

Minutes of the meeting of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY held on WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2015 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Busby (Chairman), Dransfield, Exon (part), Glover (part), Gomm, Huxley, Lambert, Mallen (part), Marland (part), Morris, Reed, Schofield, Vigor-Hedderly, Watson (part), and Wilson

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), D Sutherland (Acting Director of Finance and Assets), L Swift (Director of People and Organisational Development) G Smith (Head of Service Delivery), J Parsons (Head of Service Development), P Holland (Head of Service Transformation), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer), F Pearson (Communication and Consultation Manager), E Andrews (Executive Assistant to Chief Fire Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Bendyshe-Brown and Clarke OBE

FA01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

(Councillor Dransfield presiding)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Busby be re-elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Busby be re-elected Chairman of the Authority for 2015/16.

(Councillor Busby in the Chair)

FA02 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

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

RESOLVED –

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

FA03 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 18 February 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(Councillor Exon joined the meeting)

FA04 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed the new member Councillor Peter Marland from Milton Keynes Council to the Authority and also advised members that for future meetings the Chairman's Announcements would be circulated in advance.

The Chairman announced that:

- (a) he, and the Vice-Chairman, along with officers, attended the LGA Annual Fire Conference in Newcastle on the 10 and 11 March. The conference provided a range of stimulating workshops on subjects including joint working, collaboration with the police, arson prevention and using performance data to drive improvement. There were presentations from the current Fire Minister and the Shadow Fire Minister on key priorities in the next Parliament for the fire and rescue service.
- (b) he could confirm that the joint control room had now gone live. This had gone reasonably smoothly and he wanted to place on record his thanks to all control staff for their hard work and dedication over the last number of years, they undoubtedly saved lives with their actions and this should not be forgotten. Looking forward he knew that the Head of Service Delivery and his team would continue to work incredibly hard to ensure that the communities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes receive the best possible service from the new control room.
- (c) Watch Manager Kevin Mercer and Firefighter John Williams from Broughton Fire Station had been awarded the Thames Valley Police (TVP) Chief Constable's Commendation for excellent work. On the 13 February 2015 together with officers from TVP they successfully brought to safety a woman who was intent on taking her own life by jumping from a bridge in Milton Keynes. They would be presented with their award at a TVP ceremony. This award was well deserved and he would be writing to congratulate them on behalf of the Authority.
- (d) BMKFA held a seminar on Monday 30 March 2015, together with the Thames Valley Branch of the Institution of Fire Engineers at Stowe School. Speakers from English Heritage, Ecclesiastical Insurance and The Fire Surgery, spoke about the cause and consequences of the Glasgow Rennie Mackintosh fire, research regarding fire resistance in heritage buildings, insurance risks, managing fire strategies and disaster management plans. The seminar raised appreciation and understanding of the necessity to understand and manage fire risks in complex heritage buildings. With an audience of just over 100, delegates represented six fire and rescue services, the National Trust, fire consultancies, local authorities and numerous nationally prestigious heritage buildings from within Thames Valley and beyond.
- (e) he, along with the Chief, had now visited numerous fire stations, the feedback had been excellent with the majority of staff seeing and stating that they understand the need for future change. An issue that kept recurring was that of the ageing workforce and how the service needs to plan for the future. He had asked the Chief and his team to focus on this area for one of our Authority planning days.
- (f) the Annual Combined Fire Authorities Conference would take place on Thursday 22 October 2015 at Wyboston Lakes. This year BMKFA would

be presenting on the subject of finance and how the Authority had managed to ensure it hadn't raised council tax since 2010, reducing it last year and so reducing the burdens on local tax payers. In that time it had not closed one fire station, removed one fire engine or made one firefighter redundant. A model he believed, that could be replicated across the country with strong political leadership.

- (g) on the 5 June 2015 there was a UK Fire Symposium 2015, which BMKFA hosted at the Doubletree Hotel, Milton Keynes, in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officers Association. A large contingent attended from the Australian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council. Some of the items discussed were national procurement, industrial relations, the role of government in providing local services, current initiatives with Australian Fire Services and the future shape of the UK Fire and Rescue Service.
- (h) members had all been invited to the next workshop on Monday 20 July 2015. Sir Ken Knight would be attending and he looked forward to seeing as many members as possible.
- (i) a new Fire Minister had been appointed, his name was Mark Francois the MP for Rayleigh and Wickford in Essex. A full biography was available in the members' library; he had also been invited to visit Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- (j) all members should inform the Director of Legal and Governance of any disclosable pecuniary interests that are not already recorded in the Authority's register of interests within 28 days of their re-appointment.
- (k) he had recently written to the new Fire Minister and the Home Secretary on the issue of Police and Crime Commissioners and their possible future role in running fire and rescue services. The letter was available to all in the members' library. He had expressed the opinion that any change in governance should be driven from the bottom up and any legislation should allow fire authorities to choose their own path when determining the future governance model, one size does not fit all and the work that members had done over the last 5 years shows what could be achieved through strong leadership.
- (l) he would be writing to the two outgoing members Councillor Alan Webb from Milton Keynes Council and Councillor John Chilver from Buckinghamshire County Council thanking them for their time on the Authority.

FA05

MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY

The Authority noted that the following Members had been appointed by the Constituent Authorities to serve on the Fire Authority for 2015/16:

Buckinghamshire County Council (12)

Councillors Bendyshe-Brown, Busby, Clarke, Glover, Gomm, Huxley, Lambert, Mallen, Reed, Schofield, Vigor-Hedderly and Watson

Milton Keynes Council (5)

Councillors Dransfield, Exon, Marland, Morris and Wilson

FA06

COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990

The Authority noted that the allocation of seats on the Authority was:

(i) Conservative Group:	11 seats	(64.7059%)
(ii) Liberal Democrat Group:	2 seats	(11.7647%)
(iii) Labour Group:	2 seats	(11.7647%)
(iv) UK Independence Party	1 seat	(5.8823%)
(v) Independent Group	1 seat	(5.8823%)

- (b) Committee Matters – Committee Appointments

RESOLVED –

That the following Committees be appointed and seats allocated, as follows:

- (a) Executive Committee (8 members):

- (i) Conservatives – 5 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 1 seat
- (iii) Labour – 1 seat
- (iv) Ungrouped Member – 1 seat

- (b) Overview and Audit Committee (9 members):

- (i) Conservatives – 6 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 1 seat
- (iii) Labour – 1 seat
- (iv) Ungrouped Member – 1 seat

2. That the following Members be appointed to the Executive Committee:

Councillors Busby, Dransfield, Gomm, Lambert, Marland, Morris, Reed, Schofield

3. That the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee:

Councillors Bendyshe-Brown, Clarke, Exon, Glover, Huxley, Mallen, Vigor-Hedderly, Watson and Wilson

Councillor Wilson moved the following recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Marland:

"That the Authority request the Overview and Audit Committee for 2015/16 to consider appointing a member of a minority party as Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee."

On being put to the vote the recommendation was declared lost with 2 Members voting in favour, 11 Members voting against and 2 Members abstaining from voting.

FA07

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Authority considered possible dates for its meetings and meetings of its committees during 2015/16.

RESOLVED –

1. That meetings of the Authority be held on Wednesday 14 October 2015, 16 December 2015, Wednesday 10 February 2016 and Wednesday 8 June 2016, all at 11 a.m.
2. That meetings of the Executive Committee be held on Wednesday 29 July 2015, Wednesday 16 September 2015, Wednesday 18 November 2015, Wednesday 3 February 2016, Wednesday 16 March 2016 and Wednesday 11 May 2016, all at 10 a.m.
3. That meetings of the Overview and Audit Committee be held on Wednesday 15 July 2015, Wednesday 23 September 2015, Wednesday 2 December 2015 and Wednesday 9 March 2016, all at 10 a.m.

FA08

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Authority considered the appointment of representatives to outside bodies:

RESOLVED –

1. That Councillor Busby be appointed as the Authority's representative to the Local Government Association Annual Conference.
2. That Councillors Busby and Dransfield be appointed as the Authority's representatives to the Local Government Association Fire Commission.
3. That Councillor Busby be appointed as the Authority's representative to the Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference.
4. That Councillor Busby be appointed as the Authority's representative to the Combined Fire Authorities Conference.
5. That Councillors Dransfield and Reed be appointed as the Authority's representatives on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Joint Committee.
6. That Councillors Busby and Morris be nominated as substitute members on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – Joint Committee.

FA09**LEAD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Authority considered the allocation of Lead Member responsibilities.

RESOLVED –

That Members be appointed as Lead Members for 2015/16 as follows:

Responsibility	Lead Member
Community Protection	Councillor Morris
Human Resources, Equality and Diversity	Councillor Reed
Finance, IT, Property, Procurement and Control	Councillor Dransfield
Health and Safety, Corporate Risk	Councillor Schofield
Resource Management	Councillor Gomm

FA10**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES****(a) Overview and Audit Committee – 11 March 2015**

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Overview and Audit Committee held on 11 March 2015 relating to:

Protocol on Member and Officer Relations

The Chairman of the Overview and Audit Committee introduced the report and asked the Authority to note that the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations had to be reviewed every four years. There were no major changes, but it now reflected the fact that the Overview and Audit Committee had taken on the responsibility of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the revised Protocol on Member and Officer Relations be adopted.

(b) Executive Committee – 18 March 2015

The Authority considered the recommendations of the Executive Committee held on 18 March 2015 relating to:

2015-20 Corporate Plan

The Head of Service Development introduced the report and advised members that in December 2014 the Authority had agreed the final version of the Public Safety Plan and this report set out the detail of the plan and how the organisation would be developed over the next five years and beyond.

The plan restates the Authority's vision for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to be the safest place to live work and travel. The success of the plan would be measured by a suite of performance measures which were based on outcomes that would make a real difference to the public that it served.

The Authority was also asked to note that various features of the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan were attracting interest from other fire and rescue services.

RESOLVED:

That the 2015-20 Corporate Plan be approved.

(Councillors Glover, Mallen and Watson left the meeting)

FA11

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ROYAL BERKSHIRE AND OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

The Chairman introduced the report by advising members that a good example of shared services across the three fire and rescue services was the fire control project. He was pleased to note there were a lot of other areas of informal sharing taking place. It was agreed by the three senior elected members across the three services that more could be done and now was the right time to bring forward a Memorandum of Understanding for future opportunities.

The Chief Fire Officer reiterated to members that the Authority was pushing forward all the time in terms of collaboration across the three services including Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The fire control project showed that there were no borders with regard to mobilising, as the mobilising system chooses the quickest vehicle wherever that is, which would ensure better quality, resilience and efficiencies going forward.

The Memorandum of Understanding was not legally binding, but an opportunity for the Authority to get the best for its communities and was a platform to acquire more transformational funding from government.

RESOLVED –

That the principles within the MOU of collaboration between the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services be accepted for signature by the Chairman.

FA12

SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF PAY

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised Members that the support services staff were under local terms and conditions and over the last two years, supported by a members working party, a review of terms and conditions had been carried out, along with a full equal pay audit and the outcomes had been put in place in September 2014.

Following this it was always intended to carry out a salary review of base pay and it was felt the time was now right for the Strategic Management Board to award a pay review. It was done in line with the principles that members had agreed as part of the Authority pay policy of transparency, equality and affordability. Pay awards had to be affordable, realistic and in line with markets so that the Authority could attract and retain the right calibre of staff.

RESOLVED:

That the decision to make a 1 per cent pay award to support services staff, back dated to July 2014 be noted.

FA13

SCHEME MANAGER DISCRETIONS FOR THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2015

The Director of People and Organisational Development introduced the report and advised members that the new firefighters pension scheme was introduced in April 2015. It would be a phased transfer into the scheme from April 2015 through to 2022, but over 60% of the Authority's firefighters including 'on call' firefighters had transferred into the scheme on the first day.

With any pension scheme there were usually a set of discretions and for this scheme there were 52 which the scheme manager (the Authority) could take a view on. This report covered the three discretions that need to be in place at the start of the scheme. Of the other 49 discretions, a significant number of them were not needed until 2022.

RESOLVED -

That the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme 2015 discretions policy statement be agreed and adopted.

FA14

EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

The Vice Chairman informed members that the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme was a national, Government led programme designed to provide effective operational communications systems for all emergency services and responders.

The transition in service was due to start in 2017 and at this stage it was anticipated that the Authority would cut over to the new system in 2018.

It was anticipated that there may be financial implications for the Authority. However, the amount and the future funding mechanism were unknown at this stage.

RESOLVED:

1. That the ESMCP programme and progress to date be noted
2. That the fact that potential costs to the Authority have yet to be identified be noted.

(Councillor Peter Marland left the meeting)

FA15

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 1 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the local government act 1972 as the Exempt Minutes contained information relating to an individual; and paragraph 2 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the local government act 1972 as it also contained information which was likely to reveal the identity of an individual; and paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the local government act 1972 as it also contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person; and paragraph 5 of part 1 of schedule 12a of the local government act 1972 as it also contained information in respect of which claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings; and on those grounds it was considered the need to keep information exempt outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, so that the meeting could consider the following matter:

Agenda Item FA16 – Exempt Minutes

FA16 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 18 February 2015, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Authority noted that the next meeting of the Fire Authority is to be held on Wednesday 14 October 2015 at 11.00am.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 11.25AM