



# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Monday, 11 March 2019, at 6.30pm

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

**Members:** Councillor Alistair Auty  
(\* present) \* Councillor Christine Bateson  
\* Councillor Paul Bryant  
\* Councillor Adrian Edwards  
\* Councillor Jan Gavin  
Councillor Iain McCracken  
\* Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle  
\* Councillor Satpal Parmar  
\* Councillor Dexter Smith  
Councillor Simon Werner

*(Councillor Adrian Edwards in the Chair)*

**In Attendance:** Lincoln Ball (Member of Pension Board)  
Alex Brown (Head of Property Capital Projects and Estates, HPCP&E))  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
Becca Chapman (Data and Performance Analysis Manager, DP&A))  
Stephen Chard (Clerk)  
Tony Deacon (Area Manager, Protection and Prevention AM P&P))  
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
Jess James (Temporary Area Manager Collaboration and Change (T/AM  
C&C))  
Paul King (External Auditor, Ernst & Young)  
Tim Lo (Internal Auditor, RSM)  
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment HFF&E)  
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager (Service Delivery, Response, Operational  
Assurance & Resilience AM SD (ROA&R))  
Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)  
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)  
Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Services, HBIS)

**Action**

## 43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Alistair Auty, Iain McCracken and Simon Werner. Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle attended as substitute for Councillor McCracken.

Councillor Adrian Edwards wished Councillor McCracken well for his eye operation.

#### 44. 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.

#### 45. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2018

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2018, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### MATTERS ARISING

**Item 33 – External Audit Update** - Paul King (External Auditor, Ernst & Young) stated that the comments made in relation to more clearly presenting the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating would be reflected in future reports.

**Item 34 – Royal Berkshire Fire Authority – Pay Policy Statement 2019/20** – Councillor Paul Bryant stated that he could not recall seeing the information requested in relation to the number of employees who hired bicycles to travel to and from work. Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS) agreed to resend this information.

NR to action

**Item 38 – Quarterly Performance Report 2018/19 (Quarter 2)** – the information requested on the percentage of safeguarding referrals and how this was spread across local authorities was being included in future quarterly reports.

#### 46. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE FOR DECISION

There were no matters to be considered.

#### 47. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), introduced the report which outlined progress with delivering the 2018/19 audits and which sought approval of the 2019/20 Audit Plan.

Members were informed that since the last meeting, audit assignments had been completed for Vehicle Disposals, HR – Recruitment and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The findings from the Vehicle Disposal Audit, the Recruitment Audit and the GDPR Governance Audit were provided in the Progress Report.

In terms of the Vehicle Disposal Audit, no issues requiring management attention were identified, and only two low priority issues requiring management attention were identified for the Recruitment Audit, and therefore, Members could take substantial assurance that controls were suitably designed, consistently applied and operated effectively.

The GDPR Audit was advisory and as such did not provide a level of assurance or internal audit opinion. However, the Auditor commented favourably on the robustness of the Fire Authority's policies and the

completeness of data maps. The Auditor expressed the opinion that RBFRS compared favourably to other organisations that had undergone similar audits.

Tim Lo (Internal Auditor, RSM) commented that good progress was being made. A total of six audit assignments had been finalised and presented to the Audit and Governance Committee, including those contained in this report. A further two reports had been issued in draft (Firefighter Pension Administration and Payroll Provider follow up) and no significant issues had been highlighted within either report.

For the remaining two areas, the report for Key Financial Controls was in the process of being drafted and the VAT & PAYE review would be completed by the end of March 2019. Therefore, all Internal Audit work planned for 2018/19 would be completed.

Mr Lo confirmed that in Section 2 of the report the letters L/M/H (Low/Medium/High) denoted the level of risk and the level of priority needing to be given to the action.

Nikki Richards (DSS) responded to a query from Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle by explaining that she was the RBFRS Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) in conjunction with Becca Chapman (Data Protection Officer) and Tony Vincent (HBIS).

Councillor Adrian Edwards gave thanks for the comprehensive report. He queried if the 'Looking Ahead' section of the report could include a review of the RBFRS internal emergency planning procedures. Katie Mills (HCS) explained that this was already incorporated within the Annual Plan.

Councillor Edwards was encouraged to note that over 90% of staff had completed the original GDPR e-learning module and 43% of staff the revised module.

Mr Lo then referred to the 2019/20 Audit Plan. The audits planned for the forthcoming financial year, in support of the Authority's Strategic Commitments, included IT systems (including coverage of network and cyber security); seeking assurance that appropriate Business Continuity Plans were in place in the event of a major disruption to services; three call off audits, for which indicative costs had been allocated, which could be requested either by management or the Audit and Governance Committee; and to ensure that the RBFRS provided good value for money through its financial planning, long term budgeting, via its key financial controls and through the administration of the Firefighter Pension Scheme. The outcome of this work would continue to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Members then highlighted the diagram on page 4 of Appendix B and suggested it could be improved by enlarging the blue 'bubbles' and by having more clearly defined bullet points.

**TL to action**

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- The internal auditor's progress report be noted.
- The 2019/20 Audit Plan be approved.

#### **48. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

Conor Byrne, (HF&P), introduced the item and invited Paul King (External Auditor, Ernst & Young) to present the Audit Planning Report to the Committee.

Mr King advised that external auditors were in the planning stage for the audit of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. The Audit Planning Report (Appendix A) provided an overview of the work that had been done in preparation for the audit of the 2018/19 statutory accounts. This included the completion of work on key financial systems and no issues had been identified.

Journals had originally been identified as an area of risk. This area of work had since been reviewed and, as a result, this would be managed as part of routine work on journals.

Mr King then explained that the review of risks had identified an additional significant risk relating to inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure. The action to be taken in response covered:

- The testing of Plant, Property and Equipment (PPE) additions to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised was clearly capital in nature;
- The testing of revenue expenditure allowed to be funded by capital under statute, if material, to ensure that it was appropriate for the revenue expenditure incurred to be financed from ring fenced capital resources;
- Seeking to identify and understand the basis for any significant journals transferring expenditure from revenue to capital codes on the general ledger at the end of the year.

The results of the audit of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts would be presented to the July 2019 Audit and Governance Committee as indicated in the timetable.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried whether the work undertaken on the 2018/19 accounts differed from the previous financial year. Mr King confirmed that the only change was, as already described, the move to standardised work on journals.

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle queried whether risks were shared at Fire Authority. Mr King explained that he would always discuss potential risks with management. In addition, risks were routinely reconsidered at different stages of the audit cycle.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- The Audit Planning Report from the External Auditor be noted.

#### **49. ANNUAL PLAN 2019/20**

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), presented the report. It provided the Committee with an overview of the draft Annual Plan 2019/20. The Annual Plan would provide direction for the organisation for the coming financial year within the context of the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2019 to 2023.

The HCS explained that the annual corporate planning process aligned a number of interrelated planning processes to support service delivery. The Annual Plan reflected the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments by highlighting the key areas of focus for a single year and setting measures by which the Authority could monitor and manage performance in delivering services for the people of Berkshire.

The Annual Plan also provided information on risk management and assurance processes as the role of the Committee was to provide oversight and scrutiny of performance throughout the course of the year on a quarterly basis.

This Annual Plan formed the first year of the Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 to 2023.

The HCS advised that a total of ten Annual Objectives were proposed in the draft Annual Plan for 2019/20 and the areas of focus in delivering these were outlined. These supported delivery of the six Strategic Commitments.

The draft Annual Plan also proposed a set of Corporate Measures, key IRMP deliverables as well as objectives to meet the People Strategy.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried a number of the Corporate Measures. In relation to the first Corporate Measure 'Number of fire deaths in accidental dwelling fires' he queried if there was a separate measure for fire deaths resulting from deliberate fires. Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) explained that the measure was as agreed by Fire Authority as the predominance of fire deaths occurred from accidental fires and this was therefore where activity was most focussed. However, the circumstances of every fire death was reviewed, but it was much more difficult for the RBFRS to take action if the fire was started deliberately.

Councillor Bryant next queried why the target was proposed to be reduced in 2019/20 for the number of Safe and Well (S&W) visits. The DCFO explained that the target for 2018/19 had been increased, however the focus of activity in this area had changed and the 2019/20 target was therefore reset to the previous level.

Turning to Measure 13 (Success rate when cases go to court), Councillor Bryant sought clarification on the target for this Measure. Tony Deacon (AM P&P) explained that the target was to win four out of every five cases that went to court. Councillor Bryant queried why 100% was not being sought as this was clearly preferable. In response, the DCFO explained that while cases were only generally taken to court if there was a high level of confidence of success, the courts could still find against the RBFRS. Nikki Richards (DSS) added that this was a stretch target which gave the RBFRS a chance to take a bold approach with taking some cases to court. There could not therefore be an expectation of 100% success.

Councillor Bryant queried the inclusion of a target (85%) for Measure 28 (% of spend subject to competition). Conor Byrne (HF&P) explained that the target was to ensure that the Fire Authority was efficient. Procurement goes through a competition process and the measure was to allow some discretion could be exercised on whether or not a competitive exercise was undertaken for procurements of £10k or less. Contracts costing in excess of £10k would still go to competition.

Councillor Adrian Edwards referred to the objectives relating to the People Strategy. He highlighted the importance of Objective one 'to recruit, train and develop people to create a safe, professional and capable workforce', and Objective two 'increase the diversity of the workforce to better represent and therefore serve our local communities'.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- The Annual Plan 2019/20 be noted and recommended to Fire Authority for approval at its meeting on 29 April 2019.

**50. LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT**

Lincoln Ball, Vice Chair of the Local Pensions Board, presented the report which provided an update on the activities of the Board (for all four firefighter pension schemes) and relevant aspects of pension administration. He reminded Members that there was a legal requirement to form the Local Pensions Board under the auspices of The Public Service Pensions Act 2013.

Lincoln Ball drew the Committee's attention to one of the report's recommendations. This sought agreement that future annual reports be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee at the July meeting. Doing so would enable financial and contractual year-end figures to be included in the report.

Paragraph 3.17 of the report detailed the work that had been undertaken during 2018/19. This provided an assurance that a number of the annual requirements had been completed on schedule.

Three fairly significant Firefighter pension events had taken place during the past year and an update on these was provided in paragraph 3.25. This included court cases and a potential appeal to the Supreme Court was pending in relation to the 1992 Firefighters Pension Scheme.

The 2019 internal firefighters pension audit was undertaken in week commencing 18 February 2019. However, it was too early to provide any feedback from the audit.

Lincoln Ball concluded by referring to the risk implications. There were risks resulting from having four schemes in place as well as a fifth compensation scheme. This made the administration of the schemes, which were very technical, very difficult and the potential for error could not therefore be eliminated. In terms of the compensation scheme, this was unfunded and therefore the financial risk to the Fire Authority was low.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- Future annual reports from the Local Pensions Board would be reported to Committee at the July meeting. This would facilitate financial and contractual year-end information to be received and reported.
- The contents of the report, including activities undertaken by the RBFRS, the Pension Administrator and the Local Pensions Board since the last report, be noted.

## **51. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE**

Katie Mills (HCS), introduced the report which detailed Member Attendance and Allowances in 2018/19 for submission to the Fire Authority on 26 June 2019.

The Audit and Governance Committee Chairman's report summarised the work undertaken over the past year. The HCS highlighted that for the third year running, there had been no complaints received against the Authority's Members.

The detail provided on Member attendance, allowances and expenses would be updated with year-end information in the report provided to Fire Authority in June 2019.

Councillor Adrian Edwards referred to the attendance record for the municipal year (Appendix B). He considered this to be a good reflection of Members' commitment to their role, particularly when they had a number of commitments to fulfil in their home local authority.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- The report be noted.
- It be recommended that Fire Authority:
  - Note Members' Allowances received for the period of June 2018 to May 2019;
  - Note the 2018/19 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members.

## **52. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROJECT UPDATE**

Tony Vincent, (HBIS), presented the report and gave a presentation on the progress made with the National Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and with delivery of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) that would replace the current Airwave provision.

The report addressed the current situation set forth by the National Programme (NP) and the RBFRS and ESMCP South Central Region input to this. The report summarised progress made both at NP, regional, Thames Valley and RBFRS perspectives.

In this context, the report highlighted work taking place to ensure that RBFRS, alongside Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services and Thames Valley Fire Control Service, could adopt ESN whilst maintaining sufficient flexibility to absorb any NP schedule changes and minimise risks to overall

service provision across the region.

The HBIS reported that the ESMCP NP had indicated that the Full Business Case (FBC) would be delayed and not brought forward for consideration until later in 2019 (there was no definite timescale). However, the timescale for implementation remained unchanged meaning that the existing Airwave network was still scheduled to cease in December 2022.

The RBFRS continued to work in partnership with neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services and other emergency services in making united representations to Government highlighting areas of concern with this project.

As agreed by Members in November 2018, a letter had been sent inviting the NP to attend the Committee to make a presentation and answer questions. It had not been possible to arrange this for today's meeting but it was hoped that it could be arranged for the July 2019 meeting.

ESN system upgrades were underway and no unplanned issues had been encountered to date.

Councillor Paul Bryant commented that he remained sceptical on the delivery of the project. He felt that the current system was robust, but agreed that it would be preferable to have a more modern system in place. However, progress continued to be disappointing. He queried whether the partner Fire and Rescue Services could collectively obtain a realistic timeframe for the FBC. The HBIS would respond to this query in his presentation.

Steve Foye (DCFO) added that low levels of confidence in the project had been highlighted at a regional level. In addition, the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee had written on many occasions to express concerns. The DCFO was able to report that the Chair of the NP had confirmed their attendance at the next meeting on 4 July 2019.

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle referred to section 3.3.1 of the report and queried what would be covered by the Control Room and Information Technology health checks. The HBIS explained that ESN linkages to the Control Room had been established, but were not yet in operation. As explained, system upgrades were ongoing and while this had resulted in some disruption, this had been expected and upgrade work was going to plan.

The HBIS then gave a presentation to the Audit and Governance Committee (to be circulated to Members) on the new Emergency Services Network (ESN).

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle was concerned at the level of risk and the potential budgetary implications. This was a considerable area of work for officers. The HBIS acknowledged this was a very challenging situation with many moving parts and timeframes. This view was shared with partners across the Thames Valley.

The HBIS added that risks were tracked at a corporate level on a bi-weekly basis and the management of these was discussed. As described in the presentation of the report, key pieces of information remained to be provided, however risks would increase if this information did not materialise

**FR to action**



or if details were again to change.

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle queried the level of interaction with Capita. The HBIS explained that regular meetings and liaison took place with Capita. A positive relationship was in place and Capita shared the concerns of the RBFRS. Councillor McKenzie-Boyle was pleased to note that.

The DCFO recognised the concerns raised. They reflected those of many affected organisations. He reiterated that concerns were regularly fed into the NP both by the RBFRS and with colleague organisations. Quarterly reports would continue to be made to the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Paul Bryant sought further information on the financial implications when considering that current spend on Airwave was largely unchanged. The DCFO explained that some transitional grant funding had been awarded from the NP and was funding some of the changes being implemented currently. Therefore, there was no direct financial impact yet.

However, there were many future unknowns on the cost of ESN products and so no clarity or confidence could be given on costs moving forward. The DCFO reminded Members that the original brief had been for the same cost or a more cost effective model, but as already stated the FBC was still awaited.

Councillor Bryant then queried how equipment costs would be funded. The DCFO advised that a government grant was anticipated to fund like for like replacements, i.e. for Airwave products.

Councillor Christine Bateson noted that this had been an ongoing area of concern for some time. She queried the implications if ESN proved unsuccessful. The DCFO felt that this would potentially result in needed to reinvest in Airwave. He added that the ESN technology had been proven, but greater assurance was needed on its reliability.

In response to a query from Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, the HBIS advised that the testing phase would last for only three to six months.

Councillor Adrian Edwards gave thanks for the detailed report and presentation.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- The report be noted.

#### **53. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

Katie Mills (HCS), presented the Annual Report on Member Development activities in 2018/19.

The Member Development Strategy 2017-19 was approved by Management Committee at its meeting held on 3 April 2017. The Fire Authority approved the Member Development Action Plan at its meeting on 27 February 2018, which outlined the learning and development activities to commence at the beginning of the 2018/19 Municipal Year. This was the first Annual Report since both the Strategy and Action Plan had been adopted.

This report set out the Member Development activities attended in 2018/19 and the progress made against the Action Plan. The level of training content

would remain into 2019/20, but the number of courses would be slightly reduced as it had been necessary to cancel six courses during the year due to low Member attendance. Efforts would continue to make courses as accessible as possible, i.e. the best time of day to hold courses.

Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle gave thanks for the efforts put into producing the programme. She praised the courses that she had been able to attend.

Councillor Paul Bryant highlighted the need to avoid duplicating the training that Members undertook in their local authority, i.e. equalities. Courses should be tailored so they related to the Fire and Rescue Service. Councillor McKenzie-Boyle felt that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training was key for the FRS.

Councillor Adrian Edwards noted that training was held to induct new Members. He highlighted the importance of a refresh for existing as well as the induction for new Members.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- The report be noted.

#### **54. SERVICE REDESIGN: WARGRAVE FIRE STATION PROGRESS REPORT**

Steve Foye (DCFO) asked Jim Powell (AM SD (ROA&R)) to introduce the report which had been overseen by Councillor Emma Webster as Lead Member.

Jim Powell (AM SD (ROA&R)) reminded Members that the closure of Wargrave Fire Station was part of option one of the Response proposals included in the Service redesign IRMP consultation that ran from December 2016 to March 2017. At Fire Authority on 18 April 2017, Members selected option one with an amendment to defer the implementation of the closure for twelve months based on the fulfilment of two key criteria:

- (1) The required savings be found elsewhere within the RBFRS budget;
- (2) Wargrave to demonstrate an increase in availability to 60% within that twelve month period.

The twelve month period elapsed in October 2018. Information provided to the Management Committee on 22 October 2018 demonstrated that the 60% target had not been reached and outlined the reasons why; projected forecasts in availability were provided and the relationship to the Medium Term-Financial Plan was described.

At the Fire Authority meeting of 19 November 2018, Members considered and agreed the recommendations of Management Committee that: the decision made by Fire Authority in April 2017 to close Wargrave Station be deferred for a further nine months to see if the above criteria could be fulfilled.

The purpose of this paper was to provide an update in respect of the progress made against those criteria.

The table in paragraph 3.4 of the report detailed the current Establishment

of the station. This showed that while recruitment had been successful, qualification levels of staff varied and it would take time for necessary training to be completed.

This continued to be detailed in the chart in paragraph 3.5 which also showed availability levels since October 2017. There was some fluctuation but this was anticipated and the forecast availability showed an increase as more officers became qualified. However, it needed to be noted that the qualifications might not be achieved in all cases.

The drop shown in February 2019 was expected and accounted for the absence of key personnel who were currently on restricted duties following sickness absence. This situation was expected to be resolved during March 2019 and the forecast therefore showed an improvement.

Financial implications remained a concern as the Medium-Term Financial Plan showed a budget shortfall of £458k in 2019/20. This shortfall would be met from reserves but there was a need to avoid depleting reserves in future years. Additional income or savings would therefore need to be developed, but if these could not be identified then it might be necessary to revisit the Wargrave investment commitments to help meet the funding gap.

Councillor Adrian Edwards pointed out a typographical error in paragraph 11.1 of the report. This should refer to the meeting of Fire Authority on 19 November **2018**.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- The report be noted.

**55. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018-19 – QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2018)**

Becca Chapman (D&PA Manager) introduced the report which provided an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) third quarter performance for the 2018/19 financial year. The report had also been discussed in detail by the Strategic Performance Board.

Becca Chapman presented the following Quarter Three highlights:

Successes:

- The percentage of fire safety audits resulting in formal actions had exceeded the 5% target for the first time. The same period last year did not see any audits requiring formal action.
- The quarterly target for responding to incidents within ten minutes moved closer to the 75% target, achieving 74.1%. December saw 79.7% of incidents being attended within ten minutes.
- Wholetime appliance availability was 100% for the quarter, with no occurrences of crewing levels affecting availability for a whole shift.
- There had been a reduction in the number of accidents, including RIDDOR, in Q3. Compared to the same period last year there had been five more accidents (12) but there had been no RIDDOR, of which there was one in Q3 2017/18.

Concerns and Plans for Improvement:

- There were 17 casualties during Q3, taking the total for the year to 44 against a target of 16. One incident this quarter resulted in six casualties. Ongoing analysis of the incidents showed cooking as the main cause in these incidents and Hubs were working with the Communications and Engagement Team on a media campaign, as well as emphasising the dangers during Safe and Well Visits. In addition, Fire Safety Inspection Officers would be targeting retail outlets with sleeping accommodation above as part of their risk based inspection programme.
- One of the four referrals for individuals who had received a threat of arson did not receive a home safety visit within 48 hours. Whilst the individual was not available to have a visit conducted in their home within the 48 hours, a training need had been identified internally.

Councillor Adrian Edwards gave thanks for the very comprehensive report and gave thanks all the officers involving in putting it together. He also commended the successes highlighted throughout the report.

The Committee then worked through the performance report.

**Page 5 – Key Data – October to December 2018**

Councillor Edwards felt that this section of the report would benefit from the inclusion of indicative arrows to show where performance had improved or seen a decline.

**BC to action**

**Page 9 – Number of fire casualties in accidental dwelling fires**

Councillor Paul Bryant voiced concern at the 12 casualties recorded at Q3 and queried what action was being taken to remedy this. Jim Powell (AM SD (ROA&R)) explained that this formed part of the ongoing analysis work being undertaken within Hubs. The profile of those being injured was looked into, whether they lived alone etc and the Safe and Well visits were one way of seeking to address this when advice around safer cooking could be given. No geographical linkages had been identified.

Jim Powell also explained that there were very few serious injuries being sustained. Tony Deacon (AM P&P) added that a map was in place to identify if there were any geographical areas of concern.

**Pages 10 & 11 – various measures**

Councillor Edwards was pleased to note following the last meeting that information had been split between the East, Central and West Hubs.

**Page 16 - % of shifts/hours where there was adequate crewing on frontline fire engines**

Councillor Edwards praised the fact that 14 Wholetime appliances were in operation, an improvement from the 13 previously reported.

**Page 26 - % of working time lost to sickness, across all staff groups**

Councillor Edwards was very pleased to note that mental health awareness training to all staff commenced in July 2018. To date, 81% of the workforce had attended and a number of employees were booked to attend the January 2019 course. Councillor Edwards attended this training himself and

found it very helpful.

It was noted that there was one accident at work resulting in one short term musculoskeletal (MSK) sickness absence.

A movement screen had been newly included in the fitness tests for all operational personnel which had proved to be a positive addition. The DCFO confirmed that this was a particularly challenging test.

### **Page 29 – All injury accidents including RIDDOR (RIDDOR & Total)**

Councillor Bryant requested further detail on the data captured for this measure and its purpose. Becca Chapman agreed that it required greater clarity and, as a result, there would be a sole target for 2019/20.

### **Page 30 and 31 - % of spend subject to competition/compliant spend as % of overall spend**

94.6% of spend was subject to competition, exceeding the target of 85%. Following on from his earlier queries on this matter, Councillor Bryant queried if the RBFRS should aim to exceed this target. Conor Byrne (HF&P) stated that for low value purchases the additional burden of going through a competitive process could outweigh the savings generated. Therefore, whilst having a 100% target for compliance made sense, it would not be sensible to insist that all spend, no matter how small, should be subject to competition. The HF&P advised that the report of annual procurement savings would detail where savings had been made. To date, savings of £245k had been made against the target of £300k.

### **Page 32 – Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding a Data Protection Breach**

It was noted that a data breach had been reported by the RBFRS to the Information Commissioner's Office.

### **Page 35 – Q3 Revenue Budget 2018/19**

Councillor Edwards commended the fact that the forecast final outturn was very close to being brought in on budget.

A £25k pressure had been highlighted after significant defects and unscheduled work had been required to some of the older vehicles. Councillor Edwards was therefore pleased to note that the Authority would continue to invest in new vehicles to ensure that revenue costs did not continue to rise.

### **Page 36 – Fire Station Refurbishments – minor works**

Councillor Edwards requested that this section be split in future reports to better understand the financial position of individual works, i.e. at Ascot and Wokingham fire stations. The DCFO confirmed that this breakdown would be provided for the next quarterly report.

### **Page 36 – Fire Station Rebuild - Crowthorne**

Alex Brown (HCP&E) advised that the new station was scheduled for completion in May 2020.

### **Page 39 – Communications and Engagement Resource**

Nikki Richards (DSS) confirmed that this project had been completed on

**BC to action**

schedule.

#### **Page 47 – dedicated mental health support post**

Councillor Edwards was pleased to note the mental health support post had been created, but he queried its location at Bracknell Fire Station. The DSS explained that the post holder worked across the RBFRS.

#### **Page 54 – Disciplinary Cases, Grievances and Complaints**

Councillor Edwards queried the 17 misconduct cases considered to date in 2018/19 and whether this was a concerning number. The DSS advised that she viewed this as good news as it showed that people were willing to speak up in order to resolve issues. This aligned with feedback from the staff survey and through the 'Say So' workshops.

#### **Page 54 – Complaints (External)**

Councillor Bryant asked if there were particular areas of concern highlighted in external complaints. The DSS explained that no significant trends had been identified from these complaints. They often related to the driving of fire engines. This report did not provide the outcome of the complaints process.

#### **Page 58 – Media Training**

The DSS confirmed that the media training had been rescheduled to May 2019. It had to be postponed to ensure that adequate crewing levels were maintained.

#### **Page 60 – Reward and Recognition**

In response to a query from Councillor Edwards, the DSS confirmed that the allocation of bursary funding was not means tested. She added that the level of support/funding depended upon the course in question and the benefits it would bring to staff. The RBFRS would always aim to aid staff development.

#### **Page 63 – New Fire Station at Theale**

Alex Brown explained that this project would be the subject of a report to Management Committee on 8 April 2019. She added that there were nine tender returns for the remediation aspect of this project which would require detailed assessment.

#### **Page 64 – Firehouse Facility**

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle praised this project and commended officers for completing it on time and within budget.

#### **Page 65 - Caversham Road Refurbishment**

Councillor Edwards queried the status of this project and Alex Brown advised that her team were currently engaging directly with some of the statutory consultees which would assist in shaping the design development work at this very early stage.

#### **Page 82 – Accident Investigations**

Councillor Edwards asked if 2017/18 figures could be provided for comparison purposes. Becca Chapman explained that some measures were not reported in 2017/18 meaning direct comparisons may not possible

for all measures, they would provide comparisons where possible. However, direct comparison would be possible between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

### **Page 87 – Procurement Advisory Review**

Councillor Edwards queried the outcome of the discussion at the Thames Valley Collaboration Executive Board in November 2018 on the RBFRS governance arrangements in collaborative procurement projects. The HF&P explained that further work had since been taking place on governance arrangements for future collaboration and this would be presented to the next Executive Board meeting.

### **Page 96 – Information Governance Report**

The DSS agreed to provide, in future versions of the report, a comparison between the current and previous year's data, i.e. the number of Freedom of Information requests.

Councillor Adrian Edwards reiterated his thanks for the work put into producing this very comprehensive report.

**BC to action**

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- Performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health Measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2018/19 be noted.
- The progress made on the two priority programmes be noted.
- The position of corporate risk be noted.
- Further actions be agreed as noted.

### **56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 4 July 2019 at 6.30pm, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD.

*(The meeting concluded at 8.30pm)*