



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022 AT 10 AM.

Present: Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Darlington, Exon, Hall, Hopkins, Hussain, Lambert, Marland, McLean, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

Officers: J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer), G Britten (Director of Legal and Governance), M Hemming (Director of Finance and Assets), A Stunell (Head of Human Resources), A Burch (Group Commander), D Tubbs (Station Commander) and K Nellist (Democratic Services Officer)

Remotely: M Osborne (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), C Bell (Head of Protection, Assurance and Development), S Tuffley (Head of Prevention, Response and Resilience), A Carter (Head of Technology, Transformation and PMO)

Apologies: Councillor Irwin

Councillor Hopkins opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Annual Meeting of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

Councillor Hopkins advised that although members of the public are able to attend and observe in person, following the meeting, a video recording would be uploaded to the Authority's YouTube Channel.

FA01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

(Councillor Hopkins in the Chair)

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2022/23.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Rouse be elected Chairman of the Authority for 2022/23.

(Councillor Rouse in the Chair)

A Member commented that it was important to start having a discussion about the Chairman occasionally being from Milton Keynes Council and not always from Buckinghamshire Council, as it would

provide some balance moving forward, sharing the responsibility across Milton Keynes; a Member supported that suggestion.

FA02 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Hopkins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for 2022/23.

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Hopkins be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Authority for 2022/23.

FA03 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire Authority held on 16 February 2022, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

FA04 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

FA37 - The Director of Legal and Governance advised that on 31 May, he and the Chief Fire Officer had received an email from the NFCC Strategic Lead Safeguarding, advising that she had received formal confirmation from the Home Officer that the Fire Minister having considered the business case, which was mentioned in the minutes, was minded to endorse to the Ministry of Justice the change to the Exceptions Order to include fire and rescue authority employees. However, indications were that this would increase DBS checking nationally to Standard DBS checking rather than the Enhanced DBS checking which was undertaken by the Authority and as requested by the Group Leaders in their letters to the Minister and National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Chairman.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that he had been invited to sit on the National Fire Chief's Council Safeguarding Board and at those meetings he would be pushing the position of this Authority on Enhanced DBS checking.

FA40(c) – In terms of Members Allowances, the Director of Legal and Governance confirmed notification had been received from the new Conservative Group members to forego the 1.5% element of their allowances.

FA05 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that:

He was very honoured and privileged to become Chairman of this Authority. There were some significant challenges coming over the next 12 months, and he was very much looking forward to the Authority working collectively to address those challenges and focusing on ensuring Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes had the best fire and rescue service it could.

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Lesley Clarke OBE who had been the previous Chairman of the Authority and who had steered it through a particularly challenging time during the Covid-19 pandemic. He wanted to put on record his thanks to her and also for the professional and quality handover she had given him. He would also like to register thanks on behalf of all the Authority. The Chairman also thanked the Lead Members who had been in their roles for the past 12 months, for the huge amount of work that had been undertaken. The Chairman particularly thanked Councillor Lambert for his hard work on the equality, diversity and inclusion work that would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Chairman congratulated the Members from Milton Keynes Council on achieving City status.

Last month saw the successful completion of a challenging 12 weeks of acquisition training at the Fire Service College and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service training sites, for our newest firefighter recruits. To celebrate this significant achievement, we hosted a "passing out" ceremony for the first time at the Blue-Light Hub, West Ashland on Friday 20 May 2022. Friends and family, members of the Authority and members of the Senior Management Team attended the ceremony to congratulate and welcome our new members of staff. Thanks, and recognition of the work put in goes to Course Director, Watch Commander James Tuffley, the Area Trainers and all the Associate Trainers who assisted throughout the initial training. Thanks also to all those who were involved in organising the day and marking the occasion with the celebration it deserved. The firefighters have now taken up operational posts at a variety of stations across the Service and we wish them a long and happy career here in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Human Resources together with the help of Training School, Marketing and Communications Team, and the Organisational Development Team launched a Wholetime Recruitment campaign in April 2022. The

campaign attracted 172 applicants including existing On Call Firefighters. Applicants are undertaking tests to verify their technical and practical competence. Those who are successful will progress to a final interview and medical. The candidates will be joining on 3 October 2022.

The On Call and Wholetime Firefighter transferee campaign is live and closes on 3 July 2022.

Crew, Watch and Station Commander assessment and development centres are planned for the week commencing 17 September 2022 – including an On Call specific weekend. These Development Centres will be for both internal and external candidates and will be for promotional and direct transfer purposes. Engagement sessions/familiarisation events will be held on 18 and 19 July, to provide an opportunity for potential candidates to receive input on the process and have any questions answered. On Call and Support Services recruitment is ongoing throughout the year. Learning from these campaigns will help us to attract a wider range of diverse applicants for future recruitment campaigns. For example, we held a 'have a go' day in February 2022 for those who were unsuccessful in the previous Wholetime recruitment campaign and gave them a chance to work on their developmental areas. They also had the opportunity to talk to existing firefighters on how best they could be successful.

A Member reported that he had attended the apprentices Passing Out Parade on 20 May at the Blue Light Hub and wanted to report how impressed he was with the way the day was organised and the way it showcased the effectiveness and competence of the Service and the pride, commitment, and motivation of the firefighters at all levels.

FA07

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 2022/23:

Buckinghamshire Council (12)

Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Christensen, Hall, Hussain, Irwin, Lambert, Rouse, Stuchbury, Waite and Walsh

Milton Keynes Council (5)

Councillors Darlington, Exon, Hopkins, Marland and McLean

FA08

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	(64.70%)
(ii)	Liberal Democrat Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)
(iii)	Labour Group:	3 seats	(17.65%)

(b) Committee Matters – Committee Appointments

RESOLVED –

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

(a) Executive Committee (8 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 5 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 2 seats
- (iii) Labour – 1 seat

(b) Overview and Audit Committee (9 Members):

- (i) Conservative – 6 seats
- (ii) Liberal Democrats – 1 seat
- (iii) Labour – 2 seats

RESOLVED –

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

Councillors Christensen, Hall, Hopkins, Lambert, Marland, McLean, Rouse and Walsh in accordance with the Group Leaders wishes.

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

Councillors Bagge, Carroll, Chapple OBE, Darlington, Exon, Hussain, Irwin, Stuchbury and Waite in accordance with the Group Leaders wishes.

FA09

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Authority considered proposed dates for its meetings and meetings of its committees during 2022/23.

RESOLVED –

1. That meetings of the Authority be held on Wednesday 12 October 2022, Wednesday 7 December 2022, Wednesday 15 February 2023 and Wednesday 14 June 2023, all at 11 am.
2. That meetings of the Executive Committee be held on Wednesday 13 July 2022, Wednesday 14 September 2022, Wednesday 16 November 2022, Wednesday 8 February 2023 and Wednesday 22 March 2023, all at 10 am.
3. That meetings of the Overview and Audit Committee be held on Wednesday 20 July 2022, Wednesday 9 November 2022 and Wednesday 15 March 2023, all at 10am.

FA10

APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Authority considered the appointment of representatives to outside bodies having received nominations which were seconded:

RESOLVED –

1. That Councillors Hopkins and Bagge be appointed to attend the Local Government Association Annual Conference.
2. That Councillor Rouse be appointed as the Authority's representative (and Councillor Hopkins as the Standing Deputy) to the Local Government Association Fire Commission.
3. That Councillors Rouse and Hopkins be appointed as the Authority's representatives to the Local Government Association Annual Fire Conference.
4. That Councillors Rouse and Walsh be appointed as the Authority's representatives on the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.
5. That Councillors Hall and McLean be nominated as substitute members of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee.

FA11

LEAD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairman advised Members that he would like to make an amendment to the Lead Member Responsibility for 'Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT and Climate Change', by removing Climate Change and adding it to the Vice Chairman's responsibilities, as it was important to the Authority that Climate Change was given clear focus moving forward.

It was proposed and seconded that 'Climate Change' be removed from the Lead Member responsibility for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT.

RESOLVED –

Climate Change be removed from the Lead Member responsibilities for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT.

The Chairman wanted to put on record the Vice Chairman's responsibilities, which would include supporting the Chairman of the Authority in the discharge of their responsibilities; and to deputise for the Chairman of the Authority where necessary, including leading on the Authority's response to any Government proposals relevant to the responsibilities of the Authority, and any transitions or changes arising from such proposals.

With Climate Change having been removed from the Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT, and it being proposed and seconded it was

RESOLVED -

That the Vice Chairman be appointed to lead on Climate Change and to lead on the Authority's response to any matters relating to HMICFRS.

Having received nominations which were seconded it was

RESOLVED –

That Members be appointed as Lead Members for 2022/23 as follows:

Responsibility	Lead Member
Service Delivery, Protection and Collaboration	Councillor Rouse
People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance	Councillor Hall
Finance and Assets, Information Security and IT	Councillor Walsh
Health and Safety and Corporate Risk	Councillor McLean

FA12 2020-2025 CORPORATE PLAN: YEAR 2 PROGRESS REVIEW AND YEAR 3 UPDATE

The Chairman advised Members that this was a review of progress made over the second year of the five-year Corporate Plan that this Authority approved at the Annual Meeting in June 2020. Progress during the first year and a year two refresh was approved at last year's Annual Meeting. Also, in light of progress made, officers had taken the opportunity to refresh the programme of activities that would be undertaken over the remaining three years of the plan in pursuit of Its Strategic Objectives. Given that the Authority continued to face a very

uncertain outlook, officers would keep the plan under active review to enable the Authority to respond to changes to its strategic context and report back as often as conditions require.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that this item was structured in two parts and for each item of the refreshed plan a report had been provided which showed what had been completed during the second year of the plan and a status report for the remaining items using the RAG system. Of the 22 projects and workstreams set out in the plan, three had been completed and were now embedded in ongoing 'business as usual'. None were at red RAG status; seven were at amber and there were two without a RAG Status, as they were not due to start during the second year of the plan (these related to the preparation of the next PSP which would cover the period 2025–30).

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members, that Appendix 1 contained the updated programme of activities that would be progressed over the remaining three years of the plan and also who would be responsible for driving each aspect of the programme forward at Senior Management Team level, and who was leading on delivery of the groundwork. Members were asked to note two new items relating to the Protection Objectives replacing those that were completed during year two of the Plan. The document had also been updated to reflect the latest financial projections that were reported to the Authority in February.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that in his introduction, the Chairman mentioned the need to keep the Plan under active review given the uncertainties associated with the future outlook. Members would have seen a range of risks that could potentially impede progress with delivery of the plan. Also, there were potential implications for the Authority arising from the Government's proposals set out in the Home Office White Paper Consultation document.

A Member asked why 'the environment' was not on the Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised that the environment was on the Public Safety Plan, and also some elements of it were in the Corporate Plan and also the Authority had approved an Environment and Climate Action Plan.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that there were a number of activities in the Environment and Climate Action Plan, that would be

focused upon over the next four to five years and these could be referenced in the Corporate Plan.

A Member asked that with regard to unexpected financial pressures, inflation was not referenced, and should the rate of inflation be identified.

The Director of Finance and Assets advised that it had not been included specifically as there were so many general pressures. In terms of the individual inflation rate for the Authority, a survey had been designed for the whole sector by the National Fire Chief Council Finance Committee, and as part of that, officers would be working out the Authority's individual rate of inflation.

A Member asked how relevant the Corporate Plan was going back two or three years, in light of the recent HMICFRS Inspection recommendations, what changes would need to be made and would it require a new plan or just amendments to the current plan.

The Chairman advised that the plan had been refreshed to respond to the questions raised in the HMICFRS report. Along with the work on the environmental element, if the report were brought back to the next meeting, Members could then decide whether to start the process of looking at a new Corporate Plan or amend the current plan further.

The Chairman asked if the Corporate Planning Manager could draw to Members attention the action he was most concerned about progress on and also, with regard to the actions being taken, what impact would the actions have on the outcome measures, so it was really clear the actions were having the impact required.

The Chairman asked if this could become a regular standing agenda item to get an update on progress against outcome measures and the trends to see how successful the plan was.

The Corporate Planning Manager advised Members that SE1.1 'supported by workforce planning, development and roll-out of more flexible & innovative employment propositions, which are attractive and competitive and result in the best people being recruited' although at green rag status, the treatment and retention of staff was absolutely key, without the people there wouldn't be a plan, and that was the action he wanted to draw Members attention to.

It being proposed and seconded it was:

RESOLVED –

1. That the 2020-2025 Corporate Plan Progress Review and Update be noted by the Authority.
2. That a further review of the Corporate Plan be undertaken to integrate elements of the Public Safety Plan and the Environment and Climate Action Plan in respect of climate change and the HMICFRS actions to be presented at the next meeting.

FA13

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OBJECTIVES 2020-2025 YEAR TWO UPDATE

The Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance, thanked the previous post holder for his integrity and professionalism for the work he had undertaken whilst in the role.

The Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance introduced the report and advised Members that in June 2020 the Authority approved the overarching EDI Objectives 2020 to 2025 set out against elements of the Authority's core values – Diversity, Service to the Community, Improvement and People. This report was to update on progress made on EDI throughout the year and the EDI objectives.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that Appendix 1 provided an introduction to the statutory duties outlined by the prevailing legislation and the overarching objectives. Appendix 2 showed the proposed EDI objectives, which had been revised to continue the strong focused approach on EDI work and alignment to the Corporate Plan priorities and the HMICFRS report recommendations.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that regarding the first objective 'Change 100 Internship', officers had been working with Leonard Cheshire, an external provider who support people with disabilities to come into the workplace for a period of three months. This was an opportunity for the individuals and also the Service.

Appendix 3 illustrated the EDI workforce data in the form of charts in comparison to the latest census data (2011) for the population of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. The diversity of the workforce was broken down into wholetime, on call and support staff who were encouraged to disclose their protected characteristics, the data was used to inform the EDI strategies. Further work was planned on this area. The EDI workforce data was presented to ensure it was inclusive and could be viewed by individuals who find it hard to distinguish between different colours. The current data set had been reported for a number of years and the way the data was collected and presented

was being refreshed, and this would help inform the objective setting. Appendix 4 provided a summary of EDI headlines.

A Member stated that a lot of work was being undertaken, but he felt that benchmarking was not reflected in the report, and it would be interesting to compare progress with other Authorities as an objective measure.

The Head of Human Resources advised that there was a lot of collaboration undertaken with other fire and rescue services, but it was something that could be looked at in terms of EDI data. With regard to protected characteristics, some people were not comfortable, for whatever reason, submitting this information, and work was ongoing, trying to ensure people understood why it was important to share this information, not just when joining the organisation, but to continue to update the information.

A Member who had attended the recent apprentice graduation felt that although there was some diversity, there was a lack of gender diversity and although there were now measures in place to work with women who did not get through the interview process due to the physical elements, it would be better to be working with them before the process began and include this within the objectives and action plans. Talking to schools about recruitment was not reflected in the EDI objectives and also Fire Authority Members should be reflected in the EDI data capture.

The Head of Human Resources advised that there were 'have a go' days that took place throughout the year, and also separate female 'have a go' days. With the last cohort of apprentices who had just graduated, all those who were not successful in the role related tests, were given the opportunity to come back and try again and also given plans on how they could improve. A review had been carried out on the role related tests, and changes had been made to ensure the right testing was in place.

The Head of Human Resources advised Members that the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Director of Finance and Assets would be visiting a school the day after the Annual Meeting to talk about a career within the fire and rescue service, not just operationally, but support services as well. Officers had also been attending apprentice and career fairs throughout Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The former Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance wanted to put on record his thanks for all the officers who he had worked with over the past few years for doing such a great job.

A Member asked what kind of role would the person from Leonard Cheshire be coming into and was advised that a role in the marketing

and communications team or the human resources team was being considered.

The Chairman asked the Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance to work with the Head of Human Resources to look at all the data collected and how it could be presented in future.

RESOLVED –

1. That the contents of the report, EDI objectives for 2020-2025 in Appendix 1 and EDI workforce data in Appendix 3 and BMKFA headlines in Appendix 4 be noted.
2. The revised EDI objectives 2022/2023 in Appendix be approved.

FA14

HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION 'REFORMING OUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'

The Chairman advised that he was aware that the Democratic Services Officer had emailed copies of the Home Office White Paper to all Members of the Authority when it was published on 18 May 2022; and that he had asked that it be tabled today as an agenda item with a view to agreeing a mechanism for submitting responses on behalf of the Authority if Members were minded to do so. It was not the intention today for Members go through the details of any of the 48 questions in the consultation document.

The Director of Legal and Governance advised that since writing the report, there had been a date arranged for him and the Corporate Planning Manager to meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Head of Governance and its Chief Executive to liaise on areas of shared interest in the White Paper. If Members were minded to agree the recommendation to form a working group, the Director of Legal and Governance would follow up with the Chairman on how best to facilitate a workshop and/or a document drop box for Member and officer input in the consultation responses.

Members discussed their views on the White Paper which would be taken into consideration by the working group.

RESOLVED –

1. The content of the Home Office white paper consultation document be noted.
2. The establishment of a working group comprised of the Group Leaders, the Vice Chairman, and Lead Members be agreed in order for it to formulate responses to be approved at the meeting of the Executive Committee on 13 July.

FA15

THAMES VALLEY BREATHING APPARATUS PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE (MARCH 22)

The Group Commander and Station Commander advised Members that the aim of the project was to align and standardise the Breathing Apparatus (BA) and ancillary equipment utilised across the Thames Valley area which included Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service under a joint collaborative contract. The successful project delivery was a key enabler to achieving full operational alignment for the Thames Valley. The project falls under a wider programme of operational alignment which aimed for seamless cross-border mobilisation of fire and rescue service assets via Thames Valley Fire Control Service, and firefighters who can work together using the same operational guidance, training, and equipment.

The key achievements were the new equipment contract provided better management of contamination, this increased firefighter safety both during and post incident; A BA wearer survey had been completed and responses reviewed; successful practical trials by operational staff had taken place, providing feedback and scoring to assist in identifying the best equipment offering; the collaborative procurement process had been successfully completed, resulting in significant efficiency savings and equipment specification aligned across the Thames Valley; personal facemasks for all staff to improve equipment offering and firefighter safety and joint Thames Valley training team established to provide efficiency and resilience in aligned training delivery.

The benefits highlighted were better equipment with latest technologies; improved firefighter safety and monitoring; lighter, better fitting equipment for use by a diverse workforce; standardised equipment across the Thames Valley; resilience with equipment and maintenance; reduced procurement and technical costs; more efficient service delivery with few mobilisations and increased interoperability; reduction in complexity of management of incidents and supports aligned procedures and training in the Thames Valley.

A Member asked what would happen to the existing kit and was advised that this would be collected and donated through one of the fire charities.

The Vice-Chairman thanked officers for the presentation and for reminding Members that it was the fifth anniversary of the Grenfell tragedy and Members thoughts were with all the families involved including the firefighters.

The Lead Member for Health and Safety and Corporate Risk stated that he was pleased that health and safety, as well as health and wellbeing were at the forefront of the project.

The Chief Fire Officer advised Members that this was another positive step in terms of collaboration. There was a Thames Valley Fire Control,

the services buy the same fire appliances and same equipment and now the three services would have the same breathing apparatus across the Thames Valley. The next steps would be operational procedures and combined training.

The Chairman clarified that the reason this service was the last to receive the new breathing apparatus, was due to the order in which the current contracts for all three services were expiring.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

FA16 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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 report contains information relating to any individual; and Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as the report contains 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.

The Chief Fire Officer, Corporate Planning Manager, Group Commander, Station Commander and all remote participants left the meeting.

FA17 FUTURE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM SUCCESSION PLAN REPORT

Members considered the report and appendices, details of which were noted in the confidential/exempt minutes.

The Authority was advised as follows:

Succession planning for the Senior Management Team (SMT) was ongoing and well-reported to Members, with potential opportunities, challenges and risks identified. The timing and sequencing of SMT succession planning was disrupted by the advent of the public health emergency associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Both the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer were heavily engaged in leading the Service's response to this in collaboration with other partner agencies.

The Service continued to face a number of strategic uncertainties including financial stability due to current economic conditions; the government's agenda as set out in its White paper – "Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service"; and the need to address the issues identified by the HMICFRS in its most recent inspection.

Officers were of the view that option 1¹ strikes the optimal balance having regard to considerations of public safety, leadership stability, time to succession plan properly, and progression of key HMICFRS issues. It also created scope/flexibility for the Authority over the medium term to address the uncertainties identified above. It does not preclude the further opportunity to extend the duration of the contracts, should exceptional circumstances persist or emerge in the future.

The meeting went back into public session and

RESOLVED –

1. an interim departure from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) Succession Plan (Appendix C) until no later than 10 November 2024 be approved;
2. the mitigation measure in the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Succession Plan (Appendix C) of re-engagement be adopted.
3. an offer of employment to the incumbent CFO be approved:
 - a. subject to the following:
 - i. a fixed term contract to terminate no later than 1 November 2024 (unless terminated by either side on the giving of 3 months' notice); and
 - ii. £153,717 per annum starting salary;
 - b. with other terms and conditions in accordance with the CFO's current entitlements and obligations.
4. the current DCFO's fixed term contract is extended to expire no later than 10 November 2024
5. a paper to be submitted to the Authority before 31 December 2023 to consider all options open to the Authority in respect of the roles of both CFO and DCFO and the Senior Management Team.

THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING AT 12.11 PM.

¹ In accordance with the [Home Office Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, May 2018](#) the preferred option and the alternative options considered are set out in the appendix to these published Minutes.

Option One

Maintain the existing leadership positions with the current postholders of Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The Fire Authority agrees to re-engage, and abate the pension for the Chief Fire Officer before 27 September 2022, until 30 September 2024; and extend the current contract with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer until 10 November 2024.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer (re-engagement and abatement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure • Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements • Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS • Maintain continuity of the public safety considerations over the medium term • Engagement of internal and external stakeholders needed to deliver on the areas highlighted by the HMICFRS; and to secure longer term financial stability • Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change • Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs • Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority short term • No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment • Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply

<p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (current fixed term contract extended)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure • Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements • Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS • Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change • Engagement of internal and external stakeholders needed to deliver on the areas highlighted by the HMICFRS; and to secure longer term financial stability • Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs • Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority • No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment • Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply
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Option 1 - summary

It would create potential risks to public safety, if this option were not adopted, as it would not be realistic to expect a sufficiently qualified replacement to be in post on 27 September 2022. This would mean a reduction in Principal Officer cover to three, and no one in post to oversee the appointment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

To defer commencing recruitment to both posts until 2024, respectively, will enable seamless transition and delivery of a new Public Safety Plan, ensure knowledge transfer and continuity in the leadership team. It would be optimistic to expect that a new Public Safety Plan would be ready to be consulted upon until December 2023; or later should the Authority wish to propose substantial changes from the current Public Safety Plan.

Obtaining Precept flexibility has been the focus of the CFO and Lead Members up until February 2022, which was substantially based on the skills, experience and trust that had been built in the long-standing relationships with key external partners.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS’s partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

It is likely that BFRS will be in recruiting continuously over the next three years to maintain the headcount of firefighters and support staff, across all tiers and levels of experience, needed to fulfil the Authority’s pledges in its Public Safety Plan. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer is key to the recruitment campaigns and training aspects for firefighters and is intrinsically immersed in ensuring that BFRS has the right people, in the right places, with the right skills to move the service forward. This was identified as an area for improvement in the recent report from HMICFRS -

“The service should review its succession planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public”

The consultation on the White Paper ‘Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service’ was published on 18 May 2022. This will require the Authority to consider its governance model; how it works with other fire and rescue services in the future; and the interaction between the political oversight body and the individual charged with responsibility for operational matters. The relationships built up by the current Deputy and Chief Fire Officer will allow for a smoother delivery of the priorities established by the Government or the Authority in the medium term.

Option Two

Current Chief Fire Officer retires at the due date of 27 September 2022 and the contract for the current Deputy Chief Fire Officer’s fixed term contract is extended, with abatement, for up to a further three years.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer Vacancy advertised nationally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal promotional opportunity, or an external appointment• Opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure

<p>Operational / non-operational applicants invited</p>	<p>non Fire-Service / non-operational background to apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of leadership focus, skills and experience. • If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to stability and continuity of leadership arrangements • If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer post on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs. • If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs • Induction and training for new person in role • Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this
<p>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (current fixed term contract extended further three years)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain element of stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements • Experienced person to support new CFO • Partially minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change • Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs • Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority • No induction or familiarisation for role required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment • Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply • Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this

Option 2 - summary

At the Annual Meeting on 10 June 2020, the Authority agreed to depart from the Succession Plan and abate the DCFO post until 31 December 2022. The Pay Policy Statement (paragraph 28) refers to abatement being for *'exceptional circumstances where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for a defined period of time'*.

Benefits of maintaining this specialist knowledge during this time was recognised including providing stability in responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic; assuming additional duties following the retirement of the Director of People and

Organisational Development; and the potential retirement of Area Managers, one of whom retired at end of March 2022.

In the view of the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer has had excellent performance in his current role, taking on more responsibility when the Director of People and Organisational Development retired, ensuring that BFRS made savings in the Senior Management Team.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS’s partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

Option Three

That the Deputy Chief Fire Officer leaves the Service at the due date of his current fixed term contract of 10 November 2022 (or earlier with 3 months’ notice) and the post is advertised. The Fire Authority approves re-engagement of the current CFO for a fixed term contract with abated pension (after a break in service), for up to 31 December 2023 although likely to be sooner depending on the recruitment programme and outcome of DCFO recruitment process.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer (re-engagement and abatement until no later than 31 December 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure • Maintain stability and continuity of current leadership arrangements • Greater objectivity in relation to wider options for future of BFRS • Minimises upheaval and recruitment costs associated with change • Maintains the current Principal Officer rota number and costs • Abatement reduces pension costs to fire authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes opportunity for an internal promotion, or an external appointment • Delayed opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply • Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No induction and familiarisation for new person in role required 	
Deputy Chief Fire Officer Vacancy advertised nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal promotional opportunity, or an external DCFO appointed • Opportunity to reduce average age of the operational workforce • Opportunity for potential candidate(s) from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply • If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of management focus, skills and experience. • If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure • Change to stability and continuity of management and deputising arrangements • Reduced flexibility to consider wider options for future of BFRS involving leadership and organisational structure • If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer post on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs. • If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs • Induction and familiarisation/training for new person in role • Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this

Option 3 - summary

On the same basis as the recommendation in option 1, it would create potential risks to public safety, as it would not be realistic to expect a sufficiently qualified replacement to be in post on 27 September 2022. This would mean a reduction in Principal Officer cover to three, and no one in post to oversee the appointment of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The current position regionally and nationally is that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the fire and rescue service with a large majority of services currently recruiting. This is also mirrored in BFRS's partner agencies, where there are vacancies across local authorities, ambulance services and the police.

The Pay Policy Statement (paragraph 28) referring to abatement being for *'exceptional circumstances where specialist knowledge and expertise are required for*

a defined period of time, would apply to the post of CFO to provide continued leadership to the Service during the recruitment process for the DCFO post. A date for completion to be identified.

It would be optimistic to expect that a new Public Safety Plan would be ready to be consulted upon until December 2023; or later should the Authority wish to propose substantial changes from the current Public Safety Plan.

Obtaining Precept flexibility has been the focus of the CFO and Lead Members up until February 2022, which was substantially based on the skills, experience and trust that had been built in the long-standing relationships with key external partners.

The consultation on the White Paper ‘Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service’ was published on 18 May 2022. This will require the Authority to consider its governance model; how it works with other fire and rescue services in the future; and the interaction between the political oversight body and the individual charged with responsibility for operational matters. The relationships built up by the current Chief Fire Officer will allow for a smoother delivery of the priorities established by the Government or the Authority in the medium term.

Option Four

The Fire Authority does not agree to re-engage and abate the Chief Fire Officer, nor to extend the contract for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The CFO retires on 27 September 2022 and the fixed term contract for the DCFO ends on 10 November 2022. Both posts are advertised nationally.

Implications for this option are:

Post	Benefits	Implications
Chief Fire Officer vacancy advertised nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal promotional opportunity, or an external CFO and DCFO appointment Opportunity for potential candidates from minority or non Fire Service / non-operational background to apply If non-operational likely to introduce diversity of leadership focus, skills and experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disrupts the integrity and continuity of the current operational command structure Change to stability and continuity of leadership arrangements Reduced flexibility to consider wider options for future of BFRS involving leadership and organisational structure
Deputy Chief Fire Officer vacancy advertised		

<p>nationally. Operational / non-operational applicants invited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If operational background, will maintain the current Principal Officer rota number and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If non-operational background, will require additional Principal Officer posts on establishment to maintain the rota - additional costs. • If operational, on-going Fire Service Pension costs • Induction and familiarisation/training for new people in role • Greater level of support from SMT for new postholders • Other Fire and Rescues services are currently recruiting for CFO and DCFO positions, some have experienced issues with this
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Option 4 - summary

For both postholders to leave at the same time, this year, is likely to create instability at the leadership and operational command levels if the recruitment process is undertaken concurrently and with immediate effect. There will be little opportunity for a planned and managed handover.