

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



Held on Tuesday 19 September 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:

Doug Buchanan (Group Manager, Risk and Performance)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement)
Stephen Chard (Clerk)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Mark Gaskarth (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy),
Jacky Manning (HR Manager)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services)
James Pinchin (Democratic Support Assistant)
Jim Powell (Area Manager, Service Delivery)
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead)
Tregear Thomas (FBU Representative)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems)

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22. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Tregear Thomas (FBU Representative) confirmed that he would like to address the Committee on item 10.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillor Emma Webster stated that should the Theale Community Fire Station be discussed at the meeting she would declare a personal interest as she was a Member of West Berkshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee which included Theale in its remit. As her interest was personal and not another registrable interest or a disclosable pecuniary interest, she would

remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

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

25. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JULY 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(Councillor Paul Gittings joined the meeting at 6.31pm).

26. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Pay Award

As Members would be aware, the Employers' Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) made an offer at the start of July to increase firefighter pay by 2% from 1 July 2017, and a further 3% from April 2018, subject to Central Government funding and other conditions.

Following discussions and clarification on the offer, on 23 August 2017 the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) was notified by the NJC that the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) would be consulting its members with a recommendation to accept the pay offer.

On 13 September 2017, the RBFRS was notified that the outcome of the consultation was to reject the pay offer. In addition to which, the FBU would be communicating to its members that any work undertaken through the NJC approved trials on co-responding should stop with immediate effect from Monday 18 September 2017. As a consequence, the current trial in Wokingham had been suspended. However, co-responding would continue to operate from Wargrave and Hungerford as they were retained fire stations.

Any further updates on discussions related to the pay award would be provided to Members in due course.

Annual Wellbeing Day

The annual RBFRS Wellbeing Day was taking place on Wednesday 11 October 2017 at Newsham Court between 10:00 – 15:00. The focus of the event was on mental wellbeing with several exhibitors on site to raise awareness of mental health in the workplace. Activities would include a Laughter Feel Good session, Mindfulness for Wellbeing and creative activities to promote relaxation.

Confirmed exhibitors included Brighter Berkshire, NHS Stop Smoking Service, Riverford Organic Farm and Benenden Health Checks.

An invitation was extended to all Fire Authority Members to attend the event and further information was available from Fitness and Health Adviser Helen Morbin. Councillor Dudley recommended the event to Members.

Group Manager Appointment

Following a challenging selection process, Doug Buchanan had been substantively appointed as the Group Manager for Risk and Performance. The interview process required a great deal of commitment and hard work which was reflected in the performance of the candidates. On behalf of all Members, Councillor Dudley extended congratulations to Doug on his successful appointment to the role.

New Head of Business and Information Systems

Tony Vincent, the new Head of Business and Information Systems, was welcomed to his first Management Committee meeting. Tony joined the RBFRS in August 2017 and brought with him a wealth of experience to the role.

Fallen colleagues

Friday 15 September 2017 marked the 40 year anniversary of the incident at Elgar Road in which two of Royal Berkshire's firefighters tragically lost their lives. David 'Barney' Barnes (Caversham Road) and Neil Goldsmith (Wokingham Road) were attending a fire in Elgar Road, Reading on 15 September 1977 when the building collapsed on them.

Last Friday, at midday, staff throughout the County observed a one minute's silence as a mark of respect to their fallen colleagues to remember them and all those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Councillor Dudley was also in attendance at a memorial service on Sunday 17 September 2017.

Councillor Dudley took the opportunity, on behalf of all Members, to pay tribute to the bravery of these firefighters and to express deepest sympathies to their families on this anniversary.

The Management Committee observed a one minute silence in remembrance of fallen colleagues.

Public Sector Communications Awards 2017

Councillor Emma Webster reported that the RBFRS had been shortlisted at this event for the best consultation and engagement campaign for the work undertaken on the IRMP consultation. While the award went to NHS England for mental health services, Councillor Webster commended the hard work that went into this consultation and thanked those who contributed to the consultation.

Royal County of Berkshire Show

Councillor Paul Bryant expressed disappointment that there had been no representation from the RBFRS at this event as he felt it was an excellent opportunity for residents across Berkshire to meet with RBFRS Officers.

Trevor Ferguson, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), responded to this point and advised that a strategic decision had been made to not attend the event. This was due to concerns of costs and the level of benefit that attendance would bring/had brought in the past. The CFO added that it was not considered the best use of resource to attend and community engagement took place in other ways and at other venues. The CFO and Councillor Bryant agreed to discuss this further outside of the meeting.

New appliances for Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services

Councillors Angus Ross and Malcolm Alexander reported on the launch event

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they attended for the new appliances held at Abingdon Airfield. This followed the joint procurement of the appliances by the three Thames Valley services (Royal Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire/Milton Keynes).

The event had been successful and had generated positive press coverage. Both Members enjoyed the opportunity of driving one of the new vehicles.

Parsons Green Tube Attack

Steve Foye, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) provided an update on the latest developments following this bomb attack on Friday 15 September 2017. Following the incident, a status of 'critical' had been established, this meant that a terrorist attack could be imminent, however this had since been reduced to 'severe', meaning that a terrorist attack was thought to be highly likely.

For Berkshire, Officers had responded appropriately to the status of both 'critical' and 'severe' in line with plans that were already in place. Officers had also worked to ensure the security of the service and the county, as well as giving a reassuring presence to communities. The DCFO added the importance of identifying where lessons could be learnt from such difficult experiences.

Councillor Dudley gave thanks to those staff, including Control staff, who responded at this critical time.

27. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

28. PEER REVIEW 2017 – SUMMARY REPORT AND PRESENTATION

Jim Powell, Area Manager (Service Delivery) introduced the item. The RBFRS Fire Peer Challenge took place from 28 February to 3 March 2017 and consisted of a range of on-site activities including meetings, focus groups and fire station visits. The challenge team was led by Lee Howell (Chief Fire Officer of the Devon and Somerset FRS) and consisted of representatives from Gloucestershire, Norfolk, Hereford and Worcester, and Nottinghamshire fire and rescue services. The team also included a Member of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authority and a representative from the Local Government Association. The report outlined the narrative and key findings from the peer challenge team's visit, and the self assessment documentation provided to the team prior to the review.

Management Committee approval was sought for a recommendation to be made to Fire Authority that the Peer Review Report be published on the RBFRS website.

Doug Buchanan, Group Manager (Risk and Performance) then gave a presentation to Management Committee which provided an overview of the headlines from the peer review, key findings and plans to implement the recommendations of the peer challenge team. The Group Manager highlighted the following points from the presentation:

The RBFRS asked the team to focus on the following key areas of interest:

- An assessment of the progress made by the RBFRS since the last Fire Peer Challenge in 2014.

- The extent to which delivering the RBFA Corporate Plan 2015-19 would improve outcomes for communities across Royal Berkshire.
- To what extent would delivery of the RBFA Corporate Plan 2015-19 meet the requirements of the Home Office Fire Reform Programme.

The challenge team noted that progress had been made since 2014 within the following areas:

- Culture and leadership – a positive change noted in behaviour, culture and leadership across the organisation. It was felt that targeted staff engagement would be beneficial to cement a one team ethos, particularly during time of significant sector and organisational change.
- Improved governance arrangements – with Member development of the national agenda noted as being of value. The Member/Officer Protocol would help define areas of responsibility and also communication protocols.
- Criticism in 2014 had been that service delivery was response centric, however it was now felt that the current Corporate Plan and IRMP demonstrated a far more balanced approach to service delivery.
- Learning and development – a high quality of training provision. While reviews into NVQ and MOC had not been conducted they were planned.
- Health and wellbeing – notable practice was observed in relation to reducing sickness levels, mental health awareness and health and fitness provisions.

Turning to key findings and areas for exploration, specifically related to improved outcomes for communities, the challenge team noted that:

- Significant improvements had been made in performance monitoring. However, in some areas performance still needed evaluating and managing more effectively.
- There was greater organisational confidence in service delivery – a perception identified that IRMP was not owned at station level which could impact on the quality of interventions received by the public. However, the report acknowledged that the team visited during a period of significant change with the service redesign and restructure ongoing.
- Service delivery activities and opportunities – the service restructure would enable the RBFRS to deliver prevention, protection and response more effectively. It was noted that the need to use specific approaches in the different local authority areas within the county were understood and this targeted approach should deliver more effective outcomes than a single county-wide approach alongside balancing competing priorities.

In terms of the extent to which delivery of the Corporate Plan would meet the requirements of the Home Office Fire Reform Programme, the team noted good aspirations and plans to further the reform agenda, and good foundations on which to build. More specific comments were made against the reform programme's three themes:

- Efficiency and collaboration – good and improving partnerships at strategic and operational levels, and notable collaborative successes including Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) and co-location with partners. The challenge team did however give the view that it was time to increase collaboration with neighbouring fire and rescue services and other

partners. Management Committee were informed that the ACFO for Service Delivery had oversight of a number of collaboration projects.

- Transparency and accountability – the challenge team recognised the level of work the organisation had committed to in streamlining and improving governance arrangements. A need was identified for robust procurement processes and cost effective procurement options that would need to withstand external review. The RBFRS were confident that recent changes to procurement processes would mean they could withstand scrutiny.
- A key focus on workload reform – a positive change in behaviour, culture and leadership was praised in the report. It was felt that the RBFRS had moved some considerable distance towards an empowering culture and recognising the importance of investing in staff at all levels. A need to improve workforce diversity was highlighted and was an area being developed.

Key findings were also presented on improvements to the Retained Duty System (RDS) and 'on call' improvements. The challenge team strongly encouraged the RBFRS to explore further how other services had adapted the traditional retained/wholetime structures to become more agile. Since the peer review, a number of work streams had been pulled together as part of the RDS programme board in order to address recruitment, retention and training issues, and the widening of opportunities for staff.

In conclusion, the Group Manager (Risk and Performance) stated that a number of successes had been identified that needed to be built upon and developed. An action plan was being formed to progress recommendations, many of which were already underway, and areas for further exploration. The action plan would be presented for agreement and then routinely monitored by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Colin Dudley gave thanks for this comprehensive report and presentation.

A number of questions were then asked by Members. Councillor Emma Webster questioned the actions to be taken in response to findings on equality and diversity of the workforce, noting a People Strategy was being formed. Jacky Manning (HR Manager) explained that a number of different approaches were being explored in this area. These included recruitment campaigns which had proved successful in the past, the Change 100 programme and the appointment of apprentices within support services initially.

It was agreed that the action plan would be shared with all Members once it had been approved by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Webster then queried what steps were being taken to develop an empowering culture beyond command and control. Steve Foye, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, (DCFO) explained that all managers were encouraged by the leadership team to further develop themselves and take on additional responsibilities where possible. It was also the aim as part of this to speed up processes, encourage creativity and remove barriers.

Trevor Ferguson, Chief Fire Officer, (CFO) added that the middle managers skills programme was also designed to empower those managers to consider their role on a wider basis.

Councillor Dudley questioned the point made in this section of the report that some staff with the same functional role or rank wore different uniforms. This was also questioned in the report. The CFO confirmed that this inconsistency

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had been rectified.

Councillor Webster noted the point made in the report that front line operational staff could consider that Members were the 'go to people' to resolve issues rather than their managers due to the high level of interaction with operational staff by Members. She queried what actions were being taken to rectify this with managers. The CFO explained that good communication protocols had been developed and SMT had conducted a number of positive visits to stations. Improvements would also be aided by the Member/Officer Protocol.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons explained that she chaired a Member Development Task and Finish Group where the revised Member/Officer Protocol was being discussed. It would be presented to the next Fire Authority for approval.

Councillor Paul Gittings made reference to page ten of the report and mention of increasing prevention activities by broadening the range of agencies engaged with by the RBFRS. He asked what actions were being/would be taken to improve this. Mark Gaskarth (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy) responded that following a fire death in 2015, a recommendation was made by the Berkshire Coroner to share information more widely. An information sharing protocol had been established which included local authorities and care providers. This was considered as good practice. Post the Grenfell fire, efforts had been increased with local authorities to ensure information was shared appropriately with a focus on the most vulnerable members of the community.

Councillor Chris Maskell queried whether there was certainty among managers of the appropriate levels of information sharing and collaboration. The CFO advised of a meeting he and Councillor Angus Ross had attended with blue light colleagues to put a framework in place to ensure that collaboration was maximised. This was led by Officers, with Member oversight.

Councillor Maskell then referred to Appendix A to the report where evidence of silo working was highlighted. He sought assurance that this was being addressed. The DCFO stated that, at a senior management level, Officers acted as one team and sought to ensure this was replicated across the organisation. This was an area to continue to improve upon. The CFO added that good progress was being made in achieving the Corporate Plan theme of 'one team working collaboratively for the people we serve.'

Councillor Maskell also sought assurance that the point made in Appendix A that no clear strategy was found for the RDS had been addressed. The DCFO confirmed that this had been taken forward by a project board and a strategy was being formed.

Councillor Helliar-Symons noted that the action plan would be shared with all Members once agreed, but queried the frequency with which the action plan would be monitored. The CFO commented that this monitoring most sensibly sat with the Audit and Governance Committee as proposed. However, matters of concern would be escalated if necessary to Management Committee and/or the Fire Authority.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell queried the level of collaboration with other fire and rescue services and whether this would be extended, i.e. with other services in the Thames Valley. The CFO explained that plans had been and would continue to be carefully formed in terms of this level of collaboration, particularly where statutory duties were concerned. A Lead Member had been

appointed for collaboration and formed a key part of the role of an ACFO. They were involved in Thames Valley wide discussions which included the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel.

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillor Emma Webster declared a personal interest at this point in the meeting as she was a Member of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. As her interest was personal and not an other registrable interest or a disclosable pecuniary interest, she would remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Dudley continued on this point by referring to the Government Green Paper for Fire Prevention and Rescue which included the potential for Police and Crime Commissions to take on responsibility for fire and rescue services as had commenced in Essex. Councillor Dudley noted that collaboration within Berkshire and across the Thames Valley had been extended since the Green Paper was published. This included other fire services and other blue light services. Councillor Angus Ross raised the need to monitor the implementation of the arrangement in Essex.

Councillor Maskell queried how actions described in relation to the RDS and their outcome would be publicised/shared. Councillor Dudley commented that these minutes covered this part of the debate and would serve as a public document. The CFO added that the action plan would be publicised once it had been approved by the Audit and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) Management Committee would recommend to Fire Authority that the Peer Review Report be published on the RBFRS website.
- (2) The presentation be noted.

29. COMMUNITY SAFETY CAPACITY, CAPABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Mark Gaskarth, Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P) presented the report which detailed the new risks affecting the Fire Authority and the associated demands on the RBFRS emerging as a result of the tragic incident that occurred at Grenfell Tower in London on 14 June 2017. The situation was summed up by the Police and Fire Minister's comment, '...Grenfell changes everything'. The report also detailed other emerging risks that could have a significant impact on the RBFRS's ability to deliver its related Prevention, Protection and Response activities over the next few years.

The report outlined a proactive approach to the management of risk so that the Fire Authority could clearly demonstrate that it had exercised due diligence in the performance of its statutory functions.

A 4 phased plan had been produced and was being implemented to manage these additional risks and demands. This would enable the Fire Authority to continue to honour the IRMP commitments implemented following the Service Redesign consultation at the start of 2017, whilst also delivering the additional work requirements. Some of these additional requirements had already arisen since the Grenfell incident. It was anticipated that further requirements would emerge when more information was released through the process of the public inquiry.

The 4 phased plan had been shared and agreed in principle with each of the

six unitary authorities in Berkshire.

Significant work had already been undertaken to complete Phase 1 – initial response. This would continue into the future but this work, which was over and above that outlined in the Service Redesign, could not be sustained with current resource levels.

The intention behind the plan was not only to deal with the initial critical phase of activity following the Grenfell incident, directed and co-ordinated by the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) on behalf of the Home Office, but also to take a proactive approach to managing the risks throughout this period of change, shaping the way services were delivered for the future using the latest information and intelligence. The RBFRS would work more closely than ever before with the six unitary authorities in Berkshire to promote fire safety and protect the public whilst instilling confidence in the RBFRS and its local authority partners.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy referred Members to section 5.1 of the report which outlined additional costs for 2017/18. These additional costs had been identified as needed to meet IRMP commitments and to deliver the range of activities required as a result of the Grenfell Tower incident. This included the need to increase capacity/resource in what was a challenging market. A need was noted to be innovative in bringing in the right resources.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy proposed that Management Committee note the 4 phase plan and agree to the transfer of up to £200,000 from the budget contingency reserve to the revenue budget should that be required to enable the Service to invest in additional resources to manage the emerging risks and to meet additional demands in the remainder of the current financial year.

Councillor Colin Dudley questioned whether the funds identified were sufficient. Area Manager Collaboration and Policy gave an assurance that, with the information currently available, it would be sufficient to meet the additional costs outlined in section 5.1 of the report.

Councillor Dudley gave thanks for the work undertaken to date and that has been committed to be delivered over the remainder of the 2017/18 financial year.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell agreed with the proposal for up to £200,000 to be transferred as these were necessary steps to be funded. However, this would impact on the contingency reserve which could create a difficulty in future years, particularly when it would be difficult to reimburse the reserve. In response to this and an associated query from Councillor Dudley, Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) confirmed that this figure would be assimilated into the 2018/19 revenue budget and was an additional pressure moving forward. It would impact on the contingency reserve.

Councillor Paul Bryant referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report and the RBFRS status in terms of planning and as a statutory consultee for building regulations applications for proposed new high rise buildings and alterations to existing buildings. Councillor Bryant queried what enforcement action could be taken to ensure recommendations of the RBFRS were implemented, i.e. fire sprinklers. The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy confirmed that planning authorities can't require sprinklers to be installed as part of the planning process. Instead it would fall under Building Regulations. However, RBFRS consistently promotes the fitting of sprinklers. Once the building is occupied, enforcement action could be taken by RBFRS if the requirements of Regulatory Reform

(Fire Safety) Order were not provided in the development stage or maintained when the building came into use. RBFRS also has a power to prohibit the use of the premises if the risk to life is deemed serious enough.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy continued by explaining that fire sprinklers were not required in all cases, but were required under the Building Regulations for very large/ tall buildings. As well as actions for 2017/18 in relation to fire safety enforcement and prevention, he added that further actions were also anticipated beyond the current financial year post the outcome of the public inquiry and efforts were ongoing in preparation of that. Councillor Bryant highlighted the importance of lobbying government for stronger requirements for sprinklers and other fire suppression methods.

Councillor Dudley agreed with the need to enforce fire safety requirements, but added that there was a difficulty with setting enforceable conditions based on current laws. However, he reiterated the point made earlier that 'Grenfell changes everything'.

Councillor Bicknell referred to the additional cost of increasing capacity to advance data sharing arrangements with the NHS and the six unitary authorities. However, he queried whether this would also include private care homes and schools, and if so how data would be shared. The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy explained that work was taking place to provide improved data sharing arrangements in line with the recommendations made by the HM Coroner for Berkshire. This includes sharing data through our Adult Referral Programme (ARP).

Councillor Helliard-Symons agreed it was important to lobby government on a requirement for increased use of sprinklers. She noted that there was much new building across Berkshire and queried whether there was satisfactory consultation with the RBFRS on new developments or whether this was a role that local authorities could assist with. The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy welcomed this offer of assistance and explained that growth in buildings/population had been considered as part of the strategic Service Redesign. Trevor Ferguson (CFO) added that the RBFRS was being proactive in supporting local authorities, recognising that their finances and resources were under significant challenge.

Councillor Emma Webster noted from the report that a number of very experienced members of staff within the RBFRS Protection function were due to become eligible for retirement and she queried what succession planning was in place when considering that it took two years to train someone to operate effectively as a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer. Councillor Webster queried whether it was this type of information that could be communicated to Ministers to request flexibility on the cap for the Council Tax precept. In response to the latter point, Councillor Dudley commented that there was commitment among Members for the lobbying of Ministers and MPs to request this flexibility, in particular to respond to Grenfell requirements.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy acknowledged a significant number of staff members were to become eligible for retirement, including half of the Inspecting Officers. RBFRS operates a Career Grade Scheme to recruit and develop new members of the Protection team. This would be used to bring in new staff and also there may be the opportunity to use the newly developing apprenticeships schemes. The need to adequately resource for the future was also being considered in readiness of any further recommendations following the Grenfell public inquiry. This included additional capacity. The CFO added the importance of ensuring and maintaining sufficient capacity. Councillor

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Dudley acknowledged there was some difficulty in doing so when Officers could not be asked when they were going to retire.

Councillor Webster noted that more specific figures could not be provided at this public meeting on staff to become eligible for retirement, but requested that further information be provided to her outside of the meeting. Councillor Dudley asked that this information be provided to Councillor Webster as Lead IRMP Member.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy stressed that he was working closely with the other Thames Valley FRSS as part of the Collaboration Programme.

Councillor Maskell commented that many local authorities were in the same situation in terms of existing resource and ensuring future resource/succession planning to meet workload pressures.

Councillor Maskell added his agreement to the points made on sprinklers. He referred to a development approved in Reading which was supported in terms of its fire prevention methods, including sprinklers and ways to aid access by the RBFRS. He was however concerned that consultation comments from the RBFRS were considered as advisory only and the government should be lobbied to implement statutory measures and responsibilities including for fire sprinklers.

The Area Manager Collaboration and Policy explained to Members that Fire Safety Building Regulations were under review and reiterated that sprinklers were mandatory in high rise buildings. This all pointed back to the need for robust levels of resources to be in place so the RBFRS could be on the front foot in taking work forward and giving appropriate levels of advice for new buildings.

Councillor Maskell queried what information could usefully be included in lobbying to help bring about changes. The CFO noted there were a number of complexities to consider, but highlighted that a single and consistent approach from Members would be the most beneficial, i.e. requesting a review of building regulations and ensuring these were updated more frequently and greater use of sprinklers.

Councillor Gittings agreed it was right to agree to the transfer of up to £200,000 from reserves. However, pressures would be ongoing, particularly following the completion of the Grenfell public inquiry and its expected recommendations, creating a greater call on finances. He queried whether a meeting should be arranged with Berkshire's MPs to take this further, highlight concerns etc. Councillor Dudley advised that plans were already in place to arrange this.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of Officer's recommendations for the multi phased approach and the funding transfer from reserves to ensure the safety of residents. This was seconded by Councillor Bicknell. Councillor Dudley also hoped that improvements could be made to building regulations and planning laws without undue delay. Councillor Bicknell stated that it was frustrating that there was a need to wait for developments, but accepted that it was right for the government to respond in a robust and measured way. He also added the importance of careful budget forecasting when further financial pressures were highly likely.

RESOLVED that:

- The 4 phased plan outlined in the report would be noted.
- It be agreed that up to £200,000 of funds should be transferred from the budget contingency reserve to the revenue budget should that be required to enable the Service to invest in additional resources to manage the emerging risks and to meet additional demands in the remainder of the current financial year.

30. VEHICLE FLEET AND EQUIPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) presented the report (a revised version of which had been tabled) which provided an update on the first year of delivery of the RBFRS Fleet Strategy. The Strategy provided a four year forecast for activities and spend, with detail on specific areas of focus. It also provided a structured plan to align the budgets for fleet and operational equipment with the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The update report outlined progress to date and clarified certain areas against predicted forecasts, such as capital spend on white and red fleet, and progress on lease scheme outcomes which were expected to achieve a cost neutral position. It also outlined operational equipment/developments within the Strategy that were not predicted, resulting in the proposal for the draw down of revenue budget for fitness equipment into capital provision within the Operational Equipment budget.

The DCFO added that developments included the implementation of new appliances which served to reduce the average age of the fleet as well as plans for the delivery of new appliances in the coming years as part of a rolling programme of replacement. This had been aided by the centrally held Asset Register. There was also a requirement for new testing equipment and a provision was proposed for this within the Capital Programme.

Councillor Paul Bryant noted it was previously policy to donate older appliances to less wealthy parts of the world and queried whether that would continue as part of the proposed Fleet Review. The DCFO assured Members that this practice did continue for appliances that were still in a reasonable condition.

Councillor Chris Maskell was pleased to note the positive step of replacing training vehicles for young and new firefighters.

Councillor Emma Webster noted that the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) was scheduled for replacement in 2019/20 and queried whether this timeframe was acceptable when considering that the ALP was off the run relatively frequently. The DCFO explained that a collaborative solution was being sought to this with Thames Valley colleagues and it was hoped that this would enable the timeframe to be brought forward. However, Trevor Ferguson (CFO) added that the replacement of this appliance had already been brought forward to 2019/20.

Councillor Angus Ross stated that this was a good news item to report. He particularly highlighted the safety benefits from the lease scheme and gave his support to the report's recommendations.

Councillor Dudley proposed acceptance of the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Ross.

Councillor Webster commended the work undertaken and agreed it was a positive step forward in progressing the work of the RBFRS.

RESOLVED that:

- The content of this report be noted.
- The B type Fire Appliance delivery schedule for 2018/19 and 2019/20 be agreed.
- The inclusion of fitness equipment provision in the Fleet and Equipment capital budget be agreed.

31. WHOLETIME ESTABLISHMENT AND CREWING

Trig Thomas (FBU Representative) addressed the Committee. The FBU welcomed the report and the implementation of this review. He pointed out that the vacancy factor of 20 had had a significant impact on stations. This had necessitated temporary promotions with the result that this impacted on the ability to adequately man crews.

Trig Thomas then made reference to Appendix A which showed a decrease in the number of times appliances were crewing with five from 54 times in 2016/17 (Q4) to 23 in 2017/18 (Q1).

The FBU felt that a large number of temporary promotions could be avoided at middle manager level by moving more quickly on Station Manager recruitment. The need to bring forward recruitment in other areas of the structure was acknowledged as part of that – i.e. Watch Managers.

Trig Thomas noted from the report that work was underway to develop a means for existing RBFRS RDS personnel to be employed on temporary wholetime contracts as an alternative to pre arranged overtime and as a means of providing a greater level of stability in covering long term absences. However, this would not aid improvements to the diversity of the workforce.

Simon Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) then presented the report. This followed discussions at Management Committee in July 2017 when it was agreed that a high level review of the Wholetime operational establishment would be conducted. The review, in due course, would result in a consolidated position on operational crewing being presented to Members in early 2018. It would specifically provide clarity on the underpinning assumptions related to the current agreed station based Wholetime establishment of 328.

The report provided Members with an immediate understanding on the areas affecting the Wholetime operational establishment that would be considered as part of the review. The areas explored were establishment and crewing levels, recruitment and promotion, leave, training, overtime and sickness with each outlining historical issues, the current position and planned work.

Appendix A provided a high level summary of performance against the existing agreed performance measures for Wholetime appliances in Quarter One.

The DCFO noted the discrepancy in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of the report on the wholetime grey book establishment. He confirmed that that figure given in paragraph 3.5 was correct, i.e. grey book establishment of 391.

In response to the comments made by the FBU, the DCFO explained that Station Manager recruitment was being progressed with HR and it was hoped that recruitment would have taken place by December 2017.

The DCFO then explained that RDS personnel were on long term temporary contracts and not zero hours contracts. He agreed with the point made in

relation to a more diverse workforce and a People Strategy was being developed which would aim to broaden diversity.

Councillor Colin Dudley thanked the DCFO for his report and his work to date. Councillor Dudley pointed out that Management Committee were asked to note the report with no recommendations to consider as yet.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell queried the reason behind the difference between grey book establishment and station based establishment. The DCFO confirmed that this took account of other uniformed officers who were not station based.

Councillor Emma Webster noted that the budget allocated for pre arranged overtime was £411k per annum and queried year to date expenditure against this budget as it had overspent in previous years. This information was not available at the meeting and the DCFO agreed to provide confirmation of this external to the meeting.

**SF to
action**

Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) added that this expenditure would be confirmed, but reported his belief that spend in this area was on target at Q1, although this could vary throughout the year. The Q2 position would be reported in due course. Councillor Webster felt it would be useful to understand pre arranged overtime that had been and would continue to be necessary to achieve sufficient crewing levels and in response to Grenfell requirements.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons welcomed the receipt of this clear initial analysis. She agreed that overtime costs had previously been a matter for concern, but this had been alleviated by recruitment of staff. There was a need for a balanced and appropriate position in relation to use of overtime which could not always be avoided.

Councillor Angus Ross noted from paragraph 3.14 of the report that there was a longer term collaborative approach across the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services for an apprentice firefighter programme for 2018. He queried whether collaboration was also a consideration for the delivery of training. The DCFO advised that this was already the case for retained staff and shared opportunities continued to be developed.

RESOLVED that:

- The contents of the report be noted.

32. IRMP SERVICE REDESIGN OPTIONS UPDATE

Councillor Emma Webster introduced the item which provided an update on progress with the implementation of the options agreed for Prevention, Protection and Response.

As previously reported, £2.4m in savings needed to be found by 2020 and Option 1 from the Service Redesign consultation was to be taken forward with the exception of the proposal to close Wargrave Fire Station being deferred for 12 months on the understanding that the required savings would need to be found from elsewhere in the RBFRS budget and Wargrave were to demonstrate an increase in availability of the establishment to 60% within that 12 month period.

Councillor Webster proposed, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group for this matter, that Management Committee recommend to Fire Authority that the

start date for this work be set from 1 October 2017. This was considered to be the most appropriate date at the Task and Finish Group meeting on 18 September 2017. This group was responsible for monitoring and measuring the 60%. Councillor Webster added her understanding that key factors were in place that would help the station achieve the 60% target.

Councillor Colin Dudley stated that this would be a consideration for Fire Authority at its next meeting on 10 October 2017. He pointed out that £168k of in year savings still needed to be found, regardless of the additional Grenfell related pressures.

Councillor Paul Gittings praised the work of the Task and Finish Group. He felt that Wargrave Fire Station needed to be given a sufficient time period in which to try and achieve their targets.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons raised the need to communicate this decision and the start date, subject to the proposal being agreed by Fire Authority, with local residents and the media.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell stated his expectation that updates would routinely be provided to the Fire Authority on the progress being made against this target.

RESOLVED that:

- The update be noted and that the recommendation in relation to Wargrave Fire Station would be presented for approval at the next Fire Authority on 10 October 2017.

33. FORWARD PLAN

The RBFRS Forward Plan for the period covering 27 September 2017 to 27 February 2018 was noted.

Councillor Angus Ross queried when items would be scheduled to consider the performance of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) and its budget. Trevor Ferguson (CFO) recommended that budget discussions take place at Management Committee as part of routine budget updates. This was agreed.

Mark Gaskarth Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P), Service Delivery) reported that at the December 2017 meeting of the TVFCS Joint Committee a recommendation to the three Fire Authorities would be discussed in terms of improvements to performance. This would then be brought to Management Committee on 6 February 2018.

Councillor Emma Webster questioned the purpose of the item 'Dying to work'. The CFO explained that this paper was scheduled at the request of the FBU and related to members of staff with a terminal illness. Councillor Webster suggested that this be clarified in the Forward Plan as this had been questioned by a resident.

RESOLVED that:

- The Forward Plan be noted, subject to the above addition and amendment being made.

(Paul Gittings left the meeting at 8.14pm).

34. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved that the next meeting of Management Committee would take place on Wednesday 1 November 2017 at 6.30pm in the Brigade Headquarters, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SP.

35. 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 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.

36. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JULY 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that: the Part II minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(The meeting closed at 8.15pm)