



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY FROM ITS MEETING ON 26 MAY 2016 TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) held a meeting on 26 May 2016 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Southfields Road, Kempston. The major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

1. MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes in membership from the previous year.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR 2016-17

Councillor McVicar was duly elected as Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2016-17.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR 2016-17

Councillor Atkins was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2016-17.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Blue Light Services Collaboration

The Authority received an update on the Home Secretary's speech on fire service reform on 24 May 2016 which outlined her plans to reform firefighters' conditions of service, to address the perceived lack of diversity in the service and to bring forward plans for blue light services collaboration, particularly between the police and fire and rescue services. She had acknowledged that fire and rescue services were in a more advantageous position than the Police had been when she implemented the Police reforms.

The Home Secretary had stated that there would be no mandate for Police and Crime Commissioners to take over local fire and rescue services unless there was a strong local business case to do so and that these decisions should be made at a local level.

She also referred to the Thomas Review of firefighter conditions of service which had not yet been published and praised Fire and Rescue Authorities, including Bedfordshire, which had already implemented shift change.

Letter from the Right Honourable Mike Penning, MP

Correspondence had been received from the Fire Minister regarding the four year budget settlement deal. This was subject to the submission of a relevant efficiency plan being submitted to the Home Office.

Peer Review of Fire Special Operations Team

Members received an update on the recent review of the Service's special operations team. Of the eight areas of assessment, the team achieved 'established' in all areas, with three areas of 'notable practice' identified. These were organisational culture, regional working and the use of the PDRPro system to maintain the relevant competencies.

A thank you letter had been sent on the behalf of the Service to the members of the team and the Members of the Authority recognised the effort involved in maintaining this capability to such a high standard and wished to record its thanks to the team and to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Alarm Awards 2016

The insurance pool that the Service was part of had been shortlisted for two Alarm Risk awards: the Partnership Award and Product of the Year. The awards ceremony would take place on 27 June 2016.

5. AUTHORISATION OF MEMBERS TO REPORT TO THE CONSTITUENT COUNCILS ON MEETINGS OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Councillors McVicar, Mingay and Waheed were authorised to report to their respective Constituent Councils on meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority during 2016-17.

6. REPRESENTATION ON THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE, POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUPS, ETC. IN 2016-17

Members were appointed to serve on the following Groups/Committees for 2016/17:

Audit and Standards Committee	Councillor Ayub Councillor Chapman (Chair) Councillor Chatterley Councillor Franks Councillor Headley Councillor Waheed
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Corporate Services Policy and Challenge Group	Councillor Brown Councillor Chapman Councillor Headley (Chair) Councillor McVicar Councillor Riaz Councillor Waheed
Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group	Councillor Atkins Councillor Ayub Councillor Downing Councillor Mingay Councillor Waheed (Chair)
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group	Councillor Atkins Councillor Brown Councillor Chatterley Councillor Downing Councillor Franks Councillor Mingay (Chair) Councillor Riaz

Membership of the Local Strategic Partnerships for 2016/17 was confirmed as follows:

Bedford	Councillor Mingay
Central Bedfordshire	Councillor Downing
Luton	Councillor Waheed

It was agreed that there was no longer a need to appoint a Member Diversity Champion to the Service Corporate Equality Group, as the Chair of the Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group provided sufficient Member representation on that Group.

7. DECISION MAKING BETWEEN MEETINGS, BRIEFINGS ETC.

Members agreed that the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) Chair and Vice Chair, together with the three Chairs of the FRA's Policy and Challenge Groups for 2016-17, be appointed as an Executive Panel for the purposes of Authority decision making between meetings, involvement in briefings, Selection Panels, hearing collective grievances/collective disputes and other related matters for 2016-17.

It was also reaffirmed that a quorum of three Members be present for the hearing of collective grievances/collective disputes.

It was agreed that, if in future years, a party or a constituent authority was not represented on the Executive, a named observer from that party/constituent authority would be invited to attend all meetings and briefings of the Executive.

8. REPRESENTATION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) MATTERS 2016/17

The Fire and Rescue Authority agreed its representation on Local Government Association bodies and at the LGA Annual Fire Conference in March 2017.

9. LOCALISM ACT 2011- REVIEW OF DISPENSATIONS IN RELATION TO DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI)

Members agreed that no dispensation was required to enable them to participate and vote at meetings when the setting of Council Tax or a precept were under discussion.

The Authority reaffirmed its procedure for dealing with requests for specific delegations.

10. REVIEW OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

Arising from a request from a Member at the previous meeting, the Authority received a report reviewing the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) payable to the Chairs of the Policy and Challenge Groups and the Audit and Standards Committee. The report recommended that the Members' Allowances Scheme be amended so that the SRAs payable to Chairs of the Policy and Challenge Groups and the Audit and Standards Committee were based on 10 and 6 days' work respectively and that the SRAs be increased accordingly.

It was noted that any proposed change to the Members' Allowances Scheme would have to be submitted to the Independent Remuneration Panels of the three constituent authorities before implementation.

Members requested that the SRAs paid to the Chair and the Vice-Chair also be reviewed prior to a referral to the Independent Remuneration Panels.

11. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The Authority approved a programme of Member Development, including station visits, Member Development days and Budget Workshops.

It was agreed that the Members of the Executive be nominated to attend the full Combined Fire Authorities' conference in Wyboston on 27 October 2016, with all Members of the Authority able to attend the day event.

12. VENUE FOR FUTURE FRA MEETINGS

Members agreed that meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority should continue to be held at Dunstable Community Fire Station with the exception of the Annual Meeting which will continue to be held at Fire and Rescue Services Headquarters.

13. INFORMATION BULLETIN

Members considered the Information Bulletin covering the period 1 January-31 March 2016.

In response to a comment about the number of cell fires at Bedford Prison that the Service had responded to during the reporting period, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service had specific procedures in place when responding to fires at Bedford Prison due to the increased risks.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that a suspected fire death discussed at a previous Authority meeting had not been caused by the fire and, as such, would not be recorded as a fire death.

**COUNCILLOR McVICAR
CHAIRMAN OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**