

DRAFT

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



Held on Tuesday 17 April 2018 at 6.30pm

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

**Members:** \* Councillor Malcolm Alexander  
(\* present) \* Councillor Phillip Bicknell  
Councillor Paul Bryant  
Councillor Colin Dudley  
\* Councillor Paul Gittings  
\* Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons  
Councillor Chris Maskell  
\* Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle  
\* Councillor Angus Ross  
Councillor Atiq Sandhu  
\* Councillor Emma Webster

**In Attendance:** Richard Battley (Head of Facilities and Assets)  
Alex Brown (Strategic Property Manager)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement)  
Stephen Chard (Clerk)  
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
Tamara Hack (Democratic Support Assistant)  
Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Paul Jones (Group Manager (Central Hub))  
Jane Lubbock (Head of Procurement)  
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Risk and Performance))  
Rob Read (Station Manager, Research & Equipment Officer (REO))  
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services)  
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)  
Trig Thomas (FBU Representative & Station Manager, Protection)  
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems)

*(Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons in the Chair)*

**Action**

**69. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

Trig Thomas (Fire Brigade Union (FBU) Representative) confirmed that he did not wish to address the Committee on any agenda items.

**70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Paul Bryant and Colin Dudley.

**71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillor Emma Webster stated that should the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel be discussed at the meeting she would declare a

personal interest as she was a Member of this Panel. As her interest was personal and not another registrable interest or a disclosable pecuniary interest, she would remain to take part in any debate on the matter.

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 would declare an appropriate interest as they were members of the TVFCS Joint Committee. They would therefore not participate in any debate on the TVFCS should it materialise.

## **72. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2018 AND MATTERS ARISING**

**RESOLVED that:** the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **73. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons, made the following announcements:

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

The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) chaplains were recently 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 the equivalent of an MBE and the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK. Their nomination for this award was based on the invaluable support they provided to sustain the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of our staff.

There was not a set number of winners each year, as each nomination was judged on the benefits it gave to the local community and the Chaplaincy Team would find out at the beginning of June if they had been successful. This was a fantastic achievement and it would be absolutely terrific if they received the award. Councillor Helliar-Symons, on behalf of all Members, wished the very best of luck to the Chaplaincy Team.

### **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 aligned with the increase in the National Minimum Wage. The vast majority of our staff employed on these terms and conditions would receive a 2% increase in both April 2018 and April 2019.

### **UK National GO Public Procurement Awards**

Together with our Thames Valley blue light partners, the RBFRS had been shortlisted from over 200 entries for the Procurement Team of the Year Award 2018/19, by Government Opportunities in recognition of our collaborative procurement work. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority, Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Thames Valley Police had been included in the nomination.

This work included the delivery of £1.5m in new savings from standardised appliances and equipment, such as ladders, Positive Pressure Ventilators, emergency cutting equipment and medical supplies. The winner would be announced at the awards evening on Tuesday 24 April 2018 and further

information would follow.

### **Event held to celebrate work of volunteers**

On Thursday 5 April, an event was held at Wokingham Fire Station to recognise the outstanding contribution of all our volunteers in Royal Berkshire. The event provided an opportunity for our volunteers to meet other volunteers based at other locations, colleagues in different job roles in the Service and Fire Authority Members. Councillor Helliard-Symons was pleased to have been in attendance and she praised the volunteers for their efforts and gave thanks to the event's organisers. The volunteers were able to share ideas about the future development of the Volunteer Programme. Volunteers were also given up-to-date community safety training.

Volunteers performed several important roles in the Service, such as promoting fire safety to residents, generating home fire safety check referrals and helping to deliver the Young Firefighters Programme. It was a very well attended event with good levels of engagement throughout. Councillor Helliard-Symons, on behalf of all Members, placed on record thanks to all the Service's volunteers for all the terrific work that they did.

### **Charity car washes for the Fire Fighters Charity**

During March, firefighters from 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 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 £6,574 was raised at those five stations and lots of members of the public came to stations to meet local crews and were generous in their donations to support The Fire Fighters Charity.

### **Skydive challenge coming up**

Councillor Helliard-Symons then highlighted that some members of staff had taken a slightly different approach to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. This Sunday, 22 April, 12 members of staff would be jumping out of a plane from a height of 10,000 feet.

This skydive had been organised as part of a year of fundraising for The Fire Fighters Charity, after the charity was nominated by The Mayor of Bracknell, Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle as her chosen mayoral charity. Councillor Helliard-Symons thanked her fellow Councillor for her wonderful choice of charity.

Councillor Helliard-Symons then explained that in order to support or donate to the team, then this needed to be done via JustGiving.com under a search for "RBFRS skydive". She wished the team well on the jump and thanked them for their efforts in raising money for this worthy cause.

### **121 Meetings**

Councillor Helliard-Symons highlighted the need for Member 121 meetings to be arranged via Fayth Rowe to ensure these were logged. This was particularly important in view of the forthcoming Inspection.

### **May Elections**

Councillor Helliard-Symons wished the best of luck to those Members who were standing for election in May.

#### **74. FIREFIGHTER PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) REPLACEMENT AND PRESENTATION**

This agenda item was withdrawn, post publication of the agenda. The item would be rescheduled.

#### **75. REPLACEMENT AERIAL APPLIANCE PROJECT**

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons introduced the item by giving thanks to officers for all their efforts in progressing this project and, in particular, praised the detailed and informative appendices which accompanied the report.

Paul Jones (Group Manager, Central Hub) presented the report and explained that as part of the 2015/19 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), provision of £850,000 was included in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework for the replacement of the Aerial Appliance (AA) that was currently stationed at Whitley Wood Fire Station. It was due to be replaced in the 2019/20 financial year and the RBFRS was now in the position where it would need to start drawing down on the funding provision as the tendering process would commence in the current financial year.

The Group Manager further explained that the existing Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) had gradually become more unreliable and repairs were both expensive and often took some time.

A collaborative approach with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had been progressed to develop the specification for the AA. Councillor Emma Webster had been closely involved in this process as Lead Member for IRMP and she was thanked for her support. Interest had also been expressed in this project by other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), and Staffordshire FRS, who were very complimentary of the detailed specification produced by the RBFRS, had joined the tender process. This meant that three AAs would be purchased and it was hoped that this approach would achieve savings in the region of 5%-10%.

Turning to the appendices to the report, these detailed an analysis of the AA selection criteria, AA requirements and a Business Case for the project.

Management Committee approval was sought to allocate the £850k, already identified in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework, to enable this project to move forward.

Councillor Helliar-Symons was aware that the intention to undertake this procurement had been advertised among other FRS and queried whether there were any further responses beyond Staffordshire. The Group Manager confirmed that interest had also been expressed by other areas, including West Sussex, but this had not been pursued beyond an expression of interest.

Councillor Paul Gittings also commended the comprehensive report. He then queried the height capability of the AA to be procured and whether this would be sufficiently high to tackle fires at high rise buildings. He was aware that the appliance deployed at the Grenfell fire could not reach the full height of that building.

In response, the Group Manager explained that Oxfordshire were seeking to procure an AA that could reach a height of 32 metres (the height capability of the current RBFRS AA). However, the RBFRS had not chosen to specify a particular height. Consideration would be given to an AA which would reach a height between 32 and 52 metres, and costs etc were being looked into. He explained that an AA that could reach in excess of 52 metres would cause

complications and its height/weight would limit its use.

Rob Read (Station Manager, Research & Equipment Officer (REO)) added that learning from the Grenfell disaster was a considerable factor in these considerations.

He then explained that a balance needed to be struck in terms of the height and reach capability of the AA to be procured. An AA that could achieve a height greater than 52 metres would weigh in the region of 60 tonnes and such a vehicle would be precluded from use for the majority of incidents responded to by the RBFRS – i.e. domestic fires which accounted for 64% of fires. It was also the case that such a large vehicle would not be able to access many high rise blocks. A height/reach capability of 32 to 52 metres was, realistically, the largest AA to be procured that could also still achieve access to buildings.

Councillor Gittings acknowledged that this balance needed to be struck.

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle referred to a 17 storey building in her District (Bracknell Forest) and the response capability to this building. The Group Manager explained that the car park beneath this building meant that the appliance used to respond to a fire would need to be positioned at a distance and the fullest height of the building could not be reached in any case. He went on to explain that the higher/60 tonne AA needed to have a large turning circle and this would prevent gaining close access to many high rise buildings etc.

Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) advised that it was important to consider AA requirements for the most effective operational response. In terms of requirements for high rise buildings, this was a feature of the Protection Strategy and the CFO invited Trig Thomas (FBU Representative & Station Manager, Protection) to provide further comment.

Trig Thomas explained that for high rise buildings, the building's own protection mechanisms should keep its residents safe beyond of course those directly affected by the fire. Internal measures/systems should be used to fight the fire and therefore an AA was not needed to reach the highest point necessary. It was important, when procuring such an appliance, to consider factors including the ability for it to travel to the location and then be deployed.

Councillor Emma Webster highlighted the need for Members, particularly those who sat on Planning Committees, to continue to be mindful of the need to consider appropriate fire suppression systems wherever possible for developments.

Councillor Webster continued by agreeing with the need for the RBFRS to ensure it was equipped to respond to the most frequently occurring incidents. In the event of needing to respond to a fire in a high rise building and a larger AA being needed and suitable, she understood that such an appliance could be obtained from another FRS located in a relatively close proximity which had a greater number of high rise buildings.

Councillor Angus Ross made reference to Appendix B and queried the number of times that the RBFRS ALP had been deployed out of the county. The Group Manager confirmed that it had been deployed within Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and Surrey.

Councillor Malcolm Alexander queried whether training of the new appliance would be built into the contract. The Group Manager confirmed that some training had already been negotiated and it was hoped this could be extended when considering that the project now encompassed three FRS. The ability to train a trainer would also be explored to enable training to be rolled out more

widely and at a lower cost.

Councillor Webster put on record her thanks to officers for the huge amount of work they had undertaken in progressing this project and in putting together the comprehensive documentation. The AA would be a key resource to continue to ensure the safety of residents.

Councillor Webster also gave credit to those officers who had been able to keep the existing ALP on the run as much as was possible. Finally, she gave particular thanks to the Procurement Team for their role in the process, an important aspect of which was gaining views from end users of the equipment.

Councillor Helliar-Symons recommended approval of the report's recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Webster.

**RESOLVED that** the capital funding identified in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework of £850k be agreed. The final cost would be determined through the tender process and contract award would be subject to sign off by the Chief Fire Officer.

## **76. FORWARD PLAN**

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Forward Plan for the period 30 April 2018 to 30 July 2018 was noted.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The Forward Plan be noted.

## **77. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved that** the next meeting of Management Committee would take place on Monday 30 July 2018 at 6.30pm in the Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SP.

## **78. 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.

## **79. PROVISION OF FUNDING FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF THE WHITLEY WOOD FIRE STATION PROJECT**

Management Committee considered the exempt report which provided a progress report on this project, which was one of the agreed projects currently under design development within the Property Capital Projects Department and was contained within the Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework. The paper sought a decision from Management Committee to allocate further funding to enable the completion of the next phase of the design development work.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

**80. WAIVER FOR THE AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF A CONTINGENCY EMERGENCY CALL HANDLING AND DESPATCH SERVICE FOR ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**

Management Committee considered the exempt report which requested that approval be given to award a contract for the provision of a contingency emergency call handling and despatch service for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

**81. UPDATE ON CROWTHORNE FIRE STATION PROJECT - PRESENTATION**

Management Committee received a confidential update on progress with the Crowthorne Fire Station Project.

**RESOLVED that** the exempt report be noted.

**82. UPDATE ON THEALE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION PROJECT – PRESENTATION**

Management Committee received a confidential update on progress with the Theale Community Fire Station Project.

**RESOLVED that** the exempt report be noted.

*(The meeting closed at 7.35pm)*