



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2022 AT 11 AM.

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

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development), S Tuffley (Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO), P Mould (Area Commander), S Gowanlock (Corporate Planning Manager), D Cadwell (Health and Safety Advisor), S Hawkins (Group Commander Community and Business Policy), C Newman (Data Intelligence Team Manager) R Smith (Procurement Manager), K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer) and M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets)

Apologies: Councillors Bagge 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/UCWmIXPWAscxpL3vliv7bh1Q>

FA32 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 12 October 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA33 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

FA26 - The Director of Legal and Governance advised that a Member had asked if there was any promotional material that could be made available to Members of the Authority to raise awareness of the risks of various heating materials during the winter months and had been advised that the

information had been circulated to the Member who had requested it.

FA27 – The Director of Legal and Governance advised that where the Authority approved the Safety Centre Funding Agreement, the Chairman had requested a visit be organised for Members of the Authority after the February Fire Authority Meeting which was being held in Milton Keynes Council Chambers. An invitation had been sent to Members and additional information would be provided nearer the time.

FA28 – The Director of Legal and Governance advised that a Member had raised concerns about the condition of High Wycombe fire station and he understood that the Deputy Director of Finance and Assets and the Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT visited the station yesterday and the Lead Member would give an update.

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT advised Members that it was a very productive visit, they undertook a full tour of every room in the station. There was already in place prior to the question being raised at the last meeting, a plan to significantly improve the facilities. The majority of the improvements would be completed by March 2023 and he would return at the end of March to make sure the improvements had been completed on time.

(Councillor Darlington joined the meeting)

FA34 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None.

FA35 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that the Chairman's Announcements below had already been circulated, but he wanted to firstly congratulate the Members from Milton Keynes on receiving their letters patent, and also draw attention to the item on the independent review of culture at London Fire Brigade. As he was sure all Members would agree, it was a difficult report to read, with some quite shocking accounts. In the Chairman's Announcements it set out the steps the Chairman had asked the Chief Fire Officer and senior management team to take, to enable Members of the Authority to gain assurance that there were not

Lead
Member for
Finance and
Assets,
Information
Security and
IT

similar issues with the culture in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The Chief Fire Officer echoed what the Chairman had said about not being complacent about our own culture. Members of staff were being encouraged to come forward if they had any complaints or thoughts about the process. The Service already held staff surveys, but these would be increased in the coming years, if a budget bid was successful. The ED&I group would be looking at the recommendations in the report and working through the implications. There was also a Leadership day to talk to managers in the service about the report and the next steps. The day after the report was released, the Chief Fire Officer produced a VLOG which had gone out to all members of staff.

Knife Angel

The National Monument Against Violence and Aggression will be in Milton Keynes from 3 December 2022 to 7 January 2023 and the Safety Centre is one of the three major partners involved in the thirty days of action, starting with the opening ceremony. Staff and volunteers from the Safety Centre will be delivering a wide-reaching program of knife crime education to coincide with the Knife Angel being in Milton Keynes before it moves on to Slough in the New Year.

Annual Service of Remembrance

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Ceremonial team, and colleagues from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service recently travelled to the Belgium town of Ypres for the annual service of Remembrance. Each year on Armistice Day, a large parade is held through the town, where military personnel, cadet forces, and fire services from the UK all join to remember those lost during the First World War, and subsequent conflicts. Closer to home, many staff represented the Service at Remembrance events held in our towns and villages, and in the City of Milton Keynes. Group Commander Shaun Cunningham also represented BFRS at the Cenotaph in London, where the Remembrance Sunday commemorations were led for the first time by our new King.

Letter Patent MK

On 15 August 2022, the Crown Office announced that the Queen had ordained by letters patent that the (then)

Borough of Milton Keynes should have city status. On 18 October 2022, members of the senior management team attended the Civic Offices of Milton Keynes to witness the Lord Lieutenant issuing the Mayor with their official City Status, which was a fantastic and historic moment for the people of Milton Keynes.

Chief Fire Officer

The Chief Fire Officer attended the Asian Fire Services Association conference (AFSA) and took part in a round table about the future of diversity and inclusion in the Service.

The conference also received an excellent presentation from Dylan Bettles-Hill (BFRS Business Fire Safety Inspector) entitled 'Transitioning at Work', who has been asked to present at a number of fire and rescue services following his excellent presentation.

The Chief Fire Officer represented the Service at Thames Valley Police (TVP) for the White Ribbon event where the mission was to prevent violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes. He also pledged that BFRS would sign up and work through the accreditation process.

Operational Recruitment

The Workforce Planning Group meet on a monthly basis to progress plans for our operational recruitment:

Wholetime Firefighters - The latest Wholetime interviews have been completed; they are being assessed as to who will progress to the next stage for the March 2023 course. The aim is to recruit eighteen Wholetime Firefighters, of which three are in the 'pool' from the last recruitment intake.

We've secured an additional six candidates onto a January 2023 course at the Fire Service College. All six places have been offered and accepted. The final employment checks, medical and kit fittings are being completed.

Transferee Firefighters - The six external transferees that were recruited from the June 2022 recruitment intake, have all now been cleared to commence in role. They will be joining the Service on 5 December 2022 for their three-week conversion course with Training School, before being placed at Stations.

Armed Forces Cadets

Last week we held the penultimate cadet event for this year at Aylesbury Fire Station. We were joined by Councillor

Shade Adoh and Kate Lole, the Regional Employer Engagement Director for SERFCA (South East Reserve Forces' & Cadets Association). The session was a huge success and both have expressed interest in attending again next year. We recently had confirmation that the programme will be rolled out in High Wycombe commencing in the spring of 2023. GC Shaun Cunningham and AC Simon Tuffley also represented the Service at the Lord Lieutenant's Annual Cadet Awards Ceremony at the Oculus on 1 November.

Safety Centre

On Thursday 24 November, BFRS staff and the Vice Chairman attended the Safety Centre in the City of Milton Keynes to hear about the vital work to empower children and young people with early knife crime intervention education. Our continued investment in the Safety Centre will support not only fire safety education but also wider safety education. I look forward to visiting the Safety Centre with Members in the new year.

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

In November 2022, the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade was published, following work led by Nazir Afzal OBE. The report highlighted examples of shocking incidents that had been reported to the review, and a number of failures to ensure the culture was free from discrimination, unfairness and inequality. It made for very difficult reading for everyone connected with fire and rescue services and who cares passionately about the role they play in protecting our communities.

Following publication of the report, the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman immediately discussed the report and its findings, with an unequivocal shared view that we must not hold any complacency about the culture in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. The Chairman has asked the Chief Fire Officer to lead work to enable Members of the Authority to obtain the necessary assurance that our own culture is one that is free from discrimination, unfairness and inequality and to be clear on the steps to be taken where that is shown not to be. This will include assessing BFRS's own position against the 23 recommendations included in the LFB report. This work has commenced and there will be regular updates to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Group Leaders, as well as a detailed update to the next meeting of

the Executive Committee and subsequent Full Authority meeting.

Chairman's Activities

As well as the activities already listed, since the last Authority meeting the Chairman has continued to visit fire stations across the service, and in November attended a session with the Newport Pagnell boat team with Ben Everitt MP.

The Chairman has been involved in engaging with all Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes MP's on the issue of sustainable funding for the Service. Alongside this, the Chairman has engaged with the National Employers on the pay negotiations for Grey and Gold Book staff. The Chairman held his second meeting since taking post with local FBU representatives, along with the Chief Fire Officer, in November.

On 31 October 2022, the Chairman attended a national meeting of Fire Authority Chairs and Chief Fire Officers hosted by HMICFRS where a number of topics were covered including future inspection regime.

The Chairman laid a wreath on behalf of the Service at the Remembrance Day service in Chalfont St Giles.

The Chairman attended the two day LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Course in November. This course was free to all Fire Authority Members and was highly recommended to support our collective work in scrutinising the work of the Service.

Carol Service

The Annual Christmas Carol Service was taking place at St Mary's Church, Aylesbury, on Thursday 8 December 2022 at 7.30pm. The service will be followed by festive refreshments. It would be good to see as many Members as possible.

A Member congratulated the firefighters at the Blue Light Hub for making the White Ribbon promise and also the Chief Fire Officer and asked whether the Fire Authority, as part of its commitment to end violence and aggression towards women and girls and make a safer environment, could become White Ribbon UK Accredited, as part of the efforts of dealing with some of the cultural elements that the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer had been speaking about.

The Chief Fire Officer agreed and had attended the White Ribbon Accreditation for Thames Valley Police. In terms of the next steps, he had spoken to the Police and Crime Commissioner as he was Chair of the Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group and suggested that he shares the learnings from their accreditation process with all three of the Thames Valley fire and rescue services; and that the Chief Fire Officer would ensure that it was raised at the next meeting of the Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group

FA36 MANCHESTER AREAN INQUIRY PUBLICATION VERBAL UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Members would be aware of the tragic events that occurred on the 22 May 2017 when an attack took place at the Manchester Arena. A suicide bomber detonated his device in a publicly assessable area, adjacent to the arena bowl, as a concert by the singer Ariana Grande came to an end. The bomb killed 22 people who had attended the concert, or were waiting outside for those who had, and injured many more.

Following these tragic events, an independent public inquiry was established by the Home Secretary, on 22 October 2019, to investigate the deaths of the victims of the Arena attack. This was chaired by The Honourable Sir John Saunders.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that Volume 2 of the public inquiry report was published on 3 November 2022 and covered the emergency response element. Volume 1 covered Security for the Arena which was published previously in June 2021.

A number of recommendations had been made following the issues around the emergency response on the night. Many of the Volume 2 recommendations were in respect of national learning for police, ambulance, fire services and wider partners to consider, and to be considered by a number of bodies including the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), National Operational Learning (NOL) and Joint Operational Learning (JOL) and wider partners.

There were also specific recommendations made in respect of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and

Northwest Fire Control as well as for Local Resilience Forums.

Any national learning would feed back through the National Operations Committee and via the Local Resilience Forums structure of which the Service was embedded at all levels, and was well sighted and involved from both a strategic and operational perspective in respect of any national on more local changes.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised Members that there was an existing National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework for the Fire Service in England that supports fire and rescue services in dealing with major incidents. Within this framework, there were a number of National Resilience capabilities forged to deal with large scale incidents termed as 'new dimensions' incidents, for example Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) which was hosted here in Buckinghamshire, High Volume Pumping, Mass Decontamination and Detection Identification & Monitoring of Hazmat. In addition to these, Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) capabilities were located strategically across the country within fire and rescue services to support a national response to these types of events.

Whilst the Service does not host a specialist MTA response capability here in Buckinghamshire, all its responders had guidance and training on MTA at the appropriate level and were aligned across the Thames Valley, fully in compliance with the current Joint Operating Principles.

The Service had already identified and closed a number of gaps identified by Lord Kerslake's earlier report into the MEN Arena attack. The learning from this report fed into the Operational Assurance Improvement Plan as per normal practice, and in the same way the learning from the Grenfell Tower inquiry did.

The TVLRF executive was also sighted on the findings and were coordinating activity through the delivery and training, exercising and operational learning groups and via the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principal Leads.

A Member asked if there would be advice given to commercial and large venues across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Volume 1 published back in 2021 made recommendations for the

people who run Arenas and other big events. Those organisations should have taken the recommendations on board and implemented them. Also, when the Service was risk assessing those venues, those recommendations form part of that risk assessment.

FA37 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 9 NOVEMBER 2022

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022-2026 AND REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO CONTRACTS

The Procurement Manager advised Members that these two documents had been reviewed jointly as they fed into one another for the procurement activities across the Service. The existing Procurement Strategy expired in 2020, and the new strategy was deferred whilst awaiting the outcome of Brexit and subsequent changes to UK legislation relating to Public Procurement, which had further delays, and also some impact from the pandemic. Work had continued in the interim period, but there was a lapse between the last strategy and this one. The Strategy aligns to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Procurement Strategy which included a self- assessment that was carried out against the strategy. There were three key themes in the strategy, leadership, commercial practice and delivering local benefits. The Service assessed itself against those and set targets to be achieved throughout the duration of this strategy.

The Procurement Manager advised Members that one of the areas the Service was keen to focus on was the local benefits, social value and sustainability. The Service was proud of the fact that currently 58% of contracts were with SMEs, and the Service would like to continue to support and improve on it, and this strategy should support that.

During the Overview and Audit Committee meeting, a question was raised around which social value model was going to be used. The Service would be using the government social value model, which was published a while ago, and had five key themes running through it. The themes were there to be used optionally, however, the Service preferred to use it in its procurement where possible and where it was relevant.

The Procurement Manager advised that this strategy would be reviewed in 2025, but it may be sooner as the Service was

waiting for the latest UK Procurement Bill to go through Parliament, and there may come changes out of it that would need to update the strategy.

The Procurement Manager advised that the second document supports the strategy and was the review of Standing Orders Relating to Contracts. The main change to this document was the change from the current lowest threshold of £10k to take it up to £25k to align with the Service's collaborative partners, who already had a threshold of £25k. This would enable the Service to undertake more collaborative work, more efficiently if aligned with the same thresholds. The Service was also aligning with the latest government transparency requirements, which required all contracts to be published at a value of £25k and above. Training was being rolled out to staff involved in all areas of procurement activities to ensure lower value procurement activities were carried out compliantly. Also, Contract Management and Supplier Relationship Management training packages were to be provided for those officers responsible for the ongoing performance of established contracts.

A Member asked for more information on social value as in the report it said it was not considered important.

The Procurement Manager advised that was when the assessment was carried out several years ago. This strategy was for the Authority to develop and improve and to achieve the target of 'Mature.' The Procurement Manager advised that the Overview and Audit Committee could receive updates in respect of social value progress

Procurement
Manager

A Member asked about the challenge around SMEs. It was great the Authority was promoting more working with SMEs, but they cannot always compete with larger organisations. How does the Authority balance promoting more work with SMEs against the duty to obtain best value and lower costs which were often afforded by larger suppliers.

The Procurement Manager advised that when looking at procurement, officers would look at which market was the best fit and what were the different options. The Authority's spend was not huge compared to larger organisations, and when looking at tenders, they were often divided up and awarded in smaller contracts to smaller businesses.

When there were standard contracts, there would be no benefit in using a smaller organisation. When working with

larger companies, the Authority would use the Public Sector Framework and still get benefits, so it would depend on what was being procured.

RESOLVED: -

That the Authority be recommended to approve

1. The Procurement Strategy 2022-2026 (Appendix 1)
2. The Standing Orders Relating to Contracts as amended (Appendix 2)

FA38 2025-2030 SERVICE PLANNING

The Chairman advised that this report outlined the process and timescales for developing the next set of Service plans that would succeed the existing Public Safety and Corporate Plans.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that the current Service Plans, comprising of the five-year Public Safety and Corporate Plans, run out at the end of March 2025. Although that was a long way off, in planning cycle terms it was not, particularly in light of the feedback from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in relation to the current Public Safety Plan and also with the advent of the new Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Planning, together with an underpinning range of new risk analysis and management methodologies that were emerging. The analysis of these indicated that future planning would be a more data and resource intensive process than was previously the case. This meant the Authority needed to get the planning process underway if it was to be in a position to go live with new plans with effect from April 2025. Appendix 1 showed an outline process and timeline for production of the new plans which would cover the period 2025-2030. These would comprise of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), to align with the Fire Standard, and follow on Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that alongside the analytical and modelling work, there would be a public consultation process. The approach to this would be based on the 'Gunning Principles' which set out the key legal and good practice requirements for proper consultation which state they should "be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken; allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond; provide stakeholders with

sufficient background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and, be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken”.

To meet these requirements, the consultation would be conducted in two stages. The first ‘listening and engagement’ stage would be designed to explore public and other stakeholder perceptions of risk in the community, expectations of the Service and some of the potential ways that it might approach meeting the challenges that would be faced. The outcomes of this would be used to inform the development of the new CRMP which would then be subject to a full 12 week public consultation before being presented to the Authority along with the outcomes of the consultation and any recommended changes to the CRMP.

A Member asked whether, whilst the plan would run from 2025-2030, the evidential information would be looking further out than five years and also as the Authority was only two years into its current five year plan, how did the Authority ensure officers didn’t lose focus on the current one.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that officers do look further out, the national framework plan was a minimum of a three year period, but the Authority opts for a refresh every five years, given the scale and pace of changes associated with some of the large infrastructure projects such as HS2, and all the new housing developments in the local plans.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that what was in the current plan was being monitored and would be delivered.

RESOLVED –

1. That successor plan to the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan, be known as the ‘2025-2025 Community Risk Management Plan’.
2. That the provisional timescale for preparation of the 2025-2030 Community Risk Management and Corporate Plan’s be approved.
3. That any changes to the sequencing and timing of the 2025-2030 planning process be delegated to the Executive Committee for approval.

Councillor Stuchbury requested that his abstention be recorded in the Minutes.

FA39 HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY 2023-2027

The Health and Safety Adviser informed Members that this strategy set out the strategic health and safety objectives for the next four years and focused on how leadership was key in setting out the direction to improve health and safety and physical mental wellbeing in the workplace. This strategy sat alongside the wellbeing strategy and aligned with the Authority's Public Safety Plan. The mission statement was leading the way to a healthier and safer workforce. There were five strategic objectives: positive and effective leadership; drive improvement in health and safety performance; lead the way in reducing work related ill health, with a specific focus on mental health and stress; lead the way in protecting the environment and continue to drive a positive and effective health, safety and wellbeing culture.

This strategy was the foundation on which the Service could build on providing direction to all employees and relevant stakeholders on how it would improve health, safety and wellbeing, including culture, over the next four years.

A Member asked why mental health was not in the strategy.

The Head of Protection, Assurance and Development advised Members that mental health was part of the Wellbeing Strategy which covered those specific areas.

The Chairman noted that all areas of the Equality Impact Assessment were neutral, and he would like to have a better understanding of the approach that led to that outcome. The Chairman also wanted assurance that the Health and Safety Strategy environment was tracking any disproportionate impacts on certain types of protective characteristics.

The Health and Safety Adviser informed that the reasoning behind all aspects of protective characteristics was considered, and determined it was broadly neutral as this strategy should maintain a positive health and safety culture. The data used for analysis, did not target any particular protected characteristics.

RESOLVED –

That the Health and Safety Strategy 2023-2027 be approved.

FA40 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Health and Safety Advisor informed Members that the report this year focused on the key projects that had been ongoing during the financial year, such as the Breathing Apparatus (BA) replacement project and the new health and safety recording system. It also focused on employee wellbeing, contaminants update, and detailed the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst maintaining business as usual. The report also covered performance and the safety statistics for the year 2021/22, identifying there had been a decrease in the number of personal injury safety events. However, there had been no change in the number of equipment damage events, and an increase of 15.8% in the number of vehicle damage safety events. The new system currently only reports near misses and safety events; however, it was hoped there was capacity to make hazard reporting easier and more accessible for everyone.

A Member asked if the mental health of operational staff was being properly considered.

The Head of Protection, Assurance and Development assured Members that the mental wellbeing of all staff, not just operational staff was of utmost importance and a priority.

A Member asked that although overall numbers were down, the number of serious reportable offences had gone up by almost 100%. Did officers have the split between those incidents which were preventable by actions of a firefighter or those incidents that were preventable because it was a policy or process failure.

The Health and Safety Advisor responded that a report of underlying causes could be run and split down into any actions being taken by an individual or anything that the organisation would need to highlight to reduce injuries moving forward.

A Member asked about damage to vehicles, was it Authority vehicles, or was it damage done to other vehicles through bad parking etc.

The Health and Safety Advisor responded that vehicle damage related to any vehicle collision, either the Authority's own vehicles or damage to members of the public's vehicles, would be counted as reportable. Vehicle damage would also include anything that was picked up by officers on routine checks, or through means of driving where

Health and
Safety
Advisor

it was not though a collision but by other means that could not be determined and would be investigated.

A Members asked for more details around the three violent incidents, was this towards the Authority's officers.

The Health and Safety Advisor reported that it was acts of violence to members of staff, one example was fireworks being shot at a fire appliance.

The Chairman asked for some assurance on the underspend in the budget. Was it as a result of lack of engagement from staff for training, or were there not courses for the budget, as it was showing an underspend of just under £10k.

The Head of Protection, Assurance and Development advised that it was not because of lack of engagement, training was planned on previous trends of how many people would need to do certain courses. For example, it was planned for 8-12 candidates to undertake a NEBOSH general certificate and this year there was only two candidates that required it. Because of this, the course was cancelled, and training would be sourced by other means for the two members of staff who needed it.

The Chairman requested that future analysis incorporated data on protected characteristics

The Lead Member for Health and Safety and Corporate Risk thanked Members for all their questions and advised these would be discussed at the Health, Safety and Wellbeing meeting next week.

(Councillor Lambert left the meeting)

RESOLVED –

That Members note the health, safety and wellbeing performance as detailed in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report for 2021/22.

FA41 BUILDING RISK REVIEW AND PROTECTION UPDATE

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy advised Members that this report was an update of the Building Risk Review and some of the Protection work being undertaken and the self-assessment against the Protection Fire Standards. The Building Risk Review was completed at the end of last year and concentrated nationally on high risk residential buildings. The review was completed ahead of schedule, and work continued to take place on these

Health and
Safety
Advisor

buildings as business as usual. This would continue and incorporate the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy advised Members that the Service continued to deliver the Protection Uplift Programme, utilising the associated grant funding to deliver improvements in fire safety and training, improved software and wider support for business engagement, including an additional role of a Business Engagement Officer. Other spending had contributed to the improvement in the Premises Risk Management System to improve the communication and coordination of Site Specific Risk Information, Prevention activity and Protection audits to improve the way the Service could make its staff and communities safer.

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy advised that the Service aimed to fully comply with the competency framework and was aligning with the Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators, which recommended that all fire safety inspectors, working on high risk premises, should be third party validated.

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy advised Members that the Fire Standards Board had been set up to oversee the identification, organisation, development, and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England. The Board had since launched the Protection Fire Standard which could be seen at Appendix 1. The Service had undertaken the self-assessment which could be seen at Appendix 2. Members should note that question two around equality impact assessments had now been removed, as it was considered this was ongoing and part of what was undertaken on a daily basis and part of any audit process.

Members would also be aware that there were a number of legislative changes to fire Safety including the Fire Safety Act, The Fire Safety (England) Regulations and the Building Safety Act which officers had been working on to incorporate into the Protection function.

(Councillor Lambert re-joined the meeting)

The Chairman asked if it would be possible for Members to have a briefing session to take them through the Building Safety Act to understand what the implications were for the Authority.

The Group
Commander
Community
and Business
Policy

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy would provide a presentation at the next Fire Authority meeting.

A Member asked in terms of building risk, if the FBU would be balloting on strike action, what contingency plans would be in place to cover high rise building and whether the government had offered appliances to cover those high risk buildings in the event of strike action.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Fire Brigades Union had informed the Authority of its intention to ballot for strike action and plans were going ahead to put in contingency arrangements to provide an emergency response. The latest position was that fire and rescue services were in negotiation and discussion with the government in terms of whether or not the military would be involved in providing that response. The Service had also gone out to members of the public to engage in terms of defensive firefighting. The Service would provide the appliances and training, a plan would be brought to Members, once it was finalised in terms of what emergency response the Service could provide. The issue of high rise buildings was a national issue and was something that would be put on public record if it got to that position.

RESOLVED –

That the Building Risk Review, Protection Update, and Fire Standard Protection Self-assessment be noted.

FA42 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT Q2 2022/23

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised Members that this report was presented at the Executive Committee on 16 November 2022 and showed the Performance for Q2 across a range of measures. For Q2 one new measure had been added in the response section and that was the Site Specific Risk Information High Risk Site Completion. In the Public value section, percentage compliance with standing orders relating to contracts, work in progress measure data had now been populated. All other work in progress measures should be populated by the end of the financial year.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that at the Executive Committee meeting there were a couple of measures highlighted by Members that she would like to provide an update on. The first was Appraisal

Completion. Since April 2022 when the end of year submissions for 2021/22 and objective setting for 2022/23 became due, reminders had been sent to managers to prompt them to complete any overdue appraisals. These prompts had each time resulted in an increased return of overdue performance and development packs.

The Organisational Development (OD) team were now undertaking engagement sessions with employees to understand the barriers to appraisal completion. Alongside understanding the barriers, they would also use the opportunity to discuss career development, talent management, succession planning and leadership development.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that with regard to Mandatory Elearning, the OD team continued to remind staff and managers of the elearning modules that were mandatory, utilising different communication channels.

The Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO advised that with regard to Complaints, of the 14 complaints, only one had been upheld. The highest number of complaints related to damage to property (6), and these included damage to trees and hedges.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised that the Key Performance Measure report helped officers to understand how the Service was performing. It also enabled officers to highlight certain measures to Members and staff.

Based on feedback from quarter one, an additional page had been added which reflected on the previous quarters highlighted measures. Reading the summary pages, it might feel that there were many measures showing outcomes not in line with expectations and targets, but it's worth noting that during this reporting period, the Service experienced two heat waves that saw extreme demand on it and the sector. With this in mind, only one measure was highlighted in Q2 - Average attendance time to all incidents. The Service's average attendance time to all incidents had increased from being within three seconds of previous year in Q1 to being 36 seconds slower than the previous year. The above was a common theme across several measures, most of which would be covered within the summer pressures final report.

A Member asked in relation to the fire and wellness visits and the HMICFRS Inspection report, as the Service was behind in meeting its target (1800 visits should have been completed by September, and 732 had been undertaken), was it the right target and right approach.

The Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience advised that unfortunately the fire and wellness visits were not at the target they should be. The team had been through a significant restructure since the HMICFRS report, and a significant amount of recruitment into the central team had taken place. There was also the Prevention Improvement Plan with 60 recommendations the team were working through. The onboarding of the new team would take four to six months. The foundations were in place, so although not yet on target, by April the team would be achieving the 300 target for this year. The long term focus over the next five years was to bring the Service up to the National average without sacrificing targeting.

The Chairman asked about false alarms in the home and non-domestic false alarms. Whilst tracking a green level overall, when added the aggregate false alarms together it was quite a high number, was it giving cause for concern. Was there anything in the trends and what proactive action could the Service take particularly to drive down non-domestic alarms.

The Data Intelligence Team Manager advised there was currently a review ongoing for non-domestic false alarms. In the past, the Service did look at aggregate numbers, but repeat offenders and how it could get those numbers down.

The Group Commander Community and Business Policy advised that as part of any process, the Protection team were informed of all non-domestic false alarms, if there were any more than three in three months, the team would go out and audit the premises and give them guidance.

RESOLVED –

That the BFRS Performance for Q2 2022/23 is noted.

FA43 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Fire Authority will be held on Wednesday 15 February 2023 at 11am, at Milton Keynes Council Chamber.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.35 PM.