

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday 25 April 2016 at 6.30pm

Brigade Headquarters, Lynda Kenyon Suite, Newsham Court, Pincents Lane, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

- Members:**
- * Councillor Frank Abe
 - * Councillor David Absolom
 - (* present) * Councillor Alistair Auty
 - * Councillor Christine Bateson
 - * Councillor Phillip Bicknell
 - * Councillor Paul Bryant
 - * Councillor David Burbage
 - * Councillor Anthony Chadley
 - * Councillor Haqeeq Dar
 - * Councillor Colin Dudley
 - * Councillor Adrian Edwards
 - * Councillor Paul Gittings
 - * Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
 - * Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge
 - * Councillor John Lenton
 - * Councillor Chris Maskell
 - * Councillor Tom McCann
 - * Councillor Iain McCracken
 - * Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
 - * Councillor Ian Pittock
 - * Councillor Edward Plenty
 - * Councillor Angus Ross
 - * Councillor Ishrat Shah
 - * Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale
 - * Councillor Emma Webster

- In Attendance:**
- Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOF)
 - Stephen Chard (Committee Officer)
 - Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 - Andy Fry (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
 - Mark Gaskarth (Area Manager West)
 - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development)
 - Simon Jefferies (Area Manager Risk and Performance)
 - Dave Myers (Area Manager East)
 - Jo Reeves (Committee Officer)
 - Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
 - Anne-Marie Scott (Director of People and Organisational Development, DPOD)
 - Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
 - Tregear Thomas (Chair of the Pensions Board)

- Observers:**
- Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Members of Representative Bodies
 - Members of the Public

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98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors David Absolom, Christine Bateson, Phillip Bicknell, David Burbage, John Lenton, Chris Maskell, Iain McCracken and Edward Plenty.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct,

Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant declared a personal interest in the Chairman's announcement of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) First anniversary as members of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

The Chairman asked the Monitoring Officer to grant Members a dispensation to discuss Item 10 (Revised Structure of Fire Authority) which included an update to the Scheme of Allowances.

100. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2016

RESOLVED that:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2016 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Item 92 – Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Information and Sign Off Pack (page 24, seventh paragraph, first sentence):

Councillor Ian Pittock asked if the letter could include security issues and assurance that the CESG process would be used to ensure the security of the system.

101. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

There were no questions from members of the public under Standing Orders 19 and 25.

102. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Filming the Fire Authority

It was noted that the Fire Authority meeting would be filmed. The Chairman asked that if anyone did not want to be filmed they should indicate that this was the case.

RBFRS Welcomes New Firefighters

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had welcomed a total of 14 new firefighters after 12 wholetime and two retained recruits successfully completed an intensive 15-week course, with all training delivered 'in-house' for the first time.

During the course, the recruits learned all of the skills they would need to begin their careers as firefighters, including core skills, technical rescue and breathing apparatus training. Previously, parts of the recruits' course were outsourced to other fire and rescue services but with this being the first time RBFRS had undertaken wholetime recruitment in five years, the training centre staff were now in a position to deliver the entire course themselves. By undertaking all of their training in-house, all of the recruits could be posted to fire stations immediately (with some having already started), without any delay for conversion courses or specific equipment familiarisation as the in-house training enabled recruits to be trained to use the RBFRS's own equipment.

Another benefit of RBFRS delivering the complete course was that it enabled two retained recruits to complete their basic training at the same time as their wholetime colleagues. Although almost identical in content, retained and wholetime training was often delivered separately to allow for the availability of the retained recruits, as most had other employment or commitments. By designing the new course on a modular basis, it allowed more flexibility for retained recruits to fit in with their personal circumstances.

The course culminated in a celebratory 'passing out' parade held at the RBFRS training centre at Whitley Wood on Friday 15 April 2016. During this excellent event, the new firefighters showed off their new skills to their proud families and friends in a variety of drills, including a road traffic collision demonstration and a breathing apparatus scenario in the firehouse. Other special guests in attendance included Sir John Madejski, deputising for the Lord Lieutenant, and Victoria Fishburn, High Sheriff of Berkshire, as well as the Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, other Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer Andy Fry.

Certificates and awards were also presented at the passing out parade, including the Silver Axe, awarded to Matthew Godwin for achieving the highest score in the final assessments, and the Endeavour Award, presented to Martyn Ainsworth, who was chosen for the award by his instructors for showing consistent effort and excellent attitude to learning throughout the course.

The Chairman stated that he was very impressed by this team of new firefighters and was extremely proud of the firefighters and their instructors. He gave thanks for all of their efforts.

Refurbishment of Hungerford Fire Station

Following agreement by the Fire Authority to fund a refurbishment of Hungerford Fire Station, plans had been drawn up to deliver Royal Berkshire's First Tri-Service Station.

The Retained Duty System Fire Station would continue to deliver a Co-Responding emergency service utilising a South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) car and would also include an office for the use of a team of three Police Community Support Officers.

An architect had been commissioned and had delivered a concept drawing for a community fire station with a meeting room that would be available for use by community groups. The design of the building would have a strong brand image that had been developed through engagement with RBFRS Staff at all levels through a series of workshops. The brand would make the station identifiable as a fire station and would have a high degree of transparency making it welcoming to visitors and the public – a key theme of the Fire Authority's 'Vision 2019'. The Chairman commented that he had seen the plans for the Tri-Service Station which he felt were fantastic.

This was the first of a series of station refurbishments that the Fire Authority would deliver through the Strategic Asset Investment Framework over the coming years. The planned completion for this particular project was May 2017.

Co-responding update

The RBFRS now had three co-responder schemes in operation that, on occasions, simultaneously provided five individual vehicles to SCAS for despatch

to medical emergencies. These comprised a Retained Duty System car at Hungerford, the wholetime pump at Wokingham and 3 Officers.

The Officer scheme was initiated at the end of February 2016 following medical training. The Officers carried exactly the same equipment as the other responders including an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), oxygen and entonox. A variety of call types had already been attended including one cardiac arrest and a number of paediatric cases.

Hungerford continued to average 30 calls per month and Wokingham up to 160 per month.

Other schemes including Wargrave were currently in development.

Wholetime scheme - A notable success

On Friday 8th April Blue Watch Wokingham were mobilised to a suspected cardiac arrest in the town. The crew were on the scene within 3 minutes.

On arrival they were presented with a patient exhibiting no signs of life. A work colleague was delivering CPR. The crew immediately took over and as a team delivered manual CPR, oxygen and fitted AED pads to the patient. 2 shocks were administered to the patient by the fire crew and CPR continued. Paramedics and the air ambulance then arrived and a further shock was administered. The fire crew continued to assist the medical team.

Remarkably the patient regained consciousness and within 30 minutes was sat up talking to paramedics. The SCAS team leader later praised the efforts of the co-responders and stated that this rate of recovery was extremely rare (contrary to what was often depicted on television).

There was no doubt that the speed of attendance and the efficient and rapid intervention by Blue Watch contributed to saving this gentleman's life. The crew later selflessly nominated the patient's work colleague for an award at the forthcoming RBFRS awards ceremony.

The patient had expressed a wish to be re-united with the responders and arrangements were being made for this.

Awards Ceremony

The Awards and Celebration Ceremony would be taking place on Friday 20 May 2016 at Easthampstead Park. Long Service and Good Conduct medals would be presented on the evening alongside the Authority's own awards which celebrated the successes of the RBFRS and its staff over the last year. All Fire Authority Members had been invited to attend and be part of the celebration and were asked to RSVP to the Chief Fire Officer's PA (Sylvia Simmonds). The Chairman urged as many Members as possible to attend the ceremony.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) – First Anniversary

Councillor Angus Ross, Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee, informed the Fire Authority that the TVFCS (which covered Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) celebrated its first anniversary of being in operation on 23 April 2016. In recognition of this event a number of small celebrations had been held and Councillor Ross was present at the TVFCS to mark the event on the date itself.

Councillor Ross praised the TVFCS staff for their continued hard work.

Councillor Paul Bryant, also a Member of the TVFCS Joint Committee, echoed the points made by Councillor Ross. He added that it was pleasing to see the co-operation between the three counties which was beneficial to members of the public.

The Chairman added his thanks for the efforts of TVFCS staff over the past year.

Wellbeing Day – 18 May 2016

All Members were invited to attend a Wellbeing Day on 18 May 2016 at Newsham Court between 10:00 and 15:00. Exhibitors would be split into four zones; Eat Well Zone, Be Active Zone, Think Well Zone and Changing Habits Zone and ranged from a smoothie bike and a bike clinic to mindfulness, massage and self defence sessions.

All Members should have received an invitation via email and should contact Fitness & Health Adviser Helen Morbin for more information. (morbinh@rbfrs.co.uk 0118 938 4672)

Members Workshop – 4 July 2016

This year's workshop was scheduled to take place on 4 July 2016. This date had already been forwarded to Members and Members were reminded of the importance of attending this workshop.

During the workshop Members would review and confirm the Authority's commitment to Vision 2019. In addition to reviewing what had been achieved so far, Members would also look forward and agree future milestones. Members would also need to confirm the position on the 4 year efficiency plan and how this linked to the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. Further details would follow, but Members were asked to ensure this date was in their diaries.

Signing in/Councillors Lanyards

For security purposes, Members and visitors to the building were being asked to sign in at reception and wear appropriate lanyards whilst in the building. This was in addition to the attendance sheet that Members were required to sign.

Fire Exits

The Chairman explained the fire exits to be used if the alarm was to sound as there was no scheduled fire alarm test.

103. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

It was noted that no reports had been referred from the Audit and Governance Committee.

104. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

105. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

106. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

It was noted that the following agenda items had been recommended from:

- Items 10 and 11 from Management Committee on 11 April 2016
- Item 18a from Strategic Asset Management Committee on 5 April 2016
- Items 13, 14 and 18 from Audit and Governance Committee on 23 March 2016

107. REVISED STRUCTURE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Trevor Ferguson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), presented the Fire Authority with the recommendations from the Management Committee on the size of the Fire Authority, how seats were allocated, the committee structure, the role of Member champions and the updated Scheme of Allowance.

At the Fire Authority meeting on 22 April 2015 Members agreed that a cross party task and finish group should be established to make recommendations on; the future size of the Fire Authority, how seats were allocated on the Authority, and the future Committee Structure of the Authority, including the role and number of Member champions. The task and finish group was subsequently established with the following membership: Cllr Colin Dudley (Chairman), Cllr David Burbage, Cllr Emma Webster, Cllr Angus Ross and Cllr Paul Gittings. The group met three times between September 2015 and February 2016 and considered a wide range of evidence relating to other Authorities' governance structures and the effectiveness of the existing structure. The group developed a range of recommendations which were designed to improve:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of governance within Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
- Accountability, scrutiny and oversight
- Member involvement in policy development
- The speed of decision making

When the group considered the size of the Authority they were eager to balance efficiency and effectiveness. Having reviewed other Combined Fire Authority structures with memberships between 13 and 25, they decided a reduction in size was appropriate. To balance the desire for this reduction with the need to ensure all 6 Unitary Authorities were adequately represented, an Authority of 20 Members was recommended. The task and finish group also examined, reviewed and considered the existing committee structure. Again they compared it with other Combined Fire Authorities and recommended a committee structure of two larger Committees. These two committees, Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee, would now contain all 20 Members of the Authority, with membership of 11 and 9 respectively.

A reduction in the membership would mean that the Authority would not have any backbench Members. This would result in an increased general requirement of all Members appointed. In principle this should be attractive to Members, giving them a more active and involved role.

Under the new structure the only decisions not devolved from the Fire Authority, to one of the two committees, would be those reserved by law:

- Agreement of the Budget and setting of the precept
- Approval of the IRMP

- Approval of the Pay Policy Statement
- Statutory reports e.g. S151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) or Monitoring Officer

Audit and Governance Committee would continue to scrutinise and challenge on behalf of the Fire Authority. Members appointed to this Committee would not be members of the Management Committee and would carry out all of the functions set out in Appendix B of the report.

The Management Committee would take on a greater responsibility for devolved decision making. It would combine and coordinate much of the business delegated to the previous committees and working parties.

To ensure greater Member involvement in policy development and to ensure earlier Member engagement, the role of Lead Member had been introduced. Similar to Portfolio Holders in some Unitary Authorities, the Lead member would be responsible for specific areas of business i.e.

- Strategic Asset Management
- Integrated Risk Management
- Budget
- Collaboration

Lead Members would not have delegated authority to make decisions; however, they would be instrumental in the shaping and development of their area of business. They would work closely with Directors and Heads of Service, to ensure that papers and proposals being developed for consideration, by Members at Management Committee, were aligned to the Fire Authority's policy direction.

The task and finish group recommended the revision of Member Champions in line with the 2019 vision of the organisation. The current role of Member Learning and Development had been incorporated into the work of the Organisational Development (OD) Champion and the OD Programme. Given the importance of collaboration it was recommended that the Shared Services Champion role should be changed to a Collaboration Lead Member.

The proposed Fire Authority Member Champions were as follows:

- a. Community Safety
- b. Income Generation
- c. Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing
- d. Organisation Development

The changes to the Authority outlined above were the most significant and ambitious in the Fire Authority's history. The overall reduction in the number of Members and the additional responsibilities of the roles and committees proposed would be a significant change to Members' responsibilities. To ensure that the scheme of Member allowances matched the proposed changes an independent review had been commissioned. The independent review had made recommendations on the level of allowances which were now contained in the updated Scheme of Allowance attached in Appendix C.

Although the independent report proposed an overall increase, the total payable

across the 20 Members remained very low at £82K per annum. The increase in the Scheme of Allowance would result in additional annual revenue cost of £9,589.

Councillor Colin Dudley agreed with the efficiencies recommended in the report and noted that additional efficiencies would be created with respect to Officer time. The DCFO advised that one of the key factors in developing the recommendations had been in relation to the line of sight that Members had over policy development. The new Lead Member roles would contribute to the significant work of the Audit and Governance and the Management Committees.

Councillor Paul Bryant requested an estimate of the cost savings that the proposed new structure would create. The DCFO admitted that there would be an increase in costs on the Scheme of Allowances of approximately £10k but added that savings of Officer time were difficult to quantify. Councillor Dudley added that with fewer formal meetings, indirect cost savings would be significant.

Councillor Angus Ross asked whether it was intended to become a 'seven-day' authority, noting that one of the Management Committee dates had been scheduled for a Saturday. Councillor Dudley responded that the date in question was an error, but noted that he had held meetings with Officers on Saturdays and Sundays.

Councillor Paul Gittings sought assurance that all meeting dates had been set to avoid clashes with meeting dates at Members' respective Local Authorities, commenting that attendance at Fire Authority meetings would be more critical with a streamlined system. Councillor Dudley commented that Fayth Rowe, Committee Officer, had a difficult task in setting meeting dates which did not clash with any of the six unitary authorities represented on the Fire Authority and commended her work. Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons requested that the correct date be circulated to all Members outside of the meeting.

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Action**

Councillor Dudley moved that the Fire Authority accept recommendations 2.1 to 2.7 as laid out in the committee report; this was seconded by Councillor Emma Webster.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor Dudley stated that they represented a new policy direction regarding the involvement of Members and as such it was only right that the structure be reviewed to produce efficiencies. At present it was difficult to follow all decisions. In the new structure, every Member would have a seat on either the Management or the Audit and Governance Committee. Lead Members would be expected to put task and finish groups together, which would be encouraged to be cross-party. Committee papers would continue to be available to the public, unless they contained commercially sensitive information.

In seconding the motion to accept the recommendations as laid out in the report, Councillor Webster expressed the view that the process of recommending a new structure for the Fire Authority had been helpful in aligning the Fire Authority's processes with Vision 2019. Members would be expected to prioritise attendance at Fire Authority meetings; Councillor Webster commented that for some time there had not been a Fire Authority meeting with full attendance and she hoped that a reduction in numbers would achieve that.

Councillor Gittings stated that he had been a Member of the Task and Finish Group which produced the recommendations. He was grateful for the cross-party approach and welcomed streamlining measures. Councillor Gittings commented

that the number of Members representing Reading Borough Council would be reduced from four to three, expressing that they had been disadvantaged by the methodology of allocating seats via the number of registered electors instead of using census data. Turning to Members' Allowances, Councillor Gittings opined that if the number of Members was to be reduced, Members would be expected to contribute more and therefore the amount spent on allowances should be broadly similar. The indexation of allowances (outlined in MA19 of Appendix C) would be beneficial and the overall plans could be tweaked after one year if necessary. Councillor Gittings concluded by stating that he was unsure of the government's latest plans for Fire Authorities, whether they would come under the remit of the Home Office or Police and Crime Commissioners, voicing opposition for the latter.

Councillor Dudley invited the Fire Authority to vote on his motion to approve the recommendations as laid out in 2.1 to 2.7 of the report, seconded by Councillor Webster. At the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

- approve that the size is reduced to 20, and that the seats on the authority are allocated as per table 1, based on proportionality;
- approve that the committee structure is changed to consist of two committees (Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee) outlined in Appendix A;
- approve the terms of reference of Fire Authority, Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee as set out in Appendix B;
- approve the role of Lead Members outlined in 3.6;
- approve the role of the Member Champions in 3.8;
- approve the Member Scheme of Allowances in Appendix C; and
- approve the draft Corporate Calendar 2016/17 in Appendix E.

108. REPORT OF THE RESPONSES TO THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2015 - 2019 CONSULTATION

Simon Jefferies, Area Manager Risk and Performance (AMRP), introduced the report which outlined the responses to the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2015 - 2019 Consultation.

The IRMP 2015-19 consultation ran for twelve weeks from 4 January 2016 to 4 April 2016. The public and other stakeholders were asked to comment on the IRMP (Appendix B), via a number of methods; an online questionnaire (Appendix C) email, letter or telephone. The consultation was publicised via the Authority's website, through radio interviews, newspapers, by leaflet and poster campaigns, social media platforms and by presentations. In total there were 283 responses to the questionnaire which showed a considerable increase on previous IRMP consultation responses and six email responses were received. Staff and stakeholders were invited to stakeholder engagement events. Stakeholders who attended included partner emergency services and local Parish Councillors.

The consultation included a number of questions relating to how the Authority managed risk and whether the themes of the four key priority IRMP projects were appropriate for dealing with any potential future gaps identified in service delivery.

The AMRP explained that the responses to the consultation had been analysed and the findings were then outlined in a presentation.

The AMRP highlighted the importance of conscientiously considering the consultation feedback from the public and stakeholders, and asked Members to give consideration as to whether any changes were required to the IRMP 2015 – 2019 based on the feedback outlined in the presentation. The AMRP then took Members through the presentation:

- 50.72% (the highest score) rated the presentation of the IRMP consultation document and its content as 'Good'.
- The majority of respondents agreed that the RBFRS had taken account of all relevant factors in identifying risk (53%) and that the proposed approach would manage these risks (53%).
- 83.82% of respondents felt that the aims of the four priority projects were clearly explained.

Councillor Emma Webster noted that questions had been skipped by some respondents and queried whether there was an understanding of whether these respondents were members of the public or firefighters. The AMRP confirmed that this analysis had been undertaken and was clarified in the report.

Members agreed that no amendments were required to the Risk Management section of the IRMP 2015-19.

The AMRP continued his presentation by describing to Members the responses to the Four Key IRMP projects. In each case the AMRP gave examples of the comments received from the questionnaire and engagement events:

Project 1 - Response standards, station locations and crewing arrangements

- The most common response (39%) agreed that project one would address the gaps identified in the IRMP in current response delivery.

Members agreed that no amendments were required to the Project 1 section of the IRMP 2015-19.

Project 2 - The use of technology and special appliances

- The most common response (45%) agreed that project 2 would address the gaps identified in the IRMP in current response delivery. The use of technology and joint working were both positive areas highlighted in the open questions. However, some respondents were concerned about the use of resources.

Councillor Colin Dudley queried what was being referred to in the following comment, made as part of the stakeholder engagement event: 'public will always want 'someone' there'. The AMRP clarified that this made reference to the potential use of drones. The comment was to clarify that regardless of developments in technology, a presence would always be needed from emergency responders.

Councillor Webster queried whether awareness had been raised of the training programme available for community volunteers. The AMRP advised that efforts were made to encourage take up of training and this included with parish council representatives at stakeholder engagement events, although the number of parish councillors in attendance at these events was relatively minimal.

Members agreed that no amendments were required to the Project 2 section of the IRMP 2015-19.

Project 3 - Prevention and the wider health and wellbeing agenda

- The most common response (42.5%) agreed that project 3 would address the gaps identified in the IRMP in current response delivery. Feedback from the engagement events considered the need for more resources to deliver a prevention strategy and suggested the use of 'community champions in businesses and schools.'

Councillor Paul Bryant requested clarity on what was meant by the comment: 'try to distance the brigade from crime reduction'. Councillor Dudley pointed out that the crime of arson was a consideration for the Authority in terms of crime reduction and this was something which could be reduced by engagement with local communities.

Andy Fry, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), added that this comment could stem from a concern for some members of the community as a result of a closer alignment between the Fire Service and Thames Valley Police, and this could impact on levels of trust. The CFO felt that should this become a difficulty then some level of separation would be needed from the Police in particular instances.

Members agreed that no amendments were required to the Project 3 section of the IRMP 2015-19.

Project 4 - Protection and risk based inspections

- The most common response (46%) agreed that project 4 would address the gaps identified in the IRMP in current response delivery. Positive comments received included 'A well thought out plan'.

Councillor Dudley referred to a negative comment from the consultation: 'if there is no money for stations and paying firefighters, then there should be even less money available for assessing at risk premises' and clarified that a substantial amount of prevention work was undertaken by the Fire Service. This was a highly important area of work that helped to save lives and was particularly important for more vulnerable residents such as the elderly. Councillor Dudley made this point as he felt that the importance of prevention work needed to be clearly understood.

Councillor Bryant referred to the comment made in relation to the need for the Fire Service to be fully proactive in respect of new developments and took the opportunity to highlight the importance of efforts being made to ensure that fire sprinklers were installed as part of new developments.

Members agreed that no amendments were required to the Project 4 section of the IRMP 2015-19.

Councillor Dudley then proposed acceptance of recommendations 2.1: To consider the results and the feedback in the IRMP 2015-19 consultation report and 2.2: to agree to ratify the IRMP 2015-19. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Webster who gave her thanks both to Officers for their comprehensive work throughout the consultation process and to the respondents to the consultation.

RESOLVED unanimously that the Fire Authority:-

Had considered the results and the feedback in the IRMP 2015-19 consultation

report and agreed to ratify IRMP 2015-2019.

109. RESPONSE STANDARDS OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

Simon Jefferies, Area Manager Risk and Performance (AMRP), sought agreement on the range of options that should be included in the response standards consultation, should the Fire Authority decide to proceed with it following consideration of the feedback from the IRMP 2015-2019 consultation.

The operational peer assessment team in 2014 reported that the Fire Authority's standards were overly complex, difficult to understand and should be realigned with the Fire Authority's new strategic commitments. The Fire Authority then directed a review of operational response standards. At the Fire Authority meeting on 17 February 2016, Members agreed a single consultation for response standards and further agreed that the options to be included in the response standards consultation should be considered by the Fire Authority once the consultation on the IRMP 2015-19 had closed. The IRMP consultation closed on the 4 April 2016 and having considered the feedback from that consultation, Members would now need to agree the options for the response standards consultation.

The report outlined a number of options and the Fire Authority was asked to agree that the options were used as the basis of the response standards consultation.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons sought clarification on paragraph 3.9.1 of Appendix A to the report. Councillor Colin Dudley advised that long-serving Fire Authority Members would remember the introduction of call challenge, whereby staff were trained to recognise the signs of a hoax call. The scheme had been successful in reducing hoax calls and discouraged the callers when it became apparent that a fire engine would not automatically be despatched. The details of these calls had been passed to the police and proven to be hoaxes. Councillor Dudley reminded Members that hoax calls costed lives because when an engine was sent to a hoax call, it was not available to respond to a genuine call. Call challenge had been able to reduce hoax calls without risking lives.

Councillor Dudley moved that the Fire Authority accept recommendation 2.1 as laid out in the committee report; this was seconded by Councillor Emma Webster.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Webster noted that Fire Authority Members represented a number of different community groups in addition to their own local authorities. It was important that this consultation was widely distributed to the public as the Fire and Rescue Service had not made changes to its response standards for some time.

Councillor Dudley invited the Fire Authority to vote on his motion to approve the recommendation as laid out in 2.1 of the report, seconded by Councillor Webster. At the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that:

the range of options in 3.4 be agreed to be used as the basis of the response standards consultation.

110. ANNUAL PLAN 2016-17

Simon Jefferies, Area Manager Risk and Performance (AMRP), provided the Fire

Authority with an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) Annual Plan 2016-17. The annual plan would provide direction for the organisation for the coming 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 and would not do. It would 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. It also detailed a change to current audit arrangements.

The report was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 23 March 2016 and, following detailed scrutiny, was subsequently recommended for Fire Authority approval. Previous planning models and frameworks had not effectively dealt with the various meeting structures and timelines for the completion and submission of reports by key deadlines. The Fire Authority had therefore committed to longer term planning and this was welcomed, but this would make the process of corporate planning more complex. The annual corporate planning process would align a number of interrelated planning processes to support service delivery. This plan reflected the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments, which were set for 2015-19, by highlighting the areas of focus for a single year and stating the measures of success and setting associated targets to achieve them. It would be available on the intranet to provide a single access point for all managers to timely, accurate information to assist with planning and decision-making.

The plan had been developed as an online document to ensure that any changes to processes or meeting dates could be incorporated in a timely manner. The format had links to a number of other planning tools and processes which would bring the focus of managers to a single location and would create a more joined up approach to planning.

As well as linking with a number of other key documents (listed in Paragraph 3.5 of the report), the Annual Plan also contained the audit plan. Audit was an important part of providing the Fire Authority and the public with the assurance that the service was run properly and in ways that had been agreed by Officers and Members. It demonstrated that business was conducted in accordance with relevant legislation, government expectations, good practice and organisational policy. The audits would contribute to the annual Statement of Assurance, which demonstrated compliance with the standards set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2012). To support this, the plan for 2016-17 was to broaden the scope and improve the quality of audits.

Councillor Ian Pittock made reference to the audit plan and specifically the internal audit review of IT systems. He sought assurance that appropriately qualified IT specialists would be involved to ensure necessary compliance levels were adhered to. Trevor Ferguson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), confirmed that specialist IT professionals would be involved to ensure Public Services Network (PSN) compliance etc was in place.

Councillor Frank Abe referred to the corporate performance measures and was pleased to note that consistency and clarity was being achieved in terms of response standards. Specifically, the following target commentary text for response standards 'The standard is measured from the point at which TVFCS pick up the 999 call to the time a fire appliance gets to the fire.'

Continuing with the corporate performance measures, Councillor Paul Bryant

queried why the target for ‘% of dwelling fires where no smoke alarm is installed’ had been reduced. The DCFO clarified that a reduced target was a sign of improvement as more and more dwellings had smoke alarms fitted.

Councillor Colin Dudley then proposed acceptance of the recommendation to approve the Annual Plan 2016-17. In doing so he expressed thanks to the Officers involved in producing the document which was a clear and concise plan of the work planned for the coming year. He also gave his agreement to the point already made in relation to response standards as it was important that these performance measures were clearly understood. Councillor Emma Webster seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED unanimously that:

- The Annual Plan 2016-17 be approved.

111. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning and Development, sought final approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 following further consideration of the Statement by the Audit and Governance Committee on 23 March 2016.

At its meeting on 17 February 2016 the Fire Authority approved the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17, subject to the amendments highlighted in the report accompanying the draft statement being approved by the Audit and Governance Committee prior to the Statement’s publication.

At its meeting on 23 March 2016 the Audit and Governance Committee considered and approved an update to the Statement in relation to Continual Professional Development (CPD) payments. Two other minor amendments in relation to the paragraph on equal pay had also been made following consideration of the detail at the February Fire Authority meeting.

In accordance with the request of the Authority, a report on the outcomes of the Local Government Association’s pay audit referenced in the Statement would be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for consideration on 28 July 2016.

Appendix A provided a tracked change version of the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 indicating the amendments made and subsequently approved by Audit and Governance Committee. Officers therefore recommended that the Fire Authority adopt the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix A.

Councillor Dudley moved that the Fire Authority approve the amendment to the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17. This motion was seconded by Councillor Alistair Auty. Councillor Dudley, in proposing the motion, noted that minor changes were being made and that the Audit and Governance Committee had received these recommendations.

Councillor Dudley invited the Fire Authority to vote on his motion to approve the recommendations as laid out in 2.1 of the report, seconded by Councillor Auty. At the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that

The Fire Authority APPROVE the amendment to the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 in respect of Continuous Professional Development payments.

112. RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS UNION RECOGNITION REQUEST

Anne-Marie Scott, Director of People and Organisational Development (DPOD), presented two similar reports to the Fire Authority. These contained requests from the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) and the Fire Officers' Association (FOA) for formal recognition within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (consolidation) Act 1992. The Chairman agreed that both agenda items would be taken together.

A record of the debate for both items was contained within item 112, with a separate vote contained within item 113.

A trade union was 'recognised' by an employer when it negotiated agreements with employers on pay and other terms and conditions of employment on behalf of a group of workers defined as the 'bargaining unit' through the process of collective bargaining.

The process of collective bargaining allowed the organisation to negotiate changes to contractual terms and provided a formal route to escalate and resolve any differences.

RBFRS currently recognised only the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for collective bargaining purposes. Having a range of trade unions recognised for negotiation and consultation processes allowed the workforce a greater choice in representation and provided for wider spectrum of views on local and national matters. Having more than one recognised trade union would require a review of relevant policies and membership of relevant committees, for example Pensions Board.

Formal letters of request from the RFU and FOA were provided as appendices to the two reports.

Councillor Paul Gittings queried the number of RBFRS staff who were members of the RFU and FOA. The DPOD confirmed that there were RBFRS staff who were members of these trade unions, but the numbers could not be confirmed as access to this information was restricted. Andy Fry, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), noted that while these records could not be accessed, the fact that these requests had been made by the Berkshire branches of the RFU and FOA strongly indicated that they both had members from the RBFRS.

Councillor Colin Dudley noted that the acceptance of these recommendations could encourage more members of staff to join these trade unions.

Councillor Emma Webster referred to the fact that the FBU had a standing invitation to address Management Committee meetings if they wished to and queried whether this invitation would also be extended to the RFU and FOA if the recommendations were accepted. Councillor Dudley confirmed this to be the intention.

Councillor Gittings raised a concern that the collective bargaining and negotiation process would be complicated by the involvement of three rather than a single trade union as was currently the case. Councillor Dudley commented that an

increased level of staff representation would be a positive development.

The CFO stated his view that the involvement of representative bodies was extremely important for the RBFRS. This was currently restricted to the FBU and they were well established. An increase in the number of representative bodies could mean that collective bargaining and negotiation could become more complicated, but differing views could be held and these should be recognised.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of recommendations 2.1, 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 for agenda item 15 – Retained Firefighters Union Recognition Request. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons. The proposal was put to the vote and was approved.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

approve the request for recognition on the following basis:

- Full recognition for collective bargaining purposes in respect of retained firefighters.
- That all recognised Trade Unions be encouraged to co-operate and act together on behalf of the relevant bargaining unit.

113. FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION RECOGNITION REQUEST

The debate for this item was as contained in item 112.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of recommendations 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 for agenda item 16 – Fire Officers Association Recognition Request. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons. The proposal was put to the vote and was approved.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

approve the request for recognition on the following basis:

- Full recognition for collective bargaining purposes in respect of Middle Managers as defined by the Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, i.e. Station Manager, Group Manager and Area Manager roles.
- Full recognition for collective bargaining processes in respect of Firefighter, Crew Manager and Watch Manager roles.
- Recognition for consultation purposes in respect of matters relating to support staff.
- That all recognised Trade Unions be encouraged to co-operate and act together on behalf of the relevant bargaining unit.

Following the vote, Paul Jacques, Secretary of the FOA, was invited to address the Fire Authority. Mr Jacques gave thanks to Members for voting in favour of the recommendations. He confirmed that there were eight members of the FOA from the RBFRS and felt that numbers could increase with the FOA being formally recognised. Mr Jacques added his agreement to the important role of representative bodies and felt that it was useful for members of staff to have a choice of trade union.

Councillor Dudley stated that he looked forward to working with these newly

recognised representative bodies.

114. PENSIONS BOARD

Anne-Marie Scott, Director of People and Organisational Development (DPOD) introduced the report to update the Fire Authority regarding the establishment and activities of the Local Pension Board and to enable the Fire Authority to provide further direction to the Local Pension Board particularly in relation to its terms of reference.

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 required the establishment of local pension boards to assist the Fire Authority in its role as scheme manager. On 23 February 2015 the Fire Authority approved the establishment of the Local Pension Board in accordance with the provisions outlined in that paper indicating the role of the board was to:

- a. Secure compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to governance and administration of the scheme, and any connected scheme
- b. Secure compliance with any requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator, and
- c. Assist the Scheme Manager in relation to any other matters specified in scheme regulations.

In accordance with legislation, the board was established by 1 April 2015 and held its first meeting on 7 July 2015. The board consisted of four members – currently two management representatives (Simon Jefferies (Vice Chair) and Lucy Greenway) and two member representatives, currently from the FBU (Lincoln Ball and Tregear Thomas (Chair)).

The board met on four occasions and considered and addressed a number of areas to clarify how the board should conduct itself. These meetings resulted in a review of the terms of reference, production of a code of conduct and conflicts of interest protocol.

Initial training for board members was provided by the LGA Firefighters' Pension Adviser, Clair Alcock, on 20 July 2015; however this was limited to the remit of the board and did not address the technical knowledge of how the various pension schemes operated. Board members had been able to make use of an online e-learning portal provided by the Pensions Regulator in order to increase their knowledge and understanding in areas including conflicts of interest, managing risks and internal controls, maintaining accurate member data, maintaining member contributions, providing information to members and others, resolving internal disputes and reporting breaches of the law. Further training was scheduled to take place in early May, with Clair Alcock providing additional input to Board Members

The board were updated as required with information provided by the LGA and other pension groups as deemed relevant by the Head of HR and Learning and Development (HHR&LD).

Meetings were supported by the Committee Officer and minutes published on Trove.

Having reviewed the initial 'Terms of Reference' provided by the Fire Authority in April 2015 (Appendix A) it had become apparent that they were not fully compliant with the guidance issued by the Pensions Regulator. The board

therefore provided a 'tracked change' revised version at Appendix B for consideration by the Fire Authority.

The Board had also identified a number of further actions which would be necessary:

- Training needs had been identified and would be facilitated though training provided locally where necessary via the HHR&LD and other HR staff. Additionally training was to be provided regionally via the LGA Pensions Adviser and/or members of the Regional Fire Pension Group to which the HHR&LD belonged.
- The board would assist the Scheme Manager, as required with decisions regarding the remaining 47 discretions under the Fire Pensions Scheme 2015.
- The Terms of Reference, once agreed by the Fire Authority, would be published.
- The Pension Board would assist the Scheme Manager to review all fire schemes against the practical guidance and standards set out in the Pensions Regulator's code of practice.
- The board would hold meetings periodically and as necessary.
- The would keep up to date with information provided by the HHR&LD and other HR staff, the LGA, the Fire Authority, and other relevant groups.

Councillor Dudley thanked the Chair of the Pensions Board for the comprehensive report and expressed his gratitude to the members of the Pensions Board for their hard work including the training they had undertaken. Councillor Dudley moved that the Fire Authority resolve to approve the recommendations as outlined in 2.1 to 2.5 of the report. Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge seconded the motion.

In proposing the motion, Councillor Dudley noted that the Pension Board had been established for one year and was an important activity in discharging the Fire Authority's responsibility regarding pensions. He expressed that the Fire Authority needed to provide guidance and support to the Pensions Board.

Councillor Dudley invited the Fire Authority to vote on his motion to approve the recommendations as laid out in 2.1 to 2.5 of the report, seconded by Councillor Jackson-Doerge. At the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

2.1. **AGREE** matters relating to further direction for the Local Pension Board in terms of governance, specifically:

- a. That the Local Pension Board reports via Audit and Governance Committee.
- b. That the Pension Board will provide a standing annual report for the Audit and Governance Committee in the future

2.2. **AGREE** to the revised Terms of Reference (Appendix B).

2.3. **AGREE** the draft Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interests Policy (Appendix C)

2.4. **NOTE** the establishment of the RBFA Local Pension Board.

2.5. **NOTE** the activities undertaken by the Local Pension Board thus far.

115. ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND CHAMPIONS

RESOLVED that the following Committee and Member Champion annual reports be noted:

- Councillor Iain McCracken – Audit and Governance Committee
- Councillor Angus Ross – Strategic Asset Management Committee
- Councillor Emma Webster – Community Safety Champion
- Councillor Phillip Bicknell – Income Generation Champion
- Councillor Frank Abe – Member Learning and Development Champion
- Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge – Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion
- Councillor David Burbage – Shared Services Champion
- Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons – Organisational Development Champion

Councillor Colin Dudley thanked the Committee Chairman and Member Champions for their annual reports and for their work. He also thanked Officers for their support.

116. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that:

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Forward Plan for the period April to July 2016 be noted.

117. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the following meetings, which had been published on the RBFRS website, be noted:

- Audit and Governance Committee – 3 December 2015 (approved)
- Strategic Asset Management Committee – 19 January 2016 (approved)
- Management Committee – 8 February 2016 (approved)

118. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 29 June 2016, 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

119. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND 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 Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 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.

120. COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

The Fire Authority considered an exempt report in relation to establishing a new Community Interest Company.

RESOLVED that:

The recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

(The meeting concluded at 8.35pm)