

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



Held on Monday, 14 October 2019, at 6.30pm

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

Members: Councillor Jeff Brooks
(present)* * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
* Councillor Ted Plenty
* Councillor Colin Dudley
* Councillor Paul Gittings
* Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
* Councillor Angus Ross
* Councillor David Cannon
* Councillor Jo Lovelock
* Councillor Garth Simpson
* Councillor Dexter Smith

In Attendance: Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
Paul Binyon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
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, HHRLD)
Ryan Maslen (Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement, DHFP)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
Jo Reeves (Clerk)
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
Hannah Sheehan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)

20. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

The Fire Brigades Union confirmed that they did not wish to address the Management Committee on any of the items on the agenda.

Action

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillor Jeff Brooks.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Members or Officers.

23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2019 AND MATTERS ARISING

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman. Members noted that all actions arising from the minutes had been completed.

24. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Awards Ceremony

- On Friday, 27 September, the Annual Awards Ceremony was held, which recognised those who had gone above and beyond to deliver a truly outstanding service, in the last 12 months and staff that had devoted 20 years to serving the public.
- During the evening, those in attendance recognised and celebrated nominations across 11 award categories.
- The evening offered time to reflect on two significant and challenging incidents during the last year – the actions taken following a fatal collision on the M4 and the rapid lifesaving care that was given to one of the Service's firefighters during a fire on Mortimer Common.
- The evening not only brought together Fire and Rescue Service staff but also volunteers, Fire Authority Members and partners from blue light services. In addition, the Lord Lieutenant of Royal Berkshire, Mr James Puxley, presented the Long Service and Good Conduct Medals under Royal Warrant on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen and the High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, Mrs Lucy Zeal presented a number of awards, including The Shane Burton Award for a career devoted to public service.
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Mr Matt Parr also attended and gave special recognition to those involved in the Longmoor Wood incident.
- The Chairman thanked the sponsors of the event: Angus Fire, FireHawk, Bristol Uniforms, Reliance Medical, Knights Brown, Pegasus Group, Ridge and HLM Architects who supported the Service in putting on a special occasion for all nominees, winners and recipients.
- The Chairman also thanked all staff who had made this important event possible and helped to make it such a memorable occasion.

Getting to Know RBFRRS Event

- On Friday, 11 October, a "Getting to Know RBFRRS" event was held at

the Training Centre in Whitley Wood.

- The event was an opportunity for new and old Members to find out about all areas of the Fire and Rescue Service and how the delivery of services to the people of Berkshire.
- A wide variety of departments contributed to this event, showcasing the range of people and roles that we have in our Service. It was only a taster of the work undertaken by staff.
- All new Fire Authority Members have been assigned an officer buddy and the Chairman encouraged Members to use them to further develop your knowledge and insight into the Service.
- The Chairman thanked all who attended.

Grey Book Pay Award 2019

- The National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services had agreed the 2019 pay award for staff conditioned to the Grey Book terms and conditions of employment.
- The NJC had agreed an increase of 2% effective from 1 July 2019, which had now been brought into force.

Tri-Service Insight Day

- On Tuesday, 10 September, the Service hosted the second tri-service careers Insight Day, aimed at those leaving the Armed Forces.
- Having taken part in last year's event, hosted by Thames Valley Police, the Service proud to host this year's event, to build on the success of last year.
- During the event, attendees watched presentations from each of the three services, finding out about career options and the ways in which each emergency service could benefit them in the future. They then had an opportunity to speak to ex-service members who are currently part of all three services.
- This was just one of the ways the Service supporting employment pathways for members of the Armed Forces, as part of the Service's commitments set out in the Armed Forces Covenant.

Biker Down Workshops

- On Saturday, 5 October, the Service hosted the first Biker Down workshop in Berkshire, at Wokingham Fire Station.
- Biker Down was a three hour workshop that helped attendees to learn the practical skills of what to do at a crash involving a motorcyclist. It covered accident scene management and motorcycle specific first-aid training.
- These courses were delivered by Fire and Rescue Service staff from across the three counties in the Thames Valley - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire - at local fire stations.
- There were lots of other sessions coming up across the Thames Valley,

including one to be held at Newbury Fire Station on 26 October.

Laptop Donation

- The Service recently handed over 20 laptops to The Ridgeway Primary School in Whitley, Reading, to assist the learning experience of young pupils.
- Councillor Angus Ross, Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Lee Arslett, ICT Service Delivery Manager visited the school on Thursday, 26 September, to present the laptops.
- The Service ran an equipment replacement process to ensure that IT devices were up-to-date with technology changes and updates to operating systems. This process was now planned to be run between every three and four years.
- Through donating the equipment, our Service minimised harm to the environment by extending the usable life of the equipment, while also avoiding costly recycling processes.

Maidenhead Staff set off on 200km Charity Bike Ride

- On 14 October 2019, nine firefighters and one Fire Safety Inspecting Officer began an extremely challenging bike ride from Maidenhead to Ypres, in Belgium, a journey totalling 200 kilometres.
- All donations and sponsorship received for this bike ride would go towards Alexander Devine Children's Hospice Service, a local charity that supports children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, as well as The Fire Fighters Charity. Half of the proceedings made from the Charity Car Wash held at Maidenhead Fire Station on the 21 September would also be added to the charity fund.
- As well as raising money for these good causes, the group had decided to cycle this route so they could pay their respects to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient during World War I and whose graves are unknown.
- To donate go to the Just Giving website and search for '200K for the fallen'.

25. ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THAMES VALLEY LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the DCFO regarding the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Although not a legal entity, the LRF brings together Local Authorities, Emergency Services and other agencies, known as 'Category One' responders, in the event of an emergency or major incident, to undertake duties outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In addition to the collaborative working between the agencies, there is also cross border working with other LRFs, particularly the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LRF around Brexit planning.

The DCFO explained the strategic aims and objectives in addition to the governance for business as usual preparation and the response and recovery governance in the event of an incident. He explained that there were separate

but connected structures for health, identifying pandemic influenza as an example of an identified risk which the LRF would respond to in partnership with health if necessary.

Members were informed that residents and communities could access information and advice via www.thamesvalleylrf.org.uk.

In conclusion, the DCFO reported that there was no one lead organisation for the LRF and while Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service would be more involved in responding to an incident, it was important to plan for recovery in the very early stages to ensure the best outcomes for communities.

Councillor Paul Gittings thanked the DCFO for the presentation and on the subject of Brexit asked what risks had been identified and what the mitigation plans were. The DCFO advised that, as with any and all risks, substantial planning was undertaken on the 'worst case scenario', however, there was a low likelihood of those risks being realised. At present a weekly SCG teleconference was held to share information and there was scope to upgrade this meeting if necessary.

Councillor Jo Lovelock enquired whether the Service had access to any funding to support Brexit preparedness. The DCFO advised that any direct costs would be raised with the LRF.

Councillor Lovelock further asked who was ultimately responsible for a risk such as pandemic influenza. The DCFO advised that Health colleagues would respond to the medical issues and other agencies in the LRF had a role to respond to any risks regarding workforce.

The Chairman thanked the DCFO for the presentation which detailed a fascinating amount of work.

26. MEMBER AND OFFICER RELATIONS PROTOCOL PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the HCS regarding the Member and Officer Relations Protocol. The Vice-Chairman introduced the presentation, reporting that she was proud of the Protocol, which reflected the way the Service already worked rather than being an aspirational document. All relationships were good at the Service including between political parties and between Members and Officers. Relationships had not always been a strength of the Service and the Vice-Chairman thanked the Senior Leadership Team for the culture change which they had led and which was recognised in the recent 'good' judgement by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

The HCS explained that the Protocol was developed by a Member Development Task and Finish Group following the 2017 Peer Challenge. It was considered timely to review the Protocol following the elections in May 2019. The Protocol was designed to complement existing policies and clarified Members' and Officers' roles and obligations.

The Chairman confirmed that he was proud of the working relationships and trust between Members and Officers.

Councillor Jo Lovelock stated that she had been impressed with the enthusiasm of staff and their respect for their managers at a recent event. She asked what consequences there were in case any Member breached the Protocol. The HCS advised that the Monitoring Officer would lead any investigation into the allegation as a potential breach of the Members' Code of

Conduct.

The Chairman concluded that the Service both 'walked' and 'talked' the message of mutual respect.

27. 2019/20 BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER ONE

The Committee considered a report to present budget monitoring information at the end of quarter one. The DHFP reported that the main area of activity was the delivery of the Remotely Managed Stations/ Flexible Duty Officer Project. The Project had led to a number of vacancies so a net underspend of £199k was forecast in station budgets, £138k had been diverted to support additional development measures to benefit Service Delivery Teams. Overall an £87k surplus was being forecast for 2019/20.

The Chairman commented that it was pleasing to be forecasting that the full year outturn will be within the budget, although it should be noted that the budget is partly funded through use of reserves (£458,000).

Resolved that: the report was noted.

28. 2019/20 QUARTER ONE APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY

The Committee considered a report regarding appliance availability in quarter one 2019/20. The Service had achieved a 100% availability in Wholetime Duty Service (WDS) appliances and an average of 35.9% availability in Retained Duty Service (RDS) appliances.

Councillor Paul Gittings was pleased to note the increase of RDS availability overall and enquired upon that of Wargrave. The DCFO advised that, whilst recruitment efforts had been successful and firefighters are in training, two experienced Level 1 commanders had left the service, impacting on availability.

The Chairman acknowledged the level of work which had been directed towards recruitment for Wargrave and acknowledged that it was always a blow when firefighters left the Service, although he appreciated that this was a 'natural churn'. He stated that an appliance needed to be crewed by a driver, two firefighters and a Level 1 commander to be available. The Chairman paid tribute to Crowthorne which was operating out of a local school and to Mortimer which had been awarded Station of the Year.

In response to a query from Councillor Lovelock, the DCFO advised that there were two Level 1 commanders remaining at Wargrave.

Councillor Dexter Smith enquired upon availability of appliances at Pangbourne. The DCFO advised that the Fire Authority's IRMP commitments to build a new fire station at Theale would lead to the closure of Pangbourne and this has had an impact on recruitment and retention. As with all RDS stations, work was ongoing at a local level to establish how to build recruitment and retention.

Councillor Garth Simpson noted that the small number of staff meant that the variances in availability could come across as large. He requested assurance that the actions being undertaken would lead to improvement. The DCFO agreed that the loss of one staff member can have an adverse impact on availability due to the skills loss and advised efforts would continue to recruit and train new firefighters. The DCFO advised that it can take some time before recruitment is converted to availability as training is undertaken over a long

timescale as it has to take into account the recruit's other commitments.

The Chairman also highlighted that, in wholetime recruitment, some applicants are current RDS staff and also that some applicants, unsuccessful for wholetime positions, could apply to fill RDS vacancies.

Resolved that: the report was noted.

29 FORWARD PLAN

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

30. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved that the next meeting would take place on Monday, 3 December 2019, at RBFRS Headquarters, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SP.

31. 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 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.

32. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2019

Resolved that: the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 7.56 pm