

## PART I MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Held on Monday 15 January 2007

Strategic Command Centre, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue  
Service Headquarters, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading,  
Berkshire, RG30 4FS

**Those present:** Councillor Mike Adams (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Paul Bryant (Member, Fire Authority (*Chairman*))  
Councillor James Mole (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

**In attendance:** Jonathan Ball (Information Systems Manager) (*Item 01.04.07*)  
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)  
George Cross (Senior Divisional Officer, Support Services) (*Item 01.05.07*)  
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
Rosemary Lansdowne (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)  
Paul Southern (Senior Divisional Officer, Service Delivery)  
Des Tidbury (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)  
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

**In audience:** Lincoln Ball (Fire Brigades Union)  
Conor Byrne (Senior Accountant)  
Eduardo Cardoso (Fire Brigades Union)  
Christopher Glenn (UNISON)  
Jesse James (Fire Brigades Union)  
Andy Mancey (Fire Brigades Union)

### 01.01.07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

The Chairman noted that Councillor James Mole would be arriving late to the meeting.

### 01.02.07 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.

### 01.03.07 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2006

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27 November 2006 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

**Action**

#### **01.04.07 IT AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY (2007) - PRESENTATION**

Jonathan Ball (Information Systems Manager) gave a presentation entitled 'IS and Communications Strategy 2007-2008' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) in which he described how the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) would be managing the FireLink and FiReControl projects and how the new systems would enhance functionality. He referred to the phased programme of work associated with the migration of the RBFRS's REMSDAQ (Mobilising system), ORIS (Operational Risk Information System) and MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals) to the Regional Control Centres (RCCs). Jonathan Ball noted the estimated anticipated costs of the projects, and referred to the required training for personnel, and the expected staff resources and system costs needed to deliver the projects. In terms of convergence, he anticipated some initial problems.

Jonathan Ball confirmed that the RCC was the highest risk at the present time for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) in terms of meeting all the required standards, however he did expect its implementation to be cost neutral to the RBFA.

The Chairman thanked Jonathan Ball for his presentation.

#### **01.05.07 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN DOCUMENT**

The Executive Committee's approval was sought to recommend to the full Fire Authority the IRMP 5-Year Plan document and the IRMP 5-Year Plan consultation strategy in readiness to commence a full public consultation process on 12 February 2007.

##### **a) Draft Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan (IRMP) Document**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) advised the Executive Committee of the IRMP Working Party's key amendments to the draft IRMP 5-Year Plan document. He also referred to the additional wording to be included on page 17 of the document which would provide an explanation of the optimum and standard response times, and noted that the Executive Summary would be written after the Executive Committee had considered the document for recommendation to the Fire Authority. The ACFO confirmed that the colours contained within the graphs and associated keys would be improved prior to publication.

##### **Councillor James Mole joined the meeting.**

The ACFO tabled a draft copy of the back page of the Council Tax precept leaflet (*copy available from the Committee Manager*). He confirmed that the IRMP Working Party Members would receive copies of any subsequent re-drafts of the precept leaflet and the questionnaire.

Consideration was given to the appropriate positioning of the questionnaire within the document. It was accepted that it should remain as a pull-out section in the middle of the main document, but that additional wording should be included which steered the reader to consider the entire document prior to completion of the questionnaire. Councillor Angus Ross suggested the

inclusion of some text at the beginning of the document steering the reader to remove the questionnaire response from the centre of the document.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson felt the wording "*believes that options a) and b) are preferable to c) because they enable enhancements to be made in areas where improvement is needed*" (as contained in the questionnaire on page iii, third sentence in the section entitled 'Windsor') was a leading statement and should be removed. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer felt it was important to inform the public of the RBFRS's preferred option. The Director of Human Resources (DHR) pointed out that each proposal contained a view from the RBFRS.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson also felt that comparative number of calls received should be included during the period 0800 hours and 2000 hours. Councillor Angus Ross supported this.

Councillor James Mole suggested that the following additional wording should be included within the questionnaire - "Should you wish to make any further comments, please write to the RBFRS at ... (*insert address*)". The CFO supported this.

The ACFO invited the Executive Committee to consider that, in order to meet the printing deadlines, the Chairman of the Fire Authority and the Chairman of the IRMP Working Party be authorised to agree the final wording of the IRMP questionnaire and the contents of the IRMP information in the Council Tax precept leaflet. The Chairman and Councillor Jeff Brooks noted the Members' comments, and, subject to the agreement of the Executive Committee, agreed to consider these when finalising the wording of the questionnaire.

The ACFO noted that the Director of ORS (Opinion Research Services) who had undertaken a number of IRMP consultations for various Fire Authorities, had stated that the process recommended by the IRMP Working Party was the most thorough and extensive that he had been involved in.

## **b) Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan - Consultation Strategy**

The ACFO confirmed that the scope of the consultation had now been broadened, as directed by the IRMP Working Party, and he provided a summary of the recommended consultation process, as detailed in the report presented.

Councillor Jeff Brooks confirmed that the consultation strategy presented had been supported by the majority of the IRMP Working Party Members. He felt that the consultation process was now very thorough, however he noted the increase in the costs of the consultation. The ACFO confirmed that the costs might increase further if additional copies of the document were required to be printed.

The ACFO referred to the outline of options and recommendations for the proposed consultation programme for the 5-Year Plan, as presented. He noted that the RBFRS was still openly engaging with its staff and that Officers were meeting with a staff groups.

**The Executive Committee voted by a show of hands on each of the recommendations below, and each recommendation was carried by a vote of five in favour to one against:**

- i) The IRMP 5-Year Plan document be recommended to the full Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 February 2007 in readiness to commence a 3-month public consultation process on 12 February 2007.
- ii) The Chairman of the Fire Authority and the Chairman of the IRMP Working Party be authorised to agree the final wording of the IRMP questionnaire and the contents of the IRMP information in the Council Tax leaflet in order to meet printing deadlines.
- iii) The IRMP 5-Year Plan consultation strategy be recommended to the full Fire Authority at its meeting on 7 February 2007 in readiness to commence a 3-month public consultation process on 12 February 2007.

#### **01.06.07 MEMBERS' BADGES - CHAIRMAN'S CHAIN OF OFFICE**

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) advised the Executive Committee on the procurement options for badges of office for the posts of the RBFA Members and the procurement options for a chain of office for the post of the RBFA Chairman.

The CFO provided a sample specimen of the Hampshire Fire Authority's Members' badge of office.

The **Executive Committee recognised** the need to strengthen the RBFA's Members' identify. Councillor Jeff Brooks suggested that a board be erected at the RBFRS's Headquarters which could display information about the present Chairman and Chief Fire Officer, and preceding Chairmen and Chief Fire Officers since the RBFA's inception, and the current Fire Authority Members. This was supported by Councillor James Mole and Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson.

Consideration was given to whether Members' badges of office should incorporate Members' names, but this was felt to be impracticable. The CFO stated that separate name badges could be provided. Councillor James Mole suggested that 60 badges of office be purchased rather than the 50 proposed.

Consideration was also given to the proposal for a Chairman's collaret and/or chain. The CFO confirmed that, to date, the Berkshire Council Chairman's chain had not been located.

#### **The Executive Committee:**

- a) **Noted** the information provided within the report.
- b) **Agreed** the procurement of:
  - 60 Fire Authority Members' badges of office.
  - Plastic name badges for Fire Authority Members.
  - The erection of a display board at the RBFRS's Headquarters.
  - A bespoke medallion for the Fire Authority Chairman (similar to medallion pictured at Diagram D in the report presented), a chain and collaret ribbon.

- c) **Authorised** Officers to complete the expenditures.

The CFO suggested the inauguration of the Chairman's chain of office and the Members' badges of office at the Fire Authority's annual meeting on 27 June 2007.

**CFO**  
(RBFA -  
27.06.07)

#### **01.07.07 SOUTH EAST REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE - BOARD ATTENDANCE**

The Chief Fire Officer advised the Executive Committee of the response to the request for expressions of interest in attending the South East Regional Control Centre Board as an Elected Fire Authority Member.

##### **The Executive Committee:**

- a) **Noted** the information provided within the report.
- b) **Confirmed the appointment** of Councillor Angus Ross as the Elected Member attending for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on the South East Regional Control Centre Board.

#### **01.08.07 2006/07 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Authority Treasurer informed the Executive Committee of revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of December 2006, and noted the additional income received so far this year.

The **Executive Committee Noted** the report.

#### **01.09.07 2007/08 BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee was advised of the recommendations and proposals of the 2007/2008 Budget Sub Committee, as detailed below:

- Recommendation that a precept increase of 4.67%, with a Band D Council Tax of £50.18 (the revenue budget would increase by 4.06% from £29.957 million to £31.176 million).
- Proposal that only the unavoidable and essential bids should be supported.
- Recommendation that the Executive Committee set aside £50,000 and monitors progress on the bids and savings closely during the year.
- Recommendation that the proposed savings be accepted.
- Recommendation that the capital bids presented be accepted.

The Authority Treasurer confirmed that West Berkshire Council had now increased its taxbase by 3.8% which, he reported, would provide approximately £110,000 additional funds with a 4.67% precept increase. He noted that these funds could enable the station cooks' posts to be saved, the bring forward of the Civil Contingencies Act post and the financing of an additional £20,000 for Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs).

The Chairman invited the Representative Bodies present to comment on the proposal for the redundancy of the station cooks' posts. Christopher Glenn (UNISON) stated that there had been very little time to consult with the station cooks since the 2007/08 Budget Sub Committee had met on 9 January 2007, and that the Director of Human Resources had now written to the station cooks informing them of the current proposal. He advised the Executive Committee that the proposal had caused disquiet amongst UNISON Members and the staff group concerned, and urged the Committee to retain the posts. Eduardo Cardoso (Fire Brigades Union) supported his UNISON colleague, and felt that the proposal relating to the station cooks' posts could have been managed more appropriately.

Councillor Jeff Brooks was disappointed that the recommended precept increase was more than current inflation, and felt that the additional funds (£110,000) could be used to moderate this. He was concerned that, in respect to the station cooks' posts, there was a lack of available data to support the catering arrangements on stations to enable an informed decision to be made.

Councillor Jeff Brooks asked why the 2007/08 Budget Sub Committee had recommended setting aside £50,000. Councillor James Mole explained that this money could, for example, be used to alleviate any pressures on the salaries budget or to fund some of the highly desirable bids. Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that the reserves could be used for this purpose if required.

After due consideration of the additional funds (approximately £110,000) and the recommended allocation of £50,000 to be set aside, the **Executive Committee**:

- a) **Recommended** the funding of an additional £20,000 for ARAs.
- b) **Recommended** the funding of £66,000 for the retention of the station cooks, subject to a comprehensive Business Case being presented over the coming year for agreement by the Executive Committee.
- c) **Recommended** that the redundancy of station cooks be withdrawn from the 2007/08 budgetary savings.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) then referred to the significant environmental issues that need to be addressed, and the importance of securing the Civil Contingencies Act post. The **Executive Committee Recommended** the funding of £20,000 for the Civil Contingencies Act post from the aforementioned funds. The Authority Treasurer advised the Executive Committee that this would realise a Council Tax rise of approximately 4.48%, a Band D Council Tax of 50.09 pence.

#### **The Executive Committee:**

- i) **Noted** the budget recommended by the Budget Sub Committee.
- ii) **Recommended** that only the unavoidable and essential bids be supported.
- iii) **Recommended** that all the proposed savings be accepted, with the exception of the savings for 2007/08 for the redundancy of the station cooks, subject to Business Case being presented over the coming year for agreement by the Executive Committee.

- iv) **Recommended** to the Fire Authority the capital bids presented.
- iv) **Recommended** to the Fire Authority a precept increase of 4.5%, with a Band D Council Tax of £50.09.

#### **01.10.07 CREWING LEVEL MONITORING**

The Executive Committee was advised of the crewing levels for Wholetime appliances for the period October 2006 - December 2006. Paul Southern tabled an amended graph for December 2006 (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) noting that the graph presented in the report contained some incorrect data.

The **Executive Committee acknowledged** the excellent crewing levels.

The **Executive Committee Noted** the report.

#### **01.11.07 MONITORING OF HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION**

The Director of Human Resources advised the Executive Committee that, as a result of a lack of staff resources in the Personnel Team, it had not proved possible to produce the planned Human Resource Monitoring Information report in time for the meeting, and he apologised for this. He stated that a full report would be presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2007.

**DHR**  
(Agenda  
19.03.07)

The Director of Human Resources was pleased to report that a new member of staff had now joined the Personnel Team.

The **Executive Committee Noted** the report.

#### **01.12.07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The **Executive Committee Noted** that the next meeting would take place on **Monday 19 March 2007 at 6.30pm** (Strategic Command Centre, RBFRS's Headquarters).

#### **01.13.07 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, and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

- Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2006 (*Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*).
- Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee (*Paragraphs 1, 2 and 7*).

**Note:** The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda:

**01.14.07 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2006**

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 27 November 2006 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

**01.15.07 DISCIPLINARY, APPEALS AND GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee was advised of the two meetings of the Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee held in December 2006 and of the decisions and recommendations made.