

Minutes of the meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillors Busby (Chairman), Dransfield, Gomm, Lambert, Morris, Reed, Schofield and Webb

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Operating Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), D Skinner (Director of Finance and Assets), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development), M Osborne (Head of Service Transformation), D Tate (Knowledge and Information Services Manager), C Bell (Service Delivery Manager, Milton Keynes), E Andrews (Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: None.

EX10 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 30 July 2014, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX11 INDUSTRIAL ACTION – verbal update

The Chief Operating Officer advised the Committee of the week-long period of discontinuous strike action called by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) on the 9–16 August 2014. The FBU had also called industrial action which was different to every other Authority in the Country by calling the retained duty system (RDS) staff out on strike for the whole period.

Partial Performance had not been accepted between the 9 and 15 August, but discretion had been exercised under delegated powers to accept partial performance for the shifts commencing Saturday 16 August. The Authority throughout the week had maintained a good service to the community. All calls had been dealt with in the usual manner and contingency arrangements had worked extremely well.

The Vice Chairman wanted to express his utmost respect for the work that firefighters do, but felt the FBU was not helping them. The Vice Chairman asked if the following question could be researched and fed into the Integrated Risk Management Plan when it is discussed at the relevant Fire Authority meeting. What is the true risk to Buckinghamshire and could the learning from the strikes be fed into the future IRMP process?

A Member of the Committee wanted to express his disgust at the contents of the correspondence received from supporters of the industrial action and the personal abuse directed at the Chief Fire Officer and Senior Management Team. The Member wanted the

Chief Fire Officer and Senior Management Team to know they had his unequivocal support.

A Member of the Committee also agreed that the Chief Fire Officer had come under a personal attack which was totally unacceptable, but felt engaging in long correspondence gave the FBU more ammunition and urged caution. The Member also asked whether partial performance had been accepted on Saturday 16 August because the Authority did not have enough resources.

The Chief Operating Officer explained there were a number of reasons why partial performance was accepted on Saturday 16 August; such as to give the working crews a break.

The acceptance of partial performance had been communicated the previous evening but a lot of crews didn't turn up for work when they were rostered to do so. However, the contingency arrangements had remained in place on the day, which ensured that there were resources available in the event of an emergency. An investigation was taking place as to why those members of staff did not turn up for work.

The Chairman reminded Members of the duty of care that the Authority owed towards the Chief Fire Officer, Senior Management Team and all of its staff.

It being moved by Councillor Reed and seconded by Councillor Dransfield, it was unanimously:

RESOLVED –

That the Chief Fire Officer and the Senior Management Team continue to enjoy the support of the Authority for the manner in which the periods of industrial action have been handled.

It being moved by Councillor Reed and seconded by Councillor Dransfield, it was unanimously

RESOLVED –

That the Authority be recommended to agree that the Chief Fire Officer and the Senior Management Team continue to enjoy the support of the Authority for the manner in which the periods of industrial action have been handled.

EX12

BUDGET MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND DEBT MANAGEMENT APRIL-JUNE 2014 (QUARTER 1)

The Director of Finance and Assets introduced the report as a good news story for Quarter 1 forecasting an underspend of £1.8m. Just over £1m came from the statutory accounting contingency area; with other areas of under spend adding up to £700k. The contingency would be utilised for significant events,

including the impacts of strike action. With regard to the capital forecast there was some slippage carried forward from 2013/14, the majority of this would be caught up as orders were placed for operational equipment and vehicles.

The Vice Chairman also reiterated that the Authority had contingency that had not been spent, but felt the good news was the £700k underspend. The Vice Chairman felt the figures showed that setting and managing the budget was correct, and savings were being made. This was good news for the Fire Authority and for the tax payers of Buckinghamshire and a credit to the Senior Management Team for achieving this.

A Member asked a question regarding the under spend on employee costs. It was explained this was due to a number of reasons such as normal retirement profile and employees leaving.

RESOLVED –

1. That the latest projected outturn forecast for the Fire Authority as at 30 June 2014 be noted.
2. That the budget virements (A) and (B) as detailed at the end of section 8 of the report be authorised.

EX13

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2014/15 – QUARTER 1

The Director of Finance and Assets introduced the report which was another good news story with the amount of interest the Authority had received whilst still maintaining high levels of security. The yield was good and ahead of profile. This reflected the good decision the Authority made to move Treasury Management function in house and away from Buckinghamshire County Council.

RESOLVED –

That the Treasury Management Performance 2014/15 – Quarter 1 be noted.

EX14

FOUR YEAR KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION SERVICES (KIS) STRATEGY

The Head of Service Transformation introduced the report and advised it was an update on progress against the strategy approved by the Authority last year. Members noted that the name had been changed and the Authority now had a Knowledge and Information Services Department and not just an ICT Department. The report articulated the progress that had been made in line with the Authority's continued support and investment in this area.

The Knowledge and Information Services Manager asked Members to note that there was no change to the substance of the strategy the Authority previously agreed. The strategy contained a number of projects that related to information as opposed to IT, but that was already captured within the document along with a summary of actual and planned progress for the year.

There were approximately 30-35 projects which addressed key issues and met strategic business requirements. The Knowledge and Information Services Manager reported there were a significant number of projects last year where no progress had been made. This was due to restructuring and a large recruitment programme. This year all projects were being actioned. Four Projects should be delivered and further progress was being made with ten projects and initial progress was being made with eighteen projects.

The Chairman felt it had been a remarkable 18 months from the first strategy, and proved that the organisation was receptive to change.

RESOLVED –

1. That the progress against strategy be noted.
2. That the proposed renaming of the Interim Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy Report v4.0 be approved.
3. That the Strategy covers the period from 2014/15 – 2017/18 be noted.
4. That the Strategy be reviewed annually by the Business Transformation Board with any proposed substantial changes being presented to the Committee for approval.

EX15

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED –

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as the report contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of an individual; and Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as the report also contained information relating to actual, or contemplated, consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations and on all these grounds it was considered the need to keep information exempt outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the committee could consider the following matter:

Review of the Finance and Assets Directorate – Assets Team

The Knowledge and Information Services Manager, Service Delivery Manager, Milton Keynes, Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer and the Communication and Consultation Manager left the meeting.

Review of the Finance and Assets Directorate – Assets Team

The Director of Finance and Assets explained to Members the reasoning behind the review.

RESOLVED –

1. That the potential need for redundancies in the Finance and Assets Directorate be noted.
2. That approval be given for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive to initiate consultation with the affected staff.

The Chairman stated that rather than appoint an HR Sub Committee for the remainder of the municipal year, the Executive Committee would consider matters arising within its terms of reference.

EX16

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee would be held on Wednesday 19 November 2014 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.05 AM.