

**MINUTES OF FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2023**

Present: Councillors A Ali, J Burnett, G Coombes, R Goodchild, M Headley, M Hussain, S Hussain, A Sultan and M Versallion

CFO A Hopkinson, DCFO C Bigland, ACFO A Kibblewhite, ACO G Chambers and Mr G Britten

23-24/FRA/1 Election of Chair 2023/24

In accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders, the Monitoring Officer presided over the election of Chair.

Councillor J Burnett was nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by Councillor A Sultan.

As there were no other nominations, Councillor J Burnett was duly elected as Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor J Burnett be elected Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24.

23-24/FRA/2 Election of Vice Chair 2023/24

Councillor M Headley was nominated by Councillor S Hussain and seconded by Councillor R Goodchild.

As there were no other nominations, Councillor M Headley was duly elected as Vice-Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor M Headley be elected Vice-Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24.

23-24/FRA/3 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Wenham.

23-24/FRA/4 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 30 March 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

23-24/FRA/5 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

23-24/FRA/6 Communications

The Chief Fire Officer advised that communications had been reported to Members at the recent Induction Event and any additional information would be provided to Members at the forthcoming Member Development Day on 4 July 2023.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that:

- the whole-time recruitment campaign had commenced on Monday 19 June 2023.
- the Service would be taking part in events to mark the 75th anniversary of Windrush on Thursday, 22 June 2023.
- the Chief Fire Officer had attended the flag-raising event at Borough Hall on Monday, 19 June 2023 to mark Armed Forces Day.

Members were advised that the Annual Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Values Awards Evening would be held on 12 July 2023. Details would be provided in due course.

23-24/FRA/7 Public Participation

Members noted that no questions had been received in accordance with the public participation scheme approved at the meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority held on 5 April 2000 (Minute 99/fa/94 refers).

Craig Carter, representing the Fire Brigades Union, was observing the meeting remotely.

23-24/FRA/8 Membership

The Monitoring Officer introduced his report detailing the Members appointed by the Constituent Authorities to serve on the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24 and requesting the Authority to make arrangements for reporting to the Constituent Councils.

The membership of the Fire and Rescue Authority following the elections in May 2023 was as follows:

Central Bedfordshire Council (5)

Councillors Goodchild (Liberal Democrat), Mackey (Independent), Versallion (Conservative), Wenham (Conservative), plus one Independent to be confirmed.

Luton Borough Council (4)

Councillors Ali (Liberal Democrat), Burnett (Labour), M Hussain (Labour), S Hussain (Labour)

Bedford Borough Council (3)

Councillors Coombes (Conservative), Sultan (Labour) and Headley (Liberal Democrat)

The Monitoring Officer advised that there was still uncertainty as to which Independent Members from Central Bedfordshire Council were being appointed to the Fire and Rescue Authority (as, since the report had been published, Cllr Mackey may be replaced by another nominee).

The Fire and Rescue Authority then appointed Members to report back to their respective Constituent Councils as follows:

Central Bedfordshire

Councillor R Goodchild (nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by Councillor A Sultan)

Luton Borough Council

Councillor J Burnett (nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by Councillor M Hussain)

Bedford Borough Council

Councillor M Headley (nominated by Councillor A Sultan and seconded by Councillor J Burnett)

RESOLVED:

1. That the content of the report be noted.
2. That Councillors J Burnett, R Goodchild and M Headley be authorised to report to their respective Constituent Councils on the meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority for 2023/24.

23-24/FRA/9 Committee Appointments

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report on making appointments to the Fire and Rescue Authority's Executive Committee, Audit and Standards Committee, and the appointment of Lead Members for 2023/24.

The Fire and Rescue Authority was asked to appoint three additional Members, or one from each Constituent Council, onto the Executive Committee, along with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority.

The following Members were appointed to the Executive Committee:

Central Bedfordshire

Councillor R Goodchild (nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by Councillor A Sultan)

Luton Borough Council

Councillor S Hussain (nominated by Councillor M Hussain and seconded by Councillor A Ali)

Bedford Borough Council

Councillor A Sultan (nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by Councillor J Burnett)

This was agreed, and therefore the remaining seven Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (including the two Independents from Central Bedfordshire Council once known) were appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee.

Councillor A Ali was nominated for the role of Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2023/24 by Councillor S Hussain and this was seconded by Councillor M Headley. There being no other nominations, Councillor A Ali was appointed as Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2023/24.

Councillor M Headley proposed that the assignment of Lead Members roles to Executive Committee Members be delegated to the Executive Committee itself.

The Chair seconded this proposal, commenting that it would allow new Members the opportunity to learn about what the roles entailed, and emphasised the importance of allocating Lead Member roles based on the skill set and interests of individual Executive Members.

The Chief Fire Officer suggested that the five areas set out in the report may be amended slightly to better reflect the current priorities and structure of the Service.

This proposal was put to the meeting and carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillors J Burnett, R Goodchild, M Headley, S Hussain and A Sultan be appointed to the Executive Committee for 2023/24.
2. That Councillors A Ali, G Coombes, M Versallion, M Hussain, R Wenham, G Mackey and one additional independent Member from Central Bedfordshire Council be appointed to the Audit and Standards Committee for 2023/24.
3. That Councillor A Ali be appointed as Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee for 2023/24.
4. That the appointment of Executive Committee Members to Lead Member roles be delegated to the Executive Committee to determine at its first meeting.

23-24/FRA/10 Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies for 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer submitted his report on the appointment of representatives to serve on Local Government Association (LGA) groups.

In response to a question, Members were advised that the Fire and Rescue Authority was being asked to appoint up to two additional representatives onto the LGA General Assembly to serve alongside the Chair and Vice Chair. These Members were not substitute Members and could attend the meetings in their own right.

Councillor M Hussain was nominated by the Chair and seconded by Councillor M Headley.

Councillor R Goodchild was nominated by Councillor M Headley and seconded by the Chair.

There being no further nominations, Councillors R Goodchild and M Hussain were appointed to serve on the LGA General Assembly with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor M Headley proposed that the Chair be appointed as the Fire and Rescue Authority's representative on the LGA Fire Services Committee. This was agreed by all present.

It was also agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Fire Officer be authorised to attend the LGA Annual Fire Conference in 2024 as representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair, Vice Chair and Councillors R Goodchild and M Hussain be appointed to serve on the LGA General Assembly.
2. That the Chair be appointed as the Fire and Rescue Authority's representative on the LGA Fire Services Commission.
3. That it be agreed that the Chair, Vice Chair, and the Chief Fire Officer attend the LGA Annual Fire Conference in 2024 as representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

23-24/FRA/11 Member Development

The Chief Fire Officer reported on arrangements for Fire and Rescue Authority Member development in 2023/24 as set out in the appendix to the submitted report. Member Development Days would be held on 4 July 2023, 5 October 2023, 30 November 2023 and 29 February 2024.

As the majority of Members had been newly appointed to the Fire and Rescue Authority, it was acknowledged that the development plan may be amended to accommodate Members' requirements.

The Chief Fire Officer commented that suggestions for topics to be included on future Development Days were always welcome.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed arrangements for Member development in 2023/24 be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.21 am