



# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 19 January 2016 at 5.30pm

Bracknell Fire Station, Downshire Way, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7AA

**Members:**

- \* Councillor David Absolom
- (\* present) \* Councillor Christine Bateson
- \* Councillor Paul Bryant
- \* Councillor Adrian Edwards (*Vice-Chairman*)
- \* Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons
- Councillor Chris Maskell
- \* Councillor Tom McCann
- \* Councillor Angus Ross (*Chairman*)

**In Attendance:**

Conor Byrne (Chief Finance Officer, CFO)  
 Trevor Ferguson (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
 Moira Fraser (Clerk)  
 Simon Jefferies (Interim Head of Risk Management, IHRM)  
 Andy Parsons (Interim Head of Estates, IHE)  
 Nikki Richards (Head of Business, Information and System, HBIS)  
 Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)  
 Kieran Timmins (Capital Investment Advisor)

*(Councillor Adrian Edwards in the Chair)*

**Action**

## 38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillor Chris Maskell.

Councillor Angus Ross was delayed and the Vice-Chairman would chair the meeting until he arrived.

## 39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct there were no declarations of interest received from Members.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

## 40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2015 AND MATTERS ARISING

**Resolved that:**

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 41. DRAFT IT STRATEGY

Nikki Richards, Head of Business, Information and System (HBIS), asked the Strategic Asset Management Committee to agree the direction of travel

outlined in first draft of the ICT Strategy 2016-19 which was set out in Appendix 1 to the report. Members were also invited to identify any issues or areas that ought to be in the strategy and that had been omitted. The strategy was designed to mirror the Corporate Plan.

The ICT strategy was intended to design and embed a reliable, resilient ICT support service which would technically enable the implementation and ongoing delivery of the Strategic Commitments and Vision 2019. It was anticipated that subsequent versions would be required, but to ensure Members were sighted and content with the direction of travel it seemed sensible to agree the direction of travel ahead of detailed project planning.

The Strategy had already been considered by CMT and they had broadly accepted the direction of travel. The draft strategy was designed to be a high level document and the detail would be set out in associated action and delivery plans.

RBFRS undertook a major change programme that supported the delivery of its new Corporate Plan and commitments to the people of West Berkshire. The effective use of ICT played a key part in achieving the vision and was a key component in supporting the effective and sustained delivery of service improvement and new ways of working.

The last ICT strategy was written in 2010, prior the strategic refresh of the Fire Authority's policy direction and development of Vision 2019, and was no longer fit for purpose. The HBIS explained that the strategy was set in the context of the time it was written. Since the report had first been written the service had moved from DCLG to the Home Office and these adjustments would be made to the next iteration of the report.

ICT planning was previously focused heavily on an annual cycle, the Strategy attached as Appendix 1 looked to extend the planning horizon to 3 years in line with the then remaining duration of the Corporate Plan.

The Strategy encompassed four areas namely:

1. Infrastructure
2. Business Applications
3. ICT Service
4. Information Governance.

Councillor Tom McCann asked if Officers had considered what similar authorities were doing. The HBIS explained that work was being undertaken with both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and she had also recently met with Oxfordshire County Council. The strategy supported sharing and partnership working.

*(Councillor Angus Ross arrived at 5.39pm)*

Councillor Adrian Edwards commented that he supported the three phased approach and queried what opportunities there would be to review the strategy. Nikki Richards reported that she would bring back a final version of the strategy for agreement to the April meeting of this Committee and suggested quarterly monitoring reports would be taken to this Committee and Audit and Governance Committee thereafter. Councillor Edwards also requested that reference to staff training be included in the strategy.

**HBIS to  
Action**

Councillor Paul Bryant queried whether this strategy could be aligned with that of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Officers explained that each authority was starting from a different position but wherever possible processes and systems would be overlapped. Councillor Bryant commented that he was disappointed that there was no sharing of staff and no commonality proposed. The DCFO explained that although the end goal was to share elements and there was a theme of collaboration in the strategy a number of differences existed between the organisations which needed to be resolved first. The strategy was however designed to ensure that the RBFRS was viewed as a good partner organisation.

*(Councillor Christine Bateson arrived at 5.45pm)*

The DCFO thanked the HBIS for the significant progress that had been made with the document.

**Resolved that:**

1. The direction of travel identified in the Strategy as detailed in Appendix 1 be agreed;
2. the following changes be made to the next version of the document:
  - Reference to staff training be included;
  - Explanatory text on how the RBFRS would work better with neighbours to be included;
  - The document be written in plain English.
3. An update be brought to SAMC annually.

*(Councillor Angus Ross in the Chair)*

## **42. VEHICLE STRATEGY**

Trevor Ferguson, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Paul Southern explained that the aim of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Fleet Strategy was to provide a fit for purpose, safe, reliable and cost effective vehicle fleet, enabling RBFRS to deliver its services. The Vehicle Fleet Strategy sought to provide an overarching reference which entwined key vehicle-related policy strands into a coherent structure.

Councillor Adrian Edwards requested that consideration be given to purchasing some electric vehicles and the installation of the associated infrastructure. He would like to see electric charging points installed at all stations and they could then be made available to others to use at cost price. Councillor Ross felt that this should be considered on a needs basis. Councillor Tom McCann suggested that this work be included when stations were upgraded as staff would also be able to make use of this facility.

Members stated that the sub-group should continue to work on the strategy and that a report be brought back to the next meeting.

**Resolved that:**

- The verbal report be noted.

- An update be brought to the next meeting.
- The Vice Chairman, having recently chaired the smaller group working on the Strategy, continue to work with officers on this.

#### **43. 2015/16 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Conor Byrne, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), informed Members of capital expenditure against budgets for 2015/16.

Capital expenditure to the end of November 2015 was £676,000 of the £3.8m budget. A further £2.4m had been committed. It was anticipated that the £1.4m remaining would be slipped to 2016/17. Actual and projected expenditure for each capital project was set out in the appendix to the report.

*Water Tender* – officers had been working with colleagues in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire in order to agree the specification. Agreement had been reached to use the same specification as Hampshire.

*Telemetry* – a further report would be brought to Members as it was possible that Officers would be requesting revised investment following significant research that had been undertaken.

Councillor Tom McCann was concerned that funding was being set aside and that two years later the specifications for these purchases had still not been agreed. He was concerned about the way public money was being allocated given the current economic climate. Councillor Angus Ross stated that he had some sympathy with the views expressed by Councillor McCann but that he hoped that some of these concerns would be addressed in Item 9 (Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016 to 2020) which would be discussed later at the meeting.

The DCFO accepted that some of the delays were unacceptable but noted that the lead in times for fire appliances was at least 18 months given the specialist nature of the vehicles. Officers were working with neighbouring services to try and standardise specifications which could reduce lead in times.

Councillor Paul Bryant recognised the difficulties and stated that he would like to see the profile of expenditure over a number of years. The DCFO recognised that the rationale behind a one-year capital programme was flawed and that Officers would be presenting a strategic approach to investment as part of agenda item 9.

#### **Resolved that:**

- the report be noted.

#### **44. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 5.30pm at Whitley Wood Fire Station (Station 20), Whitley Wood Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 8FS.

Possible venues for the meeting in July 2016 were Crowthorne, Maidenhead, Slough or Wokingham Road, Reading. The venue would be agreed at the April meeting.

**45. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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.

**46. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2015**

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**47. STRATEGIC ASSET INVESTMENT PLAN 2016-2020 AND PRESENTATION**

The Committee considered an exempt report.

**Resolved that:**

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

**48. PROPERTY UPDATE – DELIVERY OF THEALE AND HUNGERFORD PROJECTS (DRAFT) AND VERBAL UPDATE ON THE SALE OF WINDSOR FIRE STATION AND THEALE NETWORK**

The Committee considered an exempt report.

**Resolved that:**

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

*(The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm)*

**Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:**

Signature.....*[Handwritten Signature]*..... Print Name .....*Angus Ross*.....

Date signed.....*5.4.2016*.....

