

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



Held on Monday 23 March 2009

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

Those present: Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Chairman, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)
Councillor Colin Dudley (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)
Councillor Jagjit Grewal (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Fred Pugh (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

In attendance: Gene Ashe (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection)
Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Stephen Buck (Area Manager, Learning and Development)
Conor Byrne (Senior Accountant)
Mr John Giles (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer) (*part meeting*)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observers: Fire Brigades Union representatives
Unison representative

Action

At the invitation of the Chairman, Christopher Glenn (Unison) confirmed that he wished to address the Executive Committee at Agenda Item 7 (Review of the structure of the Fire Authority) and at Agenda Item 8 (Minister's response to proposed Equality and Diversity Recruitment Targets).

03.01.09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority). Apologies were also received from the Chief Fire Officer, Iain Cox, and the Authority Treasurer, Andrew Vallance.

03.02.09 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Angus Ross declared a personal interest as the Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL), in respect to Agenda Item 11 (South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd). No further Declarations of Interest were made.

03.03.09 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2009 were received and **Agreed**

as a correct record for signing by the Chairman, and the following updates were provided:

- i) Sprinkler Strategy (Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2008 - 01.03.09) - Members confirmed that they had not yet received a copy of the letter(s) sent by the Chief Fire Officer to the Unitary Planning Officers regarding the Sprinkler Strategy. **CFO**
- ii) 2009/10 Budget (01.06.09) - it was confirmed that the Authority Treasurer had not yet provided Members with the maintenance spend for the last three years for premises. **AT**
- iii) Freedom of Information update (01.14.09) - the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the disclosure log was now available on the intranet, however he would advise Members of the website link. **ACFO**

The Chairman noted that the remaining Actions from the last meeting had been discharged.

03.04.09 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2009 were received and **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

03.05.09 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting of the Budget Sub Committee held on 14 January 2009 were received and **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

03.06.09 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- a) The Chairman reported that he had recently attended, with the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Angus Ross and the Chief Fire Officer, the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Fire Conference, and he advised that two of the key issues considered had been equality and diversity, and the European Working Time Directive for Retained Firefighters.
- b) The Chairman, in declaring a Personal Interest as a Steward of the Newbury Show, referred to the Community Safety Forum's concerns that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was required to pay approximately £2,000 for their stand at the 2009 Newbury Show, as advised to him by the Chairman of the Community Safety Forum. He agreed to consider the costs with the event organisers, and to seek the view of other Fire Authority Members, and to report back his findings at the next meeting.

Chairman
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18.05.09

Councillor Dudley joined the meeting during the latter part of the following item.

03.07.09 REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee considered the presented options for the future Membership of the Fire Authority and its Committee structure, the salient points being:

a) Membership of the Authority:

- i) The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's views, as considered at its meeting on 17 March 2009, that the Executive Committee Recommend the option for reducing the Fire Authority's Membership to 22 to the Fire Authority.
- ii) In response to the Chairman, and supported by the Committee, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer agreed to carry out an annual review of the number of Local Government electors for each of the Unitary Authorities' respective electoral rolls.
- iii) **Councillor Angus Ross moved that the presented option to reduce the Fire Authority's Membership to 16 be withdrawn, and this was unanimously carried.**
- iv) Those Members who had sought the views of their respective Unitary Authority regarding the presented Options advised that the Unitary Authorities had indicated support for a reduction to 22 Members on the Fire Authority.
- v) At the invitation of the Chairman, Christopher Glenn (Unison) addressed the Committee. He stated that he would like to see measures in place that would encourage Members to attend meetings of the Fire Authority. Councillor Angus Ross believed that the proposed options, particularly in respect to the Committee structure, would realise a more effective Fire Authority.
- vi) **The Chairman moved that a Recommendation be made to the Fire Authority to reduce its Membership to 22 Members, and this was unanimously carried.**

b) Committee Structure:

- i) The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's considerations at its meeting on 17 March 2009 that the Executive Committee recommend the presented Committee structure proposals to the Fire Authority.
- ii) Councillor Pugh advised of the disappointment expressed by a Community Safety Forum Member regarding the proposal to disband the Forum, however, as Chairman of the Forum, he supported the presented option to replace it with a Community/Partnerships Champion. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer assured Members that

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the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party also dealt with response, prevention and protection issues.

- iii) The Executive Committee **Supported** the option for the proposed Member Champions.
- iv) **The Chairman moved that the Executive Committee be renamed the 'Management Committee', and this was unanimously Supported as a Recommendation to the Fire Authority.**
- v) Consideration of Members' Allowances would be the subject of another meeting.

c) Appointment of Members for a period of more than 12 months:

- i) Consideration was given to indefinite appointments of Members by Unitary Authorities, however Members felt that this would not be supported by the Unitary Authorities.

The Executive Committee Noted that an additional meeting of the Fire Authority would be called on 16 April 2009 at 6.30pm to consider the Executive Committee's Recommendations to the Fire Authority that:

1. The Fire Authority consider reducing the Membership of the Authority to 22 Members.
2. That the Fire Authority adopt the proposed revised Committee Structure with effect from the Annual meeting to be held on 24 June 2009 (NB - the Clerk and Monitoring Officer apologised for the incorrect date within the presented report), and that the Committee's Terms of Reference be presented for approval, subject to the following amendments:
 - 2.1 That the Executive Committee be renamed the 'Management Committee'.
 - 2.2 That the lower tier on the presented proposed structure be removed, with the exception of the Hearing Sub Committees under the Standards Committee, and that the following words be inserted - "Committees may set up Sub Committees, Working Parties and Ad Hoc Task and Finish Groups as required."
3. The Fire Authority invite the constituent Unitary Councils to appoint Members for a period of 4 years.

The **Executive Committee Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) should E-mail the Members with copies of the current Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee and the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party, together with the draft Terms of Reference for the 'Strategic Asset Management Committee' and 'Audit and Performance Review', to enable any comments to be advised to the CMO prior to their presentation to the Fire Authority at its meeting on 16 April 2009.

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After due consideration of how political balance might be realised for the proposed future Committee structure, the **Executive Committee Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should prepare options for a membership of the Executive Committee of 6-9 Members, and a membership of the proposed Audit and Performance Review and Strategic Asset Management Committees of 6-8 Members each. The Chairman stated that he would also be considering this with the other Party Group Leaders prior to the meeting of the Fire Authority on 16 April 2009.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer conveyed her apologies and she left the meeting.

The Chairman moved that the meeting be adjourned for a short period and this was Agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 1825 hours and was resumed at 1834 hours. The Chairman introduced Mr John Giles, as the recently appointed Independent Member of the Standards Committee, and he apologised for not introducing him earlier in the meeting.

03.08.09 MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO PROPOSED EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT TARGETS

The Executive Committee was advised of the Fire Minister's response to the Fire Authority's proposals for equality and diversity recruitment targets, and consideration was given to the Fire Authority reviewing its proposals at the earliest opportunity to consider how it might take a more challenging approach to this important issue.

The Director of Human Resources reminded Members of the Fire Authority's proposals, but felt that, taking into account the target factors, it was not considered either credible, or indeed practical, to increase the minority ethnic recruitment target at this time.

The Director of Human Resources also referred to the recently published Communities and Local Government report entitled 'Fire and Rescue Service - Equality and Diversity Report 2009', a copy being made available to Members.

Christopher Glenn (Unison), at the invitation of the Chairman, urged the Fire Authority to express disappointment at the Minister's response, and this was supported.

The Executive Committee:

- i) **Noted** the Fire Minister's response to the Fire Authority's proposed equality and diversity recruitment targets, and was disappointed that the Minister did not consider the minority ethnic target proposed to be sufficiently stretching to justify the Fire Authority's application for a grant payment.
- ii) **Agreed** that a response should be sent to the Minister expressing the Fire Authority's disappointment at his response, a copy of the response to be provided to the Chairman.

- iii) **Supported** Councillor Angus Ross' suggestion that the Director of Human Resources should prepare a question that could be put to the Fire Minister at the forthcoming Fire Services Forum.
- iv) **Agreed** to retain the equality and diversity recruitment targets, as approved on 24 November 2008.

DHR

03.09.09 JUDICIAL REVIEW - ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD V ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Executive Committee was advised of the outcome of the Judicial Review, and the outcome was **Noted**.

03.10.09 2008/09 BUDGET MONITORING

The Executive Committee was advised of revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of February 2009.

In response to Councillor Colin Dudley regarding how the year-end underspend might be utilised for operational needs, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that all the operational related bids this year had been approved, however additional investment in Retained firefighters carrying out home fire risk checks could be further considered.

The Chairman invited Lincoln Ball (Fire Brigades Union) to address the Committee. Lincoln Ball suggested that the underspend could be used to fund additional firefighters at Wokingham Fire Station, which would, in turn, realise no changes to the shift patterns at Windsor Fire Station. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that this could not be achieved as part of a one-off saving, as it would require revenue funding in subsequent years. In response to Councillor Colin Dudley, the Senior Accountant agreed to cost this up, for subsequent consideration.

Snr
Accountant

The Executive Committee Noted the report.

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

The Executive Committee was advised by Councillor Angus Ross, in his capacity as the Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL), that a Service Support Manager had recently been appointed, and that discussions were ongoing regarding the future appointment of a Senior Operations Manager. He was pleased to report that the Company Secretary, the legal support and the financial support has now been secured. The Vice-Chairman advised of the key issues from the SEFRCCCL meeting held on 13 March 2009, the salient points being the arrangements for the initial Annual General Meeting, and the building lease costs which have yet to be determined.

The Chairman referred to an invitation received from the Company Secretary to each Fire Authority to appoint a representative to attend, speak and vote on its

behalf at the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 17 April 2009. In recognising that this was a decision of the Fire Authority, and that required personnel security checks would need to be carried out prior to the AGM, the Vice-Chairman proposed that the Fire Authority's representative to attend the AGM be the Chairman, subject to Fire Authority approval at its meeting on 16 April 2009, and this was seconded by Councillor Fred Pugh and carried. It was **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should advise the Company Secretary.

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03.12.09 INSURANCE - CONSORTIUM AND FRAML

The Senior Accountant advised that the London Mutual's' appeal had been heard in the preceding week, but that the outcome was not expected to be known until May 2009.

03.13.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Executive Committee Noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday 18 May 2009 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

03.14.09 FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Committee Noted the Forward Plan.

03.15.09 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 26 January 2009 (Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).
- Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges (Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3).

03.16.09 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2009

The Executive Committee Approved the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2009 for signing by the Chairman.

03.17.09 ANNUAL REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY RANGES

The Executive Committee Approved a 2% increase for the salary ranges for the Senior Managers, Information Services and Accountancy Local Pay Groups, for implementation with effect from 1 April 2009.