



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022 AT 11 AM.

Present: Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Darlington, Exon, Hall, Hopkins (Vice Chairman), Hussain, Lambert (part), Marland, Rouse (Chairman), Stuchbury and Walsh

Officers: M Osborne (Acting Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), C Bell (Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer), S Tuffley (Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), P Mould (Area Commander), C Montague (Station Commander), P Skinner (Station Commander), P Scanes (Group Commander), J Cook (Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Remotely: M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Hussain (Deputy Director of Finance and Assets)

Apologies: Councillors Adoh (joined the meeting remotely), McLean (joined the meeting remotely) and Waite

The Chairman advised the Authority that the meeting was being recorded and would be uploaded on to the Authority's YouTube channel after the meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vIiv7bh1Q>

(At the request of the Chairman the meeting observed a minute's silence in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)

FA18 NEW MEMBER OF AUTHORITY AND APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Adoh be appointed onto the Overview and Audit Committee.

FA19 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 15 June 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment, at FA12, of:

‘A Member asked why ‘the environment’ was not on the Corporate Plan’ to;

‘A Member proposed that ‘the environment’ be included on the Corporate Plan’.

FA20**(A) MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

FA08 - The Director of Legal and Governance advised that under appointments to committees and as already noted, there had been a change in Membership. On the 14 July 2022 the Leader of Buckinghamshire Council replaced Councillor Irwin with Councillor Adoh onto the Fire Authority. Councillor Adoh had subsequently been appointed to the Overview and Audit Committee as a substantive Member at this meeting.

FA14 – The Director of Legal and Governance advised that with regard to the Home Office White Paper Consultation, a response had been submitted on behalf of the Authority and circulated to the Group Leaders.

(B) CHAIRMAN’S AND VICE CHAIRMAN’S RESPONSIBILITIES (ANNUAL MEETING, 15 JUNE 2022 MINUTE FA11)

RESOLVED –

That the Chairman’s and Vice Chairman’s responsibilities be noted.

FA21**DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

None.

FA22**CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that:

Wing Commander Jenny Dennis was attending the meeting today to present the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award to the Authority. After the award had been presented to the Chairman, the Chairman extended his thanks, on behalf of the Authority, to all Officers who had worked hard to achieve the award.

Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award Presentation

On 6 October, the Chairman along with Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer Calum Bell and Group Commander Shaun Cunningham attended the prestigious Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award presentation onboard HMS Warrior, Historic Dockyard, Portsmouth. The Chairman received the Gold Award Certificate on behalf of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority on the Gun Deck of HMS Warrior, which was followed by a sunset ceremony performed by the Band of The Royal Marines.

Chairman’s Activities since the last meeting of the Fire Authority

Further to previously mentioned activities, the Chairman has undertaken additional duties representing the Authority since its last meeting. These have included visits to Fire Stations across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to meet with and hear from firefighters, and further visits are planned. In July, he met with Matt Parr from HMICFRS, to discuss the most recent inspection report; attended the Long Service Awards ceremony; and attended the firefighter graduation ceremony at the Fire Service College with the Chief Fire Officer. In

August, he met with local and regional representatives of the FBU, along with the Chief Fire Officer. In September, he represented the Service, along with Area Commander Simon Tuffley and the Ceremonial Team, at the Annual Firefighters Memorial Trust Service in London, and laid a wreath at the Memorial in St Paul's.

State Funeral

Area Commander Calum Bell was selected to be one of the 16 Fire representatives covering all fire and rescue services across the United Kingdom as part of the Civilian Services Contingent (CSC) who took part in the state funeral for the Queen on Monday 19 September 2022. Calum, along with all the other members of the Contingent, spent four days preparing for the funeral, starting with an all-night rehearsal covering the whole route, followed by three days at Pirbright Barracks being “drilled” by the Army’s finest instructors. On the day itself, Calum marched a total of 3.2 miles during the procession, where he was flanked by members from other services as well as the band of the Royal Marines. The procession route saw him start at Wellington Barracks and head to Westminster Abbey, from where the CSC marched behind the Household Cavalry who were escorting the Gun Carriage all the way to Wellington Arch. This saw the procession head down Whitehall, Horse Guards Parade and The Mall, past Buckingham Palace, before ending at the Arch where the monarch was transported by car to her final burial place at St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle. Calum described it as one of the most intense events and definitely the proudest moment of his 32 year career in the Fire Service.

Workforce Planning

The Service has recently refreshed our Workforce Planning group to oversee both short- and medium-term plans for our workforce which includes the recruitment and retention of staff. Following the increase in funding approved at the February 2022 Fire Authority meeting, the Service increased the Wholetime operational establishment from 280 to 300. The 20 new operational roles will all be based on station supporting appliance availability. Utilising several recruitment routes including apprenticeships and transfers, we are on track to achieve the new establishment by the end of the financial year.

Wholetime Firefighters

Human Resources (HR) launched a Wholetime Recruitment campaign in April 2022, together with the help of Training School, Marketing and Communications and the Organisational Development Team. The campaign attracted 172 applicants including existing On-Call Firefighters. Applicants were required to undertake tests to verify their technical and practical competence. Eighteen successful candidates were invited to the Open day events that took place over the summer months and a ‘Brew with a Crew’ evening, which was arranged by HR Projects Station Commander Montague. This was received extremely well by the candidates and Crew in attendance, so plans are in place to arrange a similar event for the next cohort; due to start in March 2023. The eighteen candidates joined the Service on 3 October 2022, for their induction and attend their Firefighter Foundation Development Programme (FFDP) course on 10 October 2022.

Within this campaign we received five applications, two internally who were already serving as On-Call Firefighters. They were successful in the process, and we were able to secure two additional places at the Fire Service College, for them to attend an FFDP commencing on 1 September 2022. The other three applicants were deemed too competent to become an Apprentice and were moved over to the Transferee intake. The latest Wholetime Firefighter recruitment campaign closed on 2 October 2022, for commencement on 1 March 2023. We received 90 applications. Following the previous Cohort recruitment (due to commence on 3 October 2022), we have eleven successful candidates and who have been rolled over to commence in the March 2023 intake, requiring us to only recruit for six places on the next course.

We also continue to recruit across all our On Call stations with five recruits having started on the 1 September 2022.

Transferee Firefighters

HR launched Transferee Opportunities for Competent On-Call Firefighters to apply for the migration to a Wholetime Firefighter in June 2022. This attracted 58 applicants internally and externally. An internal recruitment process was undertaken, and six candidates were successful and commenced their three-week conversion course on 5 September 2022 with the Training team. They were joined with the other three competent On-Call Firefighter candidates who had applied for the Wholetime campaign. The external candidate recruitment process, resulted in offers of employment for six external candidates. The candidates will commence a three-week conversion course with the Training team on 5 December 2022.

The Training team is committed to increasing the Services operational establishment. To achieve this, the team will aim to deliver -

- Two FFDP per year using Service instructors at the Fire Service College
- Two competent Firefighter transfer courses per year. The Service has developed a new three-week conversion course to support internal and external applicants transferring from On-Call to full-time roles. This course could also be utilised to support employees returning to work following long term absences, sabbaticals, or maternity leave.
- Two On-Call training courses per year, increasing the establishment of our On-Call and providing greater resilience during periods of peak demand as per the Resourcing Model.

Assessment and Development Centres

Crew, Watch and Station Commander assessment and development centres were held week commencing 17 September 2022 and included an On Call specific weekend. Well done to all those who attended, regardless of the result, your commitment to your development and want to progress your career is commendable and we will continue to do all we can to support your career aspirations. On Monday 3 October, we hosted the IFE examinations at West Ashland Fire Station, 55 staff members attended and sat an extraordinary 67 papers on the day – again congratulations to all those that sat exams and we look forward to seeing you attend the next development centre. The next phase (phase 2) of the Leadership and Management Development Programme

commenced in September, with cohort 1 completing their 4 day programme on the 29 and 30 September. Phase 2 includes rolling the programme out to all remaining established managers, this includes Support and Operational Managers. In addition, two senior managers within the service have been successful in securing places on to the sector's national Executive Leadership Programme and have commenced their attendance on the programme. The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process assesses the need for staff training at least annually. This TNA is translated into prioritised learning programmes, approved by the Training Strategy Group and scrutinised to ensure alignment with business priorities, business continuity succession plans and approved budgets. In April 2022, the Training Strategy Group met to review the proposal for allocating funding against the 2022/23 TNA and were able to approve £220,000 of investment into staff training.

Financial Position

The Budget Monitoring Report April 2022 – July 2022 was presented to the special meeting of the Executive Committee on 7 October 2022, showing a projected year-end underspend of £134k. However, at the meeting it was noted there have been subsequent events that have impacted on this forecast:

- The forecast underspend as at the end of September is now £847k, an increase of £713k
- The announcement of the energy price cap for non-domestic customers has reduced the forecast spend for the year on gas and electricity by £400k
- The recent increases in the Bank of England base rate has increased our forecast income from treasury management investments by £170k
- The remainder of the increase is predominantly due to higher operational leavers than originally forecast, as well as a few new support staff vacancies

In addition, the following will need to be factored into the forecast for future months:

- On 4 October 2022, the UK National Employers for Fire & Rescue Services have agreed to make an improved pay offer of five per cent on all basic pay rates and continual professional development payments. It is forecast that this will cost approximately £450k for the remainder of the year (as pay awards are backdated to July) reducing the forecast underspend to circa £400k (about 1.2% variance against the budget)
- While a 5% pay award can be absorbed this year, it is because of the recent non-domestic energy support announcement and assumes no further financial pressures emerging. However, without additional funding through either grant funding and/or precept flexibility in the forthcoming Local Government Finance Settlement, the Service would not be on a sustainable footing in future years.

FA23

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES:

Special Meeting of the Executive Committee – 7 October 2022

(a) Performance Management Q1 2022/23

The Chairman introduced the report and advised Members that it was considered by the Executive Committee at its Special Meeting on 7 October 2022. At the Annual Fire Authority Meeting in June 2022, the Chairman had asked that

Members had visibility of the Service's key performance indicators, so that scrutiny of the Service could be improved.

The Chairman advised Members this was the first report of Performance Measures, it was a work in progress, and information had been brought together following work undertaken during the Summer by the Senior Management team and Lead Members.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised Members that historically the Service had brought performance measures to Members across various reports and at different frequencies. Working with staff and Members, this had been combined and a range of measures built covering the whole Service, in one report. The measures showed delivery against objectives and enablers in the Corporate Plan. Three measures had been highlighted as good performance and areas that needed focus. Deliberate fires to non-domestic premises, fire and wellness visits were ones to focus on and serious accidental dwelling fires was a positive result. The measures continued to be developed and refined with updates being provided quarterly to Members.

RESOLVED –

That the Performance measures for 2022/23 are noted.

FA24

SUMMER PRESSURES

The Chairman advised Members that this summer, the Service faced a significant number of pressures due to the wildfires and field fires that were experienced. He had asked officers to prepare a report outlining the lessons learned from those summer pressures and how it impacted the Service.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that on the 19 July 2022 the Service faced the busiest and most challenging periods of operational demand it had ever faced. Following an extreme period of hot dry weather, temperatures on that day reached a record high of 40.3°C. A Major incident (defined as an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder) were declared in 15 fire and rescue services across the country, including Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and neighbouring services in Bedfordshire, London and Hertfordshire, all as a result of the devastating outbreak of fires. During this period in July, the Service was also dealing with three other significant fires and two serious road traffic collisions (RTC's). Three weeks later there were similar challenges. On the morning of 8 August, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) had received 65 calls, the majority of which were to 'fires in the open' and by 2pm they were receiving approximately 1 call per minute.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that this report was an interim one. As was customary, following the response to any notable incident or event, the Service carried out a range of debriefing processes, all intended to highlight good practice and areas for improvement. Officers were mid-way through the debriefing process, and whilst the Service wouldn't normally start to introduce any 'learnings' until after the debriefing process had concluded, officers had taken the decision to introduce some early initial changes. Cool

boxes to keep the bottled water cold, had been issued along with electrolyte tablets to restore levels after any periods of exertion. The roll out of personal issue face masks providing a higher level of respiratory protection had been accelerated. Other areas that had been identified at these early stages of the debriefing process which would be followed up in due course were, Preparedness and Resilience; Response; Equipment; Procedures; Welfare, Specialist Support; Comms, Health and Safety; Prevention – landowners, standing and harvested crop and Local, Regional and National levels of involvement for some of the above.

The Chairman on behalf of Members thanked all colleagues across the Service for their outstanding work throughout the summer. It was a very challenging time; the report outlined just how challenging and how well the Service responded.

A Member asked that climate change was leading to extreme weather conditions, both drought and flooding and everything in between. What was the Service doing to broaden this review, particularly with other authorities.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the Service was actively engaged with partner agencies, and other fire and rescue services. There had already been a meeting with other key partners both emergency response and local authorities, across the whole Thames Valley, looking at how to plan and prepare for winter pressures and that would run in tandem to the work being undertaken around those particular challenges faced during the extreme heat.

The Vice Chairman advised Members that with his responsibilities around the climate emergency, he had already had discussions with the Director of Finance and Assets and other officers around how the Service could incorporate the findings from this report into recommendations as the Service progressed through the year. While this was an exceptional summer, this was the norm in parts of southern Europe. Could the Service look at how these countries react on an annual basis to these eventualities. Also, out of the findings of this report, could officers advise third parties i.e., farmers, in the way in which they plant crops, add in breaks etc. with more work given to prevention.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that the Chief Fire Officer had already made contact with other fire and rescue services who were starting to specialise in this work, and officers were looking at bringing them into the service to see what could be learnt from them, not just in terms of equipment, but also in terms of deployment and their response models. During that summer, the Prevention Team had engaged with a number of farmers and land owners around how they stored their crops and officers would continue to explore and engage with them.

A Member asked whether it would be possible to include some analysis on what caused these major incidents, clearly the drought was the key factor, but what actually triggered the incident. The number of events that happened within Buckinghamshire was relatively low to analyse, so perhaps looking nationally and then how this was fed into the prevention programme.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that this would be included in the final report.

RESOLVED –

1 That the pressure experienced by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service during the prolonged hot weather through this summer, as outlined in this report, be noted.

2 That the Authority receive a further report once all the debriefing and review processes have been concluded.

FA25

2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN: YEAR 3 UPDATE

The Chairman advised that as Members would recall, a first draft of this was tabled at the Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority on 15 June 2022. Following that review, officers were asked to make some amendments and additions to the plan for consideration at this meeting.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that as Members would have seen from the resolution in the minutes of the June Fire Authority meeting, officers were asked to integrate some elements from other aspects of the overall planning framework, in particular those relating to the Public Safety Plan, Environment and Climate Change Plan and also the HMICFRS Action Plan. Officers had endeavoured to address these requirements and as Members would see, a diagram had been added which showed how all the various plans fit together and relate to one another.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that at Section 8 which contained the Schedule of Key Projects and Tasks, actions relating to the two HMICFRS Causes of Concern, arising from the 2021 inspection had been added, and also the Climate Change Action Plan. Finally, the performance measures designed to gauge progress towards the achievement of the Authority's Strategic Objectives and the effectiveness of its Strategic Enablers, to align with the new performance monitoring framework and associated indicators, had been included. There were some other amendments to the text which were shaded grey where they appear in the document.

RESOLVED –

That the 2020-25 Corporate Plan Update be approved by the Authority.

FA26

PREVENTION STRATEGY 2022-2025

The Chairman advised Members that the existing Prevention Strategy was still within its review period, but with the introduction in July 2022 of the Prevention Fire Standard and the National Fire Chief Council's Prevention Strategy and the findings of the internal prevention evaluations and the HMICFRS tranche two report, had necessitated the review and update of the Prevention Strategy which now aligned to the Public Safety Plan.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that as the Chairman had mentioned, the Prevention Strategy was still within period, however, a number of things came into effect over 2021 which had prompted

the update of that Strategy and the revised one presented today. The Strategy was developed in cognisance of the third element of the Prevention Fire Standard which specifically stated that the Service needed to develop a Prevention Strategy and Plan, with the flexibility to proactively respond and adapt to the changing needs of the community, and for this to be supported by a named lead for Prevention. There were key changes within the Strategy which included the division on the prevention activity focus into four areas; safer homes, safer neighbourhoods, safer roads and safer environment. Whilst that doesn't specifically reference any activity related to children or young people within those four themes, work with children and young people was integral to all of them.

Members noted that since the report was drafted, the economic situation in the country had changed dramatically and people may choose to heat their houses in different ways.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that the National Fire Chiefs Council had produced a climate change support pack which recognised some of the cost of living implications. It had only just been released, but it was something the Service would be rolling out with some timely messages over the winter. The Service also had links with both Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Councils who had set up mechanisms to support some of the difficulties they were foreseeing with either cooking or heating over the winter period.

Members asked if there were any material to raise awareness of these risks, it was given to them, so they could advertise it through their networks.

A Member asked around emerging risks, and as highlighted in the HMICFRS report around the risk of financial inability to put money into prevention work, should this be highlighted as an emerging risk.

The Chairman asked officers to add it as an emerging risk. Subject to that requested amendment it was:

RESOLVED –

That the Prevention Strategy 2022-2025 be approved.

FA27

SAFETY CENTRE FUNDING AGREEMENT

(Councillor Lambert left the meeting)

The Chairman introduced the report and advised Members that following a decision made at the Business Transformation Board on 10 February 2022, any further decision on the continuation of the Safety Centre funding agreement was deferred until the Autumn to enable the Safety Centre to evidence one full year of delivery following its reopening after the national lockdowns and response to Covid-19.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that the Safety Centre was a scenario based learning resource based in Milton Keynes. The Service was a key member in establishing it, over 25 years ago. Since then, the Service had utilised the Safety Centre to deliver education to young people through a series of funding agreements. This report recommends a three year funding agreement of £25k per annum. This would facilitate the delivery of

education to a minimum of 4000 children and young people in accordance with the heads of terms defined in the report.

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that as mentioned by the Chairman, this was deferred from the routine review point in Quarter 4, to enable a full year of trading to be reviewed following the appointment of a new CEO, and also a period where the centre was forced to close to accepting young people because of the demands of Covid. Whilst the centre was not able to accept or run school visits on its premises, it utilised the time to refresh the premises with new branding and replace an outdated scenario with a new street scenario and diversify to improve its outreach offering. The new CEO had a very clear sense of how the staff at the centre could educate and improve the outcomes for children and young people, and had continued to build on the outreach programme so that children and young people could be engaged with offsite, as well as through the scenarios. This also increased their ability to deliver to multiple groups of children at the same time. Fundamentally, the Safety Centre enabled the Service to discharge some of its requirements to educate through qualified staff and well developed programmes.

The Chairman advised Members that after the February 2023 Fire Authority meeting which was being held in Milton Keynes, a visit to the Safety Centre would be arranged.

The Leader of Milton Keynes Council advised Members that Milton Keynes Council also funded the Safety Centre, and the Safety Centre would be receiving some Section 106 money from a local development, if any Member was worried about the reduction in funding from the Service.

A Member asked if there was an opportunity for young people and people from the different backgrounds identified to have the time to visit the centre and did the centre have data to reflect how many groups were attending the centre and encouraging them to think about the Service and how they can get involved. The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager advised Members that in terms of Equality Impact Assessment and the children attending the centre, there had been a number of schemes put in place over recent years where the centre had provided, and was providing over this half term period, additional sessions for those children who were living in hotels under the Afghan Resettlement programme. This had been funded through the Community Foundation. Looking at how the Service recruits in the future, ultimately, it related to status of people within those groups as to whether they would be able to be recruited in the future. The centre was also targeting schools who had not engaged previously, or were in hard to reach areas, and looked at areas of deprivation and the areas where there were higher number of children taking free school meals, these numbers could be used to inform matters in the future.

RESOLVED –

A funding agreement with the Safety Centre of £25,000 a year for a three-year term commencing on 1 October 2022 on the terms set out in this report be approved.

FA28

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2020-2025 YEAR TWO UPDATE

(Councillor Lambert re-joined the meeting)

The Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance introduced the report and advised Members this was a year two update of a five year Strategy.

The Station Commander HR Projects advised Members that the People Strategy 2020-25 was required to be reviewed and an annual update presented to the Authority. On 13 October 2021 the Authority approved the People Strategy employee engagement roadshow as part of the People Strategy - Year One Review. These sessions were completed within the planned timescales and achieved the objective of raising the profile of the Service's People Strategy. The information was delivered through a range of methods including face to face presentations, virtual sessions and through information factsheets which were published on the Service's intranet and promoted to harder to reach part-time employees.

The Station Commander HR Projects advised Members there were a range of workstreams which support the five key areas identified in the Strategy. These were being delivered with a focus on addressing areas for improvement or causes for concern in the People Section of the HMICFRS inspection report. Key areas to note were, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, there had been a renewed approach to community engagement following the impact of the global pandemic. The Service had resumed a wide range of public facing activities, delivering new methods of engagement and interaction within its communities.

Employee Engagement, the Service had worked to understand and address key points raised in the Culture Survey which was completed in January 2022. The introduction of the 'feedback loop' had allowed employees to better understand the process of affecting organisational change. This was achieved by delivering Service-wide listening workshops and providing timely updates on key themes identified. Organisational Development and Resourcing - Delivery of the Leadership and Management Development Programme (LMDP). This had provided a measurable level of leadership training and knowledge across all levels of the Service's management structure, giving its leaders the knowledge and empowerment required to manage more effectively. Training, Learning and Development, there has been a significant commitment to delivering a range of wholtime recruitment, transferee and On-Call firefighter courses, supporting the Service's strategic objective of increasing the operational establishment. Employee Health and Wellbeing, the Service's Mental Wellbeing Support Network has been reviewed and updated, providing a robust support structure across the Service. 37 Mental Health Champions had been trained to provide a range of support to employees.

The Station Commander HR Projects advised Members that the report identified objectives for Year three of the Strategy. These objectives would allow the Service to measure and record progress made in each key area, identify new opportunities to develop the People Strategy, and improve how it supported and developed both existing and future employees.

A Member asked when attending events such as MK Pride, although this was about increasing equality, diversity and inclusion, was it also used as an opportunity for recruitment.

The Station Commander HR Projects advised that the challenge was identifying whether the Service wanted to engage with the event or to recruit. The Service undertook a wide range of recruitment activities, on call awareness days, have a go days, open days, and the recruitment team attended apprenticeship shows and visited schools. Part of the challenge was making sure that people could access recruitment information at any time.

A Member asked if there were any plans for investment at High Wycombe Fire Station.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that in terms of High Wycombe Fire Station, it was probably the station that needed the most investment. It hadn't been invested in for a number of years, mainly due to discussions with the District Council about the long term viability of the site and whether it needed to be moved or not. A condition survey had been undertaken and identified there was a need for £500k worth of investment, which was programmed over the next couple of years, as part of the upcoming Property Strategy that would come to Members.

The Acting Chief Fire Officer advised Members that regarding supporting its staff, the Service had engaged with both Buckinghamshire Council and Milton Keynes Council looking at the programmes they were putting in place to support their staff, the Service would ensure it provided the best support possible for its staff during these difficult times.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that in terms of staff wellbeing, staff had access to occupational health, articles had been written on financial wellbeing, there was a Welfare Officer, employee assistance programme and the Firefighters Charity.

The Chairman asked to what extent the Government Apprenticeship Levy was being utilised by the Service.

The Head of Human Resources confirmed the apprenticeship levy was fully utilised, for operational and non-operational roles. An annual report had been presented to the Executive Committee.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised he would come back to Members with a more detailed report on how the Service was progressing with the apprenticeship framework, and its successes.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of this update and progress made in the key areas are noted.

FA29 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

It was moved and resolved that the public and press representatives from the meeting by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contain information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the minutes contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the Authority); and on these grounds it is considered, at this moment in time, that the need to keep information exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

All Officers apart from the Director of Legal and Governance, Head of Human Resources, and the Democratic Services Officer, left the meeting.

FA30 EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 15 June 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 7 December 2022 at 11am, at the Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.00 PM.