

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday 27th February 2017 at 6.30pm

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

Members:	Councillor Malcolm Alexander	* Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
(* present)	* Councillor Alistair Auty	* Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge
	* Councillor Christine Bateson	* Councillor Chris Maskell
	* Councillor Phillip Bicknell	* Councillor Iain McCracken
	* Councillor Paul Bryant	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	Councillor Avtar Cheema	* Councillor Phillip Mirfin
	* Councillor Colin Dudley	Councillor Mohammed Rasib
	* Councillor Adrian Edwards	* Councillor Angus Ross
	* Councillor John Ennis	* Councillor Ishrat Shah
	* Councillor Paul Gittings	* Councillor Emma Webster

In Attendance:	Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement/Chief Financial Officer, HOFFP)
	Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
	Moira Fraser (Committee Officer)
	Andy Fry (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
	Mark Gaskarth (Area Manager (West))
	Paul Jacques (Temporary Area Manager (East))
	Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development)
	Simon Jefferies (Head of Risk and Performance, HORP)
	Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services)
	Dave Myers (Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer T/ACFO)
	Jim Powell (Area Manager (Risk and Performance) AM(R&P))
	Linda Pye (Committee Officer)
	Nikki Richards (Interim Director of Support Services)
	Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Observers:	Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Members of Representative Bodies

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78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Malcolm Alexander, Avtar Cheema and Mohammed Rasib.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Paul Bryant and Angus Ross stated that should the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) be discussed at the meeting they would declare a personal interest as they were members of the TVFCS Joint Committee. They

would therefore not participate in any debate on the TVFCS should it materialise.
There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

80. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED that:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2016 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

81. 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.

82. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge

Between 28 February and 2 March 2017, the Fire Authority would be welcoming an Operational Peer Review Challenge team.

The team would undertake a review of three key focus areas:

1. An assessment of the progress made since the last Operational Assurance Peer Review;
2. An assessment of the extent to which delivering the Corporate Plan 2015-19 would improve outcomes for communities across Berkshire; and
3. An assessment of the extent to which delivering the Corporate Plan would meet the requirements of the Home Office reform programme.

This process was being run in accordance with the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge guidelines set out by the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers Association. The review would provide the organisation with information on whether operational service delivery was efficient, effective and robust. The outcome of the peer review would be reported to Members in due course.

Recruitment to CMT

As Members would be aware, recruitment to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer positions was now well underway with final interviews taking place on 23 March 2017. Following the interviews, Trevor Ferguson would update Members on the outcome of the process and next steps to be taken in the appointment of successful candidates.

IRMP Consultation Update

With two weeks to go until the close of the Service Redesign public consultation, RBFRS staff and Fire Authority Members had been working hard to encourage more people to have their say, using a range of methods to reach as many people as possible.

At the start of the consultation, key stakeholders had been contacted directly by

email and letters to make them aware. This included local authorities, political representatives, schools, health groups and as had been requested, libraries.

To engage directly with members of the public, during January and February engagement drop-in events were held in Pangbourne, Wargrave and Windsor. The events were well attended with approximately 150 people attending the sessions. They provided an excellent opportunity for the Fire Authority to talk directly to local people about the proposed options and why they should take part in the consultation.

Working proactively with media contacts had meant that the consultation had received a large amount of publicity across the County and had also been extensively publicised on social media, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube. A short video was filmed at the start of the consultation, and this had now been viewed more than 3,500 times across all the channels.

This engagement work had so far produced 676 responses to the consultation. The Chairman thanked all those that had participated in the consultation to date and he also thanked Officers for the excellent work in delivering the consultation. He commented that he looked forward to hearing the views of residents and staff in due course.

Bracknell Crews become Dementia Friends

Crews at Bracknell had recently taken part in dementia awareness training, provided by the Charity Dementia Friends.

The training was arranged to give crews an improved awareness of the disease and a better understanding of how to communicate with carers and people living with dementia when conducting home fire safety checks. With more and more people living with dementia, this type of training could be especially valuable for crews when visiting people's homes. He congratulated Bracknell for helping to make the Service more dementia friendly.

The Chairman invited all Members to attend the Bracknell Fire Station Charity Car Wash on Saturday the 04th March 2017. The fire fighters would be raising money for two charities namely: the Fire Fighters Charity and Cameron's Ward at John Radcliff Hospital. The fire fighters would be supported by the UK Garrison who were one of the country's leading star wars costuming groups which should make the event even more memorable.

Pet Oxygen Masks to be added to all RBFRS Appliances

All RBFRS appliances would soon carry pet oxygen masks, after a fantastic fundraising effort from a local canine called Pelucchi.

Pelucchi was a tripawd Yorkshire Terrier that lived in Maidenhead, and had been a long time supporter of the fire service, frequently popping up on social media to support RBFRS's fire safety messaging. At the end of last year Pelucchi and his owner Zoe started to fundraise in an effort to supply RBFRS with "smokey paws" pet oxygen masks, which could be used by crews at incidents involving animal rescues.

As part of this fundraising effort, they produced a calendar, using photos of Pelucchi at Maidenhead Fire Station. The calendar was a great success, selling all copies and providing enough funding for RBFRS to purchase enough smokey paws masks for all appliances across Berkshire. The new masks would be fitted

in the coming weeks, so well done to Pelucchi and Zoe for making it happen.

Councillor Emma Webster commented that Sylvia Simmonds had retired from the Service after 24 years of service. Councillor Webster had attended a lunchtime event to wish her well and to present her with flowers on behalf of the Fire Authority. Councillor Webster stated that the farewell event had been well attended and that Sylvia had asked Councillor Webster to pass on her thanks to Members for her gift and the kind words she had received.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell thanked Jim Powell and Simon Jeffries for attending his Authority and explaining the IRMP consultation to Members. He also thanked them for the event that had taken place in the local library.

83. ISSUES ARISING FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

It was noted that no reports had been referred to the Fire Authority by the Audit and Governance Committee.

84. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

85. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 43

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 43.

86. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority noted that the following agenda items had been recommended from:

- Item 10 and 11 from Management Committee on 14th February 2017;
- Items 12, 13 and 14 from Audit and Governance Committee on 6th December 2016.

87. 2017/18 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement, presented a report which enabled the Fire Authority to finalise the Budget requirements and approve the Band D Council Tax precept for 2017/18.

The Management Committee had met on 14th February 2017 to consider the draft budget. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Fire Authority that the Council Tax precept should rise by 1.99%.

In 2016 the Fire Authority had accepted the Government's offer of a four year settlement and Officers had been tasked with developing an Efficiency Plan in line with Home Office guidance. The Plan had subsequently been approved by the Fire Authority in August 2016. The Plan assumed an annual increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 as well as a business rates surplus above the Government's baseline of £450,000. The Plan's assumption in relation to the Council Tax base was that it would grow by 1.4% per annum. In respect of expenditure various unavoidable pressures that the Authority would face over the next three years had been identified. The plan assumed that salaries would increase by 1% per annum and that inflation would,

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on average, be 1% throughout the next three years. There would also be increases in employer contributions for firefighter pension schemes in 2019/20 due to a change in the way pension scheme liabilities were calculated. The Plan assumed that the additional cost to the Authority would be £404,000.

Based on these assumptions the Efficiency Plan set out a requirement for the Service to reduce the annual revenue budget by £2.4m by 2019/20. £1.4m of these savings would need to be realised from the options presently being consulted on under the Service's IRMP. A further £1m was being realised from the Service's other back office, support and professional services functions. A staff restructure was being undertaken and in 2017/18 it was anticipated that this work would deliver £441k of the £1m savings. IRMP savings of £224k in 2017/18 were also projected.

Since the publication of the Plan it had become apparent that the Authority would face additional cost pressures over and above those identified in the Plan. The 2017/18 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) had been updated to reflect these additional pressures as follows:

- The most significant pressure had been the increase in the inflation rate over the last few months. The MTFP now assumed inflation of 3% in 2017/18 and 2% in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and would result in additional costs of around £148k in 2017/18 and £75k in the two following years.
- The resetting of Business Rates would lead to higher rates for the Authority resulting in a further pressure of £135k in 2017/18.
- An actuarial review of the LG Pension Scheme had indicated that employer contribution rates would increase from April 2018. Final confirmation was awaited but an assumption had been made that there would be a stepped increase in each of the next three years leading to an additional pressure of £40k up to 2019/20.
- An additional budget pressure of £75k had also been identified to purchase assistive technology equipment which included £36k for smoke detectors, £33k for portable water misting systems and £9k for cooker shutoff systems.
- Another additional budget pressure of £97k had been identified in the Training and Organisational Development budget. This funding had been removed from the base budget a few years before but now needed to be added back in.
- Cross border income from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service had been removed from the budget as RBFRS no longer received income for attending cross-border incidents.
- An additional £94k would be used to fund capital expenditure in 2017/18 on a one-off basis which would reduce borrowing in future years.
- However, the Fire Authority would benefit from additional one off income from collection fund surpluses for both Council Tax and Business Rates in 2017/18. The MTFP had assumed a 1.4% growth in the Council Tax Base but it was in fact closer to 2.58%. In 2018/19 and 2019/20 the figure would increase from 1.4% to 2%.
- Co-responding income had not been included in the base budget as the evaluation of the trial had still to take place.

The HoFP confirmed that the Capital Investment Programme was set out in Appendix B and the Reserves Position was set out in Appendix C. It was noted that the level of reserves would fall from around £11.2m in 2016 to £4.5m in 2021.

The Prudential Indicators, Treasury Strategy and Investment Strategy were set out in Appendix H with an emphasis on security of capital.

The fees and charges were set out in Appendix I and it was noted that the levels proposed for 2017/18 had risen by inflation.

The HoFP concluded that there was a huge degree of volatility and variation around Business Rate income and the Authority was also facing increasing cost pressures. Savings of £2.4m needed to be found with salaries increasing by 1% over the next 3 years and pay pressures would also arise from workforce reforms. Members would need to decide if the assumption around a 1.99% Council Tax increase should be retained. It was his view that it was still appropriate as the net result was that the Authority was still required to make savings of £2.4m.

The Chairman noted that Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant had declared an interest in the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) and he therefore confirmed that he would deal with recommendations 2.1 to 2.6 separately from 2.7 (which referred to the TVFCS budget).

Recommendations 2.1 to 2.6:

Councillor Phillip Bicknell referred to Appendix I (Fees and Charges) on page 59 of the agenda and he asked what 'Inspection Marriage Licence' referred to. The HoFP responded that it was the cost of inspecting premises to ensure that they were suitable for use as a marriage venue.

Councillor Paul Bryant referred to the Budget Bid around Assistive Technologies and in particular to the paragraph on page 12 which referred to the costs of portable sprinkler systems. He queried whether Officers had an idea of what the demand for these might be so that an estimate of the cost could be made. The Chief Fire Officer responded that there was not a great deal of demand at present as these systems had not been widely advertised. They would predominantly be used for vulnerable individuals who would be unable to vacate their property before a fire appliance arrived. The portable sprinkler system would be able to control a fire in a domestic room for a minimum of 10 minutes. It would be necessary to market and promote the value of these systems.

Councillor John Ennis referred to paragraphs 3.3.3 and 3.3.9 where one paragraph seemed to contradict the other in respect of business rates. However, it was clarified that paragraph 3.3.3 referred to the amount of business rates that the Fire Authority would have to pay and paragraph 3.3.9 referred to the income which would be received from business rates in the area. Councillor Ennis noted that local authorities were lobbying the government in respect of the revaluation of business rates and he asked if the Fire Authority would be doing something similar. The Chairman confirmed that there were no plans in place to do so.

The Chairman thanked Conor Byrne and Officers for all the hard work undertaken on the budget and for supporting him as lead Member for the Authority. The 4 year Efficiency Plan would assist with scrutinising the underpinning assumptions made. The funding picture was more volatile and this was a theme which it was felt would continue. The proposed budget reflected the agreement of the

Member/Officer planning workshops where a 1.99% increase in the Council Tax precept had been proposed. Officers needed a steer from Members in this respect. The focus was on numbers and he highlighted the challenges the Efficiency Plan would have on staff and local communities. A number of members of staff had already left the authority and more would follow. The Chairman acknowledged the hard work and dedication shown by members of staff over the years and he stressed the fact that RBFRS had been and was still a 'people' organisation.

The IRMP Service Redesign consultation was coming to an end and the Chairman stressed that the Authority would listen to the views of the residents as it was interesting to note that over 670 responses to the consultation had been received. The Authority would need to make some difficult decisions but they would conscientiously consider all the responses to the consultation. Decisions would need to be made based on that whilst at the same time delivering the savings targets set out in the Efficiency Plan.

An increase of 1.99% equated to an extra £1.22 per annum for a Band D property which made RBFRS one of the lowest precepting fire authorities in the country. It was essential that the Fire Authority did not tax its residents any more than it needed to but the Chairman felt that an increase of 2.4 pence per week represented excellent value for money for the services provided. This was particularly the case in the current year as, although local authorities would be able to raise the precept by 3% in 2017/18 for Adult Social Care, the Fire Authority had carried out over 10,000 home fire safety checks to make sure that vulnerable people were protected and therefore it was contributing to care in the community. It also liaised with local authorities to ensure that the most vulnerable were identified and protected. Everything that the Fire Authority did was in line with its Strategic Commitments and therefore the Chairman was confident that the authority was prudent and provided excellent value for money.

Councillor Paul Gittings also thanked Conor Byrne and his team in producing such a clear report. He confirmed that Labour would support the proposed 1.99% increase in the Council Tax precept as it only equated to an additional £1.22 per household per annum. However, he felt that the Fire Authority had missed an opportunity in the previous year to raise the precept as much as it could and he could not support the reason for the 1.99% increase which was due to underfunding of public services by the government. He would prefer to not have to raise the precept at all but he felt that it was essential to protect jobs and the service to the community. Difficult decisions would be required after the IRMP consultation closed and Members of the Fire Authority would need to consider all the options and responses to the consultation and make decisions based on that. He praised members of staff who had had to endure a lot over the years with salary increases below inflation, disputes over pensions and erosion of terms and conditions. He hoped that the future would be better and that Business Rates would provide much needed additional funding after 2019.

Councillor Emma Webster was pleased to see that additional funding had been provided for training and organisational development as this was important for any organisation. She hoped that the £40k for training on Immediate Emergency Care could be rolled out as quickly as possible. This training would up skill operational staff in first aid skills related to their operational response.

Councillor Philip Bicknell felt that joint working and co-responding was one area where there would be the ability to make savings and some of that was already

being seen in the budget.

Councillor John Ennis echoed the Chairman's comments in that the county of Berkshire received excellent value for money from its Fire Service. The Service was extremely effective and he felt that that resonated with the residents.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons confirmed that a balance was required and she thanked Officers across the organisation for achieving the necessary savings. Members did appreciate the hard work of all members of staff. Investment in IT and Training was essential in order for the organisation to grow and support its staff. A lot of the needs were external and she felt that the Fire Authority would continue to provide a superb service to its local residents although she recognised that this could not be achieved without the necessary funding. The proposed increase of 1.99% sounded a lot but it only equated to 2.4 pence per week and it was not possible for the Fire Authority to keep digging in to reserves. A certain level of reserves would be necessary to deal with emergencies such as flooding in the future. She referred to the comment made by Councillor Gittings in regard to government underfunding but she reminded him that this was only necessary due to the over spending of the previous Administration.

Councillor Colin Dudley summarised that this was about spending public money and therefore it was necessary to ensure that it was spent effectively and efficiently. The Fire Authority had put forward a budget which was both realistic but not too onerous and he stressed the point that RBFRS was one of the lowest precepting fire authorities in the country.

In the previous year the Fire Authority had agreed revised response standards and this had been maintained within budget and he confirmed that the authority was committed to those standards. With the hard work of Officers, staff and Members an affordable budget had been put forward for consideration and he therefore proposed that recommendations 2.1 to 2.6 should be agreed. This was agreed unanimously.

Recommendation 2.7:

(Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant declared an interest in recommendation 2.7 of Agenda Item 10, and reported that, as their interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest or an other registrable interest, they would not take part in the debate or vote on the matter.)

The Fire Authority considered the TVFCS budget for 2017/8 as set out in Appendix J which included the contribution to the Renewals Fund. This recommendation was agreed and it was noted that Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant abstained from voting on this item.

RESOLVED that:

- An increase in the Council Tax precept of 1.99% be approved by adopting the formal resolution in Appendix A and the Medium Term Financial Plan in Appendix B;
- The Strategic Capital Investment Programme set out in Appendix D be approved;
- The Reserves Policy in Appendix E and the proposed use of reserves in

Appendix F be approved;

- The mid-year Treasury Management report in Appendix G be approved;
- The Prudential Indicators, Treasury Strategy and Investment Strategy set out in Appendix H be approved;
- The fees and charges set out in Appendix I be approved;
- The TVFCS budget for 2017/18 set out in Appendix J be approved including the contribution to the Renewals Fund.

88. CAPITAL BUDGET PROVISION UPDATE FOR STRATEGIC ASSET INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK 2016-2020

Simon Jefferies, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (TACFO), provided the updated capital provision for the Strategic Asset Investment Framework 2016-2020 which had initially been approved by Members in February 2016. Officers had now updated and refined the report. The report set out the key changes to the framework and the rationale for the changes. The updated Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) spreadsheet in Appendix B showed spend already approved by the Fire Authority in red and the planned future provision in black text. Officers emphasised that the capital programme set out the provision only and that they would be required to generate a costed business case for projects which Members would then approve.

The key changes to the report included:

- Scheduling of the rebuild and refurbishment of the Authority's properties to deliver fit for purpose stations at the heart of communities. The scheduling would be driven by a number of factors including the condition of the properties and collaboration opportunities and would therefore be subject to change. The most recent changes to phasing were set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 of the report. The AACFO noted that the programme ran until 2028 which was outside of the current programme timescale but feedback from staff had suggested that this information would be useful as they would be aware as to when their station was due for redevelopment.
- The original indicative figure for the capital build and refurbishment programme within the SAIF was £17.75m. The requirement now stood at £15.37m and this figure would reduce further by a capital contribution from partners for the Theale project.
- Capital funding would see eleven new fire engines procured over the next three years. The current fleet was the second oldest in the UK. Some savings had been realised in the first year through Thames Valley collaborative procurement processes. A provision of £2.93m had been allocated in the budget for the purchase of fire engines.
- Savings of £150k had been realised through the acquisition of a suitable replacement for the Operational Support Unit (OSU). These savings would allow for the replacement of six of the older, high mileage fire appliances with second hand, lower mileage, ex London Fire Brigade appliances. This premise was predicated on the ability to source suitable vehicles. It was intended that the six vehicles would replace two of the Young Fire Fighter vehicles and four Fleet Reserve appliances.

- Provision of £850k had been made to replace the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP).
- Provision of £400k had been added for the Emergency Service Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP). This funding had been split over two years 2017/18 and 2018/19. The work was being led centrally by the Home Office and it was not yet clear what costs would have to be picked up by the user organisations. It was also possible that the programme might be delayed. While the costs were unknown the £400k provision was consistent with provision made by other user organisations.
- Funding provision had also increased in ICT for the provision of additional software. The large expenditure against software in 2016/17 included an upgrade to Microsoft Office 2016 and both significant application development and application upgrade for two core operational systems of IBIS and Firewatch to offer improved ways of working.

The Chairman queried whether the site and build costs for the new fire station at Theale was realistic. Officers stated that they believed that they were but that final decisions would be based on a business case which would consider what could realistically be built on the site.

Councillor Angus Ross wished to place on record his thanks to Officers for the work they had done. He was of the opinion that it had been wise to set up a longer term look at capital expenditure and he appreciated that doing this had involved a lot of work. He noted that Officers would continue to refine the figures as well as the timescales associated with projects as this was not an exact science. Scheduling would change based on a number of factors including opportunities to collaborate with other organisations and all decisions would be based on a firm business case.

Councillor Emma Webster noted that the replacement of the ALP would be welcomed by crews but she requested that the availability of spare parts be one of the factors considered as part of the procurement process. This had historically been an issue. She was also pleased to see the inclusion of the indicative figure for the ESMCP project. She commented that she had received a number of queries about the impact of any delay in implementing the system. It was important to reassure residents that an interim measure was available.

The Chairman proposed that Members accept the Officer's recommendations.

RESOLVED that:

- The amendments to the Strategic Asset Investment Framework 2016-2020 be agreed.

89. EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement, informed the Fire Authority of the national scheme for auditor appointments.

The current external audit contract expired after the audit of the 2017/18 Accounts. The external auditor for the audit of the 2018/19 accounts needed to be appointed before the end of 2017.

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had specified that Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) could make auditor appointments to

local government bodies. PSAA would appoint an auditor for all opted-in authorities for each of the five years beginning 1st April 2018. It was thought that a collaborative procurement on behalf of all opted-in authorities would secure best prices without compromising on audit quality. Should the Authority not opt in to the national scheme then it would have to run its own process to appoint an auditor. Following discussion at Audit and Governance Committee on 6th December 2016 it was recommended that the Fire Authority opted into the national scheme.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried what the difference in cost would be for the Authority in terms of opting in or running its own process. The HoFP responded that he did not have indicative costs at present but that there would be economies of scale from a collaborative procurement and he was therefore confident that this would ensure that the Authority received the best deal. The process for appointing its own auditor would be quite difficult.

Councillor Colin Dudley asked if the Fire Authority would need to go out to tender. The HoFP advised that the process had been accepted and therefore this would save money as it would not be necessary to go out to tender.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons asked whether any of the local authorities would be opting in. The HoFP responded that from feedback he had received most authorities it appeared that most local authorities and fire authorities would be opting in.

RESOLVED that:

- It be agreed that the Fire Authority opt in to the national scheme for appointing its external auditor.

90. ANNUAL PLAN 2017/18

Jim Powell, Acting Area Manager (Risk and Performance) (AAMRP), provided the Fire Authority with an overview of the RBFRS Annual Plan 2017-18. The Annual Plan would provide direction for the organisation for the next year within the context of the Corporate Plan/IRMP 2015-19. It would define the scope of the organisation's activities in terms of what it would do. It would match the activities of the organisation to the environment in which it operated so that it maximised opportunities and minimised threats and would synchronise the organisation's activities to its resource capacity.

The format included the audit plan and 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. The Audit and Governance Committee had recommended the Plan to the Fire Authority for approval. Members would be familiar with the format. The Plan would be delivered through the IRMP process, the Organisation Development Board and Service Plans.

Analysis of performance data was ongoing and supported decision making across the organisation. Performance against the Plan was reported to the Strategic Performance Board on a quarterly basis and was scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee. Reporting focused on four areas: 1) Service Provision, 2) Corporate Health, 3) Priority Programmes and 4) Risk.

The document would be available on the intranet so that Managers could use it to

develop local plans and it would also be available on the website to aid openness and transparency.

Councillor Emma Webster, in relation to Corporate Measures 15 (% of full shifts when there is adequate crewing on all 'wholetime' frontline fire engines) and 16 (% of hours where there is adequate crewing on 'retained' frontline fire engines (based on 24/7 crewing) noted that while there was some detail in the subsequent appendices about the numbers of fire fighters required to achieve the adequate level the information was not included here. Officers agreed to amend the Plan.

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Councillor Webster noted that in respect of Corporate Health measure 22 (% of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals) the 2015/16 outturn was 94.35% but the 2017/18 target was 100%. She queried, if by setting a target of 100%, the organisation was setting a target that it could not achieve. Becci Jefferies stated that a lot of work had been done in this area and that the target now referred to eligible staff. It would therefore not be impacted upon by issues such as maternity leave and long term absence and should therefore be achievable.

Councillor Paul Bryant noted that on page 74 of the paperwork reference was made to 'working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, to maximise the contribution that the RBFRS is able to make in delivering elements of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan'. He queried which element of that Plan the RBFRS was helping with. Officers confirmed that the draft Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan had been published and that there were strands that overlapped with the RBFRS Plan especially in relation to protecting the areas most vulnerable residents and decreasing demand on services. It should however be recognised that the Commissioner's Plan covered the whole of the Thames Valley Region. Councillor Webster commented that there was a lot of focus in the Commissioner's Plan about making every contact count. She urged all Members to read the document. The Chairman reminded all Members that the RBFRS had a duty to collaborate with the PCC.

The Chairman thanked Officers for putting together this eloquent document. The Plan clearly articulated what the strategic commitments were, how they would be delivered and articulated what the RBFRS was all about.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons commented that this was the most lucid plan that she had seen. It clearly and precisely set out what the RBFRS did, how they did it and how performance against targets were measured. The performance measures were clear, assessed progress and could be used to establish trend data. She thanked Officers again for the excellent document.

RESOLVED that:

- The Annual Plan 2017-18 be approved.

91. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY – PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18

Becci Jefferies, Head of HR and Learning and Development (HHRLD), sought approval of the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 which had been presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 6th December 2016 to meet its obligation under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.

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

- Following the introduction of a five point pay spine for Directors, the section relation to the Senior Managers Pay Group had been updated.
- The section relating to RBFA Local Pay Groups had been removed as these were no longer in use and clarity on the group of staff protected on non-nationally agreed basic pay arrangements following a transfer under TUPE provided.
- Reference to the development of a Market Pay Supplement Policy to address issues of difficult recruitment and retention.
- The removal of receipt of the car allowance for the Director of People and Organisational Development and clarification that the car review included Senior Managers.
- The paragraph relating to the Firefighters Pensions Schemes had been amended to reflect the transitional arrangements for members following the introduction of the 2015 scheme.
- Amendment to the section on Uniform to include Reception staff.

Councillor Paul Bryant referred to page 25 of the agenda, first paragraph, which referred to possible claims for age discrimination and he queried why this was the case. The HHRLD replied that the pay scales had been lengthy and guidance stated that staff should not take longer than five years to progress to the top of the scale. It had therefore been agreed that where there were more than 7 SCPs in the grade then the bottom point should not be used in order that staff took a maximum of five years to progress to the top of the pay scale. Councillor Bryant asked why the authority had not just changed the grades to a smaller number. The HHRLD advised that the Fire Authority used the HAY scheme and as this only related to a small number of grades then it had been agreed that not using the bottom spinal point would be easier.

Councillor John Ennis referred to page 24, third paragraph, which related to market supplements. He queried the fact that as staff would only be receiving a 1% salary increase over the next three years would this have an impact on the use of market supplements and would that create a pressure on the budget. The HHRLD confirmed that there was a policy in place to try and address that. There were a number of options which could be used to attract staff but the use of market supplements gave the authority a further option should that prove to be necessary. It would be used for specialist areas such as Finance or Procurement. Councillor Ennis also referred to page 27 and the paragraph below the table. He questioned whether 'Living Wage' should actually be replaced with 'Minimum Wage'. The HHRLD would check and amend that paragraph as necessary.

BJ to action

RESOLVED that:

- The Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 be approved.

92. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that:

- The Forward Plan for the period 22nd March 2017 to September 2017 be noted.

93. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

It was noted that the minutes of the following meetings were published on the RBFRS website:

- Management Committee – 21st November 2016 (approved)
- Management Committee – 16th January 2017 (approved)

94. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 18th April 2017 at 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 8.03pm)