

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 6.30pm

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

<b>Members:</b> (* <i>present</i> )	*	Councillor Malcolm Alexander	*	Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
	*	Councillor Alistair Auty	*	Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge
	*	Councillor Christine Bateson		Councillor Chris Maskell
		Councillor Phillip Bicknell	*	Councillor Iain McCracken
	*	Councillor Jason Brock		Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	*	Councillor Paul Bryant	*	Councillor Phillip Mirfin
		Councillor Avtar Cheema		Councillor Mohammed Rasib
	*	Councillor Colin Dudley	*	Councillor Angus Ross
		Councillor Adrian Edwards	*	Councillor Atiq Sandhu
	*	Councillor Paul Gittings	*	Councillor Emma Webster

**In Attendance:** Richard Battley (Head of Facilities and Assets, HOFA)  
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HOFB)  
Neil Carter (West Hub Manager)  
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
Tamara Hack (Assistant Committee Officer)  
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development)  
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Risk and Performance))  
Linda Pye (Committee Officer)  
Jo Reeves (Lead Committee Officer)  
Robert Reid (Station Manager)  
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services)  
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)  
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

### 59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Phillip Bicknell, Avtar Cheema, Adrian Edwards, Chris Maskell, Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Mohammed Rasib.

## **60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct Councillors Emma Webster and Iain McCracken declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that they were members of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Angus Ross and Malcolm Alexander stated that should the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) be discussed at the meeting they declared a personal interest as they were a member 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.

## **61. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2018**

### **RESOLVED that:**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2018 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Becci Jefferies referred to page 21 and in particular the minute relating to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority – Pay Policy Statement 2018/19. She confirmed that there had been an error in the table in respect of the remuneration package which had been amended. However, this amendment did not impact on the decision made at the last Fire Authority meeting.

Councillor Colin Dudley noted that on page 24 of the minutes under the discussion on the Forward Plan it was requested that an additional column should be included for Lead Member. This column had now been inserted in the Forward Plan but he stated that a Lead Member was not always shown against all the items and he asked if that could be rectified in the next version.

## **62. 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.

## **63. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

### **Firefighters Memorial Day**

- The Fire and Rescue Service would be supporting Firefighters Memorial Day, which would take place on Friday, 4 May 2018. This was now an annual event, organised by the Firefighters Memorial Trust to pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters who had died in the line of duty.
- RBFRS would be observing a minute's silence at noon on 4 May 2018 and firefighters would be parading on station forecourts.
- Members were encouraged if possible to visit their local stations to join in this act of remembrance. Please contact the relevant hub managers to arrange this and their contact details would be shared by email to Members the

following day.

### **Chaplains nominated for Queen's Award**

- The Fire and Rescue Service Chaplains had recently been presented with a nomination for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, James Puxley. The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was effectively the equivalent of an MBE and was the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK. Their nomination for this award was based upon the invaluable support they provided to sustain the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of staff.
- There was not a set number of winners each year for this award, as each nomination was judged on the benefits it gave to the local community. The Chaplaincy Team would find out at the beginning of June if they had been successful.
- What a fantastic achievement it would be if they received the award, and he asked all Members to join him in wishing the very best of luck to the Chaplaincy Team. The Chairman personally valued the work that they did and included firefighter and green book staff. The Chaplaincy Team were a fantastic group of people who volunteered for this role.

### **Pay agreement for Green Book staff**

- The National Joint Council for Local Government Services had reached a two-year pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions.
- The agreement sought to address the increasing National Minimum Wage, through larger increases for the lowest paid staff within Local Government. In RBFRS, the vast majority of staff employed on these terms and conditions would receive a 2% increase in both April 2018 and April 2019.

### **5,000 Blood Donations now made at Berkshire Fire Stations**

- 5,000 blood donations had now been made during sessions held at Berkshire's fire stations. The blood donation sessions were run by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), which supplied blood to hospitals in England, and tissues and solid organs to hospitals across the UK, saving and transforming countless lives.
- Local resident Ken Butcher made the 5,000th donation during a visit to Slough Fire Station on Tuesday, 17 April 2018. RBFA gave Ken a thank you card in recognition of the fantastic milestone.
- The idea to run blood donation sessions at fire stations goes back to the staff engagement process, when firefighters on Red Watch at Bracknell suggested the idea. Since then the donation sessions had been a tremendous success and the Fire and Rescue Service had been able to increase its contribution to local communities. Thanks to all those who had made this milestone possible – it was fantastic 5,000 pints of blood (almost an arm full!).

### **Staff took to the Skies for the Fire Fighters Charity**

- On Sunday, 22 April 2018, 12 members of staff jumped out of a plane in an effort to raise as much money as possible for The Fire Fighters Charity.
- Although they must have been feeling some nerves, it did not show as all of

them completed the tandem skydive and returned to celebrate with their families and friends on the ground. So far, they had raised an incredible £4,500 so thank you to all who had donated! It was not too late to donate. If you would like to support the team and raise money for this worthy cause, please go to their Justgiving page which was on the RBFRS website front page.

- The skydive was organised as part of a year of fundraising for The Fire Fighters Charity, after the charity was nominated by The Mayor of Bracknell and Fire Authority Member, Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle as her chosen mayoral charity. The Chairman thanked all the staff who bravely took on the challenge and in doing so, raised a great deal of money for this worthy cause – well done to all of them.

#### **Charity Car Washes for the Fire Fighters Charity**

- During March firefighters across the County took part in The National Car Wash League, to raise as much money as possible for The Fire Fighters Charity.
- Unfortunately, due to the recent poor weather, several of our car washes had to be cancelled, but crews from Bracknell, Caversham Road, Crowthorne, Newbury and Slough Fire Stations were able to hold car washes and raise a significant sum for the charity. A total of £6,335.11 was raised at the five stations and lots of members of the public came to stations to meet local crews and were very generous in their donations to support The Fire Fighters Charity.
- The Chairman noted that over £10,000 had been raised from two activities for the Fire Fighters Charity. This was a fantastic achievement and he was sure that the money would be well spent.

#### **64. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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

#### **65. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30**

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

#### **66. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44**

There were no Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

#### **67. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

It was noted that item 10 (Annual Plan 2018/19) had been recommended from the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 March 2018.

#### **68. ANNUAL PLAN 2018/19**

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS), presented the Annual Plan 2018/19 which provided direction for the organisation for the following year within the context of the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

2015-2019.

A number of minor changes had been proposed to the Strategic Objectives contained within the Annual Plan for 2018/19. However, the Strategic Commitments of the Fire Authority remained unchanged. The changes to Strategic Objectives seven to ten were intended to offer greater clarity rather than to materially change the purpose and took into account the developing national context in which fire and rescue services were operating.

The Annual Plan would form the final year of the Corporate Plan and IRMP 2015-2019.

Councillor Paul Bryant enquired whether under Strategic Objective 3, promotion of sprinklers could be expanded to include schools, care homes and other public buildings. Katie Mills confirmed she would amend the document.

Councillor Angus Ross requested that a reference be made to support given to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

Councillor Bryant noted that post-Grenfell there had been more interest in installing sprinklers in buildings and expressed concern that enthusiasm might wane as time moved on from the tragic incident.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons stated that she supported the document. She asked Members to return to their own local authorities to pass a motion expressing similar support for sprinkler systems.

Councillor Paul Gittings advised that Coley high rise was in his ward and was being retrospectively fitted with sprinklers in order to provide reassurance to residents. He noted that the full investigation report into the Grenfell disaster was yet to be published.

Councillor Emma Webster commended the report which contained useful measures. The Corporate Health measures were important as the Fire and Rescue Service's greatest resource was its employees. Regarding point 23 on page 51, Councillor Webster hoped that those staff who had been absent for more than 50%, for example on maternity leave, of the reporting period could have a Personal Development Appraisal on request.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The Annual Plan 2018/19 be approved.

**69. FIREFIGHTER PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) REPLACEMENT**

Richard Battley, Head of Facilities and Assets (HOFA), outlined the position regarding the replacement of Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment, which would need to be fully operational from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

The Authority's existing contract for Fire Fighter Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was with Ballycare. It was based on a fully managed arrangement and had been in place for the last seven years. The contract was let through the South East Regional PPE framework led by Kent FRS and would expire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 with no option to extend. In preparation for this throughout 2016/17 the Authority had been actively engaged in a national collaborative PPE procurement project for a complete Fire Fighter PPE ensemble solution led by Kent Fire and

## DRAFT

Rescue Service and supported by the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) but with direct involvement from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and other Fire and Rescue Services. Following a full OJEU tender process a national framework had been awarded to Bristol Uniforms to supply a complete PPE ensemble for all operational staff covering the full range of operational activities.

The options for the supply of PPE within the Framework included:

- Option 1 – The outright purchase of PPE sets for all Fire Fighter personnel
- Option 2 – Enter into a managed service contract with the Supplier providing all PPE ensemble to Fire Fighters.

The HOFA advised that the preferred option was to enter into a new fully managed service with Bristol Uniforms Ltd. The contract would be let through a national framework that was put in place by Kent Fire and Rescue Service. The Framework award went to Bristol Uniforms following extensive testing and evaluation. Bristol Uniforms could supply the full range of required PPE for the protection of operational staff at incidents. The proposed ensemble was an enhancement to the PPE currently issued to RBFRS staff and included all the items currently provided to RBFRS staff together with an additional Rescue Jacket. The Rescue Jacket would provide improved heat management and increased safety at motorway incidents etc.

The estimated saving on the new contract, compared to the current, was £63k per year.

Due to the high volume of take up on the collaborative framework, with 29 Services across the UK already expressing an interest in accessing it, an early decision was required to ensure RBFRS secured an early start date for the 12 month implementation plan to meet the required deadline of July 2019.

Councillor Colin Dudley asked if the quality, weight and protection of the new ensemble would be the same or better than the current PPE. Robert Reid, Station Manager, confirmed that the weight would be less than the current equipment and the protection provided fully met or exceeded the requirements. It was therefore at least equal to or better than what was currently being used and reflected 10 years of progress in this area. Councillor Dudley asked if the equipment had been tested. It was noted that this formed part of the OJEU process and 10 Fire and Rescue Services had tested the products which included RBFRS.

Councillor Alistair Auty was concerned that the Authority had been paying 35% more than it needed to over the last seven years. He asked if the previous contract had been a bad deal or whether savings in relation to the proposed contract had been achieved through economies of scale. The DCFO confirmed that it reflected the framework and the number of Services who had expressed an interest and these factors had driven costs down. He could not comment on the contract which had been awarded to Ballycare. Going forward it was proposed to use the national framework as this would also support the collaboration work with Thames Valley partners who had already signed up to the new framework.

Councillor Iain McCracken referred to paragraph 9.2 of the report which stated that the new contract would enable the three Thames Valley FRS' to align their PPE contracts at the next procurement cycle. He asked for clarification as to who would own the contract and whether there was a 'get out' clause. The DCFO confirmed that RBFRS would own the contract and would be managed through

the Procurement Team who would ensure that all the necessary protections were in place. Councillor McCracken was reassured by that and felt that it was important due to the potential length of the contract.

Councillor Malcolm Alexander noted that the current contract expired on 30 June 2019 and he asked if there would be an overlap so that everyone was dressed in the same way. The DCFO confirmed that there would be a phased transition to ensure that everything was ready for day one of the new contract.

Councillor Paul Bryant asked if Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire were also using the national framework. Robert Reid advised that Buckinghamshire were going down the managed service route and Oxfordshire were still considering options.

Councillor Colin Dudley moved the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons.

Councillor Emma Webster commended the report and stressed the need to ensure that the Authority had the best equipment possible for the fire crews. It was also good to note that a rescue jacket would be included as part of the equipment.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons was pleased that Kent had undertaken extensive testing of the equipment and it was good to see that the new contract would come out cheaper and the equipment would be of a superior quality.

Councillor Malcolm Alexander enquired if it would be possible to see a full set of the new kit modelled at the next Fire Authority meeting. The HOFA confirmed that he would enquire whether that would be possible.

DCFO

**RESOLVED that:**

- The award of a managed service of structural fire kit from Bristol Uniforms be agreed. The contract would run for a period of eight years with an option to extend the contract for up to two further years. The estimated total contract value was £1,850,000 if the full 10 years contract term was exercised; and
- It be agreed that the Structural Fire Fighting Ensemble with additional Rescue Jacket be selected.

**70. 2018/19 CORPORATE CALENDAR**

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS), presented the 2018/19 Corporate Calendar listing dates of Fire Authority and Committee meetings during 2018/19.

The Democratic Services Team had worked closely with their counterparts in the six Unitary Authorities to avoid clashes with full Council and Fire Authority meetings where possible. However, it was impossible to avoid some clashes which might affect Member attendance at RBFA Committee meetings.

In preparing the calendar it was noted that it would be necessary to undertake a consultation on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2019-2023 and therefore to facilitate this consultation within 2018 it was proposed that an additional Fire Authority meeting would take place on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 to agree a proposal for consultation. To enable this, it was proposed that Management Committee be moved forward to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Five Management Committee meetings had been scheduled into the calendar during the year, however, subject to the business need potentially two additional Management Committee meetings might be required in September 2018 and January 2019.

The streamlined governance arrangements approved by the Fire Authority in April 2016 had proved to be successful due to the increased number of Members on both Committees which had proved to be beneficial with no meetings being cancelled in the last two years due to being inquorate.

The Audit and Governance Committee would continue to monitor the attendance of Members on an annual basis and feedback attendance figures to the Fire Authority at its annual meeting in June.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The 2018/19 Corporate Calendar be approved.

**71. LEAD MEMBERS, MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL ANNUAL REPORTS**

The Annual Reports provided by Lead Members, Member Champions and TVFCS Joint Committee were presented to the Fire Authority. The Annual Reports were set out in Appendices A-H as follows:

Budget Lead Member	Councillor Phillip Bicknell
Collaboration Lead Member	Councillor Malcolm Alexander
Integrated Risk Management Lead Member	Councillor Emma Webster
Strategic Asset Management Lead	Councillor Angus Ross
Community Safety Champion	Councillor Christine Bateson
Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion	Councillor Adrian Edwards
Organisational Development Champion	Councillor Pauline Helliars-Symons
Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee	Councillors Malcolm Alexander and Angus Ross

Councillor Colin Dudley confirmed that it was not intended to go through all the reports in detail as he assumed that Members had read them. He would be prepared to take any questions if necessary.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The Annual Reports be noted.

**72. FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED that:**

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Forward Plan for the period 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018 be noted.

**73. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED that:**

The minutes of the following meetings had been published on the RBFRS website:

- Audit and Governance Committee meeting – December 2017;
- Fire Authority Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018;
- Management Committee meeting – 6 February 2018

**74. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 28 June 2018, 6.30pm in the Lynda Kenyon Suite, Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

*(The meeting concluded at 7.07pm)*