

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority  
Executive Committee  
24 April 2020

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**REPORT AUTHOR: SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY**

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Background Papers:

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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.*

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## **PURPOSE:**

To decide how to manage meetings of the FRA during the Coronavirus Emergency

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

- (a) That the Annual Meeting of the FRA be postponed until 3 September 2020 and that the FRA meetings due to be held on 30 April 2020 and 16 July 2020 be cancelled.
  - (b) 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.
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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This meeting of the Executive Committee has been arranged to agree arrangements for the management of the FRA's business during the lockdown. Normally decisions about cancelling or postponing meetings of the FRA would be taken by the full FRA. However, in this instance and in view of the exceptional situation the Executive Committee has been convened to take an urgent decision on the matter in between meetings of the FRA.

### 2. The Normal Rules

- 2.1 The FRA's Combination Scheme and its Standing Orders govern the arrangements for meetings. Standing Orders provide that the FRA must hold an Annual Meeting during May or June each year and may hold such other meetings as it may determine. The first item on the agenda at the Annual Meeting is the election of a Chairperson for the ensuing year.

### 3. The effect of the Coronavirus Flexibility of Meetings Regulations

- 3.1 These regulations were introduced by the Government in response to the Coronavirus outbreak and, in particular, the lockdown. The Regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply only until 6 May 2021. They remove the requirement to hold an Annual Meeting during this period and provide that Members holding an appointment that would normally be

decided at the Annual Meeting remain in office until the next Annual Meeting of the FRA or until such time as the FRA may determine.

3.2 The Regulations also make provision for meetings to be held remotely. Being present at a meeting includes being present remotely.

4. Proposed Changes to the Calendar of Meetings

4.1 It is suggested that the ordinary meetings of the FRA that are due to be held on 30 April 2020 and 16 July 2020 be cancelled and that the Annual Meeting be postponed until 3 September 2020.

4.2 The Audit and Standards Committee is due to meet on 2 July 2020. It is suggested that the Chair of the Committee should be authorised to determine whether that meeting should take place remotely or cancelled following advice from the Chief Fire Officer and FRA Treasurer on the decisions that need to be taken at that meeting.

5. Urgent Decisions and Information Bulletins

5.1 If urgent decisions must be made before the FRA's Annual Meeting in September a remote meeting of the Executive Committee can be convened in accordance with the FRA's normal arrangements for taking urgent decisions.

5.2 During this period the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer will issue regular updates to ensure that Members of the FRA are kept informed about any significant issues and the activities of the Fire Service.

**JOHN ATKINSON**  
**SECRETARY/MONITORING OFFICER**