

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

PRESS RELEASE

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY APPROVES PROPOSALS FOR WINDSOR AT NIGHT

Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) have agreed proposals to base firefighters and a specialist vehicle in Windsor at night, in a move which will reassure local people concerned about night-time fire cover in the town.

The decision is the culmination of longstanding discussions between the Authority and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) and has been welcomed by both authorities as a positive way forward.

At its meeting last night (28 September) the Authority approved the proposals for inclusion in the draft 2012-2013 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). The plan, including this proposal, will now be subject to public consultation and consultation and negotiation with RBFRS staff and the Fire Brigades Union.

RBFA Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley, said: "It has been a long process and this decision is indicative of the level of commitment and effort from both authorities to achieving an outcome. This solution will reassure those who were worried about a physical presence in Windsor at night, will provide a flexible resource for the town and will not place a heavy financial burden on council taxpayers in the rest of the county."

Leader of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Councillor David Burbage, is also a Fire Authority Member. He said: "This is a compromise solution which gives residents the 24/7 fire cover they deserve. The council has fought tirelessly over the past five years to retain night-time cover in Windsor. We never gave up hope of finding a way forward. Following positive negotiations with the Fire Authority this is a significant move towards meeting the aspirations of the council and our community."

The firefighters who will crew the fire engine will come from Slough fire station. They will use a new, local fire engine, smaller than a standard pump, that will be based in Windsor but will refuel and change shifts at Slough. Windsor will be staffed during the day from the beginning of October until the new fire engine is ready but it is hoped that the new vehicle could commence its duties towards the end of this year.

ENDS.

NB Notes for Editors:

The fire engine will be crewed by three firefighters (a standard pump carries five or four) and will carry core equipment to allow initial fire fighting and rescue operations to be undertaken. The costs of the fire engine, its crewing, equipment and maintenance will be met by the Fire Authority.

It will be based initially at the existing fire station in St Mark's Road but RBWM has agreed to provide an alternative base in Windsor. It is anticipated that the Fire Authority will then wish to dispose of the current

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fire station. RBWM would not wish to see the current building stand empty and therefore undertake to work with the Fire Authority to ensure that new accommodation is ready to enable a seamless handover (this location will be provided for use by the Fire Authority but will remain the property of RBWM).

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