

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Wednesday 29 June 2016 at 6.30pm

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

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

- In Attendance:**
- Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOFPP)
 - Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 - Andy Fry (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
 - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development)
 - Simon Jefferies (Area Manager Risk and Performance)
 - Linda Pye (Committee Officer)
 - Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
 - Anne-Marie Scott (Director of People and Organisational Development, DPOD)
 - Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)

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

Action

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2016/17 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED that Councillor Colin Dudley be elected as Chairman of the Fire Authority for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

2. CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The new Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Fire Authority for electing him as Chairman. He stated that it was an honour to work alongside other Members and Officers of the Fire Authority. There would be challenges ahead with the introduction of the new structure but this would be a rewarding task due to the quality and experience of Members on the Fire Authority and would contribute towards keeping the residents of Berkshire safer in the future.

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2016/17 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chairman requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

RESOLVED that Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

4. VICE-CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Vice-Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Fire Authority for electing her as Vice-Chairman. Councillor Helliar-Symons thanked Members for their confidence in her and she reiterated the points made by the Chairman. The Fire Service consisted of an amazing group of people and she was proud to be associated with them.

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Alistair Auty, Christine Bateson, Adrian Edwards and Chris Maskell.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant were Members of the Joint Committee for the Thames Valley Fire Control Service and they would declare an interest at that time should this issue be referred to during the meeting.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED that:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2016 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. 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.

9. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Filming Fire Authority: The Chairman announced that this Fire Authority meeting would be filmed. If anyone did not want to be filmed then they should indicate to that effect.

New Fire Authority Members: The Chairman welcomed Councillors Malcolm Alexander, Avtar Cheema, John Ennis, Philip Mirfin and Mohammed Rasib. He also thanked outgoing Members - Councillors Frank Abe, David Absolom, David Burbage, Haqeeq Dar, John Lenton, Edward Plenty, Jane Stanford-Beale, Tom McCann and Ian Pittock.

Reduction in short-term sickness: Short-term sickness absence had seen a reduction from 5.5 days in 2014/15 to 3.9 days in 2015/16. The Fire Authority remained committed to the health and well-being of the workforce and the management of sickness absence would continue to remain a priority, however, the success of work to-date could be seen in this improved trend. The Chairman congratulated all those involved as he stated not only was it a saving for the people of Berkshire and the Fire Authority, it was also a saving made on the productivity of the Service.

'Save the Date' Getting to know RBFRS: On 6th September 2016, all Fire Authority Members were invited to attend the 'Getting to Know Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service' session which would showcase work from across Service Delivery and Service Support teams. Demonstrations would include Animal and Water Rescue, the Extrication Team, Incident Command Unit and Co-responding. The session was being held at the RBFRS Training Centre and would start at 5.30pm.

Be Water Wise, Be Water Safe: The Chairman congratulated those involved in the recent RBFRS' 'Be Water Wise, Be Water Safe' campaign which had run between 30 May and 5 June 2016 and aimed to reduce the number of tragic deaths from drowning that occurred nationally each year. On 2nd June 2016, the campaign saw a dramatic live exercise at Mapledurham Lock which saw RBFRS and its emergency service partners respond to an incident in real time. Special mention to two guests who lent their support to this work throughout the week, Mark Scaife whose son Michael tragically drowned in the Jubilee River in Datchet last August after assisting his friend who had got into difficulty, and Rebecca Ramsey, from Lancashire, who had worked tirelessly to reduce the incidents of drowning since her 13 year old son Dylan, sadly drowned whilst swimming in a quarry. The involvement of both Mark and Rebecca served as an important reminder as to the importance of this prevention work. Thanks also to Station Commander, Jess James, and Watch Manager, David Newton, from Caversham Road who led on the organisation of the campaign.

Greener World, Slough: Following the recent work at the Greener World site in Slough, the Fire Authority extended its thanks to staff in reducing the risk of fire at the site. The work undertaken with partners had been a fantastic example of the Prevention, Protection and multi agency work.

New Recruits: A new set of recruits were currently undergoing training and would be passing out on Wednesday 21st September 2016. Fire Authority Members would be invited to attend the passing out parade in due course. The Chairman added he met the last 15 recruits who had recently passed out and reported they had settled

Annual Planning Member Workshop: Members should have received an invitation to the Annual Planning Workshop for the Fire Authority Members on 4th July 2016 starting at 4pm. The Workshop was an extremely important session in reaffirming the policy direction of the Fire Authority and allowing Officers to undertake meaningful financial planning on its behalf. The Chairman looked forward to seeing the majority of Members at this important Workshop.

Co-responding Trials: The NJC had agreed that the period for national co-responding trials should be extended to February 2017. The extension would allow for a formal, and more detailed, external evaluation of the trials. RBFRS had recently launched a new scheme with three of its Officers volunteering to

respond to life threatening medical emergencies on behalf of South Central Ambulance Service where they were closer than the nearest ambulance resource.

Signing In/Councillors Lanyards: For security purposes, Members and visitors to this building were being asked to sign in at Reception. This was in addition to the Attendance Sheet that Members were required to sign. Please return lanyards and passes at Reception, on signing out.

10. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

It was noted that there were no recommendations from Committees.

13. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBERS AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS

Trevor Ferguson, Monitoring Officer (MO), presented a report which set out the Member nominations, role descriptions and appointment to Committees of the Fire Authority in accordance with the Constitution and the rules relating to political balance.

At its meeting on 25th April 2016, the Fire Authority agreed the addition of a Lead Member role to the governance arrangements and consequently the Fire Authority were now being asked to give consideration to the revised Member Role Descriptions as set out in Appendix A.

It was noted that based on proportionality, the Fire Authority would have 20 Members in 2016/17 and would comprise 14 Conservative Members and 6 Labour Members. The total number of seats available on the Management Committee was 11 and for the Audit and Governance Committee the seats available were 9. Lead Member and Member Champion roles were also to be appointed as follows:

- Budget Lead Member
- Collaboration Lead Member
- Integrated Risk Management Lead Member
- Strategic Asset Management Lead Member
- Community Safety Member Champion
- Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Member Champion
- Income Generation Member Champion
- Organisational Development Member Champion

Table 4 in the report set out the proposed membership of the Management Committee, Audit and Governance, Lead Members, Member Champions and appointments to Outside Bodies.

The Chairman made an amendment to the Member Role Descriptions in Appendix A in the introduction by adding two extra bullet points on the roles of

the Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority and Vice-Chairman of a Fire Authority Committee. The amendment was moved by Councillor Emma Webster and seconded by Vice-Chairman, Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons.

RESOLVED that:

- The Member Role Descriptions as set out in Appendix A be noted (as amended);
- It be noted that the number of seats allocated to the Management Committee in 2016/17, based on political proportionality, was 11;
- It be noted that the number of seats allocated to the Audit and Governance Committee in 2016/17, based on political proportionality, was 9;
- The nominations received from the Conservative and Labour Group Leaders as set out in Table 4 at paragraph 1.6 be approved which included the following:
 - Appointments to the Management Committee
 - Appointments to the Audit and Governance Committee
 - Appointments to the Lead Member roles
 - Appointments to the Member Champion roles
 - Appointments to Outside Bodies

14. TRADING COMPANY VERBAL UPDATE

Paul Maynard, Area Manager, reported that following Members' agreement at the last Fire Authority meeting to form a Community Interest Company or (CIC), Officers had started to prepare a business and investment plan to define the goals and financial set up for the company.

Members would recall the governance arrangements of the CIC, required the Member nominations to be raised through the Management Committee, which would take place on the 25th July 2016. Following receipt of the nominations the CIC would be registered with Companies House, which took around six to eight weeks.

Over the coming period the CIC Board would work toward finalising the business and investment plan, which would be presented initially to the Audit and Governance Committee in September and then to the Fire Authority at its meeting in October.

For information some opportunities for new business had recently arisen in the area of training companies to manage chemical spills and gas leaks. These would be developed along with other safety related training packages that linked to the broader health and well being agenda of the Authority and maintained the primary focus of the CIC, on achieving benefit for the community. In preparation for the new courses, recruitment of training associates was being undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

The verbal report be noted.

15. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE (TRAINING) LIMITED ANNUAL REPORT

Paul Southern, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO), reported on the performance of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited (RBFRTL) for the year end 31st March 2016.

In 2015/16 RBFRTL had reduced its staff headcount following a retirement from two trainers to one whilst also maintaining the administrative assistant post. Despite this reduction the company had managed to achieve £168,628 of sales. Since February 2016 Area Manager Paul Maynard had assumed responsibility for the day to day management of the company. The unaudited financial statements for RBFRTL were set out in Appendix A to the report where it was noted that sales in 2015/16 amounted to £168,628 compared to £213,325 in 2014/15. Profit for the year was £3,864 compared to a profit of £4,702 in the previous year. In addition to the profit of £3,864 RBFRTL had also paid £57,831 in recharged costs to the Fire Authority and represented the real costs the company would face if it were a stand alone business. It was noted that this income would not be available when RBFRTL ceased to trade and RBFR Solutions CIC was formed.

The company's accounts would be audited by Ernst & Young in July 2016 as part of its audit of the Fire Authority's 2015/16 financial statements following which they would then be formally approved by the RBFRTL Board.

Councillor Paul Gittings asked whether the reduction in the annual turnover had been due to the reduction in staff. The ACFO reported that it had been the case however the current focus was to maintain the Training Company until RBFR Solutions CIC was formed.

RESOLVED that:

The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited Annual Report be noted.

16. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE – INCLUDING MEMBER ATTENDANCE

Trevor Ferguson, Monitoring Officer (MO), presented the Annual Report on Governance.

Complaints received against Members - It was noted that as in the previous year there had been no formal complaints received against Members in 2015/16. One informal complaint had been received in February 2016 but had since been resolved. On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Audit and Governance Committee thanked the Independent Person, David Comben, and Deputy Independent Person, Roger Penfold, for their availability and advice when required.

Members' Allowances – On 25th April 2016 the Fire Authority had adopted a new Scheme of Allowances to reflect the overall reduction in the number of Members on the Fire Authority which had reduced from 25 to 20 and the additional responsibilities of the roles placed on them. The scheme would be reviewed on an annual basis and the Member allowances for June 2015 to May 2016 were set out in Appendix A.

Member Attendance – The attendance of Fire Authority Members for the

Municipal Year 2015/16 was set out in Appendix B of the report and included all meetings up to 31st May 2016. Attendance for this year had generally been good with no meetings being inquorate. Most absences had been due either to a meeting clash or a holiday and apologies had generally been received in good time. However, on some occasions Members had not given their apology for absence and this was noted in Appendix B as 'Did not Attend' (DNA). It was felt that the arrangement of substitutes could be utilised more and the Chairman of the Fire Authority had requested that Members should take all reasonable steps to ensure that substitutes were nominated to attend Committee meetings wherever possible to ensure that they were quorate.

RBFRS had liaised with Unitary Authorities in arranging the 2016/17 Committee meeting dates and this practice would continue in the future. However, Members were asked to note that future clashes would be unavoidable due to the number of Unitary Authority commitments that they had.

Member Dispersations – Dispersations had been granted to all Fire Authority Members at the beginning of the Municipal Year to allow Member debate and decision making on the budget and precept. In addition the Monitoring Officer had granted named Members who were also Members of their Unitary Authority Planning Committee a dispersation at the Fire Authority held on 17th February 2016, due to the possible planning applications for masts in relation to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

RESOLVED that:

- It be noted that the Monitoring Officer had granted dispersations to all Fire Authority Members in the 2016/17 Municipal Year to allow Member debate and decision making on the budget and precept;
- It be noted that the Monitoring Officer had granted Member dispersations on 17th February 2016 on a matter relating to Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) and on 25th April 2016 in relation to the review of the Scheme of Allowances;
- The Members' allowances received for the period of June 2015 to May 2016 be noted;
- The 2015/16 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members be noted.

17. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that:

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

18. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 17th August 2016, 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

20. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED that:

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2016 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(The meeting concluded at 7.19 pm)