

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



Held on Monday 8 April 2019 at 6.30pm

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

Members:

- * Councillor Malcolm Alexander
- * Councillor Phillip Bicknell
- Councillor Jason Brock
- * Councillor Colin Dudley
- * Councillor Paul Gittings
- * Councillor Pauline Helliar-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)
Tony Deacon (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development, HHRL&D)
Jacky Manning (HR Manager)
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Jim Powell (Area Manager Response Operational Assurance and Resilience, AM ROAR)
Jo Reeves (Clerk)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Services, HBIS)

55. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

Action

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Jason Brock and Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emma Webster made a confidential declaration of interest in relations to one of the Part II items.

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 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.

58. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2019

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

59. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Passing of former Councillor John Green

- John Green, a former Fire Authority member and Mayor of Wokingham had sadly passed away.
- John was a Member of the Fire Authority for seven years, from 2000 – 2007.
- During his time, John sat on the Joint Member Steering Group on the Future of Control Room and in 2006/7 he was Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- John served Wokingham Borough Council for 21 years.
- Councillor Dudley sent their respects to his family.

Appointments to Senior Leadership Team

- The recruitment process to appoint a new Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and two new Area Managers (AM) had been finalised. There were 18 applicants for the role of ACFO and 11 for the Area Manager positions. After a thorough and competitive assessment process, all three appointments had been confirmed.
- 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 and would formally take over from Simon Jefferies when he retired at the end of June.
- Tony Deacon and Paul Binyon had been appointed as two new Area Managers.
- Tony had been on assignment with RBFRS from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service for the last six months but following success in the

recent process, he joined the Service permanently from the 1 April.

- Paul Binyon would join from the 1 May and currently worked for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- Councillor Dudley wished Mark, Tony and Paul all the best in their new roles.

Fire in Maidenhead Town Centre

- The Service responded to a large fire in Maidenhead Town Centre in the early hours of Tuesday, 12 March.
- A total of 12 appliances, around 50 firefighters and several officers were deployed at the height of the fire, which started in a derelict building on Queens Road.
- The intensity of fire, combined with the weak structure of the building presented challenging circumstances, which were well managed by those on scene, in partnership with local authorities and Thames Valley Police.
- Councillor Dudley thanked everyone who worked tirelessly during this prolonged incident to ensure that residents were kept safe.

Disability Confident

- The Service had been awarded the Disability Confident Employer accreditation, which supported employers to make the most of the talents people with disabilities can bring to the workplace.
- Over half of workplaces are missing out because they are 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 acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling 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 serve local communities. Receiving this accreditation was recognition of just some of the steps being taken to deliver this commitment.

Home Office to Speak at Audit and Governance Committee

- A representative from the Home Office would be attending Audit and Governance Committee on 4 July to talk about the Emergency Services Network (ESN). Councillor Dudley urged any interested Members to attend.
- The new Emergency Services Network (ESN) was a critical communications system. It would replace the current Airwave service used by the emergency services.
- Becca Jones, Customer Engagement Director would be attending the meeting to speak to Members about the plans and answer any questions.

Have a Go Events Arranged to Encourage Diversity in the Workforce

- Aligned to the Service's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives](#) , RBFRS had been considering ways in which communities could be given a better understanding and awareness of the operational roles available within the Service and increase diversity in appointing to those roles.
- In addition to the programme of Have a Go events that we are running throughout the year, RBFRS had announced 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 and RBFRS would like more women to apply so that its workforce can better reflect the community we serve.
- The events would be run at Whitley Wood Training Centre on 27 April, 25 May and 29 June and will provide a range of fire service activities for potential applicants to take part in.
- Although the recruitment window for wholetime firefighters was not currently open, it was expected that the Service would be recruiting in the coming months.

National Car Wash League

- Fire stations across the County had once again taken part in the Fire Fighters Charity's National Car Wash League.
- During March, 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 was proud of all the crews and volunteers that helped support these events and thanked the members of the public that participated.

60. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

61. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS) EMPLOYEES REDUNDANCY PAY

Jacky Manning, HR Manager, presented a report which recommended the reduction of the redundancy pay arrangements for staff eligible for LGPS from two times to one and a half times statutory weeks based on actual pay with effect from the 9 July 2019. The report also outlined the consultation responses.

Councillor Dudley sought to clarify that while there would be a reduction, redundancy pay would still be one and a half times the amount offered to workers in the private sector.

Councillor Paul Gittings noted the table on page 23 of the agenda and stated

that he was proud that RBFERS had been at the top of the table. RBFERS had not had to make redundancies at the level of local authorities in recent years. He would oppose the change because he did not understand why RBFERS wished to go to the lowest common denominator. It would disproportionately harm older staff who were highly specialised and therefore might struggle to find reemployment.

Councillor Jeff Brooks wished to know which consultation response came from UNISON. He also sought reassurance that the reduction would not be implemented in order to bring about a number of redundancies.

**JM to
action**

Councillor Dudley responded that RBFERS would still offer a generous redundancy payment following implementation of the reduction. He agreed there was a risk of an impact on older staff, which was why he was pleased that the payment would remain generous. RBFERS had to ensure that they were looking after the public's council tax. There was no large scale redundancy programme anticipated.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of the report's recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Helliar-Symons and at the vote was agreed by Members.

Resolved that:

The Committee

- **NOTE** the responses to the consultation; and
- **AGREE** to reduce the current redundancy pay arrangement for staff eligible for LGPS from two times, to one and a half times statutory weeks, based on actual pay with effect from the 9 July 2019.

62. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

63. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 22 July 2019 in the brigade headquarters, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SP.

64. 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 1, 2 and 3 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.

65. CAPITAL PROJECT TENDER AWARD

Alex Brown, Head of Capital Projects and Estates, presented a confidential report on the outcome of the tender process related to a capital project and seek approval to award the contract.

Resolved that: the recommendations in the report be approved.

66. CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

Alex Brown, Head of Capital Projects and Estates, presented a confidential report on the progress of a project.

Resolved that: progress was noted.

67. INCOME GENERATION

Trevor Ferguson, Conor Byrne and Alex Brown presented a confidential report on income generation proposals.

Resolved that: the recommendations in the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm