

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



Held on Wednesday 29th March 2017 at 6.30pm

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, HOPF)
- Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) (from 8.12pm)
- Mark Gaskarth (Temporary ACFO, Service Delivery)
- Maria Grindley (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
- Dan Harris (Head of Internal Audit, RSM)
- Becci Jefferies (Head of HR and Learning Development, HHRLD)
- Alison Kennett (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)
- Linda Pye (Clerk)
- Nikki Richards (Interim Director of Support Services, IDSS)
- Tregear Thomas (Chair of the Pension Board)

Action

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received from Councillor Alistair Auty.

46. 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.

47. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6th DECEMBER 2016

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2016 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Page 5, penultimate paragraph – addition of the word 'modify' between the words 'necessary to' and 'these targets'.

Matters Arising:

It was noted that all actions in the minutes of 6th December 2016 had been completed.

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

There were no matters referred to this Committee for decision.

49. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE AND 2017/18 PLAN

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP) and Dan Harris (Head of Internal Audit, RSM), informed the Committee of the outcome of audit activity during 2016/17 and considered the Audit Plan for 2017/18.

The internal audit contract had recently been put out to tender. Six firms had responded and the incumbent, RSM, had scored best in the evaluation process. The Fire Authority was currently in the process of finalising the contract to appoint RSM for three years from April 2017 with a possible extension for a further two years.

RSM's Audit Progress report was attached to the report at Appendix A. It was noted that three audit reports had been finalised since the previous meeting – IT General Controls, Governance and Risk Management and Key Financial Controls.

Dan Harris referred to page 20 of the agenda which informed the Committee of the audit assignments that had been completed to date, the assurance opinions and priority of the actions agreed with management. It was noted that no common weaknesses had been identified within the audit reports so far for 2016/17. RSM had completed the plan of work for 2016/17 and had not issued any negative assurance opinions and therefore it was anticipated that a positive Head of Internal Audit opinion would be issued. One further client briefing had been issued since the last Joint Audit Committee which had been published in March 2017.

In respect of the three audit reports which had been finalised since the last meeting it was specifically noted that:

IT General Controls: The Internal Audit opinion was that there was reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relied to manage this area were suitably designed and consistently applied. However, there were a number of issues identified which would need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework was effective in managing this area. One low and one medium priority issue had been raised as follows:

- Access to the server room at RBFRS headquarters was unmonitored during the day and the door was left open during day operation hours. This increased the risk of unauthorised access to the organisation's data centre facilities (Low). The server room door was now closed during day operational hours and an authorised fob was required to gain access.
- There was scope to improve network level password controls, in particular regarding password length, complexity and lockout attempts, to further reduce the risk of unauthorised access to RBFRS network (Medium). The Fire Authority would revisit the password control policy to ensure that it was fit for purpose and complex passwords were enabled.

Of the previous recommendations set out in the IT General Controls Audit 2015/16 report one medium and one low priority issue had been re-agreed as follows:

- The patch environment for network devices was reviewed on WSUS and testing confirmed that 15 servers had last reported status to the WSUS server between August 2015-September 2016, with failed critical patches and patch status unknown (Medium). The IDSS confirmed that the servers were no longer in use and had now been decommissioned. Routine maintenance had been re-established.
- Firewall configurations, performance and security monitoring for RBFRS firewalls had not been documented (Low). IT was in the process of documenting the process controls for firewall changes to ensure adequacy of the controls to the network.

Councillor Philip Mirfin noted that there did not appear to be any mention of system failures or business continuity in the audit review. Dan Harris confirmed that what was missing in the documentation was the scope of the review and that sometimes a separate business continuity audit would be undertaken. The IDSS confirmed that business continuity had not formed part of that audit programme. It was therefore questioned whether that was a weakness but the IDSS responded that part of the work around business continuity was in respect of how the plan was tested, whether it worked and how often it was tested. It was noted that there were two call off areas included in the Plan for 2017/18 and the Committee could make suggestions as to which areas were covered. Conor Byrne referred to page 55 of the agenda which set out the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 and it was noted that the proposed audit of IT systems specifically mentioned business continuity. Councillor Mirfin stressed the importance of testing the Business Continuity Plan on a regular basis.

Councillor Iain McCracken asked what the definition of 'Medium' priority meant. This was set out at the top of page 26 of the agenda where it stated that 'timely management attention was necessary'.

Governance and Risk Management: The Internal Audit opinion was that there was substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relied to manage this area were suitably designed and consistently applied. Four Low priority management actions relating to the application of and compliance with the control framework had been agreed (all with a completion date of 1st September 2017):

Governance:

- The service did not have an up to date self assessment and individual development plans for existing Members, as the Members' development programme was still under review. The service would ensure that individual self-assessment and development plans were completed annually and retained for all existing Members.

Risk Management:

- The review of five risks noted inaccuracies in the named owners on the register. The Fire Authority would ensure that risks were assigned an owner in line with the Risk Management Policy accountability and ownership of hierarchy.
- Risk assurances had not been fully captured on the strategic and operational

risk registers. It was also noted that risks had not been updated in a timely manner. Management would continue to deliver the Training plan, to educate employees on the completion of the risk register and the Planning and Performance Officer would continue providing risk owners with hands on support on how to use the system.

- It was noted that the RBFA CRR included both the strategic and operational risk register on one report. Where an operational risk had a score exceeding 17, this required escalation to the relevant Director for inclusion on the CRR. However, it was noted that, where applicable, the risk was not linked to the strategic risk on the CRR, resulting in duplication. The service would review its process for escalating and presenting operational risks to the relevant Director (Strategic Risk Register) and ensure there was clarity in information being presented.

Key Financial Controls: The Internal Audit opinion was that there was reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relied to manage this area were suitably designed and consistently applied. However, there were a number of issues identified which would need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework was effective in managing the identified risks. One 'medium' and seven 'low' priority management actions in relation to the design and application of the control framework had been raised as follows:

General Ledger (Implementation April 2017):

- From a sample of payroll suspense accounts it was found that there was no evidence of a review for November 2016 and the October 2016 suspense account had been reviewed in January 2017 (Low). Suspense accounts would be reviewed by the accounting manager and evidence of this would be recorded. All reviews would be conducted in a timely manner.
- Month end reconciliations had not been subject to review in a timely manner (Medium). Following the restructure within the Finance Team, month end reconciliations would be subject to review in a timely manner and evidence of this review would be formally documented.

Payroll (Implementation April 2017):

- From a sample of five changes to payroll data it was found that one change of address had no evidence of instruction from the employee concerned (Low). All notification of changes to standing data would be made in writing and evidence retained on file.

Payments & Creditors (Implementation April 2017):

- The SAGE 1000 finance system did not record the date of goods receipt, it was therefore not possible to confirm that they had been receipted within a timely manner (Low). Management would look into creating a report for the receipt dates of opened and closed purchase orders and all goods received would have an invoice attached on the system.
- Not all new supplier additions had new supplier forms in place. There was an inconsistent approach with regards to dating when checks were carried out and reviewed, for both new suppliers and supplier amendments (Low). For all new supplier and supplier detail amendments, staff would be reminded that checks and the review of those checks would be dated.

Income and Debtors (Implementation April 2017):

- In relation to outstanding debtors, three did not have the latest date of chasing recorded, either in the notes or in the sections for recording the dates the debtor was contacted (Low). Management would ensure that the debt chasing spreadsheet was fully utilised to record the latest date of debt chasing carried out by any member of the Authority.

Asset Management (Implementation September 2017):

- Currently the minimum value for capitalisation was set as £7,000 but it was not mentioned within the financial regulations, however vehicles were always capitalised to allow for thorough monitoring (Low). The minimum capitalisation value for assets would be recorded in the Financial Regulations.
- It was not possible to confirm that asset disposal forms were used, as there was no list of disposals. Without the completion of asset disposal forms, there was no confirmation that assets were being disposed of in line with the financial regulations, and that the asset register and SAGE were appropriately updated (Low). Asset disposal forms would be completed for all disposed assets on the asset register.

Councillor Philip Mirfin referred to page 37 of the agenda and one area of good practice for consideration in respect of the SAGE financial system which had two levels of access in order to segregate duties. It had been found that two employees had both level 1 and level 2 access and it was recommended that management should look at revoking the ability for employees to hold both levels of access in the system. As the organisation was shrinking he felt that it would be necessary to have the ability to raise and authorise a requisition. The IDSS confirmed that the process of employees only being able to either raise a requisition or authorise it had always been in place in order that duties were segregated. A daily check was in place which should pick up if that process was not being followed and she confirmed that all requisitions now went through a buyer.

Councillor Iain McCracken stated that going forward the focus should be around the 'ambers'. The IDSS agreed but stressed that the scope of audit was not the same in each year. Councillor McCracken accepted that there would be changes but if an 'amber' assurance had been given and had been sat there for a period of time then it needed to be addressed. Councillor Christine Bateson asked why trend arrows had not been included. The IDSS advised that it was difficult to show the trend as the particular area might not have been in the last audit and therefore no comparison could be made. It was noted that where audits had taken place and recommendations had been made, any progress on open recommendations would be monitored as part of the Performance reporting framework.

Councillor Philip Mirfin noted that none of the action plans in respect of the audits included cost implications. The IDSS confirmed that the cost of reducing risk to an acceptable level had not been measured or recorded and it would be dependent on the treatment being applied. Councillor Mirfin felt that any cost implication should be recorded as this would focus the mind even if it was just used for guidance. The IDSS confirmed that this was the direction of travel for the future but at present if it was necessary to create a treatment which required spend then a business case would be taken through CMT. She understood the point that Councillor Mirfin was making but at present it was more of a gut feeling as to whether the treatment being applied was reasonable or not.

DRAFT

The draft 2017/18 Audit Plan was attached as Appendix B and Members were asked to consider the proposed audit scope for 2017/18 and approve the plan. It was noted that RSM had recently successfully re-tendered for the provision of the internal audit service.

It was noted that emerging risks in the sector included the duty for emergency services to explore collaboration opportunities, cyber risk and the significant changes in the requirements of Data Protection as a result of the 2016 Major Overhaul of EU Data Protection laws.

The table set out in section 2.3 set out the levels of assurance given to date and included the direction of travel over the last three years.

Pages 54 and 55 of the agenda set out the proposed audits for 2017/18 in Appendix A and the Internal Audit Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20 was set out in Appendix B. Appendix C set out other potential areas of coverage which included where internal audit coverage could link to the Corporate Risk Register together with other audits taking place across the sector. It was suggested that one area which might need looking at across the three year strategy was around Procurement or Buying processes and controls. Another area was Training Firefighters. This was an audit which had been undertaken elsewhere and records could not be supplied to support the fact that the training had taken place. Councillor Philip Mirfin agreed that the area of procurement was something that needed to be looked at but there was no mention of benchmarking in the rationale as it was important that the Fire Authority achieved good value for money. Dan Harris confirmed that there was no reason that this could not be included in the scope.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The Progress Report be noted;
- The 2017/18 Audit Plan be approved.

50. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Maria Grindley, External Auditor (Ernst & Young) provided the Committee with an update from the External Auditors.

Ernst & Young were currently on site to test financial systems in preparation for the audit of the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts. Their Audit Plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

It was noted that this would be a spring forward audit as in the following year it would be necessary to complete the audit cycle by the end of July 2018 and therefore Ernst & Young were working closely with the Fire Authority to see what could be done ahead of time.

Outlined in section 2 was the financial statement risks facing the authority. As identified in ISA 240 management were in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and to prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appeared to be operating effectively. Maria Grindley assured the authority that there were no specific concerns in relation to RBFRS but that it was something that needed to be tested and assurance given.

In terms of value for money there was only a requirement to determine whether

there were any risks that would be considered as significant. Ernst & Young had not identified any risks which were viewed as relevant to its value for money conclusion.

Paragraph 4.2 confirmed that the initial assessment of key processes across the Authority had identified the following key processes where it would be sought to test key controls:

- Accounts receivable;
- Procure to pay; and
- Cash and bank

It was confirmed that a substantive approach would be taken and not controls assurance which was slightly different and had changed since the action plan had been put together.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The External Audit update be noted.

51. ACCOUNTING POLICY CHANGE – ASSET VALUATIONS

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HOFP), informed the Committee of a change in the accounting policy for the valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment. These valuations appeared within the balance sheet of the Authority's Statement of Accounts.

The Fire Authority had recently changed to a new provider to obtain asset valuations and the new provider had a different professional view on the correct methodology for valuation. The new methodology had been put to the Authority's auditors and they were in agreement that the new proposed method was appropriate. This change meant that the Authority's policy on asset valuation, as set out in the Statement of Accounts, had to change.

The current methodology for valuing fire stations was DRC. The DRC approach was a valuation method of last resort and was only used when a property was so specialised that another method would be inappropriate. The DRC approach valued the property on the basis of cost of its modern equivalent asset with deductions for age and obsolescence. The new valuation provider felt that this approach was not reliable for fire stations and gave rise to artificially high valuations. By contrast, the Comparison approach was much more accurate and was based on the fact that there was market evidence for Fire Authority property assets and that there would be a market for it in its existing form due to flexible design and adaptability.

Councillor Iain McCracken asked if this was good or bad news. The HOFP felt that it was a step forward in understanding what a particular Fire Station was worth. Maria Grindley, External Auditor Ernst & Young, confirmed that she was comfortable with the proposed methodology and their valuer would also look at the figures to ensure that there was a 'sense check'. She felt that this methodology would provide assurance around the techniques used to achieve a value.

It was queried whether the valuation would be in respect of the building or the land. The HOFP confirmed that valuers did need to take account of price changes based on land and area and it would therefore be split between the building and the value of the land. This was a much easier method of coming up with an accurate

valuation in a more detailed and reliable way. All the Fire Authority's assets were operational and they were sold from time to time. Councillor Adrian Edwards queried how the Fire Tower at Whitley Wood would be treated as that was unique. The HOPF stated that that was an example of where the two evaluation approaches might need to be used.

Councillor Philip Mirfin queried how this change compared to the methodology used by other authorities. Maria Grindley confirmed that there were a number of authorities already looking at using this methodology and she felt that more would follow. Councillor Mirfin was concerned about the possibility of merging with private enterprises where there could be disparity in the value of properties. The HOPF stated that it was also possible to get two different valuations by using the same method but with different valuers.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The policy change as set out in the report be agreed.

52. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME UPDATE

Nikki Richards, Interim Director of Support Services (IDSS), updated the Committee on the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). The ESMCP focus continued on preparation for the new Emergency Services Network (ESN). Following a recently proposed plan, it had been confirmed that there would be an update to the delivery timescales.

The Home Office Programme Board had clarified that the Network, Control Room and coverage elements of the project, known as the Mobilisation Phase, would be extended by nine months and therefore RBFRS were expected to be service ready by Spring 2018. This would then trigger the commencement of the vehicle fits in Summer 2018. The additional time would help to ensure that the ESN solution implemented worked for end users and incorporated a much more detailed and comprehensive set of tests to reduce the potential risk to the network. The project goal was to replace the current Airwave network by the end of 2019, when that last service's contract ended.

Assurances had been given by the Home Office that the old system would not be switched off until the new system was fully working and had passed all services declared success criteria for coverage and performance. The risks had been further reduced by the acquisition of Airwave by Motorola who would be responsible for building the system within the EE network.

It was noted that since the agenda papers had been distributed the Control Room transfer to ESN had been slipped to 2018.

The IDSS confirmed that this was a project that the Fire Authority had little control to influence. The Fire Authority did have a representative leading on the project and therefore more information was forthcoming. The IDSS confirmed that the Fire Authority had recently learnt that they would receive funding from the Home Office to the value of £573k for the TVFC upgrade and also an upgrade of IT equipment in order to comply with ESN. This would affect all devices which were carried by Officers and also the way in which the Control Room operated. Officers were currently assessing whether the funding would be sufficient. It was still not known what the additional costs would be and therefore it would be necessary to monitor

and audit spend. The Home Office had determined that the funding could be spent over a period of 4 to 5 years but that it would be necessary to provide evidence of how it had been spent.

Councillor Iain McCracken asked if the Fire Authority had a critical path. The IDSS confirmed that the priority would be to comply with ESN. The key issue was the capacity of Capita to upgrade equipment as there were a further 45 blue light organisations also needing to upgrade. She confirmed that RBFRS had regular meetings with Capita and had been the first authority to ask for a quote. Some authorities had been given more funding than Berkshire. Councillor McCracken asked if there was a Plan B. The IDSS advised that Plan B would mean that the Fire Authority would do nothing – it would keep existing devices and would carry on with Airwave. It would be necessary at some stage to take a view across the Thames Valley as to whether to transition or not.

Councillor Philip Mirfin felt that it would be essential to work on costings. The IDSS stated that this was difficult at present as the future was unknown. A figure of £400k had been allocated to this project at the last Fire Authority meeting as a contingency fund to mitigate risk. This project was still an unknown with the Fire Authority simply reacting to information and making best guesses. Councillor Mirfin stated that someone in the Home Office should have costings and he suggested that the Fire Authority should be pushing back on that and asking what costs had been agreed with the manufacturers. The IDSS confirmed that the authority had pushed back but the Home Office did not know what the equipment was as yet.

Dan Harris confirmed that he had attended a recent event by CIPFA who had undertaken an audit on this project. The main driver was a £500 per device saving and it was only South or North Korea that had actually gone live with this. The IDSS said that the National Audit Office had pushed back as well on this issue. Councillor Mirfin felt that the Government needed to take responsibility and the IDSS confirmed that the information in respect of the funding had only been received that afternoon and therefore Officers would need to look at what could be achieved with the funding and would put measures in place to collect the necessary evidence.

Councillor Iain McCracken stated that the telephone masts would not be adequate and therefore planning authorities would be inundated with applications to upgrade which would need to be determined. The IDSS confirmed that work had been undertaken to identify where any holes in coverage would be.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The report be noted.

53. PENSION BOARD UPDATE

Tregear Thomas, Chair of the Pension Board, updated the Committee regarding the activities of the Local Pension Board (for all firefighter pension schemes).

It was noted that the Board had met on three occasions since the last Pension Board update in April 2016. On 3rd October 2016 the Pension Board had met with representatives from West Yorkshire Pension Fund who had taken responsibility for the administration of the Berkshire firefighter pension schemes in April 2016. At this meeting discussions had taken place in relation to difficulties experienced in the transfer of members' data from the previous administrators, Liberata. Following

that meeting it became clear to the Local Pension Board that the deadline for issuing active members with individual annual benefit statements had not been met. Due to computer software issues it was not anticipated that these statements would be issued until the end of 2016, thus missing the deadline by four months. It was therefore necessary for the Pension Board to formally notify The Pensions Regulator of a material breach which it did on 17th October 2016. The individual benefits statements were subsequently issued prior to the end of 2016.

The Pension Board was currently working closely with managers within Human Resources to identify a range of performance measures relating to the services provided by West Yorkshire Pension Fund which would be used to assist in securing compliance with Regulations and the effective administration of the schemes.

Pension Board members were pleased to note a positive recent internal firefighter pensions audit report on 21st November 2016 by RSM Risk Assurance Services where 'Substantial Assurance' status was attained.

Tregear Thomas said that the Pension Board had welcomed the recent Pensions Roadshow which provided members with the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the schemes and to ask questions as to how the changes would impact them. It was hoped that this could be repeated at a later stage.

In terms of Risk Management although Pension Board Members continued to make use of all available training in order to increase their knowledge and understanding in relation to their role. However there was currently an element of risk with what they were working with to attain this. Increased workload of individual Board Members might also impact negatively on training and function. Given the previous issues experienced in relation to the issuing of individual Benefit Statements in 2016, a potential technical risk continued to exist in relation to the 2017 Statements. Failure to comply with the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 could result in reputational and financial loss.

(Councillors Mohammed Rasib and Ishrat Shah left the meeting at 7.45pm and returned at 7.49pm).

Councillor Iain McCracken queried what the duration of the appointment was. Tregear Thomas confirmed that re-election would take place on a rolling basis every two years. The key issue was attracting new Board Members at an early stage in order that they could gain the necessary knowledge. The HHRLD stated that any transition needed to be managed and was a challenge and this had knock on implications. She confirmed that work had been aligned with Bucks with the possibility of sharing a Pension Board. Councillor Philip Mirfin asked if consideration had been given to bringing in a recently retired person into the role. The HHRLD confirmed that this was something that could be looked at in the future.

RESOLVED THAT:

- The activities undertaken by the Local Pension Board since the last report be noted.

54. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

Nikki Richards, Interim Director of Support Services (IDSS), presented the annual

report on Governance for submission to the Fire Authority.

A report had been received from the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee where it was noted that this first year of the new streamlined governance arrangements had seemed to work well and had benefited the Fire Authority due to the fact that each Member had been appointed to a Committee which had increased their role and involvement and had increased communication between Members and Officers. The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, each Head of Service, Officers and Members of the Committee for their continued hard work and efforts in the delivery of Audit and Governance on behalf of the Fire Authority.

The Committee was also responsible for Governance which included complaints against Members, Members Code of Conduct, Fire Authority Constitution/ Handbook and the monitoring of Members Allowance and Attendance. It was noted that there had been no formal complaints received against Members for the current year. The Committee, on behalf of the Fire Authority, recorded their thanks to the Independent Persons for their availability and support during the year.

The Fire Authority had adopted a new Scheme of Allowances in April 2016 to reflect the overall reduction in the number of Members and the additional responsibilities of the roles placed on them. It was noted that a 1% pay increase was proposed to Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances which would take effect from 1st April 2017. The Committee was also asked to recommend to the Fire Authority that payments between Members' home and/or their regular workplace (location that RBFA held its regular meetings) should be taxed from 1st April 2017. Member allowances for the period June 2016 to February 2017 were set out in Appendix A.

The attendance of RBFA Members for the Municipal Year 2016-2017 were set out in Appendix B to the report. It was noted that attendance had generally been good and all meetings had been quorate. In 2017/18 the frequency of four Fire Authority and Audit and Governance meetings per year would be brought back in line with previous years. Management Committee would continue to meet approximately eight times during the year.

Councillor Adrian Edwards asked how much of a saving had been made by reducing the frequency of Fire Authority meetings. The IDSS confirmed that she would look at the figures and report back to the next meeting but it might be that it was cost neutral.

**NR to
action**

It was noted that attendance figures had improved and this might be due in part to the reduction in the number of meetings. Those with 100% attendance record should be congratulated. Councillor Ishrat Shah stated that this would be her last meeting as she would be taking on the role of Mayor for her authority in the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (1) The report be noted and amended where appropriate;
- (2) It be recommended to the Fire Authority that:
 - The 1% pay increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services be noted which would take effect from 1st April 2017;
 - It be noted that travel payments between Members' home and place of

work (RBFA Headquarters) would be taxed from 1st April 2017;

- Members' allowances received for the period June 2016 to February 2017 be noted; and
- The 2016-2017 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members be noted.

55. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (2016/17) – QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2016)

Nikki Richards, Interim Director of Support Services (IDSS), provided the Committee with an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service third quarter (October – December) performance for the 2016/17 financial year. Officers had taken on board feedback from the previous quarters and it reported performance in four key areas. . Comparative data and trend analysis had been included wherever possible.

Good Performance:

- There had been no fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires during 2016 which was the first time this had been achieved when reviewing performance measures. This was due to the active prevention activities undertaken and the continued effective partnership working.
- There had been a continued improvement in call handling by TVFCS during Quarter 3 and most targets were now either being achieved or exceeded.
- The percentage of HFSC's being carried out for vulnerable people, whilst still not achieving target, had increased by 14.4% since the same point in the previous year.
- Sickness levels continued to exceed the target at 3.36% and were an improvement on 2015/16 which saw year to date performance of 4.27%.
- Whilst there was a slight increase in the number of accidents in Quarter 3, the figures were still lower than in 2015/16.
- 99.29% of eligible staff had completed a PDI.

Areas for Improvement:

- Casualties in accidental dwelling fires, whilst within target, had seen an increase in comparison to 2015/16 figures. Mark Gaskarth confirmed that this was an area which would be targeted in the future.
- Mobilising appliances in less than 120 seconds was still 7.8% off target, however, a month by month improvement in performance could be seen and the target was performing 18% better than at the same point in 2015/16.
- Existing attendance times of appliances to incidents, both RTC's and dwelling fires, was below target but both had seen an improvement in the last quarter.
- The volume of fire safety audits being carried out on premises requiring formal or informal activity had seen a decline which demonstrated that the targeted premises were not highlighting any problems.
- The percentage of accidental dwelling fires where no smoke alarm was installed had increased during Q3.

The Committee also considered the following documents:

- Corporate Health Indicators
- Transition Bid Spend summary - £1.6m had been allocated to date and a further £397k was available for allocation over the next couple of years up to 2019. Councillor Iain McCracken asked if completed projects could be removed from the document in future.
- Priority Programmes - IRMP and Organisational Development
- Corporate Risk Register
- Procurement Plan
- Audit recommendations
- Appendix A – Update on progress of the ICT Strategy
- Appendix B Corporate Measure definitions.

**NR to
action**

The report had been reviewed by the Strategic Performance Board and Corporate Management Team to ensure that issues and corrective actions were discussed and owned by Heads of Service.

Councillor Iain McCracken thanked Nikki Richards for such a comprehensive and informative report.

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 the corporate risk be noted;
- It be noted that the quarterly HR statistics would be included from Quarter 4;
- Any further actions to be discussed and agreed if appropriate.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 27th July 2017 at 6.30pm, Room 301, Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

The meeting concluded at 8.21pm