

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



Held on Monday 17 March 2008

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

Those present: Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Chairman, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

In attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Councillor Dexter Smith (Member, Fire Authority)
Richard Taylor (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Des Tidbury (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources) (DHR)

Observers: Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers
Representatives from the Fire Brigades Union
Representative from UNISON

Action

03.01.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority).

03.02.08 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.

03.03.08 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2008

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2008 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman. The Executive Committee **Noted** that the Actions had all been discharged.

03.04.08 PART I MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2008

The Part I Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 13 February 2008 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

03.05.08 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- The Chairman reported that he had, together with the Vice Chairman, Councillor Jeff Brooks and the Chief Fire Officer, attended the recent Local

Government Association (LGA) Fire Conference, and he referred to the key themes which included the Regional Control Centre, Sprinklers and Environmental issues.

- The Chairman was pleased to report that the Business Continuity Exercise conducted on 4 March 2008 had proved to be a valuable exercise which had tested a number of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's systems and procedures. The Chief Fire Officer acknowledged the work undertaken by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Andrew Mancey (Group Manager, Technical) in the delivery and execution of the exercise.

03.06.08 SPRINKLER STRATEGY

The Executive Committee's approval was sought for the development of a Strategy to increase the provision of sprinkler systems in high fire risk premises.

The Chief Fire Officer took the Executive Committee through the key elements of the report, as presented, and confirmed that the proposed Strategy was for the Fire Authority to adopt a policy to actively encourage the fitting of sprinkler systems in new builds (schools, high risk residential and other high risk premises).

The Executive Committee:

- **Unanimously Approved** the proposals for a Strategy to encourage the fitting of sprinklers within targeted premises.
- **Supported** the Chairman's proposals that he initially approach his Unitary Authority to advocate the fitting of automatic water sprinkler systems to new builds for schools, care homes, office blocks and the like, for subsequent consideration by the other Berkshire Authorities. The Chairman agreed to informally seek the position of the Unitary Authorities, and the **Executive Committee agreed** that the Fire Authority (FA), at its meeting in June 2008, be invited to drive this Agenda forward.

Chairman

FA Agenda
25.06.08

03.07.08 MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

The Executive Committee's approval was sought for the development of an integrated Members' Communications Programme.

Councillor Dexter Smith (Fire Authority's Communications' Champion) introduced the report, and supported it with a presentation entitled 'Improving Fire Authority Communications' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) in which he highlighted the reasons for, and how, communications could be improved, how Member links could be developed, and how the cascading of relative information could be improved. The Executive Committee welcomed the proposals put forward by Councillor Dexter Smith.

The Chairman suggested that consideration could be given to publishing Members' photographs on the website, including collective pictures of the Fire Authority Members and the Fire Authority Committees' Members. The Chief Fire Officer supported Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's suggestion that such pictures be placed in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Headquarters Reception area, by being shown on the large LCD monitor in Reception on a 'rolling loop'.

The Executive Committee supported the Chairman's suggestion that an informal open day, at a weekend, for Fire Authority Members and their families be arranged at, for example, Whitley Wood Fire Station. The Chief Fire Officer supported this and suggested that this could take place in September 2008.

CFO

The Executive Committee:

- **Unanimously Approved** the outline proposals for the development of the Members' Communications Programme.

03.08.08 CORPORATE UNIFORM PURCHASE (NON-PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

The Executive Committee's approval was sought to the waiver of Standing Order CS024 (f) to award a contract under a single tender action to W M Sugden and Sons for the supply of corporate uniform, pending the availability of a National Uniform Contract expected within the next 12 months.

Members expressed concern regarding the delays and issues emanating from the national FireBuy Integrated Clothing Project (ICP) Project. Councillor Dexter Smith suggested that these issues might be worthy of scrutiny by the Audit Committee or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Committee:

- **Unanimously Resolved** that, in accordance with Standing Order CS024 (f), the contract for the supply of corporate uniform, pending the availability of a National Uniform Contract expected within the next 12 months, be awarded under a single tender action to W M Sugden and Sons.
- **Noted** that the extension of the contract to WM Sugden and Sons would realise some additional time for the Fire Authority to consider the FireBuy Integrated Clothing Project contract in more detail in terms of provision, cost and suitability.

03.09.08 2007/08 BUDGET MONITORING

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the revenue budget was £395,000 below the profiled budget at the end of February 2008, and that an update position on the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of February 2008 would be circulated to Fire Authority Members for information.

Authority
Treasurer

The **Executive Committee Noted** the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as advised by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, that the Executive Committee might wish to consider any recommendations of the Water Safety Working Group pertaining to firefighter clothing for use in flooding incidences when the apportionment of the 2007/08 revenue underspend to help finance the replacement firefighting clothing is considered.

03.10.08 SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCCL)

Councillor Angus Ross advised of the salient issues considered by the SEFRCCCL

at its meeting held on 3 March 2008:

- A meeting between the Fire Brigades Union and the Directors would take place on 10 April 2008.
- Director Training events were being co-ordinated.
- Directors would be visiting the Regional Control Centre on 10 April 2008.
- Directors' Interest, confidentiality issues, including Freedom of Information, and press releases were considered.
- The SEFRCCCL Board would meet monthly until the end of the year, with a training plan and a programme of themed meetings.
- The new Director, Matthew Goodwin, would be assuming his duties on 1 May 2008.

In response to a request from Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, Councillor Angus Ross agreed to clarify if the Fire Authority Members would have an opportunity to visit the South East Regional Control Centre.

Cllr Ross

03.11.08 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2007

The **Executive Committee Noted** the Minutes of the Audit Committee's meeting held on 11 October 2008.

Councillor Dexter Smith stated that, since the Audit Commission's External Audit 2007/08 Annual Governance report, the Fire Authority's direction of travel had improved, and he referred to the work being undertaken by the Audit Committee.

03.11.08a) SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL CENTRE LTD - MEMBERS' AGREEMENT

The Executive Committee was advised of the Members' Agreement for the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd which dealt with a number of matters concerning the relationship between the Fire Authorities and the Company, including Membership, voting rights, Chairmanship and initial costs. The Fire Authority had delegated the signing of the Agreement to the Chief Fire Officer in consultation with the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee:

- **Noted** that the Chief Fire Officer would be signing the Agreement on behalf of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

03.12.08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Executive Committee Noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday 19 May 2008 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

03.13.08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

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 21 January 2008 (*Paragraphs 1, 2 3 and 4*).
- Award of Grounds Maintenance Contract (2008-2012) (*Paragraphs 1 and 3*).
- Redundancy of Station Cooks (*Paragraphs 1 and 2*),

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

03.14.08 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2008

The Executive Committee Approved the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2008 for signing by the Chairman.

03.15.08 AWARD OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (2008-2012)

The Executive Committee Unanimously Approved the Recommendation presented.

03.16.08 REDUNDANCY OF STATION COOKS

The Executive Committee Unanimously Agreed the Recommendations presented, and agreed, on the advice provided by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, that a report would be presented to the next Part I meeting of the Executive Committee, to formally agree the amendment made to the Fire Authority's Standard Compensation Policy.

DHR
Agenda
(Part I)
(19.05.08)