



BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Members of Executive Committee.

Bedford Borough Councillors: C Atkins

Central Bedfordshire Councillors: J Chatterley and D McVicar

Luton Borough Councillors: Y Waheed and D Franks

A meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held **remotely** on **Wednesday, 8 July 2020** starting at **10.00 am**.

John Atkinson
Secretary/Monitoring Officer

A G E N D A

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
1.	Apologies		

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
2.	Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests		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		
4.	Minutes		To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2020 (Pages 5 - 10)
5.	Public Participation		To receive any questions put to the Authority under the Public Participation Scheme
6.	Governance Review Update	Secretary/Monitoring Officer	To consider a report (Pages 11 - 18)

Local Government Act 1972: Schedule 12A (as amended) - Exclusion of 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 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended.

Item	Subject	Lead	Purpose of Discussion
7.	HR Issue	Secretary/Monitoring Officer	Report to follow

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF BEDFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

HELD ON 24 APRIL 2020 AT 11.30AM

Present: Councillors J Chatterley (Chair), C Atkins, D Franks, and Y Waheed
CFO P Fuller, DCFO A Hopkinson, Mr J Atkinson and Mr G Chambers
Councillors M Headley and S Khurshid were also present

12. Apologies

12.1 Due to technical issues, apologies were received from Cllr McVicar.

13. Membership

13.1 The Chair welcomed Councillor S Khurshid to the Authority and introduced all those present.

14. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

14.1 There were no declarations of interests.

15. Minutes

15.1 Concern was expressed that the Chair was the only Member present who had attended the meeting on 4 February 2019, as Councillor Waheed had not yet been able to join the virtual meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2019 be received and that the Chair and Vice-Chair be delegated authority to confirm the accuracy of the Minutes so that they can be signed as a true record.

16. Communications

- 16.1 The Chair reported that he had been sending Members of the Authority regular updates via email. These included updates following his regular discussions with the Chief Fire Officer.
- 16.2 The Chief Fire Officer referred to a letter that had recently been received from James Brokenshire, the Minister of State for Security. He advised that this letter would be circulated to all Members for information.
- 16.3 Within the letter, the Minister referred to the change in legislation which removed the requirement to hold Annual General Meetings for Fire and Rescue Authorities, with other meetings being held remotely as required, as Fire and Rescue Services should be focused on service delivery. There had been no removal of the requirement to adhere to the national framework.
- 16.4 The Service had not had any difficulty procuring the required PPE. Fire fighters and their families were now eligible for testing if they were displaying symptoms. Twelve Service personnel had been tested to date and there had been no positive cases of COVID-19.
- 16.5 The letter also touched on issues such as protection for retained fire fighters so that they were not disadvantaged through COVID-19 loss of earnings scheme as a result of their employment by the Fire and Rescue Service, arrangements for bringing retired fire fighters back into employment and the extension of LGV licences.
- 16.6 It was noted that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer had completed his strategic leadership course and had been awarded a distinction.

17. Update from the Chief Fire Officer

- 17.1 The Chief Fire Officer provided a detailed update on action taken by the Service to support the local community as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff had responded brilliantly to the challenge, with many volunteering to go above and beyond in aid of the local communities of Bedfordshire. To date, this included over 24 separate areas of action that had been implemented both immediately prior to and during lockdown.
- 17.2 This included the ordering and delivery of “community welfare packs” to some of the County’s most vulnerable residents as identified through Exeter and MOSAIC data, of which almost 400 had been delivered, the secondment of staff to both the Ambulance Service and the Local Resilience Forum’s community support cell, transport of materials to enable the Friends of Bedford Hospital to produce approximately 350 sets of scrubs for use in theatre and the delivery of a YouTube fire station visit for Year 2 children.

- 17.3 The Service had also developed a mechanism for recording expenditure on COVID-19, an internal strategic planning group, safe working practices to ensure that social distancing was maintained, staff and public information videos which had been made available on YouTube, support for the creation of a temporary morgue in Essex, delivery of food to on-duty crews to ensure they were well fed and did not have to leave the station to purchase food, the continuation of critical training and maintenance and improved sanitation. The Service's driving instructors were working with the Ambulance Service to provide training to trainee paramedics.
- 17.4 In addition, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer was representing the Service on the National Fire Chiefs Council COVID-19 Foresight Group.
- 17.5 Two stations, Harrold and Leighton Buzzard, had proactively come forward to develop local agreements to enable co-responding with the Ambulance Service. This had recently been implemented in Harrold.
- 17.6 The Service continued to support its partner organisations and staff were participating in the weekly "Clap for the NHS". A visit had also been paid to Captain Tom Moore, who had raised over £25 million for the NHS and was a resident of Bedfordshire.
- 17.7 It was suggested that fire safety advice could be provided to those on the NHS list of "shielded" individuals, recognising that these were some of the County's most vulnerable residents.
- 17.8 Members recognised the efforts of Service staff in developing and supporting these new initiatives.
- 17.9 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on the fire at the Signature Flatbreads factory at the Chiltern Park Industrial Estate in Dunstable. The first appliance had arrived at the incident within three minutes of the call being received. The incident was attended by three pumps, an aerial platform and a water carrier. The fire did not spread and the company was able to resume production on all but one of the production lines.
- 17.10 Thanks had been forwarded to those involved in the incident and the incident would be used as a case study for incident command training.
- 17.11 In response to a question about the funding of COVID-19 expenditure, the Assistant Chief Officer for Finance and Corporate Services and Treasurer reported that the Service had received £105,000 in the first tranche of local authority funding. The amount allocated in the second tranche had not yet been confirmed. The next return to the Home Office was due on 8 May 2020 and the Service was currently collecting costs for that return.

17.12 It was hoped that the expenditure would be covered in full from Government grant. The Service was also considering a recharge to partners for work undertaken by the Service, although this was not the preferred option.

18. Public Participation

18.1 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).

19. Arrangements for FRA Meetings during the Coronavirus Emergency

19.1 The Executive Committee received the report of the Secretary and Monitoring Officer on how to manage meetings during the coronavirus emergency.

19.2 The relevant legislation had been amended to allow for greater flexibility in the arrangement of local authority meetings, including the ability to hold meetings with remote attendance and to cancel or postpone Annual General Meetings.

19.3 Following consultation with the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer, it was being proposed that the Annual General Meeting be postponed and that the meetings arranged for 30 April and 16 July be cancelled.

19.4 In relation to the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee due to be held on 2 July 2020, the Assistant Chief Officer for Finance and Corporate Services and Treasurer reported that the Finance Team were still working to progress the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement and that he would be in a position in a few weeks' time to confirm whether the timescales allowing these items to be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 2 July 2020 could be adhered to.

19.5 Members discussed the various options available, recognising the impact of holding meetings on the Service's resources, but also the value of engaging with Members of the Authority.

19.6 The Secretary and Monitoring Officer referred to the potential difficulties of conducting a secret ballot at a virtual meeting, as would be required at the Annual General Meeting. The most practical way of conducting a vote during a remote meeting was by roll call, where Members could be easily identified.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Annual Meeting of the FRA be postponed until 3 September 2020 and that the FRA meeting due to be held on 30 April 2020 be cancelled.
 2. That the FRA meeting due to be held on 16 July 2020 be conducted as a remote meeting.
 3. That the Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee be authorised to determine whether the Committee's meeting due to be held on 2 July 2020 should proceed remotely or be cancelled following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer.
20. Governance Review
- 20.1 The Secretary and Monitoring Officer suggested that, given the current pandemic, the governance review should be revisited at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Governance Review be considered at a future meeting of the Authority.

The meeting closed at 12.47pm.

This page is intentionally left blank

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Executive Committee
08 July 2020

REPORT AUTHOR: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER and SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER

SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE

For further information on this report contact: Nicky Upton
Democratic and Regulatory Services Supervisor
Tel No: 01234 845149

Background Papers:

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

To review the future governance arrangements of the FRA, in particular the role and responsibilities of members of the Executive Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. Each member of the Executive be allocated a special area of responsibility as shown in Appendix A;
 2. The terms of reference of the Executive Committee be revised and adopted as shown in Appendix B.
 3. No changes be made to the Scheme of Member Allowances at this time but that this be reviewed in December 2020.
-

1 Introduction

- 1.1 On 19 July 2019 the FRA made a number of changes to its governance arrangements in response to a governance review that had taken place. The decisions made by the FRA were as follows:
- That the Policy and Challenge Groups be suspended;
 - That two additional FRA meetings be added to the 2019/20 calendar – 4 September 2019 and 6 November 2019 and the updated calendar of meetings be approved;
 - That the interim Executive Committee elected at the Annual Meeting remain in place with the remaining seven members being members of the Audit and Standards Committee;
 - That FRA Meetings continue to be held at Dunstable Community Fire Station, when possible, with the Annual Meeting held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters;
 - That the terms of reference of the Executive Committee be amended to include the management of the employment relationship between the FRA and the Chief Fire Officer; and
 - That the decision to suspend the Policy and Challenge Groups for a trial period be reviewed in the next Member Development Day in October 2019.

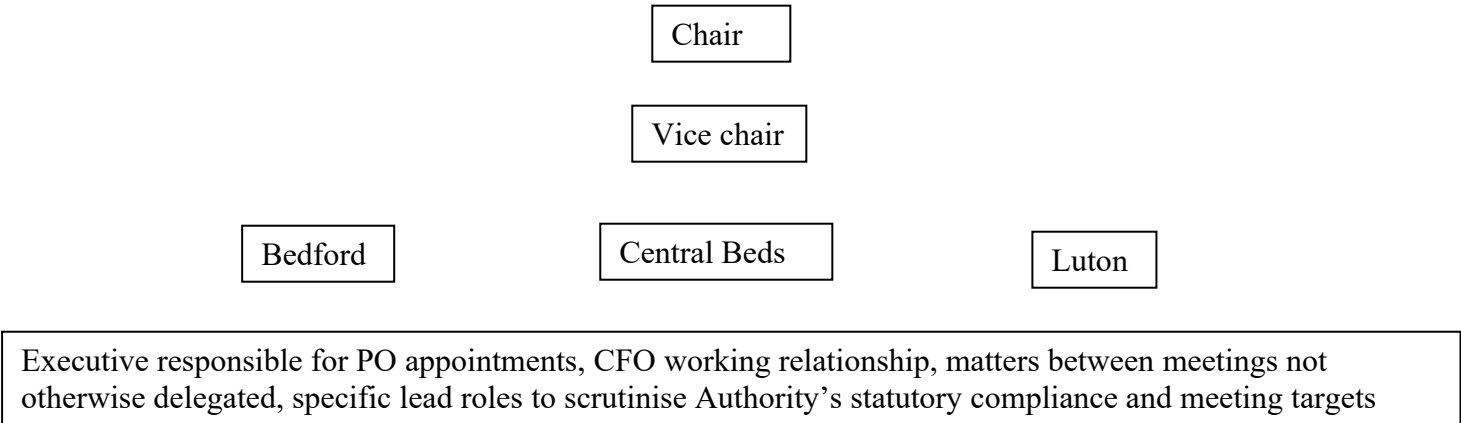
- 1.2 Further discussions took place at the Members' Development Day in October 2019 and also at the Budget Workshop held in January 2020. At that workshop the Chairman made some suggestions about the way in which the role of Executive Member might be enhanced and it was decided to refer the Chairman's proposal for consideration by the Executive Committee.
2. The Chairman's Proposals
 - 2.1 The Chairman has attended a number of national and regional meetings since he was elected in June 2019. The experience that he has gained since then has led him to the conclusion that the Bedfordshire FRA is at a disadvantage because of a lack of continuity. He proposes to address this by asking each member of the Executive to accept responsibility for a discreet area of the FRAs business (portfolio). Members would attend regional and national meetings that related to their portfolio and, in this way, would gain experience and knowledge that they could bring back to their work within the FRA.
 - 2.2 The diagram attached as Appendix A shows how these arrangements would be organised and Appendix B sets out revised terms of reference for the Executive Committee including the portfolio arrangements.
3. Special Responsibility Allowances
 - 3.1 Executive Members currently receive an SRA based on an assessment that their additional responsibilities will spend 6 days undertaking their special responsibilities. It is difficult to say at this stage how the adoption of portfolios will affect this assessment and so it is suggested that no change be made to the FRAs Scheme of Member Allowances at this stage and that this should be reviewed in December 2020.
4. Conclusion
 - 4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the proposals set out in this report and the appendices and to recommend to the FRA that they be adopted.

PAUL FULLER
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER CBE QFSM MStJ DL

JOHN ATKINSON
SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER

APPENDIX A

FRA EXECUTIVE



AUDIT AND STANDARDS
 Scrutiny function by all FRA Members not having executive roles
 Internal, external audit, Nolan principles, etc

Page 14

Prevention and Protection
 Fire safety Order and other fire safety legislation, National framework as appropriate

Operational response, preparedness
 Fire and Rescue services act, Civil contingencies Act, National framework as appropriate

Corporate Risk, Health and Safety
 HASAWA, Governance Combination scheme order

People Board, Staffing, Diversity Champion
 Employment law, equality duty/ legislation

Collaboration
 Police and Crime Act

National Meeting , seminars, LGA, CFA conference etc ought to be attended by the responsible lead.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee has been established to undertake the following functions on behalf of the FRA:

Decisions

- To take urgent decisions in between meetings of the FRA;
- To appoint selection panels and carry out the arrangements for the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer and Principal Officers;
- To exercise the FRA's responsibilities in respect of employment disputes including collective grievances/collective disputes and matters referred to the FRA under stage two of the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) and other related matters.
- To manage the employment relationship between the FRA and the CFO, including such matters as objective setting and appraisal, discipline and grievances.

Policy Development

- To provide support and constructive challenge to the Principal Officer Team in the development of strategies and plans within the overall policy objectives agreed by the FRA.
- To keep abreast of developments and policies at national, regional and local level and to provide reports to the FRA on any significant developments.

Delegated Powers and Reporting Arrangements

The Executive Committee is authorised to exercise any functions of the FRA that come within its terms of reference. Decisions taken by the Committee under its delegated powers will be reported to the next meeting of the FRA, except where the decision taken is quasi judicial or where the subject matter considered is exempt from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Membership

The membership of the Executive Committee shall be as follows:

- The Chair and Vice Chair of the FRA; and
- One Member from each constituent authority.

The Chair of the FRA shall be Chair of the Executive Committee.

In the event that a political party or constituent authority is not represented at a meeting of the Executive Committee, a named observer from that party/constituent authority may attend the meeting.

Special Responsibilities

Each member of the Executive Committee will have special responsibility for one of the following portfolios:

1. Prevention and Protection

Including the Fire Safety Order, other fire safety legislation and the National Framework as appropriate.

2. Operational Performance and Preparedness

Including the Fire and Rescue Services Act, the Civil Contingencies Act and the National Framework as appropriate.

3. Corporate Risk, Health and Safety

Including the FRA's responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act, Governance and the Combination Scheme Order.

4. People Board, Staffing, Diversity Champion

Including employment law, the equality duty and related legislation.

5. Collaboration.

Including the FRA's responsibilities within the Police and Crime Act 2017.

Where possible the portfolios will be agreed amongst the members of the Executive Committee following the Authority's annual meeting. However, in the event that they cannot be agreed, the portfolios will be allocated by the Chair of the FRA.

Portfolio holders will carry out the following responsibilities within their portfolios:

- To act as a sounding board for senior officers and provide support to deal with any problems at a strategic level.
- To review, in conjunction with senior officers, the effectiveness of service within their portfolio.
- To report to the FRA on significant issues arising within their portfolio.
- To represent the FRA on bodies, at events and at conferences as agreed by the FRA related to their portfolio and to provide feedback to the FRA on any relevant or significant issues.

Quorum

Business shall not be transacted at any meeting of the Executive Committee unless at least three members of the Committee are present with at least one member from two of the constituent authorities.

Support

The Committee will be supported by the Principal Officer Team and the FRA's Secretary /Monitoring Officer.

Regularity of Meetings

The Executive Committee will meet as and when required to transact any business within its terms of reference.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are reviewed by the FRA on an annual basis at the Annual Meeting.