

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

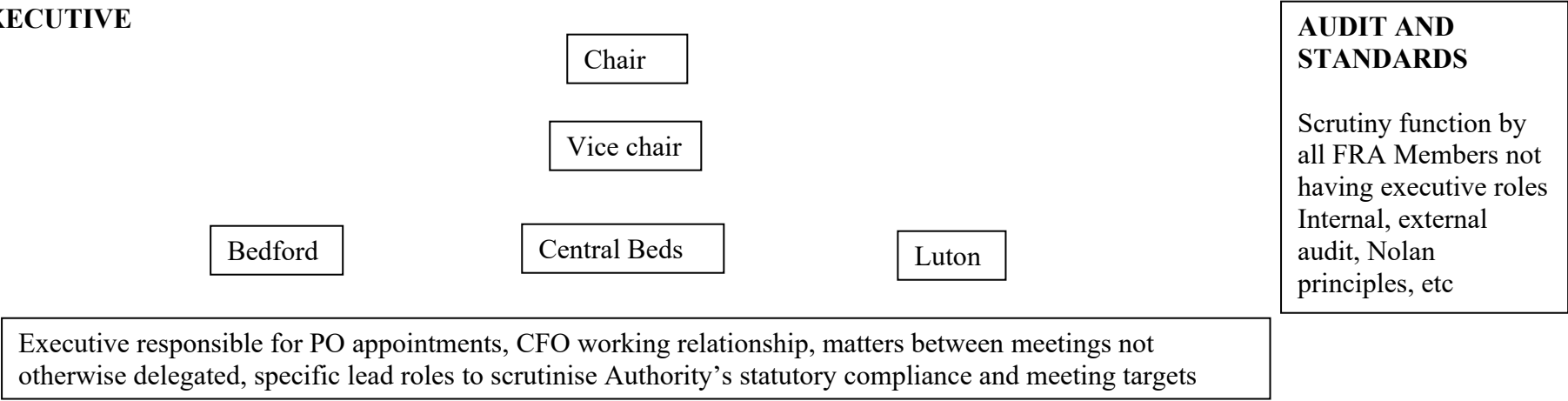
4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the proposals set out in this report and the appendices and to recommend to the FRA that they be adopted.

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

Executive responsible for PO appointments, CFO working relationship, matters between meetings not otherwise delegated, specific lead roles to scrutinise Authority's statutory compliance and meeting targets

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.