

Minutes of the meeting of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 29 July 2015 at 10.00 am at The Safety Centre, Milton Keynes.

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

Officers: M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development), D Sutherland (Acting Director of Finance and Assets), M Hemming (Deputy Finance Director), J Parsons (Head of Service Development), P Holland (Head of Projects and Transformation), D Melia (HR Project Manager), E Andrews (Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies: None.

EX01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

(Councillor Andy Dransfield presiding)

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Busby be elected Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Busby be elected as Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

EX02 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Dransfield be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Dransfield be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for 2015/16.

EX03 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 18 March 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

EX04 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

**Overview and Audit Committee – 15 July 2015
(a) Revised Code of Conduct**

The Committee considered the Revised Code of Conduct and heard from the Director of People and Organisational Development that it had been very well scrutinised at the Overview and Audit Committee meeting.

RESOLVED –

That the Revised Code of Conduct be approved.

EX05

BUDGET MONITORING PERFORMANCE AND DEBT MANAGEMENT APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2015 (PROVISIONAL OUTTURN)

The Committee considered an update of the provisional revenue and capital outturn position and debt management performance to 31 March 2015.

The Lead Member for Finance, IT, Property and Procurement advised Members this was a good news story with a £1.8m underspend. The outturn variance in service delivery was predominantly due to the industrial action which had inadvertently resulted in significant savings.

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Chief Fire Officer had written to all local MPs requesting a longer term financial settlement. The Chief Fire Officer had received a positive response back from DCLG.

(Cllr Lambert joined the meeting)

RESOLVED –

1. That the provisional outturn forecast for the Fire Authority as at 31 March 2015 be noted.
2. That the transfers to reserves ([a] to [c] in the Executive Summary) are approved and that the residual balance of the underspend (£122k) is transferred to the vehicle reserve once the final outturn figures have been confirmed.
3. That the slippage of £2,981k on the capital programme is approved to be carried forward into 2015/16.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance to authorise any late changes to the movements in reserves and capital slippage amounts resulting from accounting adjustments needing to be made during the year-end closedown process.
5. That should any changes to the amounts referred to above be required, then the Chief Finance officer will report these to Members at the next available meeting.

EX06

PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The Lead Member for Resource Management advised the Committee that this was a yearly update of Member and Officer participation in external partnership arrangements and also suggested recommended additions to the Partnership Register.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that Appendix 3 showed a list of joint working groups where the Authority had an interest rather than partnerships.

As the groups and partnerships change regularly, the Acting Director of Finance and Assets and Members felt it was prudent to review the register yearly.

RESOLVED –

1. That Members approve the revised Partnership Register, including suggested additions, set out in Appendix 2.
2. That Members approve the separate list of joint working groups where the Authority has an interest, including suggested additions, set out in Appendix 3.

An additional recommendation having been moved and seconded it was:

RESOLVED -

3. That Members receive an Annual Report on Partnerships.

EX07

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE 2014/15 QUARTER 4

The Committee considered the treasury management performance 2014/15 Quarter 4. The accrued interest earned for 2014/15 was £137k, which was £67k higher than the budget for the year and £11k higher than the total interest earned in 2013/14.

The Lead Member for Finance, IT, Property and Procurement asked Members to note that making investments in the Authority's own name rather than through Buckinghamshire County Council as previously, means that the Authority bears the risk of any counterparty failure. It was perceived that the current counterparty list was safe and the Authority would earn more in terms of interest.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets asked Members to note the good performance was also due to more active management by the Deputy Finance Director and his team which had helped to secure these good results.

RESOLVED –

That the Treasury Management Performance 2014/15– Quarter 4 report be noted.

EX08

PROPERTY STRATEGY 2015-18

The Chairman requested that in future this strategy would come under the Lead Member for Resource Management, as part of the Resources portfolio.

The Lead Member for Resource Management advised Members that the report looked at different ways the Authority's assets were managed. With increasing financial pressures being faced by all public bodies over the next few years, it was more important than ever to ensure the investment in property and facilities was targeted and coherently planned.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets explained to Members that the aim of the Property Strategy was to set a clear framework for the management of property assets within the Authority and more detailed individual reports would be brought to Members attention in the future.

The strategy supports the development of a longer term vision on how property can help deliver the Authority's aims and outcomes while working within a value for money framework in order to achieve efficiency savings.

RESOLVED –

That the Property Strategy 2015-18 as drafted be agreed.

EX09

PROPERTY SHARING AND CO-LOCATION OF POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN THE THAMES VALLEY

The Lead Member for Resource Management introduced this report and advised Members that the purpose of the report was to apprise Members of the principles of property sharing and co-location which had been agreed by the Chief Officers and obtain approval for the Chairman to sign the Memorandum of Understanding in commitment to those principles.

The Lead Member for Resources also felt this was an area that could be of financial benefit to the Authority and also good for community partnerships by opening up fire stations to be used in different ways.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that this also linked in with the Property Strategy and that the Authority was looking at all joint co-location opportunities including ones with community groups and charities. The Authority already had a joint location at Broughton Fire Station where the community police team were located. There were sometimes challenges working with Thames Valley Police purely due to the size of the organisation.

The Acting Director of Finance and Assets advised Members that over the past 18 months he had regular contact with the property management team from Thames Valley Police looking at joint opportunities where the Authority can co-locate. The Chairman advised Members that the Chief Fire Officer had recently met with his counterparts from the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Oxfordshire County Council as well as the new Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police. Mr Francis Habgood.

The Head of Projects and Transformation updated Members on recent conversations with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Milton Keynes Hospital regarding the Milton Keynes Review and the possibility of funding from Milton Keynes Hospital for SCAS to join the new site.

RESOLVED –

That the principles within the property sharing and co-location of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in the Thames Valley MoU be approved for signature by the Chairman.

EX10

ANNUAL PUBLIC SAFETY PLAN & CORPORATE PLAN 2012-15 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Lead Member for Community Protection advised Members that this was another good news story. The report addressed the Authority's key strategic aims and focused on Prevention, Protection and Response.

The Chairman advised Members that there was a great deal of information in this very comprehensive report, and a lot of the background information had been discussed at the recent Members' Workshop. Those Members who had attended the workshop had already had the opportunity to examine this information in detail.

RESOLVED –

That the performance against the objectives and targets set out in the Corporate Plan 2012-15 be noted.

EX11

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION BUSINESS CASE

The Lead Member for Finance, IT, Property and Procurement introduced the report and advised Members that the report wasn't about integrating various systems into one monolithic system, but about finding systems that were more appropriate to the fire service, that work well and were compatible and would allow the Authority to operate more efficiently in the future.

It would also give the Authority the chance to move away from the current finance system and find a much simpler financial system more suited to its size.

The Head of Service Development advised Members that as the Authority looked to reduce its workforce as part of the public safety plan one aspect of the integration was that it enabled this to be done. It would be very empowering for the future and would open up new avenues for potential collaboration with other fire and rescue services and the opportunity to share costs.

The Director of People and Organisational Development asked Members to note that whilst this was a systems project it would touch on every single department and every person within the organisation and would give the Authority a fantastic opportunity to change the way it worked and to get people thinking differently.

The Chairman asked officers to ensure that everyone within the organisation was kept up to date with progress.

RESOLVED –

1. that the final solution should include two enterprise level systems, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and finance, as

currently there is no singular ERP solution available that would meet all the unique requirements of the fire service and cover all functions of the organisation.

2. that the solution should be implemented in four phases over two years to maximise benefits early on and to reduce overall risk to the service.
3. that resources should be dedicated to the project and their day-to-day work reassigned in order to meet the two year target.

EX12

APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

The Lead Member for Human Resources and Equality and Diversity advised Members that there were two main strands contained within this report. The first strand was asking Members to adopt an apprenticeship scheme for various support services and service delivery roles including that of firefighter, the second was the creation of an apprenticeship sponsorship scheme to support the service with its on call duty system.

The apprentices would be employed by an apprentice training agency partner rather than the Authority which was important to bear in mind from a risk management perspective.

Anyone on the Authority's apprenticeship scheme would have achieved a qualification at the end of it, which would improve their opportunities for future employment, either with or outside the Authority.

The Director of People and Organisation Development advised Members that the apprenticeship scheme linked back to the Authority's medium term workforce plan. The Authority had an ageing workforce and would need to replenish those skills and would also need new skills if it was going to diversify.

The HR Project Manager advised Members that the Authority had a high retirement profile in the operational workforce over the next five years. The Authority can predict those that are due to retire and go into their normal pension arrangements, but what is more difficult to predict is staff leaving the service prior to their predicted retirement dates and the apprenticeship scheme would help mitigate this.

(Councillor Marland joined the meeting)

The Committee was informed that the Enterprise Minister had made a statement on 14 June 2015 to reinforce the government's ambition to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020. As part of this, all public authorities would be set targets for recruiting apprentices within their workforces. These targets would be set in the autumn and the Authority would not know its targets until then.

The Committee was informed that it was envisaged that the Authority would be taking on 10 fire apprentices a year for the next 3 financial years and a number of support service

apprentices and it was hoped that the Authority should be able to address the targets once known; and that the procurement team was already looking at various training providers around the country as part of the procurement process. Proximity to the Authority area was something that would be taken into account. It was planned to hold a supplier day in September for all short listed training providers and the preferred provider would be chosen then.

It was explained that an apprenticeship does not automatically guarantee employment with the Authority. If at the end of the apprenticeship an individual was offered a contract, it would not be a traditional contract, but one that had been drawn up over the period of the apprenticeship scheme; and that another option for the Authority was that if someone was good and an attractive prospect long term (but there was not a place on the establishment for them at that time) they could be offered up for secondment for a number of years to another fire and rescue service. At that point they would be employed by the Authority but they would go and work for the other fire and rescue service and then bring back their valuable experience to the Authority when needed.

With regard to collaboration, Members were told that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service had expressed interest in this scheme, but they need to recruit firefighters much quicker than this process would allow and were recruiting wholetime firefighters in the next few weeks.

A Member asked if the Authority was using an Apprentice Training Agency would the Authority get the credit from the government for the apprentices, or would the training agency. Officers undertook to seek clarity on that point. The Director of People and Organisational Development and the HR Project Manager would look at a range of different contracts (beyond the grey book terms and conditions) for the new apprentices.

RESOLVED –

1. That an organisational wide apprenticeship scheme which forms part of the resourcing process linking to the workforce plan is approved.
2. That the pursuit of partnership arrangements with external training providers is approved.
3. That the Authority creates and promotes an Apprentice Sponsorship Scheme to support the on-call duty system, local businesses and young people in the community who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS).

EX13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the date of the next Executive Committee would be held on Wednesday 16 September 2015 at 10.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.05AM.