



Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting

Monday, 12th July, 2021, 2.00 pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS)
Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincent's Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD

Minutes

Present: (*)

- * Councillor David Cannon, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
- * Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service - Vice-Chairman
- * Councillor Neil Fawcett, Oxfordshire County Council
- * Councillor Steven Lambert, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
- Councillor Glynis Phillips, Oxfordshire County Council
- *Councillor Angus Ross, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - Chairman

In Attendance: Mike Adcock, Area Manager – Senior Responsible Officer (OFRS)
Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance (BFRS)
Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (RBFRS)
Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead (RBFRS)
Simon Harris, Group Manager (TVFCS)
Asif Hussain, Head of Finance (BFRS)
Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer (OFRS)
Jim Powell, Area Manager – Senior Responsible Officer (RBFRS)
Tony Vincent, Head of Business and Information Systems (RBFRS)
Steve Wells, Area Manager – Senior Responsible Officer (BFRS)

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1. ELECTION OF 2021/22 CHAIRMAN	
Councillor Cannon nominated Councillor Ross as Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor	

Clarke.

On there being no further nominations for Chairman, it was;

RESOLVED that Councillor Ross be elected Chairman of TVFCS Joint Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF 2021/22 VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman nominated Councillor Clarke as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Fawcett.

On there being no further nominations, it was;

RESOLVED that Councillor Clarke be appointed Vice-Chairman of TVFCS Joint Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence was received from Councillor Phillips, Wayne Bowcock and Jason Thelwell.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

5. MINUTES AND RECORDED ACTIONS OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2020

Jim Powell, Area Manager (Senior Responsible Officer) confirmed that both actions identified on page 8 of the agenda pack (work on expenditure proposals and income ideas) will be brought to the forthcoming Member / Officer Workshop in September 2021.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020, be approved as a true record to be signed by the Chairman.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (WRITTEN QUESTIONS)

None received.

7. MATTERS ARISING

This will no longer be an agenda item.

**8. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.5
(QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)**

None received.

9. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

Welcome to New Members and Farewell to Councillors Heathcoat and Gray

“I would like to welcome Councillors Neil Fawcett and Glynis Phillips from Oxfordshire County Council as our new Members for 2021/22.

This means we sadly say goodbye and send best wishes to Councillor Judith Heathcoat and Councillor Mark Gray who have now retired from public life. I’m sure you’ll join me in wishing them both a long and happy retirement. I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you for their commitment and service to this Committee since its inception in 2015. On behalf of the committee I will write to both.”

New Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock

“I am also pleased to welcome Wayne Bowcock, new Chief Fire Officer for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, though he is unable to attend today. Wayne joined Royal Berkshire having served as Chief Fire Officer of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service. “

New Senior Responsible Officer

“I would also like to welcome another new face, Area Commander Steve Wells from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. Steve has joined us whilst his colleague Dave Norris has been seconded to Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

This follows the sad news of the passing of Paul Fuller CBE, the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service who sadly passed away on Monday 7 June, after a short illness.

On behalf of Thames Valley Fire Control Service, I would like to send our deepest condolences to Paul’s family, friends and colleagues.”

Thank you to staff

“Lastly, as we look back at 2020/21, as presented in the Chairman’s annual report later in agenda, I would like to place on record the thanks of all members of the Joint Committee to the staff of TVFCS for the hard work, commitment and

Action

dedication in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that the service maintained minimum crewing levels throughout all of last year. Well done and thank you.”

Review of the TVFCS Mobilising Requirements at the fifth anniversary of the commencement date

The Legal Agreement requires the Joint Committee to review, following the fifth anniversary, whether any Fire Authority wishes to exercise its right to withdraw from the agreement and / or whether the Mobilising System Contract should be extended. The Chairman requested for this to be included at the next Joint Committee.

Graham Britten

The Vice-Chairman requested for a review to be held on how much each Authority pay towards TVFCS. Jim Powell suggested that this would part of the long-term forecast that will brought to the December meeting.

Conor Byrne

10. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 - FOR NOTE

Jim Powell presented the Annual Report 2020/21 on behalf of last year's Chairman Councillor Judith Heathcoat. He reported that TVFCS has managed to maintain minimum crewing levels and highlighted a member of TVFCS staff had been recognised as 'Emergency Responder of the year' in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) annual awards. This was for the lifesaving advice provided to two youths trapped in a domestic fire in Reading during the Summer of 2020.

In referring to paragraph 3.10.3 of the report, he advised that TVFCS will continue to adopt National Operational Guidance by the Central Programme Office, ensuring control staff are able to work to 'industry best practice'.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report be noted.

11. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL MOBILISING REQUIREMENTS - TO AGREE

Jim Powell reported that the partnership agreement had a 15-year life which commenced in April 2015. The project Team had delivered the current Mobilising System contract to mirror the term of the partnership agreement creating the option for a contract break or contract extension.

He outlined the complicated factor of the current risk of the sale of Capita SSS. In referring to 3.18 of the report the table provided estimate costs for the hardware refresh and the table in 3.24 showed the ongoing revenue element, and the indicative figure for the contract extension.

Jim Powell advised that this would be discussed in greater detail at the Member

Jim Powell

/ Officer Workshop in September, with the view to present a report on the Annual Capital Expenditure for decision at the next Joint Committee in December 2021.

In referring to the recommendation to extend the contract for one year, (April 2022 – March 2023), he advised that this would enable officers to gather intelligence and that further proposals would be made to the Joint Committee for a contract beyond 2023.

The Vice-Chairman expressed her concern with the timeframe in the procurement of a new provider, should Capita SSS be sold, and how do we ensure that our Service was to be protected before a new provider is sought.

Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer reported that Capita SSS provide software solutions to 60% of the Fire Service and Police sector. He explained the current situation with the possible sale of Capita SSS and its buyers. He reassured the Joint Committee that although there were risks attached, all was being done to mitigate those risks and discussed the potential opportunities that could develop.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Rob MacDougall stated that he was liaising with the National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) Strategic Commercial Board, working with the Government, Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and Capita to mitigate this risk and advised that as soon as the potential buyer was known, additional work would be done to reduce the risk.

In answer to further comments from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Jim Powell advised that a draft Annual Capital Expenditure Programme will be brought to the Joint Committee to make a recommendation for approval on the expenditure for the hardware refresh at its next meeting in December 2021. He added that the hardware refresh would not create any additional financial burden as it would be drawn from the Renewals account.

In response to the Vice-Chairman, Jim Powell explained the proposal to extend the contract for one year would not leave TVFCS without a mobilising system, and that a further proposal would be presented to the Joint Committee for decision in July 2022.

In discussing Emergency Services Network (ESN), Councillor Lambert asked what assurances will Capita SSS bring.

Rob MacDougall advised that the potential buyer would also need assurances from Capital SSS and reported that FRSs will also need to be part of the wider discussions with the new owners of Capita SSS.

In response to an additional comment from Councillor Lambert, Jim Powell advised that TVFCS were currently using the Vision 4 product, which has a five-year development programme and was compatible with ESN. He stated that was a level of commitment Capita SSS had to the product.

In discussing the staffing and recruitment of Capita SSS, the Chairman stated that a large proportion of the workforce would TUPE to the new provider.

The Chairman moved the recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Cannon. The Vice-Chairman made a request to make a slight amendment to the recommendation, to include the month of the one-year period.

RESOLVED that:

- The Joint Committee recommend the participating Authorities a contract extension for the Mobilising System of one year (April 2022 – March 2023); and
- The projected expenditure from the Renewals Account commensurate with requirements outlined in the Capita 'system report' summarised at point 3.22, be noted.

12. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) COST APPORTIONMENT REVIEW - FOR NOTE

Jim Powell briefly outlined the TVFCS Partnership Agreement which sets out the Cost Apportionment Model (CAM) which include the population, tax base and incidences attended. He advised that this report be presented to the Joint Committee for note.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Cannon.

RESOLVED

That the Recommendations at 2.1 on the revised cost apportionment percentages as set out in section 3.9 be noted.

13. TVFCS QUARTER THREE AND QUARTER FOUR 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORTS - FOR NOTE

Jim Powell presented the Quarter Three and Quarter Four Performance reports. He stated although the Joint Committee had agreed to move to two meetings per year, the Quarter Three Performance report had been included for information. Members agreed that only Quarter Four be reviewed at the meeting.

He reported that the Senior Responsible Officers met on a monthly basis to monitor the performance of TVFCS, and stated unless Members had questions on Quarter Three, he would take them through the Quarter Four Performance

report.

The key highlights were:

- TVFCS has continued to focus on maintaining service during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was an increase in staff absences arising from Track and Trace, however these were consistent with the normal levels of absence for the time of year.
- Sickness levels were lower than Quarter 4 period in 2019/20.
- Page 64 of the report showed how many staff were going through development. A new Development Pathway had been introduced.
- TVFCS contribute to prevention and protection elements of the Fire Service, in relation to safeguarding children and adults, and threat of arson.
- Page 67 show how quickly calls were answered in Quarter Four. In over 90% of occasions, calls were answered in 5 seconds.
- Page 68 show how quickly resources were mobilised.
- Page 69 break down mobilising time to high-risk incidences – more time is taken to alert station in seconds for Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) due to more questioning to determine the accuracy of location to get to incidences.
- Page 72 is a high-level look at the budget outturn, budget variance has come down.

In answer to a question from the Vice-Chairman on succession planning, Jim Powell reported that TVFCS were able to draw resources internally.

In referring to page 63, Councillor Lambert stated that pregnancy should not be classed as a sickness level.

Jim Powell confirmed that Maternity leave was not included in sickness absence reporting.

Jim Powell

Simon Harris, Group Manager reported that self-isolation had been a challenge and agreed to provide Members with this data. He stated that the number of confirmed COVID cases were low compared to the volume of staff required to self-isolate. He added that TVFCS was largely vaccinated.

Jim Powell

Jim Powell confirmed that a short presentation will be provided at the forthcoming Member / Officer Workshop in September.

A discussion was held on whether six monthly Performance Reports were to be presented to Members, to align with TVFCS Joint Committee meeting frequency.

RESOLVED:

- That the report be noted; and

- That the frequency of Quarterly Performance reports to remain the same in 2021/22, and for the frequency to be reviewed in July 2022.

**14. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME
- VERBAL UPDATE - FOR NOTE**

Tony Vincent, Head of Business and Information Systems delivered a short update presentation on Emergency Mobile Communications Programme. For copies of the presentation contact committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

15. TVFCS JOINT COMMITTEE - SEPTEMBER 2021 WORKSHOP - TO AGREE

The date of the Member / Officer Workshop was agreed be held on Thursday 16 September 2021, at 11.30am. The venue to be determined subject to government guidelines nearer the time. (This meeting is not open to the public).

16. FORWARD PLAN - FOR NOTE

Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance requested for an item to be included in December 2021, as stated in the Legal Agreement that the Authorities are offered the opportunity to continue (after the fifth year of TVFCS).

Graham
Britten

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16 December 2021, 2.00pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

(The meeting closed at 3.35pm)