

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



Held on Monday 19 May 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 Colin Dudley (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Adrian Edwards (*nominated substitute Member, Fire Authority*)

**In attendance:** Becci Jefferies (Personnel Manager)  
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)  
Mr Albert Gregory (Chairman, Standards Committee)  
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
Andrew Mancey (Area Manager, Response, Service Delivery)  
Nicholas Oxborough (Group Manager, Performance Review)  
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)  
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

**Observers:** Christopher Glenn (UNISON)

### Action

#### 04.01.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority) and Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority). The Committee Manager stated that Councillor Angus Ross, under Standing Order 113, had notified the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's office, that Councillor Adrian Edwards would attend the meeting as his nominated Fire Authority Member substitute.

Apologies were also received from Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) and Richard Taylor (Clerk and Monitoring Officer).

#### 04.02.08 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.

#### 04.03.08 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2008

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

**Item 03.06.08 (Sprinkler Strategy)** - the Chairman advised that he had approached his Unitary regarding the fitting of sprinklers into new builds for schools, care homes, office blocks and the like, but noted that progress might be slow in advancing this agenda due to resource issues. The Chief Fire Officer

referred to the Chief Fire Officers Association's draft Policy Statement for Water Sprinklers which he agreed to share with the Chairman.

CFO

**Item 03.07.08 (Member Communications)** - the Chief Fire Officer reported that, at the annual meeting of the Fire Authority on 25 June 2008, he would be inviting Fire Authority Members to attend an informal open day in September 2008 or October 2008, and would be offering some proposed dates for this event.

CFO

**Item 03.10.08 (South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd)** - the Chief Fire Officer advised, on behalf of Councillor Angus Ross, that Fire Authority Members would have the opportunity to visit the South East Regional Control Centre later this year or early next year.

**The Executive Committee Noted** that the Actions from the last meeting had all been discharged.

#### **04.04.08 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

- The Chairman, in response to a request received from Councillor Angus Ross, advised that The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead had been given permission to proceed to Judicial Review. The Chief Fire Officer reported that legal representatives were preparing the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's final submission, to be presented on 20 May 2008, and that he expected the Hearing to be held by July 2008.
- The Chairman reported that he had recently attended, with Becci Jefferies (Personnel Manager), an Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Equality and Diversity meeting in Brighton, which had highlighted the need to consider operational diversity and service provision in terms of what can be offered to client groups.
- The Chairman referred to the Thames Valley joint major incident exercise conducted on 18 May 2008, as part of the Local Resilience Forum, which had involved all the Local Authorities. Andrew Mancey provided a summary of the exercise. In response to Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's concerns regarding late notification of this event, Andrew Mancey stated that it had been identified that communications to Members and local MPs could have been better, and that this would be improved for future similar events.

#### **04.05.08 CORPORATE PLAN 2008/09 - DRAFT**

The Executive Committee's approval was sought for the draft version of the Corporate Plan 2008/09.

The Chief Fire Officer introduced Nicholas Oxborough who took Members through the salient points within the Plan, noting the changes in legislative recording of the Best Value Performance Indicators.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Fire Indicators (33 and 49) were contained within Local Area Agreements for Bracknell Borough Council, Slough Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council and as local Indicators within Reading Borough Council, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and West Berkshire Council.

The Chairman invited Mr Albert Gregory to address the Executive Committee. Mr Albert Gregory stated that there was no reference within the Plan to the Standards Committee or its role, and he suggested that this might be addressed by the inclusion of a reference within the 'How to Contact Us' section or by the production of a small stand-alone leaflet similar to one produced by the Slough Borough Council's Standards Committee.

**The Executive Committee:**

- **Agreed** an inclusion within the Plan detailing the role of the Standards Committee and how the complaints' process relating to Fire Authority Members, as well as a brief statement relating to the complaints' process in respect to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- **Recommended** that the Standards Committee consider the benefits of producing a stand-alone leaflet outlining its role and associated issues relating to the Standards Committee.

**NO**

**Chairman  
(Standards  
Committee)**

Mr Albert Gregory conveyed his thanks to the Chairman and he left the meeting.

The Executive Committee then considered the presented draft Corporate Plan. The Chairman referred to Councillor Angus Ross' received comments that he believed the Local Performance Indicators might be over ambitious and difficult to achieve. Andrew Mancey felt that the Local Performance Indicators (1a-c) were achievable, and that the Local Performance Indicator (2a-d) could be achieved with appropriate support and training provided to the Control staff. **The Executive Committee Agreed** that these Local Indicators should be referred back to Service Delivery to review the targets and to adjust as appropriate.

**AM**

**The Executive Committee Agreed** the following amendments to the Plan:

- All mis-spellings to be corrected.
- 'Our Elected Members' section - include Members' respective Political Party.
- 'Our Elected Members' section - delete Paragraph 1 ("The Service is run ..... through the levy of the Council Tax").
- 'Areas of Strategic Focus for 2008/09 (Human Resources)' 'Cross Cutting' section (second bullet point) - amend to read "Internal and external partnerships".
- 'Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS)' section - amend second paragraph to be more user friendly, and include an explanation of what the Aspire Model is.
- 'Integrated Risk Management Plan' section (fifth paragraph) - amend reference to "step change" to now read "radical".
- 'Our Performance (Best Value Performance Indicators)' section (fifth paragraph) - delete text "x".
- 'BVPI8' - add supporting text where marked "x".

- 'Local Area Agreement Targets and Stretch Targets' section - include an explanation of what a stretch target is. Amend "LSP" to now read "LSPs". Include hyperlink at end of section where marked "xxxx".
- 'The Performance Targets' section - remove this section, as duplicated within previous section relating to Performance Indicators, and re-visit text within the latter section.
- 'Community Safety Strategy' - The Main Themes' section - ensure that the relevant national statistics presented are referred to as such.
- 'Increasing Community Involvement' section (fifth paragraph, sixth bullet point) - include reference to Neighbourhood Action Groups.
- 'Increasing Community Involvement' section (last paragraph) - include full explanation relating to acronym "VCS".

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

- **Unanimously Approved** the draft Corporate Plan 2008/09, subject to the above amendments and inclusions, and subject to Officers being allowed to make amendments as appropriate in consultation with the Chairman, and that a paper be presented to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority inviting them to Note the contents of the report.

Fire  
Authority  
Agenda  
25.06.08

#### **04.06.08 AMENDMENT TO COMPENSATION POLICY**

The Executive Committee's approval was sought for an amendment to the Fire Authority's Compensation Policy following its consideration of the Station Cooks' redundancy exercise.

The Director of Human Resources reported an amendment to Section 3.1i) of the report presented, which should read "Waive the statutory maximum weeks pay for the calculation of redundancy payments (currently **£330** per week)".

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that UNISON had been consulted, and was supportive of the proposal presented.

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

- **Unanimously Agreed** that the Fire Authority's Compensation Policy be amended by the addition of an option for employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to receive the discretionary compensation payment as either an additional lump sum added to their redundancy payment or, alternatively, as augmented pensionable service to the equivalent value purchased on their behalf by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **04.07.08 ADJUSTMENT TO NON-UNIFORM STAFF PAY SCALES**

The Executive Committee's approval was sought to amend an anomaly in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Non-Uniformed Staff pay grading structure, as recommended by the Director of Human Resources.

The Director of Human Resources reported that UNISON had been consulted, and had advised him that a number of Local Authorities do have additional scale points that exceed 49 spinal points. The Director of Human Resources referred to the scale points 50-52 (£40,965 - £42,687) within the London Voluntary Service Council's guidance on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services salary scales for 2007/08.

The Chairman invited Christopher Glenn to address the Executive Committee. Christopher Glenn endorsed the Director of Human Resources' recommendation, and he noted that there was a need to ensure standardisation across the grading structure. He supported the plan to conduct an equal pay audit within the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2008/09.

**The Executive Committee:**

- **Unanimously Agreed** that Grade 7 of the non-uniformed staff grading structure be amended to extend it from the current 3 points to 6 points (spinal points 47-52) in line with the other grades within the structure with effect from 1 April 2008.

**04.08.08 UPDATE TO CLEANING CONTRACT TENDER PROCESS**

The Executive Committee was advised of the recent circumstances affecting the decision made at the January 2008 Executive Committee meeting on the tendering of the Premises' Cleaning Contract.

**The Executive Committee:**

- **Noted** the change to the tendering process described in Agenda item 6, Extension to Cleaning Contract of the meeting held 21 January 2008.
- **Unanimously Agreed** that the Fire Authority should not collaborate as outlined in the January 2008 report, but tender in its own right using the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) process and within the timetable already agreed prior to Kent County Council changing their strategy.

**04.09.08 FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES MUTUAL LIMITED - UPDATE AND WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS**

The Executive Committee was advised of the latest developments with the Mutual Insurance Company and was invited to approve a waiver of Standing Orders.

The Authority Treasurer confirmed that the Communities and Local Government (CLG) was currently reviewing the judgement on the legal challenge by an Insurance Company against the London Authorities' Mutual Ltd and was considering the implications of this for the Fire and Rescue Service. He noted that this could take many months.

Councillor Colin Dudley moved an amendment to Recommendation 2c) to include a timescale, and this was seconded by Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson.

**The Executive Committee:**

- **Noted** the latest developments with FRAML.

- **Unanimously Agreed** a retrospective waiver of Standing Orders under Contract Standing Order 24d (genuine urgency) to ensure insurance cover for the Fire Authority was maintained.
- **Unanimously Agreed** any further waivers of Standing Orders necessary, for a one year period, to allow the Authority Treasurer to secure any temporary insurance arrangements required to maintain insurance cover for the Fire Authority.
- **Unanimously Agreed** that the Authority Treasurer should provide a verbal update to each meeting of the Executive Committee.

**AT**  
Standing  
Agenda Item

#### **04.10.08 CREWING LEVEL MONITORING - PRESENTATION**

Andrew Mancey presented the statistics for the January 2008 - March 2008 Wholetime Shift Crewing, the January 2008 - March 2008 Incident Crewing Performance (Wholetime), and referred to the causes of crewing at four riders (*copy of data available from the Committee Manager*). He was pleased to report that, between January 2008 and March 2008, an estimated £19,740 had been saved in overtime movements as a result of the Optimisation of Crewing Policy (revised), and that, in all between August 2007 - March 2008, an estimated £42,420 had been saved in overtime payments. The Chairman conveyed his congratulations.

**The Executive Committee Noted** the Crewing Level Monitoring presentation.

#### **04.11.08 SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCL)**

In the absence of Councillor Angus Ross, the Chairman read out his report on the SEFRCCL Board meeting held on 16 May 2008 (*copy of the report available from the Committee Manager*).

**The Executive Committee Noted** the update provided.

#### **04.12.08 REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Executive Committee received an annual update on risk management issues.

**The Executive Committee Noted** the annual Risk Management update.

#### **04.13.08 FIREBUY UPDATE**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation entitled 'FireBuy Update' in which he provided Members with an update on the position to date (*copy available from the Committee Manager*).

#### **04.14.08 HUMAN RESOURCES MONITORING REPORT - RETIREMENTS, ACCIDENTS, SICKNESS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND RETENTION**

The Executive Committee was advised of staff retention, the number of medical retirements, workplace accidents and sickness absences during the period

October 2007 - March 2008. Becci Jefferies introduced the report and took Members through the salient points within the report.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Director of Human Resources stated that an invitation could be extended to Members to join the next Wellbeing Day.

In response to a question from Councillor Adrian Edwards, Becci Jefferies confirmed that corporate rates and discounted fees were available for staff at some Fitness Clubs, and she agreed to clarify to Members whether the benefits offered to Local Authority staff in Berkshire to use of the Local Authority leisure facilities could be extended to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service staff.

BJ

**The Executive Committee Noted** the Human Resources Monitoring report.

#### **04.15.08 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE'S MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2008**

**The Executive Committee Noted** the Minutes of the Audit Committee's meeting held on 24 January 2008.

#### **04.16.08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**The Executive Committee Noted** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 21 July 2008 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **04.17.08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING**

**The Executive Committee Unanimously 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 17 March 2008 (*Paragraphs 1 and 3*)
- Retained Firefighters and Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations - Employment Tribunal outcome (*Paragraphs 1 and 4*).
- Best Value Procurement of Plasma Display Screens (*Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3*)
- Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges (*Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3*)

#### **04.18.08 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2008**

The Executive Committee Approved the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 for signing by the Chairman.

#### **04.19.08 RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS AND PART-TIME WORKERS (PREVENTION OF LESS FAVOURABLE TREATMENT) REGULATIONS - EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL OUTCOME**

The Executive Committee Noted the outcome of the long-running Employment

Tribunal case concerning the application of the Part-time Workers (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations to firefighters working the Retained Duty System, and the potential implications for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS).

**04.20.08 BEST VALUE PROCUREMENT OF PLASMA DISPLAY SCREENS**

The Executive Committee Unanimously Approved the Recommendation presented.

**04.21.08 ANNUAL REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY RANGES**

The Executive Committee Unanimously Approved the Recommendation presented.