

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - PART I**



Held on Monday 13 March 2006

Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters
103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS

Those present: Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Christine Borgars (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Christine Bateson (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Barrie Patman (Member, Fire Authority)

In attendance: Pat Arthur (Procurement and Facilities Manager) (*Item 03.06.06*)
Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Rosemary Lansdowne (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Alan Newcombe (Information Systems Officer) (*Items 03.09.06 and 03.10.06*)
Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager)
Des Tidbury (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

In audience: Mark Stollery (Chair - Fire Brigades Union)
Christopher Glenn (UNISON)
Andrew Mancey (Fire Brigades Union)

03.01.06 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer asked Members for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Executive Committee. Councillor Borgars proposed Councillor Bryant, and this was **supported** by the other Members present.

The Executive Committee resolved:

- ***That Councillor Bryant be elected Chairman*** of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Executive Committee for the remainder of the year, until the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting on 28 June 2006.

Councillor Bryant took the Chair.

03.02.06 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee noted:

- ***That Councillor Bateson had been appointed as a Member of the Executive Committee*** and had taken up this appointment following the untimely death of Councillor Mills.

Action

03.03.06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mole.

03.04.06 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Having been reminded that, in accordance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, Members were required to declare interests, which were Personal or Personal and Prejudicial, where appropriate.

It was **noted** that, on this occasion, there were no such declarations to be made.

03.05.06 MINUTES (PART I) OF MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2006

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2006 were **approved** by the Executive Committee, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

03.06.06 PROCURE SMOKE DETECTORS USING NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided a summary of the report presented and referred to the supporting information provided within the report. He noted the announcement of £25million by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in capital grants to English Fire and Rescue Authorities to support a ten-year Home Fire Risk Check initiative, and the respective capital funding to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) of £67,000 for 2005/06 and £67,000 for 2006/07 to procure smoke alarms for Home Fire Risk Checks. He described the Framework Agreement awarded to FIREBUY.

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that, in accordance with Standing Order 10f, the Procurement and Facilities Manager be authorised to procure smoke alarms for 2005/06 and 2006/07, using the National Framework Agreement set up by FIREBUY.

DT

03.07.06 SUMMARY OF BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07 (DRAFT)

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the draft Summary of Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/07 had been amended from previous years, in particular to the figures presented, and noted that it had been linked to the Integrated Risk Management Plan. He drew attention to the quote by the Chairman, as contained within the draft Summary, that the community safety initiatives were working well. The Chairman supported this wording. The Chief Fire Officer noted the unqualified approval by the Auditors to the RBFRS' 4-year plan.

Councillor Borgars asked that, under the section entitled 'Our Funding' the reference made to '*David Weller, the Fire Authority's Committee Administrator*', be updated to reflect the appointment of Lynda Kenyon as Committee Manager. She also asked that the wording '*For details of your local member*' be changed to read '*For details of your local Members*'.

The Chairman asked for clarification regarding the reference to 'accidents' under the section entitled 'Performance Links to Community Safety', and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that this, predominantly, related to car accidents.

The Chairman proposed that under the categories, listed as bullet points in the aforementioned section, a further category should be included on 'do-it-yourself safety'. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to raise this with Community Safety for consideration.

IC

Under the section 'Best Value Reviews', it was felt that the first sentence should be re-worded to enable clearer interpretation and understanding for members of the public. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to consider this.

IC

General discussion and consideration took place in respect to the circulation of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/07, including distribution to Unitary Authorities, Parish Councils and Clerks. The Chief Fire Officer felt that the best approach would be for Christopher Gill (Senior Divisional Officer, Performance Review) and the Performance Team to consult with each Unitary to ensure appropriate distribution.

DT

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that the draft version of the Summary of the Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07 be approved, subject to the minor amendments outlined above.

DT

03.08.06 INTRODUCTION OF TRAINING AGREEMENT

The Director of Human Resources introduced the report presented, and provided an outline summary of the Training Bond, and the establishment of the Joint Recruitment and Retention Working Group and its respective recommendations, including the introduction of a new Training Agreement. He noted the support of the Fire Brigades Union to the Training Agreement, and that retention issues would be better addressed by this Agreement.

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that a Training Agreement be introduced to replace the existing Training Bond, and that the outstanding debts arising from the operation of the Training Bond be written off.

DW

03.09.06 HOME OFFICE MASTER AGREEMENT (HOMA) WITH MICROSOFT

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced Alan Newcombe (Information Systems Officer). The Chief Fire Officer referred to the supporting information provided (*copy available from Lynda Kenyon, Committee Manager*) in response to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 March 2006. Alan Newcombe provided an explanation of the developments to date, and referred to the existing agreement negotiated by the Home Office and the demonstrable benefits, including the identified savings to the RBFRS of £25,697.50, as contained within the reports presented. Alan Newcombe tabled a copy of 'The New Approach to Microsoft Licensing, The Home Office Master Agreement (*copy available from Lynda Kenyon, Committee Manager*)'.

Councillor Bateson felt that it would have been helpful if, included within the reports presented, additional information had been made available to demonstrate other comparisons to the HOMA agreement. Alan Newcombe stated that it would be possible to look at alternative suppliers, however he noted that it would be difficult to provide comparisons in terms of compatibility features, and he felt that there would be considerable costs in terms of staff training if alternative software was employed.

The Chairman asked if there were any other suppliers of Microsoft software and license agreements that would be cheaper than obtaining these through HOMA. Alan Newcombe confirmed that the HOMA was the cheapest option.

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that, due to their being demonstrable benefits in the form of £60,000 savings over the next 3 years, the Information Systems Manager be directed to enter into a pre-tendered licence through the Home Office Master Agreement.

DT

03.10.06 LEASE OF OPERATIONAL RISK INFORMATION SYSTEM (ORIS) HARDWARE

Alan Newcombe provided a summary of the reports, including the supporting information report (*copy available from Lynda Kenyon, Committee Manager*) presented. He noted that no decision had yet been approved for the removal of the RBFRS' Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs), but that it was believed that this would be in 2009/2010. He referred to the additional costs incurred and resources required if an alternative supplier was used, to the proposal by the RBFRS to purchase 30 MDTs over the next 3 years, and to the costs involved and the associated funding. He also noted the risk involved of not replacing this hardware.

Councillor Bateson asked if the MDTs might become obsolete in 3 years time, and Alan Newcombe confirmed that he did not believe that this would be the case.

The Chief Fire Officer noted the importance of ensuring that appropriate systems were in place in fire appliances for crews to access the required information.

The Chairman expressed concerns regarding the funding of the proposed MDTs, and Alan Newcombe confirmed that the underspend in this year's capital expenditure for Information Systems hardware was being utilised.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that the reference made in the proposed resolution that the '*Information Systems Manager be directed to enter into an Operational Lease Agreement on a 3-year agreement*' was incorrect, and that that the Executive Committee should be asked to consider resolving that the '*Information Systems Manager be directed to enter into an agreement to purchase 30 MDTs*'.

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that, due to their being demonstrable benefits in that the contract was pre-tendered, the agreement offered the RBFRS the opportunity to replace its MDTs like for like, and that cost savings would be achieved, the Information Systems Manager be directed to enter into an agreement to purchase 30 MDTs.

03.11.06 STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer tabled a paper (*copy available from Lynda Kenyon, Committee Manager*) which detailed the existing wording and the proposed amendments to the Interests of Members in contracts and other matters (Standing Orders 19) and the Interest of Officers in Contracts (Standing Orders 20).

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer reported that the Members' Handbook was currently being updated.

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** to recommend to the full Fire Authority that Standing Orders, Numbers 19 and 20, be amended to reflect the new Code of Conduct.

*FA Agenda
(28.06.06)*

03.12.06 2005/06 BUDGET REPORTING

The Authority Treasurer provided an update of the financial position, noting that, currently, there was an underspend of £169,000, however he expected that the budget would be fully spent up by year-end, and that there might be a slight overspend which would be as a result of pensions.

The Executive Committee:

- **Noted** the 2005/06 Budget Monitoring position.

03.13.06 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on:

- **Monday 15 May 2006 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre at Brigade Headquarters.**

03.14.06 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated:
 - Agenda item 15 - Part II Minutes of meeting held on 23 January 2006
 - Agenda item 16 - Reactive and Term Maintenance Contracts (*Paragraphs 8 and 9*)
 - Agenda item 17 - Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges (*Paragraph 1*)
 - Agenda item 18 - Employment Tribunal Applications update (*Paragraph 1*)
 - Agenda item 19 - Procurement of Consultancy to support the implementation of an Integrated Workforce Learning and Development Strategy for Fire and Rescue Services of the South East (*Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9*).

Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Executive Committee meeting held on Monday 13 March 2006:

03.15.06 PART II MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2006

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2006 were **approved** by the Executive Committee, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

03.16.06 REACTIVE AND TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

The Executive Committee:

- **Agreed** that an update should be provided to the meeting on 17 July 2006 on the progress of the contracts.
- **Resolved** that, in accordance with Standing Orders 10f, the Procurement and Facilities Manager be authorised to award 2 one-year contracts, commencing on 1 April 2006, one for Reactive Maintenance and one for Term Maintenance.

03.17.06 ANNUAL REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY RANGES

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that the proposed revised salary ranges for Senior Management, Information Services and Accountants local pay groups be approved for implementation from 1 April 2006.

03.18.06 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL APPLICATIONS UPDATE

The Executive Committee:

- **Noted** the Employment Tribunal Applications update.

03.19.06 PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANCY TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED WORKFORCE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OF THE SOUTH EAST

The Executive Committee:

- **Resolved** that, in accordance with Standing Orders (SOs) relating to Contracts (SOs 18), the contract be awarded to the considered provider.