

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



Held on Wednesday 24 June 2009

**Mess Room, Maidenhead Fire Station, Bridge Road, Maidenhead
Berkshire, SL6 8PG**

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

In attendance: Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Mr Albert Gregory (Chairman, Standards Committee)
Dr Declan Hall (University of Birmingham)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observer: Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response)

The Chairman welcomed Dr Declan Hall and Mr Albert Gregory to the meeting.

05.01.09 INVITATION TO REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

There were no Representative Bodies present.

05.02.09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received. As Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, apologies were received from Councillor Peter Jones.

05.03.09 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Members present declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as Members of the Fire Authority in relation to Agenda Item 6 (Scheme of Member Allowances Report). No further Declarations of Interest were made.

05.04.09 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2009 were received and **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

The following updates were provided:

- i) **Councillor Jagjit Grewal** - the Chief Fire Officer advised that he had not yet prepared a letter of thanks, to include congratulations on Councillor

Action

CFO

Jagjit Grewal's recent appointment as Deputy Mayor of Slough Borough Council, as he was awaiting confirmation from Slough Borough Council regarding their Member appointment following Councillor Rakesh Pabbi's recent resignation from the Fire Authority.

- ii) **Judicial Review (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead v Royal Berkshire Fire Authority)** - the Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the actual Court Judgement could not be published on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's website.
- iii) **Wokingham Fire Station (residential properties)** - the Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that the tenants had been advised of a revised proposed date to vacate the properties, but that, to date, no direct response had been received from them.
- iv) **Investors in People Assessment** - the Director of Human Resources reported that a further assessment had been arranged to take place during the first week in December 2009.

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

05.05.09 RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman did not make any announcements.

05.06.09 SCHEME OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES REPORT

The Executive Committee was advised of the outcome of the Independent Review of the Fire Authority's Scheme of Member Allowances and the recommendations of the Standards Committee. Dr Declan Hall gave an overall summary of his report and provided clarity to any points raised by Members.

Councillor Colin Dudley proposed that the formulaic principles, as recommended by Dr Declan Hall, be adopted by the Fire Authority, but that the multiplier be adjusted from 12 days per year to 8 days per year, or 66% of the presented remuneration rates (based on 12 days per year), for implementation from 24 June 2009. This was seconded by Councillor Fred Pugh.

Councillor Angus Ross felt that the report's findings were well presented, and this was supported by the Committee, however he stated that the Fire Authority had a responsibility to stay within the previously agreed budget for Members' Allowances.

Councillor Colin Dudley did not believe that Members should be financially disadvantaged for carrying out their Member responsibilities.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that he would be abstaining from making any recommendations to the Fire Authority until he had sought the Liberal Democrats Members' views, but felt that the presented multipliers should be applied but implemented on a scaled basis.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stressed the importance of Members meeting their

respective Fire Authority responsibilities, ie attendance at meetings, and he felt that sanctions should be imposed by the Unitary Authorities, through Group Leaders, for any Member who failed to fulfil these satisfactorily. Mr Albert Gregory confirmed that the Standards Committee had considered Members' attendance at meetings, and that the data would be sent to each Unitary Authority. Councillor Jeff Brooks recommended that Member attendance be published on an annual basis.

The Executive Committee Noted the presented report.

The Executive Committee, with two abstentions:

- a) **Supported** the principles of the Independent Review, and **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that it accept the formulaic principles of the report, but that consideration be given to adjusting the multiplier from 12 days per year to 8 days per year, or that 66% of the presented remuneration rates (based on 12 days per year) be accepted, for implementation from 24 June 2009.
- b) **Recommended** that Members be reminded that they might wish to consider the renunciation of their Allowances (*Members' Handbook MA8 refers - "A Member may, by notice in writing to the Clerk & Monitoring Officer, elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this Scheme"*).
- c) **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that, should more than 12 Members become eligible for a Special Responsibility Allowance, the decision on which Special Responsibility Allowance should lie fallow to comply with the 12 maximum Special Responsibility Allowances payable rule should not be reserved to the Standards Committee, but to the Fire Authority.
- d) **Recommended** that the Fire Authority should make appropriate representations to the Government and Local Government Association for consideration of a national scheme for Fire Authority and Local Authority Member Allowances, and that this should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- e) **Recommended** to the Fire Authority that the Scheme of Member Allowances be reviewed four-yearly, but that, in the interim, a review be carried out annually until such times as the Recommendations are implemented in full or until the Fire Authority decides otherwise.
- f) **Noted** its concern regarding previous non-attendances by Fire Authority Members at meetings.

05.07.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Executive Committee Noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday 27 July 2009 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

05.08.09 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 18 May 2009.
- Award of 5 year Compressor Contract.

05.09.10 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2009

The **Executive Committee Approved** the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2009 for signing by the Chairman.

05.10.09 AWARD OF 5-YEAR COMPRESSOR CONTRACT

The **Executive Committee Approved** that the Contract for the provision and maintenance of Breathing Apparatus Compressors be awarded to the identified contractor on the grounds of being the most economically advantageous tender.