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



Held on Monday, 22 July 2019, at 6.30pm

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

Members:

- * Councillor Jeff Brooks
- * Councillor David Cannon
- * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
- Councillor Colin Dudley
- * Councillor Paul Gittings
- * Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)
- Councillor Jo Lovelock
- * Councillor Ted Plenty
- * Councillor Angus Ross
- * Councillor Garth Simpson
- * Councillor Dexter Smith

(* present)

In Attendance:

Mark Arkwell Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
Paul Binyon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
Alex Brown (Head of Property, Capital Projects and Estates, HPCP&E)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
Doug Buchanan (Group Manager Risk and Performance, GM R&P)
Stephen Chard (Clerk)
Tony Deacon (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Tamara Hack (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources, Learning and Development, HHRL&D)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

3. REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

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

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor Jo Lovelock.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillor Angus Ross stated that should the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) be discussed at the meeting he declared a personal

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interest as he was a Member of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 8 APRIL 2019 AND 26 JUNE 2019 AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

Resolved that the Minutes of the meetings held on 8 April 2019, and 26 June 2019, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

- Monday, 15 July 2019, saw the opening of the wholetime firefighter recruitment application process. There had been an overwhelming response and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had received over 550 applications, meaning that the cap had been reached and no further applications could be accepted.
- Alongside the opening of the recruitment process, a brand new campaign had been aimed at giving prospective applicants a real insight into what it took to work for a modern fire and rescue service.
- Some of our wholetime firefighters had been asked to share their stories of working for the Service, to demonstrate how the role contributed to communities, the Service and to the wellbeing and development of staff.
- As the campaign progressed, more information would be published to highlight the diversity of people and roles within our Service, which enabled RBFRS to deliver the best possible services to our communities.
- The 'oneteamforberkshire' campaign could be followed by visiting the RBFRS website and social media platforms.

Arrival of New Appliances

- Councillor Helliard-Symons was pleased to report that the fire appliance replacement programme was continuing with the rollout of four more new Volvo appliances to fire stations. They were scheduled to go to Windsor, Wokingham, Dee Road and Whitley Wood Fire Stations.
- These appliances were to be built in two batches, with the first pair having already been delivered. These would go on the run in late August at Wokingham and Windsor. Fire Authority Members would be invited to come and see the new fire engines in the coming weeks. Councillor Helliard-Symons encouraged Members to do so.
- The second pair of new fire engines would go into build in August for delivery in December, they would go to Dee Road and Whitley Wood. Once operator training was completed, they would also go into service.

Crowthorne Rebuild Continues

- The work to rebuild Crowthorne Fire Station as part of the project to deliver our second tri-service community fire station was ongoing. The foundations for the rebuild had now been laid, with steel frameworks due to be carried out the week commencing 29 July. The work was expected to be

completed by the summer of 2020.

- During the re-build period, the crew were continuing to respond to the local village and surrounding areas from their temporary location within the grounds of Wellington College. Councillor Helliar-Symons thanked the College for their willingness in providing a building for the short term period.
- Further updates, including images of the re-build as it progressed, could be seen on the RBFRS social media channels.

Use of New Personal Protective Equipment

- Following Fire Authority investment, the Vice-Chairman was happy to announce that in early July, the new personal protective equipment went into use. The new equipment had been provided by Bristol Uniforms and replaced the helmet, tunic, leggings, boots, gloves and flash hoods that were previously in use.
- The changeover also included the addition of a Rescue Jacket, which would be included to give a choice of protection level depending on the incident being attended.
- Feedback on the new kit and change over process had been positive and well received on station.

(Councillor Jeff Brooks joined the meeting at 6.35pm).

Members Workshop

- A Members Workshop would be held at 5pm on Tuesday, 30 July, at Headquarters. Confirmation of attendance had been received from 15 Members, which, it was pleasing to note, would be more than half of the Fire Authority in attendance at this important workshop.
- The workshop would focus on the journey RBFRS had undertaken over the past five years and looked forward to how the Vision and Strategic Commitments of the Service would be delivered in the coming years.
- The workshop would also be looking in greater depth at three key areas – Integrated Risk Management Planning, the Strategic Asset Investment Framework and the People Strategy.
- The workshop would be held with the Senior Leadership Team and was an important opportunity for Members and Senior Officers to come together to discuss the important issues facing the Service.

Getting to Know RBFRS Event

- Councillor Helliar-Symons was pleased to announce that on Friday, 11 October, a “Getting to Know Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service” event would be held at the Training Centre in Whitley Wood.
- The event would be an opportunity for Members to find out about all areas of RBFRS and how services were delivered to the people of Berkshire.
- All Members were invited to attend and would receive formal invitations in due course. For further information please contact Fayth Rowe.

8. STAFF SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTATION

Nikki Richards (DSS) gave a presentation which outlined the responses received to the Staff Survey held in September 2018. The People Strategy

made a commitment to running an annual staff survey from 2018 onwards. She highlighted the following points:

- The survey was designed to highlight areas of success and good practice, and to identify areas where RBFRS could continue to learn and improve to ultimately offer a better service to the communities that made up Royal Berkshire.
- The overall response rate for the RBFRS was 59%, which was a reduction on the participation level in 2015. The lowest response rate was for Service Delivery (39%), but it should be noted that the ability for frontline staff to respond was limited in comparison to other staff across the Service. The timing of the survey (September 2018) also came at a period of change for RBFRS – i.e. the Remotely Managed Stations and Flexi Duty Officer Project. The level of employee engagement was similar to that of benchmark organisations.
- Points to highlight from the results included:
 - 96% of employees engaged fully in the training and development needed to do their job well.
 - 90% were committed to the Service and the residents of Berkshire.
 - 87% took personal responsibility to improve performance.
 - 86% felt there was a strong feeling of teamwork and co-operation within their team.
 - 85% felt proud to work for RBFRS.
 - 82% felt comfortable to provide useful and constructive feedback to their manager.
- Areas of focus included:
 - 68% of employees felt aware of the information and communication shared across the RBFRS.
 - 61% believed that they had a good work life balance.
 - 54% had a clear understanding of the potential career advancement opportunities available to them in the Service.
 - 50% held the view that RBFRS was working hard to attract people from diverse backgrounds.
 - 38% felt that RBFRS had improved its business processes to ensure the organisation was efficient and effective.
 - 28% believed that people were rewarded based on merit and that good performance was recognised.

The presentation outlined ways to improve communication and engagement; work life balance; career development; equality, diversity and inclusion; process improvements; and reward and recognition.

The DSS concluded her presentation by explaining that the changes that had been made were already starting to show signs of improvement. The survey results had reinforced where key areas of focus should be.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons was very pleased to note the high commitment to training (96%). It was important that 82% of the workforce felt able to provide useful and constructive feedback to their managers. She felt

this was a notable success for the Senior Leadership Team.

Councillor Jeff Brooks drew attention to the low Service Delivery response rate (39%). This low percentage meant that the views of many members of staff had been omitted. He queried what had been done to encourage participation during the survey – i.e. liaison with the FBU and involvement of middle managers. Councillor Brooks also asked whether targets would be set for increased participation in the next and future surveys.

DSS confirmed that the FBU was involved as part of the good relationship that existed with the FBU. As such, it was not felt necessary to take any particular action to seek FBU buy in.

Middle managers were briefed and asked to encourage members of staff to respond during the period of the survey. She repeated the view that the response rate was affected as the survey was held during a period of structural change.

DSS explained that efforts had been and would continue to be made to increase the response rate, but targets had not been set. The questions posed in the survey would be kept the same, enabling year on year comparisons.

Councillor Paul Gittings queried what was being done to increase the diversity of the workforce. DSS advised that positive action was being taken to do so. Trevor Ferguson (CFO) confirmed that the RBFRS was committed to enhancing the diversity of the workforce, but added the commitment, alongside this, to employ the best candidate(s) for the job.

Councillor Helliar-Symons gave thanks for the presentation and the work undertaken on the prior and forthcoming staff surveys. She was pleased that the survey would be conducted annually and looked forward to seeing the results year on year.

Resolved that the presentation be noted.

9. REMOTELY MANAGED STATIONS AND FLEXI DUTY OFFICER PROJECT PRESENTATION

Councillor Dexter Smith introduced the item, the purpose of which to provide Members with an update on the Remotely Managed Stations and Flexi Duty Officer Project. This was very much a good news story.

The project stemmed from the 2015-19 Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Public consultation was undertaken which related to the requirement to make £1.3m of savings from Service Delivery.

Doug Buchanan (GM R&P) then gave a presentation to Members on the project and highlighted the following points:

Continuous improvement

- At the last Fire Authority meeting, a presentation was received from Officers on the outcomes of our recent inspection. The opportunity was taken to highlight the positives from the inspection, but the CFO was quite clear that the Service should still strive for continuous improvement.
- The delivery of IRMP was a cornerstone of that journey of improvement and, as such, this presentation outlined progress with a key organisational project which was currently being led by officers within the Service.

Service redesign

- GM R&P reiterated the background to the Remotely Managed Station and Flexible Duty Officer Project. It extended to the previous IRMP cycle 2015-19, when officers, on behalf of the Authority, conducted a significant public consultation relating in part to a requirement to make £1.3m worth of savings from Service Delivery. Those Members who were on the Authority at that time would remember that one of the outcomes of the consultation and subsequent Authority decision making in April 2017, was an agreement to introduce three additional station pairings to the Service. The benefits recognised by this intent would be to achieve £550k of the required savings without affecting the quality of service received by the public. The achievement of this saving would however result in reducing the wholetime duty system station establishment from 328 to 316. This was accepted as tolerable, albeit acknowledged that the Service would be operating a leaner model going forward.

Flexi Duty Officers / Incident Command

- A separate area of focus within the 2015-19 IRMP was the review of the existing Flexible Duty Officer provision. This review was based on a number of factors, but primarily an opportunity to understand how the provision of Incident Command aligned to National Operational Guidance. In early 2018, it was identified that there might be an opportunity to provide a more efficient, effective and resilient outcome by combining the projects.
- It was recognised by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that combining the two projects would be a significant piece of work which would affect most areas of the Service. As such, a decision was taken to build on already good relationships with representative bodies and develop the project in co-design. In April 2018, SLT, the FBU and FOA released a joint statement to all staff outlining the co-design principles and the agreed high level project objectives, those being:
 - the transfer of additional resources and investment into the frontline station delivery model;
 - the achievement of a resilient and highly skilled operational command model;
 - securing an efficient and effective middle management tier;
 - providing increased resilience of the organisation across the middle manager tier;
 - the achievement of the already agreed IRMP savings necessary to balance the budget; and
 - to provide greater flexibility for promotion, overcoming some existing barriers.

Phase One

- The project was split into two phases in order to deliver on the objectives. Much of the Phase One work centred on station based personnel.
- The main focus of Phase One was to satisfy objectives one and two, but it also laid the foundations for successful delivery of the remaining objectives later on in the project. The key ingredient of this part of the project was the creation of 24 new Watch based Station Manager posts. These posts were designed to lead teams across fire stations, working the 2, 2 and 4 shift

system and providing operational cover at both incident command level 1 and level 2. In order to implement Phase One, the project team devised and managed a rigorous selection process which included operational training and assessment for candidates at the Fire Service College. Phase One was implemented on 1 May 2019, and as with any significant change there would be a bedding in period and lessons learned, the transition had been relatively smooth. A development and assessment pathway had been devised by the Resourcing and Development team specifically to focus on developing this new group of middle managers in the organisation.

- In addition to increasing middle management resilience in incident command and capacity across the middle management tier, the design of this project also enabled the service to reduce the Wholetime Duty System (WDS) establishment by only 4, rather than the originally planned 12.
- With Phase One up and running, the Service was then in a position to start developing the Phase Two consultation in order to address outstanding objectives, not least the required financial savings.

Phase Two

- The previous operational command model required RBFRS to maintain 32 Flexible Duty Officers, working across incident command levels 2 and 3. In reflection of these numbers, the managerial structures needed to cater for the number of roles in terms of day jobs. However, with the introduction of the Watch Based Station Managers, the Service could review these structures. It was agreed prior to Phase One that the Flexi Duty Officer numbers could be reduced to 18 and still enable the Service to maintain the previous minimum incident command provision of 8 at any one time. One of the key benefits of this change was that the Service could look to employ the best person for a role, based on skill sets. In some cases this would remain Grey Book staff (i.e. our uniformed officers), but in other cases this would be Green Book staff. The proposed changes would allow for the introduction of specialist green book posts that could focus on the delivery of key functions such as prevention. Importantly, the proposed structure also achieved the £550k savings required through the original IRMP process.

Timeline

- The Service was currently consulting staff on the Phase Two proposals. This consultation would close on 30 July, and it was anticipated that the new structure would be in place before the end of the year as outlined on the timeline.

Objectives

- Fundamental to the success of this project was ensuring that the future service delivery model operated efficiently and effectively. The model, co-designed by RBFRS and representative bodies, placed focus on front line teams, support departments and managers having the ability and resilience to provide effective prevention, protection and response activities to best serve the communities of Berkshire.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons gave thanks for the very clear and useful presentation. It was pleasing to note that the project was working well and helping to make necessary savings.

Resolved that the presentation be noted.

10. SPRINKLER POSITION STATEMENT

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons introduced the report, the purpose of which was to provide Fire Authority Members with a draft motion to be used within their home Local Authority to promote the installation of sprinklers or other Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) in new buildings or those undergoing refurbishment. This was with the intent of reducing risk and the impact of fire on people, property and the environment.

It had been proven that sprinklers and other forms of AFSS were effective in the rapid suppression of fire as set out in evidence compiled by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

In the Annual Plan 2019/20 the Fire Authority had committed to promoting the awareness and benefits associated with both the retrofitting and initial installation of sprinklers or AFSS in buildings. The Fire Authority supported the fitting of sprinklers in all buildings, including its own building stock. The Fire Authority should be treated as a statutory consultee for building planning consent and in consideration of the most significant risks prior to decisions being made on planning applications.

Councillor Angus Ross added that this had been supported by the Fire Authority's Members, in particular former Councillor Paul Bryant, and the Senior Leadership Team. It had become a point of much greater focus post Grenfell.

An AFSS Policy was in place in both West Berkshire and Wokingham, but a common policy was required across the County. In addition, planning policies and building regulations in relation to AFSS needed strengthening to help manage risks. Central Government needed to be lobbied in addition to conducting work in local areas.

Councillor Ross stated that the greatest level of focus was required for schools. A fire in a school, even if not fatal, would have a significant impact on an entire community arising from the displacement of pupils.

Tony Deacon (AM P&P) gave a presentation to Members and highlighted the following points:

- As already explained, the purpose of the Sprinkler Motion was to assist Members with promoting the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS in new buildings or those undergoing refurbishment in their local authority areas.
- RBFRS was committed to reducing the impact of fire on people, property, the environment and the economy. The installation of AFSS would help achieve that commitment. It would also reduce the risk to firefighters who were called to deal with fires, including loss of life.
- The benefits of correctly positioned sprinklers were clear. They were able to contain fires until crews arrived.
- Legislation required sprinkler installation in warehouse premises of 20,000m², buildings over 30m high and single/multi-storey shops over 2000m². Schools, other than those considered a very low risk (as identified by risk assessment toolkit) should be fitted with sprinklers. 'Should' rather than 'must'.

- Domestic sprinklers were simple to install either during construction or retrospectively. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire would activate.
- Commercial sprinklers had access to a significant body of water.
- The Authority's Position Statement:
 - recognised that sprinklers and other AFSS saved lives, protected property, reduced the impact of fire on the environment, reduced interruption to businesses and improved safety for individuals, the community in general and firefighters;
 - made a commitment to the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS within its own building stock when planning for and constructing new buildings or as a retrofitted solution when undertaking major refurbishments of existing buildings;
 - would promote and support the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS for all new or refurbished buildings through the planning application or building control process, particularly those that presented the most significant risk to the public and firefighters; and
 - supported the National Fire Chiefs Council position on sprinklers by writing to Central Government to express support for the creation of a legal requirement to fit sprinklers or AFSS in buildings.

In response to a question from Councillor Helliard-Symons, the AM P&P offered to provide a letter that all Fire Authority Members could use for sending to Central Government.

TD to action

Councillor Ross suggested that a joint statement be issued to Central Government from both the RBFA and the RBFRS. He also made the point that influence over the installation of sprinklers or AFSS was more possible as part of pre-application discussions and the design stage rather than when a planning application was submitted and/or presented to a planning committee.

AM P&P acknowledged the need for work at early stages of the planning process, with early notification from Local Planning Authorities a key aspect. He also made the point, in response to a point made by Councillor Dexter Smith, that the cost of sprinklers/AFSS would not be prohibitive to developers.

Councillor Paul Gittings gave his support to the proposed Motion. He gave his view that schools 'must' be fitted with sprinklers and appropriate lobbying should be undertaken to ensure this became a requirement.

Councillor Jeff Brooks referred to paragraph 1.4 of the report and queried why this point, to make the Fire Authority a statutory consultee for planning applications, was not captured within the Motion. He also felt that this could be requested with immediate effect.

In response to related questions from Councillor Angus Ross and Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, AM P&P explained that it was the intention to apply consistent standards across the UK in relation to the use of sprinklers and other forms of AFSS. This could be within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons proposed acceptance of the Sprinkler Motion as set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Angus Ross.

Councillor Jeff Brooks proposed an amendment to the Motion, as per his earlier comment, that the Fire Authority be treated as a statutory consultee. This was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey and the amended Motion

was unanimously agreed by Management Committee.

The importance of the Fire Authority being consulted at an early stage in the planning process was reiterated. Discussions on this were needed with appropriate Directors and/or Heads of Planning. Pre-application discussions also needed to be held with land owners, developers etc.

It was agreed that the report and the presentation on this item be forwarded to all Fire Authority Members to assist them in progressing the Motion. The minute of this item should also be provided.

FR **to**
action

Councillor Dexter Smith felt that it would also be useful for a cost benefit analysis to be provided, i.e. on the cost of a fire at a school without sprinklers. AM P&P M agreed that case studies would be provided to cover the financial impact and the wider community impact, i.e. on pupils' learning if they were relocated.

TD **to**
action

Councillor Garth Simpson raised the importance of continuing to lobby on points 3.3 and 3.4 in the report: to proactively endorse the installation of sprinkler systems in educational, domestic, industrial, commercial and residential premises; and to amend Building Regulations so that the requirement to install sprinklers was increased. Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey added that outbuildings also needed incorporating on school sites where appropriate.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons gave thanks for the work that had been undertaken. She was hopeful that the Motion would be supported across the Berkshire Unitary Authorities.

RESOLVED that the 'Sprinkler Motion' as detailed in the report be agreed, subject to the inclusion of the approved amendment, and for it to be used by Fire Authority Members in order to support the installation of sprinklers or AFSS.

11. NATIONAL FIRE CHIEFS COUNCIL (NFCC) – ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

Katie Mills (HCS) presented the report which informed Members of the Management Committee of the value and benefit of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services' membership of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The role of the NFCC was set out in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England, which included the expectation that fire and rescue services in England should engage with the NFCC, and, in turn, that the NFCC worked to support and represent every service.

Membership of the NFCC brought with it many benefits. These were outlined in the report, but in summary the NFCC served as the collective, unified professional voice supporting the improvement of fire authorities at a national level. It aimed to:

- strengthen the professional and operational leadership of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- improve national co-ordination;
- reduce duplication and increase efficiency;
- support local service delivery;
- provide increased influence for Fire and Rescue Authorities and their

Services; and

- provide a joined up approach that could work across boundaries.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons noted the benefits in Appendix A to the report. However, she queried whether the cost delivered sufficient benefits to RBFRS to be worthwhile. In response, Nikki Richards (DSS) highlighted the excellent leadership programme which offered a recognised qualification in strategic leadership. Membership included access to the FRS learning portal and its learning materials, as opposed to needed to produce these in-house.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12. ICT STRATEGY

Councillor Angus Ross was delighted to introduce the report as Lead Member for Strategic Assets. The ICT Strategy for 2019-2024 would deliver the necessary ICT updates required since the current ICT Strategy was adopted in 2016.

Tony Vincent (HBIS) presented a report which informed Members of the ICT Strategy to be adopted by the Fire Authority during the period 2019-2024.

The current ICT Strategy had been in place since 2016, and was due a refresh in 2019. The replacement Strategy aimed to build on the solid foundations of stabilisation and reinvestment and to move to a position where ICT was adding real value to the Fire Authority's effectiveness, efficiency and people, and to ensure that use of technology became a greater enabler for the service as a whole. The document was set out in Appendix A to the report which had been agreed by RBFRS Senior Leadership Team, endorsed by the Lead Member for Strategic Assets and passed through stakeholder consultation effectively.

Provision for the Strategy had been made within the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). The SAIF for ICT was designed with three core principles in mind:

- Simplification
- Collaboration
- Virtualisation

These principles formed the core of the ICT Strategy and would provide direction at each tactical decision point over the lifetime of the Strategy. Every project, system update, hardware specification, service requirements specification and software function would be subjected to three key questions:

1. Does the proposal improve the user experience, speed up a process or reduce steps to complete an action?
2. Does the proposal increase opportunity for effective sharing or communication of information, reduce duplication of effort or improve decision-making speed?
3. Can the proposal be provided by adoption of a cloud based service rather than on premise infrastructure or does the proposal prepare for cloud provision?

HBIS concluded by stating that RBFRS would focus on continuing to make improvements to its technology and the ICT Strategy would enable that.

Councillor Paul Gittings referred to the funding volatility section of the Strategy.

He noted that not all funding had been identified and in light of this questioned if the Strategy could be fully delivered. In response, HBIS advised funding provision was available through the SAIF and the Strategy could therefore be progressed on that basis. There was however some flexibility in the Action Plan and some areas had aspirational targets. There was also scope to potentially reduce over time the ongoing investment in hardware to achieve savings.

Councillor Gittings referred to new technologies being implemented in local authorities and queried if RBFRS could seek to share these to save money. HBIS noted this point, but advised it was the aim to strive for internal efficiencies.

Councillor Gittings next noted that a replacement Emergency Services Network (ESN) based on 4G technology was to be delivered. He asked whether 5G would be sought. HBIS advised that 4G was currently the aim as this technology was widespread. However, the mobile data framework would enable an upgrade to 5G once greater reliability had been achieved.

Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried the total cost of implementing the Strategy. HBIS reported that £7.5m had been provisionally assigned for the Strategy in the SAIF for a 15 year period. No projects had as yet been costed in any detail, but there was confidence that costs would fall within this funding envelope.

Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey next questioned the impact of the replacement ESN being behind schedule. HBIS explained that none of the projects in the action plan for the next five years depended on the delivery of the replacement ESN. However, it would be necessary to adapt and cater for changing timelines.

Councillor Dexter Smith sought verification on the action to reduce the total number of applications in use by 75%. He queried the benefit this would bring to the FRS. HBIS pointed out that there were over 100 applications in use by the organisation. This target would simplify processes, remove duplication and areas of inefficiency.

RESOLVED that the ICT Strategy be noted.

13. 2018/19 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN

Conor Byrne (HF&P) presented a report which informed Members of the provisional 2018/19 revenue and capital outturn positions. It also gave an update on the levels of reserves held by the Authority as at 31 March 2019.

Due to the prudent management of the Service's budget and various in-year realignments the total expenditure for 2018/19 was £33,501,000 against the budgeted figure of £33,479,000 which was a variance of just 0.07% or £22,000.

Capital expenditure in 2018/19 was £2.1m. Progress against individual projects was set out in Appendix C.

The Authority's earmarked reserves had risen from £7.94m to £7.96m during 2018/19 and the movement on individual reserves was set out in Appendix D.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons gave thanks to Conor Byrne, finance officers and budget managers for achieving such a low variance.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

14. 2018/19 QUARTER 4 APPLIANCE AVAILABILITY

Steve Foye (DCFO), provided an update on Quarter 4 performance and supporting narrative on Wholetime Duty System (WDS) and the Retained Duty System (RDS) appliance availability.

The information provided reflected that which was provided for Audit and Governance Committee as part of the Service's quarterly performance reporting. The narrative within the report provided an insight for Management Committee on the Service's work and progress in managing appliance availability of both the WDS and the RDS.

The DCFO highlighted that during Quarter 4, there had been 100% availability of the Service's 14 Wholetime appliances. There had also been a significant increase in comparison with the previous year in the availability of Retained appliances (detailed in Table 1) in what was a challenging area of activity.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons gave thanks to all involved in making these improvements.

Councillor Paul Gittings referred to Retained appliance availability in Wargrave. Overall, there had been an upward trend throughout the year, but this had reduced between January and February 2019. He queried progress against the target.

The DCFO explained that efforts continued to achieve the target of 60% availability in Wargrave which was set at the time the decision was made to defer its closure. The period of time granted to achieve this was ongoing.

Councillor Paul Gittings queried improvements made since March 2019. The DCFO advised that training and development had been ongoing of new staff, in particular new recruits. There had however been some variations in the establishment with members of staff leaving.

Councillor Garth Simpson queried if there was confidence that the necessary improvements could be achieved through training and recruitment. The DCFO reported that good progress had been made with recruitment with 90 personnel on the establishment and this improved resilience levels. Work was however needed to improve retention.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons referred to the targeted campaign in Lambourn with local businesses which resulted in interest being expressed in on-call recruitment and two individuals being in the system for progression. She queried if this scheme could be rolled out to Wargrave. The DCFO explained that much had been learnt from the success of this approach in Lambourn and he felt this model could be employed in other stations such as Wargrave.

RESOLVED that:

- The Quarter 4 performance of appliance availability and particularly the 100% appliance availability of the Service's 14 Wholetime appliances be noted;
- The actions to maintain, improve and monitor appliance availability be noted.

15. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted, including the additional Fire Authority meeting on 24 October 2019.

The need for a report on the implementation of the Member Development Programme to be added to the Forward Plan was highlighted.

Councillor Angus Ross queried if reports from the Thames Valley Fire Control Service should be scheduled more frequently than annually. Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) agreed to look at scheduling six monthly reports.

FR action to
TF action to

16. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved that the next meeting would take place on Monday 14 October 2019 at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7SD.

17. 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 Paragraph 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.

18. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2019

Resolved that the Part II minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2019 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. TRANSFER OF LAND TO BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

Management Committee received a confidential report on the transfer of land to Bracknell Forest Council.

Resolved that the recommendation set out in the exempt report be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.12pm