

Health and Safety Committee Meeting

15 December 2025

Meeting Room 1 SHQ / Teams

Attendees: Barrie Ackerlay (BA), Calum Bell (CB), Graham Britten (GB, Chair), Daniel Cadwell (DC), Marcus Hussey (MH), Jason Manders (JM), Katie Nellist (KN), Angela Pinkerton (AP), Oliver Reddick (OR), Paul Scanes (PS), Rob Spearing (RS) and Councillor Robin Stuchbury (RSt)

Meeting opened: 10am **Meeting closed:** 11.56am

Item	Details	Action
1.	Introductions and welcome – Angela Pinkerton (HR Assistant) standing in for Faye Mansfield.	
2.	Apologies: Aaron Brinklow (AB), Dave Howlett (DH), Faye Mansfield (FM), Dave Tubbs (DT) and Charlie Turner (CT)	
3.	Minutes from last meeting: Minutes of last meeting approved.	
4.	Matters Arising - Action Log Previous actions reviewed.	
5.	Property update RS advised the Committee that work had been carried out at Newport Pagnell Fire Station, asbestos was removed from the appliance bay ceiling. The old ceiling was removed under controlled conditions and replaced with a new ceiling, giving 60 minutes of protection and new LED lighting was fitted. Fire Doors inspections were being carried out, Newport Pagnell Fire Station was fully completed (7 replaced, 2 repaired). Broughton Fire Station was 90% completed (3 more doors to be repaired/replaced). Ongoing programme of remedial work on numerous doors across the estate was being carried out. Refurbishment of Waddesdon Fire Station shower room facilities was scheduled for January 2026. RSt asked if Milton Keynes Fire Authority Members could be advised of the work that had been done and a list of work planned.	Facilities Manager
6.	Sickness Absence Data AP advised there were currently 21 open cases of long term absence of 28 days plus. There had been a transition of 4 cases that were short term but	

	<p>had now moved over to long term absences. Looking at the number of open cases, 57% were muscular skeletal, including post operative cases. Some of the long-term absences were due to NHS waiting times for MRI scans and individuals to see specialists. This was out of the Service's control, but officers kept in regular contact with those individuals.</p> <p>In terms of wholetime absences, there had been a reduction in sickness absence, decreasing from 418.58 lost days in October to 373 lost days for November. Again, muscular skeletal conditions remained the leading cause of long-term absences. Short term absences tended to be colds, flu and gastro conditions. Nationwide there had been a massive spike in flu cases.</p> <p>In terms of On-Call, there was a large spike of lost days in October (284) but this had reduced in November (170). HR were working closely with managers ensuring they were going through the formal stages if required.</p> <p>In terms of support staff, there was a slight increase of 108 calendar days lost due to both long term and short-term absence, compared to 90.4 days in October, the most common reason being mental health (stress related). HR were working with managers ensuring Occupational Health was brought in as additional support.</p>	
7.	<p>Health and Safety Audits / Fire Risk Assessments</p> <p>DC advised that from July to September Health and Safety Audits and Fire Risk Assessments had been undertaken at Brill, Chesham, Waddesdon, Great Missenden, Winslow and Stokenchurch. The main trend were around inconsistencies or lack of testing for fire alarms, emergency lighting, water flushing and fire drills. Station specific areas of concern raised were Brill issue with damp in the lecture room. Chesham issue raised where potentially in the summer the temperature was deemed to be too hot and there were unlabelled chemical bottles which needed to be labelled so they could be identified. Waddesdon issue with the showers but this was being addressed. Winslow gloves and flash hoods found in boots, the temperature in the summer could be uncomfortable upstairs and during the sample checks of driver records they were not indexing and some were out of date.</p> <p>BA advised that the Service did not have a system to log every drive but OFRS do, and he felt it was something the Service should be doing.</p> <p>DC advised that when Visor was built the Driving School Manager had requested it be put into it, and the reason it was specified as a requirement was because OFRS did, and it was an expectation that those drives were logged.</p> <p>CB advised that drivers currently have a dongle to log into any Service vehicle that was not theirs so it recorded the drive, could the same</p>	

	<p>approach be taken for appliances, whether on blue lights or not, the system would record the drive so there could be an accurate digital record. GB to flag at COO and may bring forward to flag at SLB.</p>	Graham Britten
8.	<p>Contaminants – update</p> <p>GB advised there was a report in the pack, but no one to present it.</p> <p>The following information was in the report from Aaron Brinklow:</p> <p>Air Monitors were in place at stations, 3 at West Ashland, 3 at High Wycombe, 1 at Haddenham and 1 at Service Headquarters. Data continued to be gathered, initial findings showed no concerns, but further data required. All monitored parameters were important however the key one was Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM2.5). This showed matter which was 2.5 micrometres or less which pose a significant health risk. The 2.5 breakdown showed extremely low levels of this with the lowest reading of 98% in the green. This was positive and at no point does the graph turn red.</p> <p>Total Volatile Organic Compounds (TVOC) these are a large group of chemicals that can become airborne, thus can be breathed in. There were some occasions on sites where it drops into the red zone, however these had been attributed to the cleaners spraying aerosols around and the readings quickly return to normal following this. Overall, these results were positive and show staff were following the guidelines. The one device at Haddenham would be moving from the BA service room to the drying room as it was felt this could have elevated readings.</p> <p>Options were now being explored to place air monitoring within cabs. NFCC have published a Statement on their website which had been linked to the intranet NFCC Statement.</p> <p>Carly Humphrey had produced an exposure form and further understanding was required around what this would mean moving forward. Looking to implement by end of calendar year.</p> <p>Station zoning all complete with the Red, Amber and Green areas. Work was ongoing around how to progress this. Do red and amber zones still exist. Washing machine/dry room guidance was being developed.</p> <p>Staff continued to engage with the contaminants group and progress was being made to further understand the risks.</p> <p>RSt asked if this aligned with the FBU Manifesto. GB advised a report would be going to the Authority but would check progress with the DCFO.</p>	Graham Britten
9.	<p>Health and Safety KPIs progress report – JM advised that starting with Toolbox Talks the goal was to deliver these to all teams by March 2030.</p>	

	<p>Twelve watches had completed them, which was a good start. The feedback had been good with crews continuing to engage positively. For Risk Assessments, the aim was to review within 21 days of submission, and it was pleasing to note that this target had consistently been met.</p> <p>Health and Safety Audits were progressing well and remained on track for completion by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>The Health and Safety performance across key indicators included data on investigations that exceeded SLA timeframes, the current injury rate per 1,000 employees, and the total number of workplace injuries reported. Figures were included for RIDDOR-reportable injuries, incidents involving physical or verbal assaults on staff, near misses, hazard reports, and vehicle-related incidents. These metrics offer a clear picture of the safety performance and highlight areas for continued focus.</p>	
10	<p>South East Health and Safety and Peer Review Update – CB advised that at a recent South East Health and Safety meeting it was touched upon the number of times that safety events had been highlighted around attention and not following procedure and the level of supervision. The Head of People was doing a review of the current position of the training of staff and the recording of the requirement to be competent in supervision.</p> <p>The HSE inspections would be starting in January, the HSE would be auditing the majority of fire and rescue services. Within the contaminants audit they would be looking at face-fit testing under the amended guidance document. This had been raised to Board level and AB had it as an action to meet that expectation for the HSE, whilst acknowledging the expectations on frequency of retesting was not a legislative requirement.</p> <p>The Slow speed vehicle manoeuvres trending goes up and down. Work was being undertaken with FRIC, the insurance provider, to see what more could be done. The current plan was for someone to come in and engage with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as to what the Service could do and what other services were doing.</p> <p>The peer review had been confirmed to take place 27-30 April 2026. DC had collated most of the information needed.</p> <p>GB advised that when the annual report had gone to a recent Authority meeting, the comparative data for the family group was not available. GB felt it would be good to get the data out to Members, RSt to see it first and also SLT. This to be provided before the end of January 2026.</p>	Calum Bell
11.	Papers update – None	

12.	<p>Proactive Safety:</p> <p>Hazard reports</p> <p>JM advised during this period, six hazard reports were submitted across several stations. At West Ashland, issues included a turnout alert system in the kitchen and mess being too quiet, with post-turnout sounders working intermittently, a blown-out window above the firefighter entrance caused by heat damage, and excessively high gym temperatures making safe workouts difficult. Beaconsfield reported a pump locker 'tunnels flap' catch that does not protrude enough, causing the pin latch to fail to stay engaged. At Buckingham and Newport Pagnell, a defective fridge freezer posed risks for food storage and was replaced, while Newport Pagnell also highlighted the absence of signage on the LGV platform warning crews about slip risks when using gantry levers. These hazards have all been logged and actions were being taken to address them.</p>	
13.	<p>Reactive Safety</p> <p>DC advised that the safety event statistics for July- September were as follows:</p> <p>Vehicle Damage Only – 3, Vehicle Collisions – 11, Personal Injuries (Wholetime) – 7, Personal Injuries (Apprentices) – 0, Personal Injuries (On-call) – 0, Personal Injuries (Support) – 1, Personal Injuries (Members of the public) – 0, Personal Injuries (Officer) – 0, Property Damage – 2, Actual Violence – 0, Near Misses – 6, Threatened Violence – 3, Near Misses Q2 2024/25 – 10.</p> <p>The breakdown of safety events by activity undertaken (excluding near misses), operational driving 6, operational fire 5, operational manoeuvring at incidents 1, routine 4, training driver 1, training operator 3, training PT/gym 1 and other 2.</p> <p>Driving data, out of 11 events 4 were moderate and 7 minor. Out of these, 5 were on blue light, 6 were caused by slow speed manoeuvres. Incidents with pilots being used was 2.</p> <p>Breaking down vehicle events, there were 10 Minor, 4 Moderate and 0 Major.</p> <p>Third party fault, 11 incidents were from driving and 3 incidents were vehicle damage. 6 vehicle driving safety events were slow speed manoeuvres on 2 occasions pilots were not used during these. 4 underlying causes were highlighted as either inattention or misjudgement by the individual.</p> <p>Personal safety events, there were 5 minor, 3 moderate and 0 major. 4 injuries were as a result of training activities, 1 injury was as a result of routine activities, 3 injuries sustained from operational activities and 4</p>	

	<p>injuries sustained were as a result of failings of safety management which included hazards not corrected or controlled.</p> <p>Near miss safety events there were 4 minor, 0 moderate and 2 major.</p> <p>Severity, 22 incidents were classed as minor, 9 incidents were classed as moderate, and 2 incidents were classed as major.</p> <p>There were 2 RIDDOR Incidents, over 7 days injury, while entering the water, the firefighter slipped and fell, resulting in an awkward landing on their knee. Following MOD 2 water rescue training, the firefighter experienced illness (diarrhoea and vomiting), suspected to be water training-related.</p> <p>Safety events completion rates, July – 75%, August 92% and September 78%.</p> <p>As of 4 December 2025, there was currently 1 L1 investigations overdue, and 0 L2 investigations overdue.</p> <p>RSt asked about the threats of violence, was there anything that should be done.</p> <p>DC advised that it was higher than normal in a quarter, but all incidents were investigated.</p> <p>OR felt it was a good point and staff should be made aware how to escalate it themselves, awareness training would help and de-escalation training was a very good idea.</p> <p>GB asked that the distinction between cars and appliances for slow speed manoeuvres be reported on at the next meeting.</p>	Daniel Cadwell
14.	<p>Safety Representatives – update</p> <p>OR advised that he was not aware of how long the Bristol and the PPE contract had to run (2028), but there was a recent On-Call BA course being run and there was not enough PPE for staff to wear for their hot wears and they were re-wearing contaminated kit. Bristol had advised that it was not in the contract to provide training kit for On-Call and staff at the college. This needed to be looked at.</p> <p>BA advised he was aware of it, but it was not in hand. Bristol were meeting their contractual obligations, but the contract was done years ago and things were very different now. Extra PPE was required to maintain training and to meet the contaminant requirements. This should be on a risk register higher up as it would be a problem for the next couple of years.</p> <p>PS advised it had been brought to his attention through the FBU representative. The Bristol contract needed looking at and also the</p>	

	<p>relationship with the Fire Service College regarding loan kit was it on a goodwill gesture.</p> <p>PS would take an action to follow this up.</p> <p>OR also advised that the water rescue PPE and the personal floating devices (PFDs) were nearing their ten year lifespan and should be taken out of service. Also, some people's dry suits were 10-15 year's old, there was no lifespan on the suits. Going forward when these suits do fail, there was no contingency on station to have a spare suit, or a pool of suits.</p> <p>PS advised it was going to be on the Annual Plan to look at dry suits, the collars and cuffs had been replaced, it was also part of a water rescue review. PS was not aware of the PFDs.</p>	Paul Scanes
15.	<p>Safety event costings:</p> <p>JM advised that in Q2, vehicle-related costs totalled £25,967.98, while property costs were £536, bringing the overall cost for the quarter to £26,503.98. The most significant expense came from one vehicle incident, which so far has incurred £481.25 in labour and £6,284.26 in parts, with an estimated £1,000–£1,500 in additional costs expected. A second incident involved £61.25 in labour and £5,213.66 for external repairs, while a third incident cost £1,427.56 for specialist accident repair work.</p> <p>MH advised that at future meetings there would be a separate agenda item to cover Insurance.</p> <p>MH advised that April – November there had been 23 claims, 10 were BFRS at fault, 4 were third party and 9 no claims were made. Total recovery during the period was £98k. Total costs for BFRS was £15k and total cost for the Insurers was £98k, of which £60k related to the water carrier. There were 9 open claims, total cost to BFRS was £8k, total cost for insurers was £18k. Projected outstanding costs were £15k for BFRS and £66k for the Insurers.</p>	Katie Nellist
16.	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>MH advised there was a report he received from the Insurers, entitled Value for Money Assessment and covers 2025 and the savings generated. 2025/2026 renewal contribution was £387,234.87 which was adjusted based directly on claims performance, compared to last year's figure of £401,087.61, a saving of £13,852.74. Insurance Premium Tax savings estimated at £29,265.72, Applying the KPI rating factors had resulted in a saving of £16,783.56 being deducted from the motor contribution for the 2024/25 period.</p> <p>FRIC also offered incentives in its pricing model for certain risk management initiatives. A discount was available for any vehicle that was</p>	

	fitted with CCTV to a specified standard. In 2025/26, the Authority reduced costs by £28,902.07 for equipment installed on all 134 vehicles.	
17.	Date of next meeting: TBC	

UNAPPROVED