracken gave thanks for the informative documentation. He noted that in many cases a percentage had been provided to demonstrate performance, he requested the inclusion of actual numbers to aid clarity in future reports.

Councillor Adrian Edwards welcomed the reduction to long term sickness absence, it was important to keep officers fit to perform their duties. He was also pleased to note that there was greater recognition and greater awareness of mental health issues.

Councillor Colin Dudley requested further detail on why the measure 'Whole Time under 90 seconds' was not achieved. Lloyd Palmer, Group Manager, explained that a contributing factor were cases where equipment was being used for community based work. Councillor Dudley followed this up by querying the quantity of community based work undertaken in Q3 (October to December), as performance was red throughout the year. Lloyd Palmer Group Manager explained that this remained a contributing factor as the programme ran throughout the year. However, he gave an assurance to

KM to action

Members that improvements continued to be looked at and would be taken forward. Internal monitoring was regularly and consistently undertaken.

Councillor Dudley considered that the failure of this 90 second measure was a contributing factor in not consistently achieving the measure ‘% of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes, from time the emergency call was answered’ in at least 75% of cases. Councillor Dudley felt that the achievement of the 90 second measure would help the overall response time. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) noted this point and agreed it would help to achieve the 10 minute response time. However, he added that senior management routinely monitored this performance in detail with Hub Managers providing performance data. Improvements were constantly sought and were being made.

Councillor McCracken referred to Appendix B: Update on progress of the Fleet Strategy, specifically the one amber action ‘determine multi-use vehicle requirements, availability to provide off road access, flexibility and effectiveness of back-up vehicles’ and queried whether this was impacted by the issues reported with the ESMCP. The CFO confirmed this was not the case.

Councillor McCracken reiterated his thanks to Officers for the report and proposed acceptance of its recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Dudley who queried whether the recommendations should also list any specific actions. The CFO explained that progress would be outlined in future quarterly performance reports. Therefore it was not considered necessary to expand the recommendations.

RESOLVED THAT:

- Performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2017/18 be noted.
- Progress made on the two priority programmes be noted.
- The position of corporate risk be noted.

12. ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), presented the Annual Report, which summarised performance in 2017/18 against the Annual Plan. She explained that the Grenfell Tower tragedy took place following the agreement of the Annual Plan for 2017/18. The incident had an immediate impact on all fire and rescue services and led to resources being allocated to previously unforeseen areas of work. The impact of this was reflected in the report.

These new and emerging challenges, together with an ambitious continuous improvement programme, saw a significant amount of work undertaken in 2017/18. Achievements included the arrival of new fire appliances, opening of Hungerford Community Fire Station, recruitment of new Whole Time Fire Fighters, increased focus on the recruitment of Retained Fire Fighters, development of a new People Strategy, launch of a new website, and a restructure and implementation of a new service delivery model.

Councillor Paul Bryant noted customer feedback data in the report. This stated that 98.9% of domestic and 96.2% of commercial respondents were satisfied with the service they received from the RBFRS. He queried how this data was obtained. Becca Chapman (Data and Performance Analysis Manager) advised that feedback questionnaires were sent out to those affected with a request that they be posted back.

Councillor Colin Dudley was pleased to note the significant achievements highlighted in the timeline of the last year. This was testament to the hard work of the Officers and Members involved. Councillor Dudley stated that he was very proud to be involved in the opening of Hungerford Community Fire Station and the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Councillor Adrian Edwards added that he was pleased to note the work undertaken post Grenfell. He queried how this work impacted on the training programme for fire fighters. Paul Jacques (Area Manager Protection and Prevention) explained that a dedicated team was in place with responsibility for high rise buildings. Seventy high rise buildings that were considered to be of greatest risk had been targeted by this team and their safety reviewed. A multi-agency audit was also scheduled for September 2018. In terms of training, this work had enhanced the knowledge held by the fire fighters involved and this knowledge would be shared widely within the RBFRS.

Councillor Edwards then queried the interaction and information sharing with neighbouring fire and rescue services. The Area Manager Protection and Prevention advised that information and learning was shared on a national level via the National Fire Chiefs Council.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted and published externally.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 18 October 2018 at 6.30pm, Service Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD. However, Councillor McCracken would need to give his apologies to this meeting and he asked if the meeting could be rescheduled to a later date. An alternative date would be arranged.

FR to Action

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that:

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

15. INJURY PENSION OVERPAYMENTS

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The Audit and Governance Committee considered an exempt report on Injury Pension Overpayments.

RESOLVED that:

- The recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

(The meeting concluded at 8.12pm)