

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday 29 April 2019 at 6.30pm

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

Members: (* present)	*	Councillor Malcolm Alexander	*	Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
		Councillor Alistair Auty	*	Councillor Iain McCracken
		Councillor Christine Bateson		Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
		Councillor Jason Brock	*	Councillor Satpal Parmar
		Councillor Jeff Brooks	*	Councillor Ted Plenty
	*	Councillor Paul Bryant	*	Councillor Angus Ross
	*	Councillor Colin Dudley		Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
		Councillor Adrian Edwards		Councillor Dexter Smith
		Councillor Jan Gavin	*	Councillor Emma Webster
	*	Councillor Paul Gittings	*	Councillor Simon Werner

In Attendance: Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
Stephen Chard (Committee Officer)
Tony Deacon (Area Manager, Service Delivery)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Tamara Hack (Committee Officer)
Jess James (Temporary Area Manager (Collaboration and Change))
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services)
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Service Delivery))
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems)

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

Action

71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Alistair Auty, Christine Bateson, Jason Brock, Jeff Brooks, Adrian Edwards, Jan Gavin, Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Dexter Smith.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors Malcolm Alexander 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, and in Councillor Alexander's case the Chairman of, the TVFCS Joint Committee. They would, therefore, not participate in any debate on the TVFCS should it materialise, aside from Agenda Item 13 (h) – the Annual Report from the TVFCS Joint Committee.

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Iain McCracken and Emma Webster stated that should the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel be discussed at the meeting they would declare a personal interest by virtue of the fact that they were members of this Panel. They would therefore not participate in any debate on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel should it materialise. Specifically, they highlighted Agenda Item 13 (b) – the Annual Report from the Collaboration Lead Member.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

73. PART I AND PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED that the Part I and II Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2019, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

74. PETITIONS AND 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.

75. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

He commenced by announcing that a number of the Fire Authority's Members were due to stand down from the Fire Authority before the next meeting. This would be the final Fire Authority meeting for Councillors Iain McCracken, Emma Webster, Paul Bryant, Alistair Auty and Jan Gavin.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to say a few words about each of these Members and their work on the Authority.

Councillor Iain McCracken – 12 years

- Councillor McCracken was appointed to the Fire Authority on the 27 June 2007. He had served as the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee since its formation, and prior to that was Chairman of the Audit Committee and Audit and Performance Review Committee.
- More recently as Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, Iain had overseen a programme of internal audit in which the Fire Authority had received substantial assurances on Risk, Governance and the Capital Investment Strategy.
- Since 2011, Iain had represented the Fire Authority on the Local Government

Association's (LGA) Fire Commission exchanging good practice and acting as an advocate for the LGA and its work.

- As a Member of the Property Development Working Group, he had effortlessly contributed to the planning of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's capital projects.
- Councillor McCracken was presented with a small token of appreciation for his tireless work on behalf of the Fire Authority for the people of Berkshire.

Councillor McCracken gave thanks for the presentation. He also extended his thanks to officers and Members for all their support during his time with the Fire Authority. He stated that it had been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the Fire Authority.

Cllr Emma Webster – 14 years

- Councillor Webster was appointed to the Fire Authority on the 29 June 2005. Emma had played a pivotal role as Lead Member of the Integrated Risk Management Plan since 2016.
- Prior to that she was a member of the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party since 2005, and Chairman of this group between 2008 and 2016. Therefore, the Member responsibility for risk had sat with Emma for some time.
- Emma had been integral to community engagement during Fire Authority public consultations. Her recent involvement in the consultation and communications activity for the Service Redesign had the greatest impact to date of any consultation that the Authority had undertaken. Emma had always ensured that consultation exercises were done properly and had been personally involved in discussions with staff as part of this process.
- In addition, she had served as Community Safety Champion and sat on the Audit Committee for two years.
- Emma was a very loyal and irreplaceable Member of the Fire Authority.
- Councillor Webster was presented with a small token of appreciation for all she had done during her time on the Fire Authority.

Councillor Webster gave thanks for the presentation. She stated that it had been a pleasure to serve on the Fire Authority and serve the community. Emma thanked all employees of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service for their continued efforts and she added a particular note of appreciation for the efforts of representative bodies. She would greatly miss colleagues.

She wished the Fire Authority and RBFRS all the best for the future.

Cllr Paul Bryant – 16 ½ years

- Councillor Bryant was appointed to the Fire Authority on the 18 December 2002, and served as Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman from 2006 to

2011.

- Throughout his time on the Fire Authority, Paul had lobbied to raise awareness on the benefits of the installation of sprinkler systems particularly to private developers, care homes and schools.
- Paul played a pivotal role in the early meetings of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee and served as a Member of the Property Development Working Group since its inception.
- During Paul's time on the Fire Authority he had sat on Executive Committee, IRMP Working Party, Management Committee and represented the Fire Authority on the South East Regional Committee and Local Government Association Fire Commission meetings.
- Councillor Bryant was presented with a small token of appreciation for all his hard work and contribution to making the people of Berkshire safer.

Councillor Bryant gave thanks for the kind words and the presentation. He stated that it had been a real pleasure to serve on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority which was among the best in the Country. It had maintained a low precept whilst still providing an excellent Fire and Rescue Service. He concluded by stating that it was a marvellous organisation.

Cllr Alistair Auty – 7 years

- Councillor Auty was appointed onto the Fire Authority on 28 June 2012.
- During his appointment, he had sat on the Audit and Governance Committee, Strategic Asset Management Committee and served as Member Development Champion.
- In 2014, Alistair proudly reported to the Fire Authority its achievement in receiving the Charter for Member Development Award. He worked tirelessly during his two years as Member Champion in achieving Charter status by South East Employers. At that time, the Fire Authority was one of only two public authorities in Berkshire to achieve this award.
- Unfortunately, Alistair was unable to be in attendance at the meeting, but the Chairman and all Members extended their thanks for this work which would be passed on to Alistair as would a small token of appreciation for all his efforts.

Cllr Jan Gavin – 1 year

- Councillor Gavin was appointed onto the Fire Authority on 28 June 2018, and had been a member of Audit and Governance Committee.
- In the last year, as a Member of Audit and Government Committee, Jan had received regular updates on the Inspection and had oversight of the performance of the Service and audit programme.
- Jan had been a great servant for the Fire Authority during the past year and

thanks were given for all her hard work.

- Unfortunately, Jan was unable to be in attendance at the meeting, but thanks for all her work would be passed on as would a small token of appreciation for all her efforts.

Councillor Dudley stated that it was always sad to lose such valued colleagues. They would all be sorely missed, but they were wished all the very best for the future.

Finally, Councillor Dudley wished those Fire Authority Members who were up for election on 2 May 2019 well.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons added her personal thanks and appreciation for the work undertaken by all the outgoing Members. They had all been totally committed to their Fire Authority roles and had been a joy to work with. She wished them all the best for the future. Councillor Helliar-Symons added that this was a great Fire Authority to work with and that was thanks to the officers and Members.

Sri Lanka Terror Attack

- On behalf of the Fire Authority, Councillor Dudley expressed deepest sympathies with all the victims of the terror attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday.
- It had been sadly confirmed that Bill Harrop, a former firefighter with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, was killed in one of the blasts alongside his wife Sally.
- Condolences were passed to Bill's family and all those who tragically lost their lives in this barbaric act of violence.

Appointments to Senior Leadership Team

- On a happier note, Councillor Dudley was pleased to announce that following completion of a recruitment process, a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and two new Area Managers (AM) had been appointed.
- Mark Arkwell had been appointed as the new Assistant Chief Fire Officer and he would join the Service in mid-May. Mark currently worked for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.
- In addition, Tony Deacon and Paul Binyon had been appointed as the two new Area Managers. Tony had been on assignment with the RBFRS from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service for the last six months but following success in the recent process, he joined RBFRS permanently on the 1 April 2019. Paul Binyon commenced work this week and joined Royal Berkshire from the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Councillor Dudley wished Mark, Tony and Paul all the best in their new roles.
- The appointment of a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer of course meant that the Service would soon be preparing to say farewell to current ACFO Simon Jefferies, who was due to retire at the end of June after 30 years of service.
- Unfortunately Simon could not be present for this meeting, but Councillor

Dudley, on behalf of all Members, thanked him for his dedication in serving the people of Berkshire and wished him all the best for his retirement.

RMS/FDO Project

- Members had previously received updates on the Remotely Managed Stations/Flexi Duty Officer Project, which was being delivered in co-design with the Fire Brigade Union.
- A significant part of Phase One of the project was the addition of 24 watch-based Station Managers, which in addition to being responsible for the day-to-day management of Wholetime Fire Stations, would provide level 2 incident command ensuring resilience in the RBFRS incident command model.
- The selection process for these posts had now been completed and Councillor Dudley was pleased to report that all 24 positions had been filled. He congratulated all of those that had successfully completed the rigorous interview and assessment process. The new watched-based Station Managers would officially take up their new posts on 1 May. He wished the new post holders well and stated that he looked forward to working with them.

Crowthorne Firefighters Relocate for Station Rebuild to Get Underway

- On 15 April 2019, the crew of 14 Crowthorne firefighters officially relocated to Wellington College whilst the rebuild of Crowthorne Fire Station got underway.
- Building work was due to begin in May 2019, with hoarding being placed around the building in early May. The rebuild was anticipated to be completed towards the end of summer 2020. Councillor Dudley asked Fire Authority to note that the rebuild timescales were indicative.
- A groundbreaking event to celebrate the start of the building works would take place on 9 May 2019, and Councillor Dudley looked forward to seeing colleagues there.
- Councillor Dudley added that he had mentioned these points at a recent Full Council meeting of Bracknell Forest Borough Council where this news had been very well received. It was especially pleasing to note that Crowthorne's firefighters would still be based in Crowthorne during the building works.

Firefighter Memorial Day

- On Saturday, 4 May 2019, the Service would be supporting Firefighters Memorial Day. At midday, all staff were being encouraged to observe a minute's silence to recognise and honour the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters who had died in the line of duty.
- Members were encouraged to attend their local fire station to commemorate this event.
- On Sunday 5 May 2019, Councillor Dudley advised that he would be attending The Annual Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Holy Sepulchre London, alongside Area Manager, Jim Powell, and the Service's Ceremonial Unit. Councillor Dudley would be laying a wreath on behalf of the Fire Authority.

Disability Confident

- RBFRS had been awarded the Disability Confident Employer accreditation, which supported employers to make the most of the talents of people with disabilities and the skills they could bring to the workplace.
- Over half of workplaces were missing out because they were excluding talented people with a disability. As a Disability Confident employer, RBFRS would:
 - Communicate and promote vacancies;
 - Anticipate and make reasonable adjustments for those with a disability; and
 - Support any existing employee who acquired a disability or long-term health condition, which would enable them to stay in work.
- One of the key objectives of the RBFRS People Strategy was to increase the diversity of the workforce to better represent and, therefore serve, our local communities. Receiving this accreditation was recognition of just some of the steps the Service was taking to deliver this commitment.
- Councillor Dudley gave thanks to all those involved in achieving this accreditation and added that they should feel very proud of this achievement.

Have a Go Events Arranged to Encourage Diversity in the Workforce

- RBFRS had recently run 'Have a Go Events' which were aligned to Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives. The Service had been considering ways in which communities could be given a better understanding and awareness of the operational roles available within the Service, and to increase diversity in appointing to those roles to better represent our communities.
- In addition to the programme of Have a Go events that were running throughout the year, RBFRS was running three Have a Go recruitment events which aimed to encourage more women to consider a career as a firefighter.
- Although women made up a significant proportion of support and Control roles, they were under-represented in operational roles in the Service.
- The first event was held on 27 April 2019, with further events coming up on 25 May and 29 June at the Whitley Wood Training Centre and it would provide a range of fire service activities for potential applicants to take part in.
- The first event on 27 April was fully subscribed and it was hoped that some of those who took part would consider an application to become a wholetime or on-call firefighter.
- Councillor Dudley thanked all staff from the support and operational teams who were helping to facilitate these important events.

New Chief Constable at Thames Valley Police

- John Campbell had recently started in post as Chief Constable at Thames

Valley Police. John was previously the force's Deputy Chief Constable and first joined the police in 1988.

- He replaced Chief Constable Francis Habgood who retired at the end of March. Francis had been a fantastic Chief Constable and it was sad to see him go. However John was welcomed as his successor.
- Jason Hogg had been appointed as the new Deputy Chief Constable.
- The Fire Authority welcomed John and Jason to their posts and looked forward to working with them closely as part of ongoing efforts to keep communities safe as part of collaboration work across all blue light services.

Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week

- This week the Service was supporting Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Week by promoting the importance of water safety in our communities.
- The awareness week had been coordinated by the National Fire Chiefs Council to raise awareness of the risk of accidental drowning, which was amongst the leading causes of accidental death in the UK.
- During the week crews from Bracknell, Wokingham, Caversham Road and Slough would be attending local events and prominent locations across the County, speaking to residents about this important issue.
- RBFRS would also be joining other fire and rescue services in providing water safety tips on our social media channels and website.
- Councillor Dudley reinforced the importance of this. In the past, there had been terrible incidents after people had jumped in rivers, particularly on hot days. While the RBFRS had very good safety teams in place, it was still vital to get safety messages across whenever possible. Water needed to be treated with the upmost respect.

National Car Wash League

- Fire stations across the County had once again been taking part in the Fire Fighters Charity National Car Wash League.
- During March 2019, Langley, Slough, Wokingham, Mortimer, Newbury and Crowthorne Fire Stations had all been busy cleaning cars to raise money for this worthy cause.
- An impressive total of £7,226.15 was raised across all car washes during March.
- Councillor Dudley issued a well done and a thank you to all the crews and volunteers that helped support these events which were great fun to be part of and supported a very worthwhile cause.

76. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

Councillor Iain McCracken reiterated his thanks for the support he had been given on the Audit and Governance Committee during the time he had been involved.

77. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

78. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

79. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority noted that the following agenda items had been recommended by the Audit and Governance Committee on 11 March 2019:

Item 10 – Annual Plan 2019/20.

80. ANNUAL PLAN 2019/20

Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services) presented the 2019/20 Annual Plan to the Fire Authority. The document had been considered in detail by the Audit and Governance Committee who recommended it be approved by the Fire Authority.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that this Annual Plan would form the first year of the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2019 to 2023. It reflected the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments by highlighting the key areas of focus for a single year and set measures by which performance in delivering services for the people of Berkshire could be monitored and managed.

Councillor Emma Webster took the opportunity to highlight that the Annual Plan consisted of five key projects covering Risk Analyses, Prevention, Protection, Response Resource Deployment and Response Safe Systems of Work Development. These projects included 19 deliverables for the IRMP. She commended the vast amount of work that had been put into the Annual Plan and the work committed to in the forthcoming year.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons drew attention to the diagram on page 33 of the agenda papers which outlined how the Annual Plan would be delivered. The starting point of which was the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments, which carried all the way through to the individual objectives set at appraisals. This approach would ensure that all Members and officers across the organisation were clear on how the Annual Plan impacted on them and how they were contributing to the delivery of its annual objectives.

The involvement and input from the Fire Authority's Members had been a particularly useful aspect in developing the Annual Plan.

Councillor Helliar-Symons continued by highlighting the objectives aligned to the delivery of the People Strategy. These included delivery of the one team culture, ways to help employees feel valued and access to training.

Councillor Helliar-Symons concluded by commending the document and giving thanks for all the work undertaken in putting it together.

Councillor Colin Dudley highlighted some of the achievements outlined in the Annual Plan. In 2018/19, 100% of safeguarding referrals had been made to local authorities within 24 hours. The target for 2019/20 was 100%. This success owed much to the close working arrangements with local authorities.

He also commended the process that had been developed in delivering Safe and Well visits. Councillor Dudley explained that these visits went beyond solely fire safety and did much to support communities. Officers actively looked for any underlying issues in a person's life to see where help could be offered.

RESOLVED that:

- The Annual Plan for 2019/20 be approved.

81. PAYMENT TO PENSION BOARD MEMBERS

Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development, HHR&L&D) introduced the report, which set out the background to the payments made to members of the Pension Board for conducting their activities as either a scheme member or employer representative. The report recommended that the payment be increased in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services pay award, following a request from the Pension Board.

The HHR&L&D explained that at its meeting of 23 February 2015, the Fire Authority established its Local Pension Board. The Board existed to assist the Fire Authority in its role as Scheme Manager for the various firefighter pension schemes and consisted of four members – two management representatives and two scheme member representatives who were currently elected from the FBU.

The Fire Authority currently made an allowance of £100 per meeting available to each Pension Board member. This was provided in recognition of the requirement for these individuals to keep up to date with pension legislation and changes to the various schemes and had not increased since its introduction in 2015. Although not all Board members currently chose to accept the payment, the Board had made representation for the allowance to be increased.

It was recommended that a 2% increase be made in line with the NJC pay award, backdated to 1 July 2018 and payable when the next Board payment was due to save administration costs. It was further recommended that the allowance be increased in line with any NJC pay award in the future.

Councillor Colin Dudley stated that this Board, which was an independent body, fulfilled a very important role. As explained, the payment made to its members served as a stipend to enable them to carry out the role.

Councillor Simon Werner queried how members were elected to the Board. The HHR&L&D advised that the management representatives were selected internally and the FBU selected the scheme member representatives.

RESOLVED that:

- The payment made to members of the Pension Board would be increased by two percent in line with the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services pay award – effective from 1 July 2018; and
- The payment be increased in line with future pay awards as notified by the NJC.

82. CORPORATE CALENDAR

Members were asked to agree the 2019/20 Corporate Calendar, which listed dates of the Fire Authority and committee meetings during 2019/20.

RESOLVED that:

- The 2019/20 Corporate Calendar be agreed.

83. LEAD MEMBER, MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) JOINT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS

Members were asked to note the following Annual Reports received from Lead Members, Member Champions and the Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee:

- Budget and Income Generation – Councillor Colin Dudley
- Collaboration Lead Member – Councillor Malcolm Alexander
- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Lead Member – Councillor Emma Webster
- Strategic Assets Lead Member – Councillor Angus Ross
- Community Safety Champion – Councillor Christine Bateson
- Organisational Development Champion – Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion – Councillor Adrian Edwards
- TVFCS – Councillor Malcolm Alexander

Councillor Paul Gittings gave thanks for these reports and took the opportunity to give particular thanks to Councillor Webster for her last report as IRMP Lead Member. On behalf of Labour Members, Councillor Gittings commended Councillor Webster for her hard work, dedication and fair mindedness as a Fire Authority Member. She would be missed and Councillor Gittings wished her well for the future.

Councillor Gittings went on to offer thanks and best wishes to Councillors Iain McCracken and Paul Bryant for their diligence in performing their role as Fire Authority Members to the benefit of Berkshire's residents. This was also extended to Members not able to be present – Councillors Alistair Auty and Jan Gavin.

RESOLVED that:

- The Annual Reports be noted.

84. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan for the period 26 June 2019, to 3 December 2019, be noted.

85. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 26 June 2019, 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

Councillor Colin Dudley wished those Members standing for election well and once more gave thanks to those Members who were standing down.

Councillor Dudley added a thank you for all the hard work undertaken by Officers and Members over the last Municipal Year.

86. 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.

(The meeting concluded at 7.15pm)