

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Wednesday, 26 June 2019, at 6.30pm

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

Members: (* <i>present</i>)	*	Councillor Christine Bateson	*	Councillor Jo Lovelock
	*	Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	*	Councillor Tony Linden
		Councillor Jeff Brooks	*	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	*	Councillor Tricia Brown	*	Councillor Angus Ross
		Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale	*	Councillor Garth Simpson
	*	Councillor David Cannon		Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey
	*	Councillor Colin Dudley	*	Councillor Satpal Parmar
	*	Councillor Paul Gittings	*	Councillor Ted Plenty
	*	Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons	*	Councillor Dexter Smith
	*	Councillor Graham Howe	*	Councillor Simon Werner

In Attendance:

Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
Paul Binyon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AMR&R)
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
Tony Deacon (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AMP&P)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Tamara Hack (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AMC&P)
Jo Reeves (Committee Officer)
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

Observers:

Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Members of Representative Bodies
Members of the Public

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Action

RESOLVED that Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

Councillor Dudley read the following statement, '*I Councillor Colin Dudley having been elected to the office of Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability*'. He thanked Members for placing their confidence in him and stated that it was an honour and privilege to lead the Fire Authority.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

Councillor Helliar-Symons read the following statement, '*I Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons having been elected to the office of Vice-Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability*'. She also stated that she was proud to take on the role of Vice-Chairman for one of the best Fire Authorities in the country.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Jeff Brooks, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Jane Stanford-Beale.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Angus Ross and David Cannon stated that should the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) be discussed at the meeting they declared a personal interest as they were proposed as members of the TVFCS Joint Committee. They would therefore not participate in any debate on the TVFCS should it materialise.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2019, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

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

7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

He announced he would begin the annual meeting by welcoming new Members to the Authority and recognise the contribution of Members who had stepped down from the

Authority since the last meeting.

Farewell to Fire Authority Members

- Councillor Adrian Edwards had served on the Fire Authority for 12 years, having been elected to the Fire Authority on the 27 June 2007. He became Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee in 2016 and was also Member Champion for Health, Safety and Wellbeing and was involved in the successful reduction of sickness absence rates to one the lowest of any fire and rescue service nationally.
- Councillor Malcolm Alexander joined the Fire Authority on 29 June 2016. He was a Management Committee member since 2016, and between June 2017 and May 2019, he had been appointed as Collaboration Lead Member, where he chaired the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee in 2018/19.
- Councillor Jason Brock was appointed onto the Fire Authority on 28 June 2017. During his first year as Fire Authority Member he sat on Audit and Governance Committee and from June 2018 he was appointed onto Management Committee. I would like wish him every success in his new position as Leader of Reading Borough Council.
- Our thanks goes to all these Members for their dedication and hard work whilst on the Fire Authority.
- Joining the Fire Authority were eight new Members:
 - The Chairman welcomed back Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale to the Fire Authority. Cllr Stanford-Beale was first appointed by Reading Borough Council onto the Fire Authority for one year in 2015/16. Joining Councillor Stanford Beale from Reading was Councillor Jo Lovelock, who had previously served as Leader of the Council.
 - Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Garth Simpson, Tony Linden were welcomed from West Berkshire Council.
 - Councillor Tricia Brown had been nominated by the Chairman's own local authority, Bracknell Forest Council.
 - Councillor David Cannon was welcomed from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - Finally, Councillor Graham Howe from Wokingham Borough Council was welcomed to the Fire Authority.
- The Chairman hoped that all new Members found their time on the Fire Authority to be both rewarding and enjoyable. All new Members were presented with the Member Handbook which provided an overview of the Authority, its governance arrangements and important information on the Service.
- All Members were reminded to forward their signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office to either the Monitoring Officer, Graham Britten or, Fayth Rowe.
- The appointment of Committees would be made later on in the agenda and the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee would be made at the rising of the Fire Authority.
- Members of Audit and Governance Committee were asked to note that the

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meeting scheduled on 4 July had been cancelled, and were asked to hold a provisional date for the next meeting on 31 July. Further information on this change would be provided by Conor Byrne under agenda item 13.

- All Members were invited to attend a special meeting on Thursday 4 July, 6.30pm at Newsham Court in place of cancelled Audit and Governance Committee meeting. Representatives from the Home Office would be attending this meeting to give a presentation on the Emergency Service Mobile Communication Programme. Some Members had already confirmed their availability.

Misreporting of Fire Engine Numbers in Berkshire

- Some Members would be aware of recent media coverage regarding the number of fire engines in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Some media reports had stated that there had been a decline in the number of fire engines serving the public with one headline even stating there was a shortage of fire engines in Berkshire.
- This was untrue. The Chairman was incredibly disappointed that this had been reported, as in fact, the number of frontline fire engines had remained at 21 since 2014.
- The Communications Team had made repeated efforts to correct this irresponsible reporting, to no success, as the printed story was published without correction.
- This was being picked up with the publication, but in the meantime, the Chairman wanted to reassure the public that there continued to be no impact to the frontline services we deliver to the people of Royal Berkshire. Any reports otherwise were simply untrue.

Firefighters Memorial Day

- On Saturday, 4 May, the Service joined fire and rescue services across the Country in marking Firefighters Memorial Day.
- The annual memorial event was an opportunity to pay tribute and remember those who have died or had been injured as a result of their duties whilst serving their communities.
- Wholetime and on-call watches on duty during the day were joined by Fire Authority Members and members of support staff at midday for a parade at the front of fire stations. A minute's silence was then held in honour of the fallen.
- On Sunday, 5 May, the Chairman was honoured to attend the Annual Service of Remembrance was held at the Holy Sepulchre in London, along with the Colour Party and Area Manager, Jim Powell.
- The Chairman thanked all who joined the commemorations for Firefighters Memorial Day, an important event to remember the bravery and sacrifices of all those who have served and continue to serve.

Crowthorne Rebuild Begins

- Following the relocation of its crew to Wellington College in April, building work at Crowthorne Fire Station had commenced.
- This project would provide the Authority with its second tri-service station in the

County and would offer shared facilities for Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service. The enhanced community asset will further improve partnership working in the village.

- It was the next on-call station to benefit from Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's capital investment programme which focused on how the Service continued to maintain and renew our buildings, fleet and equipment and ICT.
- A groundbreaking event was held on Thursday, 9 May, ahead of the rebuild, where guests could hear about plans for the station and meet some of the people responsible in bringing the plans forward – our in-house Estates team, the contractors and architects, as well as the local crew who lived and/or worked in the village.
- Demolition of the old station was now complete and hoardings had been placed around the site in readiness for the re-build process. Progress of this exciting project could be followed on the Service's social media channels, where regular updates would be published.

Female Focused Have a Go Days

- Saturday, 29 June, would be the final of three female focused Have a Go events that the Service is running.
- The events aimed to encourage more women to consider a career as a firefighter and so far, 17 candidates had taken the opportunity to take part in the sessions and the final event was fully booked.
- As well as getting to try the physical assessment tests during the sessions, candidates had been meeting current firefighters and instructors and getting an overview of what life in the fire service was like.
- Although the application window for wholetime firefighters was not currently open, it would be opening in the summer, giving candidates a chance to prepare in advance.
- The Chairman thanked all staff who had worked hard to provide these events.

Thousands raised for Good Causes

- Fire stations across Berkshire had once again excelled in raising money for good causes through charity car washes and during Royal Ascot Week.
- At Royal Ascot, crews from Ascot, Bracknell, Crowthorne, Maidenhead joined with several of the Service's officers and blue light partners to help ensure the event ran smoothly.
- At the same time they were fundraising for The Fire Fighters Charity, raising an impressive £9,274 throughout the week.
- Car washes at Bracknell, Wokingham and Caversham Road during May also raised thousands more for both The Fire Fighters Charity as well as Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- This followed on from the success of Slough firefighters, who raised more than any other station in the whole country in March. They were taking part in The Fire Fighters Charity National Car Wash League and were presented with the winner's award on 31 May by the charity and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Foye.

Supporting the Armed Forces

- At the end of April the Service took part in a Health Open Day at Combermere Barracks in Windsor.
- The day had been organised to give serving members of the armed forces a chance to meet and speak to a host of external providers in relation to health matters. The Service was there to give an overview of what it did, with a particular focus on road safety and careers in the fire and rescue service that are available for service leavers.
- With over 300 armed forces staff taking part in the event, it was a fantastic opportunity to talk about fire service life and the nature of what the Service does.
- On Saturday, 29 June, the Service would also be joining in celebrations for Armed Forces Day. Some staff would be running a stand in Forbury Gardens, Reading from 11am – 4pm to show our support. The Chairman requested that Members attended to show their support.
- Both these events would help to strengthen the Service's ties with the armed forces. As many of you would be aware, in August 2018, the Service was awarded the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver award and we continue to make good progress in working towards the Gold award.

Getting to Know RBFERS Event

- The Chairman was pleased to announce that on Friday, 11 October, the Service would be holding a "Getting to Know RBFERS" event at the Training Centre in Whitley Wood.
- The event would be an opportunity for new and old Members to find out about all areas of the fire and rescue service and how the Service delivered its services to the people of Berkshire.
- All Members were invited to attend and would receive formal invitations in due course.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer

- Finally, tonight really was a night for the changing of the Guard! The Service had not only welcomed and said goodbye to our new and old Members but was also welcoming the new Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Mark Arkwell.
- Mark joined the Service from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and took over the reins from our departing Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Simon Jefferies. All Members joined the Chairman in welcoming Mark to his first full Fire Authority and wished him every success in his new role.
- The Chairman also wanted to take the opportunity to place on record his thanks and that of the Authority to Simon who had joined the meeting tonight.
- Simon joined Royal Berkshire Fire Brigade, as it was then, on the 26 June 1989, and dedicated his full 30 years of Service to the people of Royal Berkshire.
- Simon achieved many great things during his time with the Service, including:
 - Achieving the highest overall mark in the UK Fire Service when he passed his Station Officers exam!

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- He led the learning and development function to an Ofsted rating of “outstanding” during his time as Group Manager Learning and Development!
- But probably his greatest achievement and his legacy to the Service can be found in our recently published HMICFRS report:
 - *“In 2014, a review highlighted a culture of bullying in the service. The current senior leaders told us they have been working to create a positive and inclusive culture across the organisation. Staff told us they see senior leaders as positive role models and respect them for improving the culture within the service.”*
- Simon joined the Senior Leadership Team 5 years ago when this journey started.
- He brought organisational credibility and a track record of acting with integrity and honesty.
- His reputation and his commitment to fairness gave our new team the opportunity to demonstrate that this was how they wanted to do business too.
- He initiated the process of co-design with our representative bodies, which is now central to how the Service works.
- His reputation and credibility have been the cornerstone on which improved relationship with frontline staff has been built.
- The Chairman stated that Simon should be immensely proud of what he achieved and presented the retirement axe.

Simon Jeffries thanked the Chairman for the kind words and paid tribute to the Senior Leadership Team for their hard work to transform the Service over the past five years. Simon thanked the Members for their support and thanked all officers and staff. Most of all Simon wished to thank Trevor Ferguson, the CFO, for the faith he placed in him.

8. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBERS, MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer) introduced the report and the tabled list of appointments of Committees, Lead Members, Member Champions and Outside Bodies.

The Chairman reported that two nominations, Councillors Paul Gittings and Tina McKenzie-Boyle had been received for the role of LGA representative. Members were invited to vote to determine which Councillor would be selected. 6 votes were received for Councillor Gittings and 10 votes received for Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle. It was carried Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle appointed as LGA representative and Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons as her substitute.

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The appointments to Committees, Lead Member, Member Champion, Outside Bodies and Working Parties listed in the table below were agreed.

Management Committee	(Con) Cllr Colin Dudley
	(Con) Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
	(Con) Cllr Angus Ross
	(Con) Cllr David Cannon
	(Con) Cllr Dexter Smith
	(Con) Cllr Garth Simpson
	(Lab) Cllr Paul Gittings
	(Lab) Cllr Jo Lovelock
	(Lab) Cllr Ted Plenty
	(Lib Dem) Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
	(Lib Dem) Cllr Jeff Brooks
Audit and Governance Committee	(Con) Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	(Con) Cllr Tony Linden
	(Con) Cllr Dennis Benneyworth
	(Con) Cllr Christine Bateson
	(Con) Cllr Jane Stanford-Beale
	(Con) Cllr Graham Howe
	(Lab) Cllr Tricia Brown
	(Lab) Cllr Satpal Parmar
	(Lib Dem) Cllr Simon Werner
Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) roles	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman Cllr Colin Dudley
	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Vice - Chairman Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
	Labour Opposition Leader Cllr Paul Gittings
	Liberal Democrats Opposition Leader Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
	Budget and Income Generation Lead Member Cllr Colin Dudley
	Strategic Asset Management Lead Member Cllr Angus Ross
	Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Member Cllr Dexter Smith

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	Collaboration Lead Member Cllr David Cannon
	Community Safety Member Champion Cllr Christine Bateson
	Organisational Development Member Champion Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Member Champion Cllr Christine Bateson
	TVFCS Joint Committee Cllr Angus Ross
	TVFCS Joint Committee Cllr David Cannon
Appointments to Outside Bodies	LGA representative Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	LGA representative's substitute Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
Collaboration Working Group	Cllr David Cannon
	Cllr Garth Simpson
	Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	Cllr Dexter Smith
	Cllr Paul Gittings
Member Development Working Group	Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
	Cllr Graham Howe
	Cllr Dennis Benneyworth
	Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	Cllr Paul Gittings
Property Development Working Group	Cllr Angus Ross
	Cllr Jeff Brooks
	Cllr Simon Werner
	Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons
	Cllr Tony Linden
	Cllr Dexter Smith
	Cllr Paul Gittings
	Cllr Jo Lovelock

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

1. Agreed nominations received for the appointment of Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee;
2. Agreed the appointment of Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle as LGA representative and Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons as her substitute;
3. Agreed nominations received for the appointments for Lead Member roles, Outside Bodies and Working Groups listed; and
4. Noted Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members (attached as Appendix A).

11. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services) introduced the report which provided the Annual Report on Governance detailing Member Attendance and Allowances in 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the Fire Authority:

1. Note the report;
2. Note Members' Allowances received for the period June 2018 – May 2019;
3. Note the 2018/19 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members for the period June 2018 – May 2019.

12. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES TRANCHE 2 RESULTS

Trevor Ferguson (CFO) and Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services) gave a presentation to provide Members with an overview of the results from the recent inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The CFO stated that in 2018 the National Framework reintroduced inspections. Tranche 1 took place in mid 2018 and tranche 2, of which the Service was a part, in late 2018. The inspection looked at three areas, effectiveness, efficiency and people. The CFO was delighted to announce that in all areas the Service had been found to be 'good'. Although there was no league table of results, the Service had performed third best of thirty services so far inspected.

The result was a testament to the hard work of the staff and Members, including Andy Fry, the previous CFO.

Nikki Richards provided more detail under each of the three areas inspected.

Nationally, the Service had been hailed for many examples of its work including its approach to risk, joint working with Wokingham Borough Council on sprinklers, Thames Valley Fire Control Service and the Change 100 programme.

A planning workshop with Members would be held in July 2019 to continue the Service's high aspirations and reach for an even better service.

Councillor Paul Gittings praised the report and asked how the Service would improve its diversity. The CFO reported that the Service recognised itself in the results which contained no surprises. They knew they needed to be better and would continue the

direction of travel set in the People Strategy. Nikki Richards added that the focus in the Inspection Report was on the diversity of firefighters and the figures did not include prevention and support staff, of which 70% were female. While the Service was interested in the contribution an individual could make and not their 'wrapper', it recognised that the community did not see themselves reflected in the workforce. Work was underway to resolve this and Members were asked for their support.

Councillor Colin Dudley commended the efforts of all staff and Fire Authority Members and stated that the results were their legacy. He praised the CFO who set high targets and fostered a culture of continuous learning and development. He stated that the residents of Berkshire should also thank the Service and know that they were well served and kept safe at the price of £60 per resident.

Councillor Gittings echoed the sentiments of Councillor Dudley and thanked the Senior Leadership Team for leading a culture which had enabled the good result. He noted that it had been a difficult period since 2010, with no pay rises and commended the performance achieved against this background.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons stated that it was a terrific result. The Service had been transformed by Andy Fry and his success had been built on by the CFO. She agreed that the Senior Leadership Team were role models and thanked all staff for their hard work and ambition.

Councillor Tina Mackenzie-Boyle led a round of applause for officers on the result of the inspection.

Councillor Dexter Smith expressed the view that the Service delivered a good service and also had the capacity and willingness to continue improving.

The CFO thanked Members for their kind words and recognised the collaborative spirit between the Fire Authority and the Service which had enabled the pleasing result.

RESOLVED that:

The Fire authority note the report.

13. FORWARD PLAN

Conor Bryne (Head of Finance and Procurement) reported that the Audit and Governance Committee scheduled on 4 July had been cancelled. The external auditors, Ernest and Young had advised that they would not be in a position to sign off the statutory accounts by 4 July as they were currently considering at a national level how to account for the Court of Appeal judgment in the McCloud case. This related to transitional protection offered to some members as part of the reform to public sector pensions which had now been judged to be unlawful. The Government was seeking permission to appeal the decision.

Once the auditors had formed a position on the appropriate accounting treatment, it was expected that the Service, would have to ask the actuaries to calculate specific estimates of the increased pension liabilities. Given that the auditors were yet to decide the appropriate accounting treatment and that there was likely to be an additional workload for the actuaries nationally, the auditors were currently not able to give a revised date for signing off the accounts.

Members were asked to hold Wednesday 31 July as a provisional date for the next

meeting.

RESOLVED that:

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Forward Plan for the period July 2019 to April 2020 be noted.

14. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee, which had been published on the RBFRS website, be noted.

15. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 24 October 2019, 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 7.50 pm)