

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



Held on Monday 17 July 2017 at 6.30pm

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

**Members:**

- \* Councillor Malcolm Alexander
- \* 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:**

Alex Brown (Strategic Property Manager)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement)  
Neil Carter (Group Manager)  
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer)  
Simon Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)  
Mark Gaskarth (Temporary ACFO, Service Delivery)  
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development)  
Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Jane Lubbock (Interim Procurement Lead)  
Dave Myers (Area Manager, East (AM(E)))  
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Risk and Performance))  
Linda Pye (Clerk)  
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services)  
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead)  
James Pinchin (Democratic Support Assistant)  
Eddie Cardoso, FBU Representative

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Chairman of the Management Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

**Action**

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2017/18 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Management Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

## **3. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

Eddie Cardoso (FBU Representative), confirmed that he would like to address the Committee on items 12 and 13.

## **4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

## **5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant 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.

There were no declarations of interest received from Officers.

## **6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 APRIL 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Resolved that:** the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2017 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**Item 104** – Appointment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer. It was noted that feedback had been given to all the unsuccessful candidates and the Chairman asked if the same practice could be undertaken for the recent recruitment process.

## **7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman asked if the Chief Fire Officer could update the Committee on work following the incident at Grenfell Towers.

Trevor Ferguson, Chief Fire Officer, confirmed that there continued to be a great deal of speculation in respect of the incident and many questions remained unanswered. Locally, work continued with the various agencies and it was noted that further testing would be carried out on the structures of each of the high rise buildings in the Berkshire area. The additional resources required would only be known in the fullness of time. The Chief Fire Officer stated that RBFRS had good fire engineering skills in-house and aerial appliances were a valuable resource. However, the most effective way of mitigating the risks was to ensure that buildings were properly maintained and that fire resistant materials were used.

Resources had been redirected from planned/unplanned work in order to carry out inspections of high rise properties in the area and the implications for the budget would only be known when the answers were known. The Medium Term Financial Plan would be revisited at the workshop in September 2017

when further information might be available.

The Chairman made the following announcements:

### **Update on response to Grenfell Tower**

The Fire Authority's aim had been to provide public reassurance and to ensure the safety of its communities and firefighters, whilst also enforcing the fire safety order and ensuring those responsible for high-rise buildings in Berkshire complied with government guidance.

RBFRS' activities carried out to date included:

- The Operational Support Room which had been running every day for weeks managing the flow of information and coordinating the actions that needed to be carried out.
- Conducting fire safety audits of the buildings to assess fire safety standards and ensure that responsible persons were adhering to Government guidance. To date, fire audits had been completed at 154 addresses meaning that all residential high rises had received a visual inspection.
- Liaising with local authorities, education providers, care providers and hospital trusts to maintain an accurate and up to date picture of the fire situation across the high-rise building stock in Berkshire together with the returns that had been provided by these bodies to Government departments.
- Offering fire safety advice and reassurance to residents. Across the County, firefighters had visited 4,725 homes in high residential buildings to offer fire safety advice and reassurance. This had resulted in 1,326 face to face visits and 2,796 further occasions where that was not possible but where fire safety leaflets were left at the property.
- The Fire Authority's operational response plans and mobilising control information had been updated to reflect the latest intelligence.
- Responding to emergencies where they had occurred.
- Conducting investigations of fires that had occurred in high-rise buildings and, where arson was suspected, providing support to the police in their lead role of preventing and detecting crime.

The Chairman thanked all of those who had done so much work to carry out fire safety inspections, to provide fire safety advice and reassurance and in co-ordinating the flow of information and the delivery of actions over the past few weeks. The response from the team had been fantastic.

The work would continue – the Fire Authority was receiving requests daily for advice and assistance from partner agencies and it was working closely with local authorities. It was also working through the co-ordination from the National Fire Chiefs' Council and awaited further information that would gradually come out as part of the public inquiry.

### **New Wholetime Recruits**

RBFRS welcomed eight new wholetime firefighters to the service last Wednesday after they had successfully completed an intensive 14-week course at the RBFRS Training Centre in Whitley Wood. The new recruits had learned all the skills needed to begin their careers as firefighters, including hose, pump and ladder training, technical rescue (including water rescue,

animal rescue and road traffic collision training) as well as training in using breathing apparatus.

To mark the conclusion of the course, a celebratory 'Passing Out' parade was held at Training Centre. During the event, the new recruits showed off their new skills to their proud families and friends in a variety of drills, including a breathing apparatus rescue scenario and road traffic collision where they had to safely remove a 'casualty'. During the parade, it was officially announced in front of friends and family, the station at which each of the new firefighters would be posted. These were:

- Austen Mullar – Whitely Wood Fire Station
- Tom Davis – Maidenhead Fire Station
- Leigh Wilson – Bracknell Fire Station
- Luke Foster - Wokingham Fire Station
- Felicity Screen – Slough Fire Station
- Ryan Bonner – Dee Road Fire Station
- Mark Kelly – Wokingham Fire Station
- Nicky Palmer – Whitley Wood Fire Station

I am very honoured as Fire Authority Chairman to have joined the new recruits at their Passing out Parade and to the Royal Berkshire family.

### **Young Firefighters**

Last week, young people from across Berkshire celebrated successfully completing the Young Firefighters programme. The 36 week course provided to 12-16 year olds taught the young people a range of valuable practical and theoretical skills. In total, 44 cadets completed the course which was run at Crowthorne, Maidenhead, Whitely Wood and Pangbourne fire stations.

In total, the scheme had already reached nearly 500 young people over the years and it was hoped it would reach many more across Berkshire in the years ahead. The next programme would commence in September and recruitment was already underway.

Well done to all those who completed the course and the course instructors who helped ensure its success.

### **RBFRS shortlisted for UK Public Sector Communications Award**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that RBFRS have been shortlisted for the UK Public Sector Communications Awards for its Service Redesign consultation campaign. It had been shortlisted in the 'Consultation and Engagement' category.

Huge congratulations to all those involved in developing the consultation and campaign and the Chairman looked forward to the results being announced in September.

### **Upcoming Open Days**

The Chairman reminded Members that Wokingham Fire Station was holding an open day on 22 July, between 11am and 4pm. This was followed by Langley Fire Station Open Day on 11 August between 11am and 4pm.

Both would be fun-filled days for the family and he therefore asked Members to spread the word.

### **Urgent Item 16a - Ransomware Attack**

The Chairman had agreed to accept an urgent late item - 16a Ransomware Attack - by virtue of section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The urgent item would be a short presentation on the recent ransomware incident to inform the Management Committee how the incident had been quickly identified and resolved by RBFRRS IT department.

Councillor Angus Ross reported on the first tranche of the joint procurement of four fire appliances which had recently been delivered. He referred to the recent BBC coverage of the opening of Hungerford Fire Station and one of the new appliances could be seen there. Councillor Ross advised that the press together with Members of the Fire Authority had been visiting the fire stations where the other new appliances were located. A video has been recorded and placed on Facebook and he was pleased to note that 1,126 people had viewed the page and 35% had actually looked at the video. This seemed to be the way that the public were now embracing communications.

Councillor Emma Webster reported that a successful open day had taken place at Whitley Wood over the weekend as it celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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

No reports had been referred to the Management Committee by the Audit and Governance Committee.

## **9. EVALUATION OF CO-RESPONDING TRIALS**

Neil Carter, Group Manager, presented an interim report which had been commissioned by Management Committee with the purpose of evaluating the co-responding function from its inception two years ago to present day. The report aimed to:

- Assess the success of co-responding against the potential benefits identified at inception of the project;
- Assess any other benefits, costs and impacts identified during the trials;
- Identify and assess internal and external factors that could or would influence co-responding in the future;
- Reach conclusions based on the available data and to make recommendations for the future in relation to co-responding.

Neil Carter gave a presentation to the Committee in respect of the co-responding evaluation which had been influenced by the NJC commissioned 'Broadening Responsibilities' report into EMR.

The complex national situation and industrial relations backdrop had been explained as it had a major influence on the local situation and FBU support for co-responding and wider Emergency Medical Response (EMR) work. Medical response was not part of a fire fighter's role and was therefore undertaken voluntarily.

The Service had been co-responding for two years and had four schemes currently operating. Data selected from RBFRRS schemes was as follows:

	<b>Implemented</b>	<b>Call Rate (per month)</b>	<b>Car availability</b>	<b>Backup time</b>
Hungerford – car based scheme	June 2015	26	50%	9 minutes

Wargrave – car based scheme	June 2016	20	18.5%	7 minutes
Wokingham – pump based scheme	December 2015	97*	83%	10 minutes
Officers – car based scheme	February 2016	3-12*	2-21%*	4-9 minutes*

A number of significant changes had occurred during the course of the trials which included recent changes to the types of calls which were being responded to. Wokingham were now only responding to the most life threatening of calls (Red 1s) and the other schemes were attending Red 1s and a limited number of Red 2s.

All co-responders had received an additional three days training providing them with additional skills and additional equipment had also been provided to accompany the training.

All Thames Valley FRSs had signed a partnership agreement so that there was some harmonisation.

New 'Stop' message codes had also been introduced locally. This would determine the type of incident and identify types of calls where there was a potential for mental impact on the co-responder.

It was concluded that the potential benefits of co-responding that had been identified at the start of the project had been improved RDS retention, evidence of emergency service collaboration, improved clinical outcomes for patients and providing assistance to SCAS. In relation to these benefits the report had concluded that co-responding had been a success although the direct impact on RDS retention was difficult to assess due to a lack of evidence. Those RDS firefighters involved in co-responding had however reported that the function had had a positive effect on their station. Lives had definitely been saved by fire fighters and 65% of calls had been attended before an ambulance had arrived (62% nationally).

#### **Costs:**

- Per appliance mobilisation - £54.84
- Management costs – circa £7,600 per annum
- When wider societal benefits taken into account - £1.2m benefit to the community per annum (around £2,373 per incident).

In conclusion it was noted that the costs of the schemes were generally being operated on a cost neutral basis, however, when the managerial burden was taken into account there was a net cost to the Service. Return on investment was positive when the wider societal value was taken into account. 92% of co-responders felt that their scheme was of value to the community.

Other impacts included:

- Impact on fire cover and availability – 19 simultaneous fire and medical calls in Wokingham (between December 2015 and March 2017)

Impact on other work –

- Significant impact at Wokingham – disruption to planned work, admin, prevention activities

- Opportunity to increase earnings – between £350 and £450 per month at RDS stations
- Personal impact – fatigue, mental health

Future developments and influences:

- National trial of new response standards – could reduce co-responder call volume by up to 70%
- Due to be implemented in the SCAS area in October 2017
- Impact on new schemes – SCAS reluctance to invest in new schemes across the Thames Valley until ARP introduced
- National Joint Council (NJC) negotiations – Emergency Medical Response (EMR) – FBU support for trial schemes dependent on the progress of negotiations linking EMR to pay.

Councillor Colin Dudley queried how the costs were being covered. Neil Carter confirmed that broadly direct costs were being covered and this was based on a number of different factors. Councillor Dudley agreed that there was more to this than a cost benefit as it also helped to improve moral and to aid retention. However, he stressed that it should not be undertaken at a detriment to the budget.

Councillor Paul Bryant asked where the money had come from to purchase the public access defibrillator boxes. Neil Carter confirmed that firefighter wages would already have been paid as they were on duty but there was a £50 charge to SCAS per call which was placed in a co-responding budget and it was this budget which had been used to purchase the defibrillators.

Councillor Emma Webster referred to the mental health issues and how that would link in to the strategy. Neil Carter advised that he had met with SCAS and had also had discussions with the TRIM Co-ordinator to ascertain what they could do to address the mental health issue. There were also links in to HR. Becci Jefferies confirmed that the Fire Authority had a Health and Wellbeing Strategy which made reference to mental health issues. The Fire Authority was also in the process of appointing an Officer to raise awareness and to look at possible interventions.

Councillor Webster asked if this report was on the forward plan to come back to Committee in December following the NJC review. It was confirmed that it was on the forward plan.

There appeared to still be some confusion around the costs of this and whether they were being covered off or not. Councillor Colin Dudley confirmed that he was happy to move the recommendations but he would like to see a breakdown of costs. There was a societal benefit to this even if a loss was made but Members needed to be clear on the exact costs. This was seconded by Councillor Emma Webster.

#### **Resolved that:**

- (1) Management Committee agreed that RBFRS would maintain its current:
  - WDS appliance co-responding scheme;
  - RDS co-responding car schemes;
  - Officer co-responding scheme until the main external impacts from the Ambulance Response Programme and ongoing NJC negotiations

were known.

- (2) It be agreed that where opportunities arose for new RDS co-responding car schemes these should be implemented.
- (3) Conor Byrne to provide a breakdown on the exact costings of the co-responding schemes.

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#### **10. DIRECTOR APPOINTMENTS FOR RBFR SOLUTIONS COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY**

Simon Jefferies, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report which set out that Article 22.3 of the Articles of Association for RBFR Solutions Community Interest Company (CIC) stated that the Chairman of the Management Committee of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority had to nominate and appoint two Fire Authority members as directors of the CIC on an annual basis or more frequently as required.

It was noted that currently the two Member directors of the CIC were Councillor Phillip Bicknell (Chair) and Councillor Paul Bryant.

It was proposed that due to a restructure of work responsibilities Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) and Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) would replace AM Paul Maynard and AM Dave Myers.

The Directors would also be Members of the Company as laid out in Article 26.

#### **Resolved that:**

- The nomination and appointment of two Fire Authority Members as Directors of the CIC be agreed;
- The appointment of Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) and Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) as Officer Directors be noted.

#### **11. AWARD OF THREE MAJOR CONTRACTS: PROVISION OF MULTI DISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL SERVICES; PLANNED AND REACTIVE MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE AND BUILDING PLANNED WORK AND RESPONSIVE REPAIRS**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement, presented a report which set out the tender process carried out in early 2017 for three new contracts all with a value in excess of £1 million. The report requested Management Committee to award these contracts in accordance with the RBFA Contract Regulations. The three contracts for consideration and approval were:

- A new requirement for Professional Multi Disciplinary Services to deliver the Property Asset Management Programme and support for Facilities;

Four tenders had been received for this contract and had been evaluated by the Property Manager and Procurement Lead. Ridge and Partners LLP offered competitive pricing and the highest quality score. They were able to offer a team with good working knowledge and experience of fire stations and blue light projects together with a knowledge of Berkshire.

- A tender renewal for Building Planned Works and Responsive Repairs; and
- Mechanical & Electrical Planned and Reactive Maintenance services. These last two service requirements had been advertised as Lots as part of a single tender process.

An Invitation to Tender document had been created which had two lots – Lot 1 for Building Planned Work and Responsive Repairs and Lot 2 for Mechanical & Electrical Planned and Reactive Maintenance Services. A review of the market had identified a good range of suppliers but many of these had not been on suitable frameworks to an OJEU compliant tender process had been carried out. The Fire Authority received four tender submissions for Lot 1 and six for Lot 2. Two suppliers submitted tenders for both lots.

For Lot 1, Kier Workplace Services offered the most competitive pricing and the best quality response and as such the tender evaluation team unanimously agreed that the new contract be awarded to Kier Workplace Services subject to approval by Management Committee. The same applied to Lot 2 and again Kier Workplace Services were considered to be the best supplier for the contract.

Councillor Angus Ross agreed with the recommendations as the Fire Authority already had a good working relationship with Kier Workplace Services.

### **Resolved that:**

It be agreed that the contracts should be awarded as follows:

- Ridge and Partners LLP for the delivery of professional Multi Disciplinary services for all the property projects approved in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework for a period of four years with an option to extend if required in order to complete the agreed programme. The estimated value of this contract was up to £2m;
- Kier Workplace Services for the delivery of Building Planned Works and Responsive Repairs. The estimated value of this contract was £1.2m for a three year period potentially extended for up to a further two years; and
- Kier Workplace Services for the delivery of Mechanical & Electrical Planned and Reactive Maintenance services. The estimated value of this contract was £1.05m for a three year contract potentially extended for up to a further two years.

## **12. CREWING LEVELS**

Dave Myers, Area Manager Service Delivery, presented a report in order to inform Management Committee of the crewing levels for wholetime and retained appliances and TVFCS for the fourth quarter of 2016/17. The report also provided a summary of the crewing levels for the financial year 2016/17.

Forecasting and recruitment had resulted in the station based establishment being maintained. However, factors such as long term absence had influenced the availability of personnel on stations to crew appliances and the extent of reliance on pre-arranged overtime.

The Service's target of providing 14 wholetime appliances available on 100% of shifts had been consistently achieved throughout the year. Retained appliance availability due to low establishment figures remained below target and the focus on initiatives designed to support RDS recruitment and retention had intensified.

Crewing data for Thames Valley Fire Control Services indicated that year on year sickness absence was reducing and the occasions where crewing had fallen below minimum levels had reduced significantly compared to the previous year.

Eddie Cardoso, FBU representative, stated that the report had to be read in the context of it being Quarter 4 (January to March 2017) as this was a period when there was normally minimal selection of leave in the early parts of the year. The station based establishment was 328 excluding the Retained Support Officers (RSOs). The establishment figures displayed in the report did not take into account those missing from their substantive posts through long term absences such as temporary promotion and long term sick leave which would have a significant influence on crewing, the ability to take or move leave and the use of pre-arranged overtime. During Quarter 4 an average of 20 personnel were absent from their posts on a long term basis and therefore the actual staff figure available to crew appliances for this period was between 310 and 315.

In respect of absences due to temporary promotions and secondments the current Service redesign, departmental restructure processes and the IRMP review had resulted in a number of officer posts remaining temporarily filled for extended periods and this was an issue which needed to be addressed.

Simon Foye, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, stressed the need to ensure that crewing levels were appropriate and he confirmed that this was an area of key focus. A number of factors affected crewing levels - one of which was extractions (temporary promotions). The Fire Authority operated in a lean way and the effect of temporary promotions, long terms sickness and attendance at training courses would all have an impact on crewing levels. If gaps arose in crewing levels then steps would be put in place to overcome that such as retained staff on temporary contracts and pre-arranged overtime. The use of pre-arranged overtime in the last quarter of 2016/17 was significantly lower in comparison to other quarters and it tended to fluctuate over the year. Officers were currently undertaking a range of work such as looking at staffing levels and recruitment plans to ascertain whether the establishment base of 328 was sufficient or not. The Fire Service had recently come through a rebalancing of budgets and an IRMP review which would help to direct that work.

Dave Myers confirmed that whilst this was a Quarter 4 report, the focus of which was on a specific quarter, there was reference throughout the report to annual data.

Neil Carter advised that one of the key issues was staff being seconded from stations into specialist roles. The table set out in paragraph 3.5 showed that the Service did run above establishment at times but that during the fourth quarter an average of 20 personnel were absent from their posts and therefore the service was operating with less than the establishment of 328.

Councillor Colin Dudley noted that in the fourth quarter and year to date there had not been a single wholtime pumping appliance which had been unavailable due to a lack of crew. Neil Carter said that in quarter four in over 50% of the shifts pumping appliances had been crewed with 5. Councillor Dudley queried where that had happened as he could not recall coming across 5 riding on an appliance that often and he would therefore like to see further data behind the chart in paragraph 3.19.

In respect of Retained Crewing the Service maintained seven retained pumping appliances. The chart at Appendix 1 showed the total retained appliance availability for the period per station and a corporate target of 50% had been set for this performance measure. During the fourth quarter the average appliance availability was 43% and for the full financial year the average retained appliance availability was 41.6%. The main factor affecting availability was the continuing low establishment and therefore support for

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RDS stations was a key focus for the Service in 2017/18. It was noted that a small change at a station could have a disproportionate impact on crewing. An RDS project had been implemented which concentrated initially on increasing the establishment via improvements to recruitment processes and basic training. Support would also be provided to those applicants failing their theory tests in the form of short college courses.

In May 2017 four RDS recruits had attended a two week 'safe to ride' training course in partnership with Oxfordshire FRS. This approach to initial training was being trialled to streamline and reduce the period between recruitment and firefighters becoming available to crew an appliance which would positively impact on their availability. At the end of quarter four 11 trainee RDS firefighters were undertaking basic training or were operationally available for incidents (although not fully qualified).

In summary RDS availability continued to track under target as a direct result of low establishment levels. Recruitment activity and interest from prospective recruits was strong across the county however the failure rate at point of entry was an ongoing concern. The focus on RDS recruitment and support for applicants had intensified with initiatives being explored and implemented through the Service's RDS project.

The minimum crewing level for Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) was six staff on duty, of which three had to be supervisory managers (Crew or Watch Manager). During the fourth quarter crewing fell below minimum on six occasions (3% of shifts) as a result of sickness and on all of those occasions operational officers from across the Thames Valley had made up the shortfall. During the financial year crewing levels fell below minimum on 38 occasions (5% of shifts) compared to 150 in 2015/16. During Quarter 4 no shifts were lost to long term sickness which reflected a gradual decrease in long term sickness throughout the year. During the financial year 154 shifts had been lost to long term sickness compared to 162 in 2015/16. During the financial year 35 shifts had been lost to short term sickness compared to 261 in 2015/16.

In summary absences due to short term and long term sickness were down on the year 2015/16 as were the occasions where crewing fell below minimum. Management of sickness absence combined with the flexibility demonstrated by Control staff were resulting in a much improved crewing situation in comparison with the previous year.

Councillor Emma Webster asked whether global crewing was working. Simon Foye confirmed that the Service was achieving 100% but that was with pre-arranged overtime. So yes it was working in principle but the DCFO confirmed that he would like to look at different models.

Councillor Emma Webster could not see the rationale for taking this report to Audit and Governance in the future other than to streamline the process. She queried how the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition spokesperson would be able to input into the process if it went to Audit and Governance Committee. The CFO responded that existing performance management reporting was monitored and scrutinised via Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Emma Webster referred to the chart in paragraph 3.19 and she stated that figures must be available for year end for the percentage of shifts where pumping appliances were crewed with 5. She also asked what was being done to capture information on part shifts. Neil Carter confirmed that data was available but it would require a manual count which took up a great

deal of time.

Councillor Emma Webster referred to paragraph 3.10 around temporary promotions. She asked how many of these had been substantiated as some had been in these posts for 2-3 years. Simon Foye responded that if the authority wanted to substantiate a post and to fill it then it would need to go through a recruitment process which would need to be undertaken in a balanced way. IRMP changes would have an impact as well.

Councillor Emma Webster again referred to the chart in paragraph 3.19 and the percentage of shifts where crewing levels were maintained at a level to provide a primary crew for the special appliances (e.g. aerial platform and RSU). It was noted that the year total was 95% and she asked how the Fire Authority could ensure that the trend did not continue downwards. Neil Carter confirmed that the figure related to the primary crew at Whitley Wood. Dave Myers added that there was no statutory duty to crew the special appliances and that the pumping appliances were the main focus. Where crewing levels could be maintained then they would be and in the service redesign there might be an opportunity to look at that in further detail.

Councillor Emma Webster stated that there was an impact if staff were not able to undertake training. Officers confirmed that pre-arranged overtime would be offered as recompense for those coming off duty to undertake training.

Councillor Emma Webster also referred to staff leaving the service as this would have an impact on crewing levels. She asked what the Fire Authority was doing to retain staff and if exit interviews were undertaken. Becci Jefferies confirmed that face to face interviews had been replaced by an on-line survey which was monitored. Councillor Webster queried whether the use of a survey was the best way to capture information and it was agreed that further discussion on this should be taken off-line.

Councillor Paul Bryant noted that difficulties in maintaining crewing levels were due to leave, temporary promotion and sickness. He asked whether the authority had the right establishment numbers if it wanted to get to a level of 100% cover. Councillor Colin Dudley responded that an establishment of 328 might not be the right level and the DCFO would be looking at that in the near future. He would need to come to an understanding of how that number had come about in the first instance. Councillor Bryant asked for clarification as to what the target was. It was confirmed that the target was 14 wholtime pumping appliances being crewed 100% of the time. Trevor Ferguson said that the organisation had made a decision to maintain 14 pumps with a very lean staffing level and consequently pre-arranged overtime had to be used to cover that. This also needed to be balanced against the desire for staff to take leave which could be challenging at times. Councillor Colin Dudley stated that the Fire Service was performing well and this was only due to the fact that it had good people working for it.

Councillor Emma Webster asked if recommendation 2.2 could be revisited. She noted the good work undertaken by Audit and Governance Committee but Management Committee was led by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority and consisted of leading Members and the Opposition. Non-Members of the Audit and Governance Committee could observe at those meetings but would not be able to speak or vote on the report. Representative bodies would also not have a right to address Audit and Governance. Councillor Colin Dudley suggested that there was no reason that the report should not come to both Committees and Audit and Governance could make a recommendation to Management Committee. This was confirmed by Officers.

It was therefore agreed that recommendation 2.2 would be amended to reflect that.

**Resolved that:**

- The contents of the report be noted;
- The measures contained within the report be agreed and would be monitored and scrutinised via the existing performance management systems within the Service (Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee) and also reported to Management Committee.

**13. WHOLETIME DUTY SYSTEM OVERTIME REPORT**

Dave Myers, Area Manager Service Delivery, presented a report which provided actual overtime spend against the allocated Wholetime Duty System (WDS) overtime budget for the six month period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. The report also set out details of the 2017/18 WDS station overtime budget, described management arrangements for monitoring overtime use and provided a conclusion on the use of WDS overtime in relation to the WDS establishment figures.

Overtime referred to the use of pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) to maintain appliance availability. In practise this meant firefighters and junior officers working additional shifts to cover absences in order to ensure that appliances were continuously crewed. Absences included:

- Sickness absence (long and short term)
- Long term restricted duties i.e. personnel in the workplace but unable to perform full operational duties due to recovery from a long term injury or illness
- Maternity/paternity leave
- Sabbaticals i.e. unpaid absence for military reservists
- Secondments i.e. temporary promotions away from the station

PAOT spend for a number of stations seemed to be at considerable variance with the allocated POAT budget and in 2017/18 the PAOT annual budget had been increased to £411,776. Station 17 at Slough was particularly vulnerable to absences as the crewing factor at that station was marginally lower than at other stations.

The use of PAOT to meet crewing shortfalls on WDS stations was one method by which the Fire Authority maintained optimum availability of operational cover and appliance availability. However, in managing staffing and enabling teams to operate effectively in delivering all activity, such as training and community safety, a balance needed to be struck to cover shortfalls using PAOT whilst not over using this option during peak leave periods when uptake for PAOT was limited.

Going forward, the service would consider impacts from the Service Delivery restructure and wider IRMP changes on crewing. Wider opportunities would be explored for flexibility in crewing and establishments to complement the current use of PAOT which would remain one of the primary methods for bridging shortfalls. The Service would ensure that extractions from stations was minimised and would work to make sure recruitment and promotion processes best matched current and future establishment needs.

Eddie Cardoso, FBU representative, stated that this report was linked to the

previous one and one had an impact on the other. He stated that there were many times when the fourth rider on an appliance would be on overtime and there were also a handful of people doing excessive overtime and this needed to be addressed.

Councillor Emma Webster referred to paragraph 3.7 which stated that since October 2016 the Firewatch system had been configured to record PAOT against a number of overtime categories. She asked which category the majority of PAOT was recorded in. Dave Myers responded that short/long term sickness absence and ability to take leave were the key issues. Sickness levels were reducing but other areas such as leave/training also had an impact.

Councillor Emma Webster queried what level of forecasting forward had the authority undertaken on the PAOT budget. Dave Myers responded that he had been working with the Leave Policy which was now going through consultation and which the authority would ensure was appropriate. Councillor Webster stressed the point that between October 2016 and March 2017 the POAT budget had been £66k overspent and she asked what the full year prediction would be and whether the authority would be covered. Dave Myers confirmed that the 2017/18 budget had been increased by £411,776 and station POAT budgets had been individually set to more accurately reflect historical spend and to allow better analysis, monitoring and management. He felt that this would provide more accurate prediction moving forward.

Councillor Paul Gittings noted that this report and the previous report were linked and felt that they should come back to Management Committee. The Fire Authority had suffered budget cuts and the service was now beginning to look a little stretched as it had to rely on overtime. He therefore felt that the establishment needed to be increased and he hoped that that would be tested in future reports.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell noted that the overtime budget had been increased by over £400k and therefore the Fire Authority was wasting money as this was more expensive than if the establishment was increased. However, it was not necessarily about the cost but about what was right for the Service.

Councillor Colin Dudley stated that some firefighters wanted to do overtime but the authority needed to ensure that they did not breach the Working Time Directive. A review of staffing levels would not necessarily mean cuts. The new DCFO had come from outside the area and therefore he would be able to take a fresh look. It was essential that firefighters were treated fairly and to ensure that the right level of appliances and crew were in place in order to keep the residents of Berkshire safe.

**Resolved that:**

- The report be noted;
- It be agreed that the use of WDS overtime remained one of the methods by which RBFRRS maintained optimum availability of operational cover which was kept under review by the Fire Authority's Audit and Governance Committee through the quarterly performance report.

*(Councillor Paul Gittings left the meeting at 8.59pm)*

#### **14. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE (TRAINING) LIMITED ANNUAL REPORT**

Simon Jefferies, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the performance of the Authority's arms length trading company – Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited (RBFRTL) for the financial year 2016/17.

The Profit and Loss Account and Balance Sheet were set out in Appendix 1. Sales in 2016/17 amounted to £191,040 compared to £168,628 in 2015/16. Profit before tax was £21,128 compared to a profit of £3,864 in the previous year.

In addition to the posted profit, RBFRTL had paid £54,744 in recharged costs to the Fire Authority. These recharges represented costs the company carried and would still exist if it were to source HR, IT, Transport, Finance, Facilities and Management support services from elsewhere.

During 2015 Paul Maynard had taken on responsibility for the day to day management of the company with a remit to transition the existing arms length trading company to a Community Interest Company (CIC). Whilst the CIC was not yet trading it was a legal entity called RBFR Solutions CIC. Members had since decided to prioritise the development of the performance of the existing company with a view to commencing trading through the CIC when a suitable customer opportunity arose. At that time in the future it was anticipated that the CIC would operate in parallel to RBFRTL.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell stated that this was a good news report and he confirmed that a new legal entity had been established and would be utilised in due course running alongside RBFRTL.

Councillor Emma Webster asked if the list of training courses could be circulated to Members in order that they could be promoted in the local authorities.

Councillor Colin Dudley noted that this was a commercial company and he queried whether there had been any increase in requests for training since the Grenfell incident. It was confirmed that there had been no immediate increase in requests for training but that an increase might be seen over the next few months.

#### **Resolved that:**

- The report be noted.

#### **15. 2016/17 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement, informed Members of the provisional 2016/17 revenue and capital outturn position and updated on the level of reserves held by the Authority as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

The 2016/17 revenue budget of £32,770,000 was underspent by £9,000 which resulted in a variance against budget of 0.03% and the detailed position was set out in Appendix A of the report.

Capital expenditure in 2016/17 was £1.9 million and progress against individual projects was shown in Appendix B. The major estates project in 2016/17 was the rebuilding of Hungerford Fire Station which had officially opened in early July 2017. Just over £450k had been spent during the year enhancing IT systems and purchasing software licences. The main fleet project

during 2016/17 was the collaborative procurement of fire appliances. The joint procurement between Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services was part of a wider operational alignment project.

The Authority's earmarked reserves had fallen from £11.2 million to £10 million during 2016/17 and movement on individual reserves was set out in Appendix C. The largest movements were as follows:

- The grants received balance had increased due to the receipt of £573k from the Government to fund costs in relation to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project.
- £515,000 had been spent from the Transition Fund during 2016/17.
- £1.3m had been taken from the Development Fund to support capital expenditure.

Councillor Paul Bryant asked if unbudgeted income from co-responding had balanced out with expenditure and this was confirmed to be the case.

**Resolved that:**

- The report be noted.

**16. NATIONAL JOINT COMMITTEE (NJC) – PAY OFFER**

Trevor Ferguson, the Chief Fire Officer, reported that the National Joint Council (NJC) had made an offer of a 2% pay increase from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 and a further 3% from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. The 3% was conditional of Central Government funding and agreement on issues relating to Emergency Medical Trials and Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack.

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was based on the underpinning assumptions of a 1% pay increase and a 1.99% precept increase until April 2020. Therefore any pay increase above 1% could not be met from existing budgets and would require either new funding or further reductions to expenditure. A further 1% increase would equate to an additional £250k per year. This would be in addition to the £2.4m of savings already identified in the MTFP.

The offer was now being considered by the Employee side would create additional budget pressures for RBFRS. Although a formal response from the Employee side would not be received until 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the initial response had not been overly positive. Should agreement not be reached through the NJC process then the matter might be referred to ACAS for further consideration.

Members noted that at present this was all speculative and that the authority would need to wait and see what response was received by the Employee side. It was clarified that an update on the position would be given in the annual planning workshop but that any decision would need to be made by Management Committee.

**Resolved that:**

- The report be noted;
- It be agreed that if the 2% increase was agreed and accepted that funding from the Budget Contingency Reserve could be used to cover any in year

shortfall in budget;

- It be agreed that Officers and the Budget Lead Member would provide an update at the annual planning workshop on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 which would include scenarios and options on how to manage the outcome of the negotiations, which should have concluded by then.

## **17. RECENT RANSOMWARE ATTACK**

Nikki Richards, Director of Support Services, updated Members of Management Committee on the recent Locky Ransomware attack which had taken place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 just following the Grenfell incident. The attack had happened by e-mail and was not targeted. The opening of one e-mail had encrypted over 100,000 files and the Bitcoin ransom request had been for 2,000 bitcoins (around £4m).

The infected e-mail had been received at 9.17am and at 10.20am IT had been notified that files were not accessible on the training drive. IT then identified the encryption type and determined 'Locky' as the malware. By 10.40am the server links were disabled and file share shutdown initiated.

Nikki Richards confirmed that this situation had been handled quickly and calmly by the IT team. Patching worked to help prevent the malware spreading and file shares had been restored within 20 minutes because of the new virtualisation system. The Service had been back to business as usual by the lunchtime on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

In terms of learning from the incident continued awareness and training for all staff was essential together with Business Continuity/Critical Event Management awareness. Communications to staff had been pre-planned. It was noted that investments in licences and systems had meant that the attack had not been as bad as it could have been.

Councillor Colin Dudley informed the Committee that a similar attack had happened to MP's e-mails in the House of Commons. RBFRS had been back up and running 6 hours before the House of Commons. It was believed that the malware originated in Korea.

Councillor Angus Ross queried whether training would be available to Members. Nikki Richards confirmed that Members could use the on-line training package and she would ensure that they had access to that training.

**NR to  
action**

### **Resolved that:**

- The update was noted;
- Nikki Richards would ensure that access to the on-line training package would be provided to Members.

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

**Resolved that** the next meeting of Management Committee would take place on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 6.30pm in the Brigade Headquarters, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SP.

## **19. 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.

## **20. CAPITAL FUNDING BIDS**

Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services) and Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), advised that the Strategic Asset Investment Framework had been introduced in 2015 by Members to assist planning for capital projects and to give more structure to medium term capital spending, although the figures contained within remained indicative and any projected funding level was subject to market fluctuation. The report asked Members of the Management Committee to agree funding for an ongoing number of capital projects as set out in Section 2 of the report.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

## **21. CAPITAL FUNDING – THEALE COMMUNITY FIRE STATION**

Simon Jefferies (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) and Alex Brown (Strategic Property Manager) presented a report which updated Members of Management Committee on progress in respect of the acquisition and development of the new Community Fire Station at Theale and asked Members to agree projected funding levels from capital budgets as set out in Section 3 of the report.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The recommendations as set out in the exempt report be agreed.

*(The meeting closed at 9.52pm)*