

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE  
AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**



**Held on Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 6.30pm**

**RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot,  
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD**

**Members:**

- \* Councillor Malcolm Alexander
- \* Councillor Phillip Bicknell
- (\* present)
- \* Councillor Jason Brock
- \* Councillor Colin Dudley
- \* Councillor Paul Gittings
- Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
- Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
- \* Councillor Ted Plenty
- \* Councillor Angus Ross
- \* Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
- Councillor Emma Webster

**In Attendance:**

Alex Brown (Head of Capital Projects and Estates, HCP&E)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
Stephen Chard (Clerk)  
Tony Deacon (Temporary Area Manager, Service Delivery Prevention and Protection (T/AM P&P))  
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
Tamara Hack (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)  
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)  
Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)  
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFFE)  
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Service Delivery Response, Operational Assurance and Resilience AM ROA&R)  
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)  
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Services, HBIS)

**Action**

**39. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

The Fire Brigade Union (FBU) did not address the Committee on any of the agenda items.

**40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Pauline Helliard-Symons, Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Emma Webster.

**41. 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 declared 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.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

#### **42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2018 AND MATTERS ARISING**

**RESOLVED that:** the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2018, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Item 31 – 2018/19 Quarter 1 Appliance Availability**

Steve Foye (DCFO) explained that he had met with Councillor Emma Webster to discuss her request to include journey times in quarterly reports. They had agreed that this additional information would not be appropriate for this particular indicator as it would make the reporting overly complex.

A letter had been sent on behalf of Councillor Colin Dudley to Crowthorne Fire Station to congratulate them on the high availability of their appliances.

##### **Item 32 – Response to consultation on Local Government Finance Settlement**

The responses received from Berkshire's MPs had been shared with Management Committee Members.

#### **43. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley, made the following announcements:

##### **Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)**

- Week commencing 28 January 2019, marked the fieldwork week of the first inspection by HMICFRS of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS).
- The week saw ten inspectors on site interviewing staff from across the RBFRS. The inspectors attended fire stations, hubs and the Headquarters.
- It was an intensive week and Councillor Dudley extended his thanks on behalf of Members to all of those involved in the planning and preparation which included engagement days, data returns, submission of the Self Assessment, Discovery Week, delivery of the Strategic Briefing and Fieldwork week. A significant document pack had been put together which included in excess of 50 key documents.
- On Thursday 7 February 2019, RBFRS would receive some initial high level feedback on the inspection findings, however, no gradings would be issued at this stage. The report for the RBFRS would be published with the other Tranche 2 reports which was expected in June 2019.
- Later this evening, the Chief Fire Officer would provide an overview of the outcomes from the Tranche 1 inspections, the results of which were published in December 2018.
- Councillor Dudley stated that he was very proud of the work that had been undertaken for the inspection.

- Trevor Ferguson, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), added the expectation that a draft report would be provided in April 2019 when it would be available for comment. Councillor Dudley advised that he had attended a HMICFRS meeting with representatives of other Fire and Rescue Services who were at a more advanced stage of the inspection process. It was the case that they had been given the chance to comment on the draft report but there had been no changes made to judgements as a result.

### **Budget and Council Tax Consultation 2019-20**

- Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) was consulting on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's funding through Council Tax for the next financial year.
- RBFA was determined to continue to provide a safe and efficient service, whilst balancing the budget, changing local needs and working with reducing grant funding from Central Government. Councillor Dudley believed that the plans that had been put in place over the last few years had provided a reasonably good foundation to meet that challenge. However, the funding position continued to be volatile.
- In order to carry out those plans and help maintain and renew fire appliances, fire stations and lifesaving IT systems, the Fire Authority was consulting on an increase of 2.99% in Council Tax (the maximum allowed). That was an increase of just 3.7p a week for a household living in a Band D property, which totalled an annual increase of £1.92 for the coming year, taking the total Band D Tax for the Service to £66.28 a year. Councillor Dudley felt that this constituted very good value for money. Through this consultation, it was also the intention to ascertain the public's views on whether they would be supportive of an increase of up to £5 per year in future years, subject to Government agreement as this could only be done via a referendum. The views of residents were being sought on this £5 increase via the completion of an online survey which had a deadline of 5pm on Wednesday, 20 February 2019. The survey took less than five minutes to complete and the feedback would be considered by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 25 February 2019.
- Further information about the budget consultation was available on the RBFRS website, which included a letter from Councillor Dudley as Chairman on the Budget and Council Tax. Councillor Dudley urged Members to encourage residents to respond to the survey. RBFA had the fourth lowest Council Tax precept nationally.

### **On-call firefighter recruitment**

- Efforts to recruit more on-call firefighters at fire stations across Berkshire were off to a promising start in the New Year. Eight new on-call firefighters had joined the Service in December 2018 and January 2019 after completing their initial training courses. They would be serving at Maidenhead, Wargrave, Mortimer and Hungerford Fire Stations.
- There were a further seven applicants who passed their physical assessments during January 2019, at a Firefighter Selection Test weekend, which was held at RBFRS's Training Centre on 19-20 January. They would now move onto the next stage of the recruitment process.
- This followed a successful Have a Go event that was held at Mortimer Fire Station on 12 January, where a number of people came to try out their

skills to see if they had what it took to become a firefighter.

- The next Have a Go event would take place this Saturday, 9 February, at Lambourn Fire Station, where it was hoped that more potential applicants would come to find out more about this important role.

### **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 FBU.
- The project was progressing really well with staff. Consultation on phase one of the project relating to station based personnel was now completed.
- A significant part of phase one was the addition of 24 watch-based Station Manager A's, which in addition to being responsible for the day-to-day management of Wholetime Fire Stations, they provided level 2 incident command ensuring resilience in the incident command model (Level 2 Incident Command Manager).
- The selection process for the Station Manager A's was currently underway with role-based assessments and interviews having already been completed. The individuals that had successfully completed the initial stages of the selection process would be undertaking Level 2 Incident Command training at the Fire College in February and March 2019.
- Final appointment and placement decisions would be completed by April 2019, with the new station based L2 incident command structure being in place from May. Councillor Dudley commended this excellent work, which enabled this move to a new system.

### **LGA Conference**

- On 12-13 March 2019, the LGA Annual Fire Conference would be taking place in Brighton. The annual fire conference and exhibition was a key event in the conference calendar for senior officers and members of fire authorities. The conference provided an opportunity to examine the changes affecting the fire and rescue sector and consider notable practice.
- Jim Powell, Area Manager Service Delivery, and Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services, would be attending the event on behalf of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Councillor Dudley reported that, unfortunately, he was unable to attend due to work commitments and he opened the opportunity to attend to another Member. Members interested in attending this conference on behalf of the Fire Authority should make contact with Fayth Rowe.

### **Charity round up**

- During January 2019, RBFRS supported the 'Bag it and Bin it' campaign, to help raise money for the Fire Fighters Charity. The textile recycling scheme had been running since 2008, and now raised over £500,000 a year for the Charity. Recycling banks were available at a total of 13 stations across Berkshire, with residents generously donating various textiles.
- Looking forward, fire stations would also be taking part in the National Car Wash League during March 2019, to raise more much needed funds for this worthy cause. Slough fire station had previously been southern

champions.

- Newbury and Wokingham fire stations would be holding car washes on Saturday, 30 March, and all were welcome to attend. Further dates would be confirmed on the RBFRS website at a later date.
- Councillor Dudley was very proud of all the charity and fundraising work that was being undertaken.

### **Snow and business continuity**

- With temperatures falling over the past week, business continuity plans had been put in place to ensure that residents received an effective service. Following yellow and amber weather warnings for snow and ice, disruption was expected on the County's roads.
- Arrangements had been put in place to ensure that all departments continued to have necessary staffing levels and worked remotely where necessary.
- To ensure an effective response, fire appliances with 4 x 4 capabilities were deployed at strategic locations, to ensure that RBFRS could reach those in need.
- Although the Service did not receive an unusually high number of call outs, the plans put in place ensured that the Service was well prepared.
- Councillor Dudley gave thanks to all those who worked tirelessly in challenging conditions to maintain the high standards of RBFRS including those officers who were able to get to their places of work.

### **Hub News**

- In recent weeks, there had been a number of important achievements in relation to fire safety within Berkshire. These included:
  - Following a call to a fire, which occurred in an electric oven within an accommodation block, Maidenhead, crews passed on relevant fire safety information to the East Hub protection team. This had led to the issue of a Prohibition Notice restricting areas within the building from being used as sleeping accommodation.
  - Additionally, the Fire Safety Inspecting Officers raised concerns regarding modern day slavery. Thames Valley Police was informed and subsequently visited the premises very quickly. It was important to note this example of partnership work to ensure the safety and security of residents.
  - Following a joint inspection with Environmental Health partners, East Hub protection team members issued a Prohibition Notice on a retail outlet with sleeping accommodation above. This prohibited the use of the first floor of the building due to inadequate fire alarms and means of escape. Preventative work was crucial.
  - Within the East Hub, our blue light partners advised of a property with safeguarding, hoarding issues and environmental issues. Following an onsite meeting there were a number of issues identified, which included a damaged front door (fire door) and excessive fire load due to hoarding. RBFRS was currently working with local authority partners to have the front door replaced and the fire load reduced so that RBFRS Safe and Well Technician could conduct a visit and provide the required

level of protection for when the occupant returned.

- This showed that Hubs were working well with blue light partners, local authorities, health partners etc. The Hubs were undertaking excellent work that would help to save lives.
- Councillor Dudley thanked all those involved in the Hubs for the important work being undertaken and the contribution being made in keeping the people of Berkshire safe.

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

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

#### **45. 2019-2023 VEHICLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT STRATEGY**

Councillor Angus Ross, Lead Member, introduced the item. He explained that significant progress had been made in the delivery of RBFRS Vehicle Fleet and Equipment Strategy 2016-2019. As this was due to expire it was now timely to introduce a renewed Strategy that took into consideration greater partnership and collaborative work.

Andrew McLenahan, Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment (HFFE), then presented the report. A renewed Vehicle Fleet and Equipment Strategy for 2019-2023 had been developed and sought to continue the progressive work achieved thus far. The Strategy linked in with the ongoing Strategic Asset Investment Framework and was supported by a headline five year delivery plan that would inform the annual Service Plan.

The HFFE expanded on the progress that had been made by the existing Strategy. This included the removal of a range of end of life assets, a reduction in the overall fleet numbers, the introduction of new pumping appliances through a joint procurement process with Thames Valley FRS partners and the ordering of a new Aerial Ladder Platform.

The new Strategy did not create any immediate financial implications. It informed and would be addressed by the capital programme and medium term financial plans and supported the intent set out in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework.

There were no specific risks stemming from the Strategy and, in itself, it provided the basis for mitigating risk of not providing for and maintaining effective and efficient operational fleet and equipment. The Strategy supported good management of road risk and wider safety management through the provision of modern, reliable and compliant appliances and equipment. This underpinned RBFRS commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and supported work with the Fire and Rescue Risk Group.

It was recommended that the Strategy be noted.

Councillor Malcolm Alexander queried how end of life vehicles were disposed of. The HFFE advised that in general, they were disposed of via public auction. They were also donated to underdeveloped countries in some cases.

Councillor Colin Dudley commended the work undertaken by Councillor Ross, the HFFE and other Officers in producing the positive new Strategy. He had noted improvements made by the existing Strategy, i.e. by the removal of older vehicles formerly stored at Dee Road and was pleased that improvements

would continue to be made.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The 2019-2023 Vehicle Fleet and Equipment Strategy be noted.

**46. JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT FOR FLEET MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP WITH HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Andrew McLenahan, (HFFE), presented a report which provided a summary of the benefits with the partnership working agreement between Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) for the continued fleet maintenance and management services across the combined geographical area with the intention of sharing resources and reducing costs in connection with the discharge of their functions. This working arrangement had been very successful and Officers would be seeking to renew this agreement for a further five years.

The HFFE explained that over the past four years, the partnership had successfully delivered the forecast efficiencies. It provided for the delivery of major scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, routine safety inspections and minor maintenance for all front line operational vehicles for RBFA and the whole fleet for HFRA.

The partnership was possible as Hampshire maintained a workshop that included an extensive vehicle repair facility; preparation bay and commercial sized paint oven; dedicated vehicle electrics workshop; dedicated ladder maintenance and repair workshop; full welding and fabrication facility and a working at height platform and gantry crane to access appliances safely.

The renewal of the joint working agreement would maintain the terms of the original agreement. There were minor adaptations to address modified management arrangements as detailed in Schedule 5 of Appendix B and adaptations to reflect changes in wider legislation, such as the introduction of GDPR. Further to this were the updated charges as set out in Schedule 4 of Appendix B, reflecting inflationary increases since the 2014 agreement.

The original forecast benefit for RBFA in 2014 was £69,000 per annum. At the time the original agreement was established, the budget for fleet servicing was adjusted down to take account of this efficiency gain. Over the past four years the service had operated within this reduced budget providing a real terms contribution to reducing expenditure. There was no additional funding requirement as a consequence of this renewal.

To move back to a third party commercial provision of fleet maintenance was considered to be significantly more expensive than the cost of operating in partnership through the joint working arrangement. To give context, the highest hourly rate cost for a technician working in the partnership was £48.43 an hour. The indicative hourly rate charge for labour in the commercial sector was in the region of £90 per hour. The charges associated with the agreement were detailed in Schedule 4 of Appendix B.

Ongoing monitoring of fleet costs and the ongoing realisation of both the financial and operating benefits would take place through the partnership's Joint Management Board.

It was also important to recognise that the collaboration offered benefits beyond financial efficiencies. Through this joint working it had been possible to

improve management and control of fleet maintenance throughout the service with wider benefits which included:

- Improved co-ordination and monitoring of fleet servicing.
- Use of mobile service units to manage a significant proportion of the fleet maintenance, including prompt response to vehicle defects.
- Reduced downtime of appliances resulting in improved service delivery to the public.
- Improvement of standards throughout the fleet.
- Continuous benefit of enhanced quality assurance through ongoing performance monitoring.
- Access to specialists that were working with FRS appliances and equipment regularly.
- A collaborative, adaptive and shared commitment to problem solving across the partnership.
- Established vehicle, equipment service and maintenance plans, preventing overdue service events and other servicing on vehicles and equipment.

There were no immediate risk implications arising from this report or the new agreement. Not entering into a new agreement meant RBFRS would need to take an alternative approach. This would entail a full tendering process and all indications were that costs of using a commercial provider would be higher, risking an additional financial burden and would not be in the spirit of collaboration or good efficiency.

Not entering into the new agreement could also have employment implications as part of the premise of the agreement was that RBFRS would have a vehicle technician based permanently at the Hampshire vehicle maintenance centre and shared the services of a Fleet Manager.

Councillor Colin Dudley sought to confirm the saving this renewal could realise in comparison to using the commercial sector. Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) explained that this was a significant saving, estimated at close to £400k for the five year period.

Councillor Angus Ross felt that the partnership had worked well and he commended the work of the HFFE and other Officers in achieving this. He was pleased to note the renewal and the savings it would bring.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of the report's recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Ross. This was unanimously agreed by Members.

#### **RESOLVED that:**

- The renewal of the Fleet Maintenance Partnership Agreement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority for the joint provision of fleet maintenance and management services for a period of five years, from 1 April 2019 until 31 March 2024, be agreed.

#### **47. MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES REVIEW**

Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services), presented a report which set out the 2019/20 Member Scheme of Allowances which would be presented to the Fire Authority for approval. The recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) to their respective councils

was also provided for information.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2) required the Authority to make a scheme of allowances before the beginning of the financial year and, before making it, to have regard to the recommendations made by Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

In July 2018, the National Joint Council (NJC) Government Services had reached a two year pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions to receive a 2% increase in April 2018 and April 2019.

Appendix A to the report reflected the 2% proposed increase in the Members Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2019.

The HCS confirmed that Members were able to debate the item.

Councillor Jason Brock highlighted a need for consistency in relation to references made to Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) in the Scheme of Allowances document. The document referred to SRAs for Opposition Group Leaders and separately for the main Opposition Group Leader only. This needed to be consistent to ensure this was clarified.

Councillor Angus Ross made reference to 3.4.6 of the report – the IRP recommendations for Wokingham Borough Council. This needed to be amended as the recommendations to increase allowances were not approved by Members.

Councillor Colin Dudley proposed acceptance of the report's recommendation. He acknowledged that allowances were an emotive subject, but pointed out that the recommendation came from an independent body – South East Employers (SEE). The recommendation was in line with the already agreed proposal to link increases to allowances with 'Green Book' staff pay increases. Councillor Dudley added that the allowances existed to encourage people from all walks of life to become Councillors and serve local residents.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell seconded the proposal. He agreed the provision was needed to encourage people to become Councillors, particularly younger people.

Councillor Brock also agreed that allowances opened up the opportunity to any member of the public who wished to become a Councillor. However, he voiced concerns over the methodology used to increase allowances in line with staff pay increases. He felt this to be unusual and considered that it would be more appropriate for the IRP to consider what level of allowance was actually required rather than what he considered to be an arbitrary rise. He questioned how allowances paid in Berkshire compared nationally.

Councillor Brock continued by stating the view that a more robust methodology was required before future increases were considered. He did not feel increases should automatically link to staff pay.

Councillor Ross added his concerns to the proposal. Members in a number of local authorities had chosen to not increase allowances and he felt that the Authority should mirror this approach and not increase allowances at this time. Councillor Ross also felt that residents would be unclear of the role of SEE and therefore why they were selected to conduct the independent review.

Councillor Dudley noted these points. However, he reiterated that the recommendations came from an independent body – SEE – and they were a recognised regional body. The recommendation was to link to the price index

and staff pay increases.

Councillor Dudley was content for Councillor Brock to be involved in future discussions relating to Member Allowances and in helping to set future recommendations.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The 2% increase to the 2019/20 Member Scheme of Allowance set out in Appendix A to the report effective from 1 April 2019, be noted and recommended to the Fire Authority for approval at its meeting on 25 February 2019. Minor amendments would be made to the report in advance of Fire Authority.

**KM to action**

**48. BUDGET MONITORING**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), informed Members of the estimated revenue outturn for 2018/19 and provided an update on capital projects as at the end of December 2018.

In summary, due to the prudent management of the Service's budget and various in-year realignments as set out in the report, the total projected expenditure for 2018/19 was £33,495,000 against the budgeted figure of £33,479,000 which was a variance of just 0.05% and an overspend of £16,000.

It was noted that there had been some good news from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that an error had been made in the calculation of the Local Government Finance settlements for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19. The Authority had been under-funded by a total amount of £592,000 and this would be paid to the Authority as a single payment in Quarter 4 of 2018/19. This sum would be placed in the Development Fund and used to finance capital expenditure in future years.

It was positive to note that the continued improvement in RDS (Retained Duty System) recruitment had brought this budget to within £205k of profile. When the necessary portion of the £168k of savings required from Pangbourne were realised and the additional RDS recruits came on stream, this budget would balance.

A further positive was the delivery of £123k savings from the Remotely Managed Stations/Flexi-Duty Officer (RMS/FDO) project. This had enabled the project team to provide additional high quality realistic incident command training at the Fire Service College.

Further improved contract management, invoice chasing and business rates revaluations had resulted in additional in-year savings of £113k. This had been offset against the £205k professional service costs relating to the development of the Whitley Wood business case. Funding this in-year meant that the costs would no longer be met from the Development Fund.

The Revenue Budget included a contribution from the Budget Contingency Reserve of £353k. The receipt of the additional £592k, already referred to, which would be credited to the Development Fund meant that the net impact on reserves would be an inflow of £239k.

There was a forecast underspend of £6k for the RBFRS from the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) in 2018/19. This was the Authority's share of the £16k variance reported by the TVFCS.

A breakdown of the Transition Fund budget allocations and spend to 31

December 2018 was provided in Appendix B. Projects funded by the Transition Fund were monitored on a quarterly basis by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Capital expenditure and supporting commentary for each respective scheme was shown in Appendix C. None of the schemes were forecasting an overspend.

Councillor Colin Dudley commended that fact that a variance of only £16k was being forecast.

Councillor Paul Gittings added his congratulations to achieving such a small budget variance.

Councillor Gittings then referred to the £205k cost of professional services relating to the development of the Whitley Wood business case. He requested that a detailed breakdown be provided of this cost to aid public scrutiny of the expenditure to assess its appropriateness, when considering that the project was no longer proceeding.

Management Committee discussed when this commercially sensitive information could be made public. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) advised that the cost breakdown would be included in the year-end budget monitoring report, by which time the information would no longer be commercially sensitive. He agreed this needed to be transparent and the breakdown would be provided with the business case. Alex Brown (Head of Capital Projects and Estates) added that much of this information was contained in the Part II report presented at the last meeting of Management Committee.

The HF&P explained that it was hoped that some of the work undertaken on this joint project with Thames Valley Police could still be put to use. Councillor Gittings asked that information on this be provided at a future Management Committee.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The report and the projected final outturn variance of £16,000 or 0.05% of the £33.5m revenue budget be noted.

**49. 2018/19 QUARTERS 2 AND 3 APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY**

Steve Foye, (DCFO), introduced the report, which provided a Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 performance update and supporting narrative on wholetime (WDS) and retained duty system (RDS) appliance availability.

The performance information provided within the report reflected that presented to Audit and Governance Committee as part of the Service's quarterly performance reporting. The narrative in this report provided a more detailed insight for Management Committee on the Service's work and progress in managing appliance availability for both WDS and RDS appliances.

Jim Powell (Area Manager (Service Delivery Response, Operational Assurance & Resilience (AM ROA&R)) highlighted that the Service operated 14 Wholetime appliances which required a station establishment of 328 personnel. The target for availability was 100%.

Q2 performance was 98.4% as availability dropped below 14 on 3 occasions. On the first 2 of these occasions, managers were able to utilise personnel on Pre Arranged Overtime (PAOT) to cover the absence and the fire engines were

made available shortly after two hours. On the third occasion, which occurred due to sickness absence, managers were unable to source any PAOT cover and the fire engine was unavailable for the whole day shift of 9 hours.

100% was achieved for Wholetime appliances in Q3.

Turning to Retained appliance availability, this varied across each station due to the very different establishment profiles in place. The average availability in Q2 was 27.7% and 32.1% in Q3.

Recruitment was ongoing to help improve performance in Retained appliance availability. Improved performance was therefore forecast based on higher staffing levels. New recruits and existing employees would receive the necessary training and development.

In response to queries from Councillor Colin Dudley, the AM ROA&R confirmed that the issues with Wholetime appliance availability in Q2 related to Ascot on 19 August 2018, Maidenhead on 21 September 2018 and Slough on 23 September 2018. This information would be included in future reports.

**JP to action**

The DCFO confirmed that all stations improved their Retained availability from Q2 to Q3.

Councillor Paul Gittings referred to Retained appliance availability at Wargrave Station in Q2. This had increased to close to 20% in November 2018, but had then dropped in December. He therefore queried the level of confidence in achieving 60% performance by year end.

Councillor Dudley reiterated the point that recruitment would have a positive increase. The AM ROA&R agreed that this improvement would be based on an improved staffing position as well as some smaller factors. There was therefore confidence that the required improvement would be made.

Councillor Jason Brock queried the level of variation in the performance of Lambourn and Mortimer stations from month to month, and asked what was being done to improve performance and sustain this. The AM ROA&R explained that this related to the qualifications of existing members of staff and improvements were therefore being sought in this area. In addition, Hub Managers were closely involved in seeking improvements in appliance availability and Incident Command Assessments would be undertaken for the stations.

#### **RESOLVED that:**

- The Quarter 2 and 3 performance of appliance availability be noted;
- The Service's actions to maintain, improve and monitor appliance availability be noted.

#### **50. HMICFRS TRANCHE 1 RESULTS PRESENTATION**

Trevor Ferguson (CFO) gave a presentation to Management Committee following the first tranche of Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) inspections for 2018/19, which completed in December 2018. The CFO covered the focus of the inspection

In concluding his presentation, the CFO explained that he was hopeful that value would be added from this process and it would help the RBFPS move further forward in its improvement journey.

[For copies of the presentation please contact [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)]

Councillor Colin Dudley gave thanks for the presentation. He gave the view that he would accept the rating if he recognised the RBFRS from the report. He would also expect feedback from inspectors of areas for improvement and, if appropriate, how this could be achieved alongside budget constraints. Additional investment would be a decision for Fire Authority.

Councillor Paul Gittings queried whether an update could be provided from the hot debrief at Fire Authority on 25 February 2019. The CFO agreed to do so if there was information of value to report. He reiterated that it was unclear what information would be available at this early stage.

Councillor Dudley highlighted that it would be useful to obtain feedback from already inspected FRS to help understanding of grading etc. in advance of receiving the RBFRS grade.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell felt there was a lack of clarity of the outcome being sought. He considered that any grading other than 'Inadequate' was acceptable. The CFO gave the view that as a new process, there would be learning points. He reiterated his hope that it would add value and identify ways to make improvements.

Councillor Bicknell then questioned the variation of response times and whether this related to different measuring practices. Councillor Dudley pointed out that the measure for Royal Berkshire was from the time the emergency call was received to the time of arrival. This should be the consistent measure nationally.

Councillor Dudley gave thanks to all officers involved in the preparation for the inspection, during the inspection week and post the inspection.

**RESOLVED that:**

- Management Committee noted the presentation.

**51. FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan for the period 25 February 2019 to 29 April 2019 was noted.

**RESOLVED that:**

- The forward plan be noted.

**52. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED that** the next meeting of Management Committee would take place on Monday 8 April 2019, at 6.30pm in the RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SD.

**53. 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 Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraphs 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.

**54. PART II MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 22  
OCTOBER 2018**

**RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes be agreed.

*(The meeting closed at 8.00pm)*