



Bedfordshire

Fire & Rescue Authority

This is an extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority that is being called on behalf of the Chair [Standing Order 1.4 refers]

17 January 2024

Members of Fire and Rescue Authority.

Bedford Borough Councillors: G Coombes, M Headley and A Sultan

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: K Gurney, R Goodchild, S Owen, M Versallion and R Wenham

Luton Borough Councillors: A Ali, J Burnett, M Hussain and S Hussain

Your attendance is requested at an extraordinary meeting of the **Fire and Rescue Authority** to be held at **Lecture Theatre, Dunstable Community Fire Station, Brewers Hill Road, Dunstable LU6 1AA** on **Thursday, 25 January 2024** starting at **10.00 am**, for the transaction of the following business:

Graham Britten
Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
1.	Apologies	Business Support Manager	

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
2.	Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests	Chair	Members are requested to disclose the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and any other interests as required by the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct (see note below).
3.	Communications	Chair	
4.	Public Participation	Chair	To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme

Local Government Act 1972: Schedule 12A (as amended) - Exclusion on the Public

Chair

To consider whether to pass a resolution under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that consideration of the following items of business is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended.

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
5.	Executive Committee meeting 5 January 2024		To receive the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 5 January 2024 (Pages 5 - 12)
6.	ACFO Recruitment and Succession Planning	CFO	Report to follow

Next Meeting

10.00 am on 13 February 2024 at Dunstable Community Fire Station, Lecture Theatre

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

From 1 July 2012 new regulations were introduced on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs). The interests are set out in the Schedule to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Fire Authority on 28 June 2012. Members are statutorily required to notify the Monitoring Officer (MO) of any such interest which they, or a spouse or civil partner or a person they live with as such, have where they know of the interest.

Item

Subject

Lead

Purpose of Discussion

A Member must make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and any other interest as defined in paragraph 7 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct at any meeting of the Fire Authority, a Committee (or Sub-Committee) at which the Member is present and, in the case of a DPI, withdraw from participating in the meeting where an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

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MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2024

Present: Councillors J Burnett (Chair), R Goodchild, M Headley (Vice-Chair) and A Sultan

CFO A Hopkinson, ACO G Chambers, Mr G Britten and Mrs N Upton

23-24/EC/29 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Hussain.

23-24/EC/30 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

23-24/EC/31 Communications

Independent Culture Review of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

The Chief Fire Officer referred to the briefing note which had been prepared for Members of the Authority following the publication of the Independent Culture Review of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, which had identified serious failings and a culture of tolerating problematic behaviours. The temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer was currently undertaking a gap analysis of the report's recommendations against the Service's cultural improvement action plans. This was also cognisant of the current HMICFRS thematic review on how fire and rescue services handled cases of misconduct and how people and culture issues may inform the fourth round of inspections.

The Chief Fire Officer and Chair had discussed how best to address this at a local level.

The Chair suggested that a Combined Fire Authority conference be held before the LGA Conference to discuss people and culture.

Cause of Concern

The Chief Fire Officer reported that he met with HMI Roy Wilster to discuss the outcome of their review of the cause of concern relating to firefighter fitness tests. It was hoped that the letter would publish the outcome no later than January.

Government response to consultation on the Fire Service Reform White Paper

The Chief Fire Officer advised that there were proposals to make it easier for Police and Crime Commissioners to subsume responsibility for the governance of fire and rescue services, such as the possible removal of the requirement of a business case to be submitted. The information required during this process was very demanding on the fire and rescue service. At present, there was no collective view from fire and rescue services and it was important to “fill the void”.

Councillor Goodchild reported that his group had submitted a Notice of Motion to the next meeting of Central Bedfordshire Council to remove the Police and Crime Commissioner and replace with a body similar to the previous Police Authority due to various concerns about the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner, including appropriate governance arrangements and operational effectiveness.

The Chair emphasised that authorities, including this one, must be proactive and put forward their views and concerns about changes to the governance arrangements for fire and rescue services. This would involve working with and supporting other fire and rescue authorities and services.

23-24/EC/32 Minutes

Following a suggestion from the Monitoring Officer, confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 23 November 2023 were deferred to the next meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer recommended that the Executive meet more frequently on an informal basis. He already met on a weekly basis with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority and suggested that the full Committee meet informally once a month.

Members supported this idea, subject to these meetings being held virtually and for Members to be given as much notice as possible of meeting dates so that they could accommodate these along with their other commitments.

23-24/EC/33 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).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTION 1972, SCHEDULE 12A, PARAGRAPHS 1 to 3 PART 1: EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That, pursuant to Sections 100A(2) and 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the discussion of the following items on the grounds that the matters to be discussed involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended):

Item:

23-24/EC/34 ACFO Recruitment and Succession Planning

The meeting ended at 11.36 am

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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