

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



Held on Monday 27 November 2006

Meeting Room 3, Brigade 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 Paul Bryant (Member, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)  
Councillor James Mole (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

**In attendance:** Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)  
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)  
George Cross (Senior Divisional Officer, Support Services)  
John Daly (Facilities Officer)  
Rosemary Lansdowne (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)  
Des Tidbury (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)  
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

**In audience:** Christopher Glenn (UNISON)  
Andy Mancey (Fire Brigades Union)  
Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager)

### 07.01.06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority).

### 07.02.06 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.

### 07.03.06 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2006

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25 September 2006 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

The Chairman congratulated the firefighters involved in a fire incident at a block of flats that had occurred on 27 November 2006, in which 13 people had been successfully rescued using ladders, as informed by Andy Mancey, who stated that smoke alarms had been fitted to all the flats involved. Andy Mancey agreed to convey the Executive Committee's thanks to all the operational staff involved.

### 07.04.06 REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRES - PRESENTATION

George Cross gave a presentation entitled 'Regional Control Centres - Overview' (*copy*

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*available from Lynda Kenyon, Committee Manager*) in which he described how FiReControl would improve resilience and would result in a more cost effective service. He referred to the Resilience Programme and the 3 critical projects being led by the Fire Resilience Directorate, namely the 'New Dimension Project', the FireLink Project and the 'FiReControl Project'. He explained the regional and local link responsibilities, the structure in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), the timeline for the 3 implementation phases and the current issues. He also described the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) key risks, namely the strategic change/impacts, the critical dependencies and financial resources, and the biggest risks overall in respect to legal, people, funding and technology. He noted that the RBFRS was far advanced in terms of prerequisite technology.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson asked when the full costs would be known and what pressures were being put on the Government to inform Fire Authorities. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) reported that he expected there would be significant costs associated with FireLink but that it was anticipated that these would be funded through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). He stated that the draft FiReControl Project Business Case indicated that 30% savings would be achieved, and, therefore, there should be no costs to Fire Authorities. The DCFO reported that the full Business Case would not be published until the contracts for Local Authority Controlled Companies were signed, however he expected that it would be available by the beginning of February 2007. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) stated that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer would be presenting the first round of documentation relating to the setting up of these Companies to the Fire Authority at its next meeting.

Councillor James Mole asked if there would be any parallel running during the Regional Control Centre changeover. George Cross stated that operational assurance testing would take place, and the DCFO confirmed that a migration plan would be implemented.

Councillor Angus Ross asked if the Unitaries would be in receipt of regular notifications relating to the future developments for service continuity and financial implications, and Councillor James Mole suggested a programme be devised for the RBFRS to visit each Unitary Authority. Councillor Angus Ross proposed that a presentation be given to each of the Unitary's full Council meetings. The DCFO referred to the Fire Service Circular which contained details regarding the new burdens funding for 2007/08 which was being circulated to each Unitary Authority.

The Executive Committee **Recommended** that the presentation given by George Cross should also be given to the next meeting of the Fire Authority, and **Agreed** that a programme of visits to each Unitary Authority should take place after May 2007 once more robust plans were known.

#### **07.05.06 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN - PROPOSALS FOR FULL PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) advised the Committee of the suite of proposals from the Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan, as recommended by the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Working Party, and reminded Members of the Fire Authority's direction for more detailed work to be undertaken before any decision was made on the suite of proposals to be taken forward for full public consultation, and to the caveat against each recommendation, as detailed in the report presented.

Councillor James Mole asked that the proposed risk reduction strategies relating to the Dee Road/Caversham Road proposal be regularly monitored to ensure that the strategies were achieved. The DCFO reassured the Committee that these would be regularly measured.

Addressing Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's concerns relating to attendances by 'Over The Border' appliances from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to areas such as the Old Windsor area, and the resulting pressures that these might put on their fire stations, for example Egham, the ACFO confirmed that an activity level mapping exercise would be conducted. He stated that an agreement would also be sought with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. However, at this stage, and following lengthy conversations with the ACFO from Surrey, no problems had been highlighted due to the low level of calls in these areas.

The Executive Committee **Recommended** to the full Fire Authority the suite of proposals from the IRMP 5-Year Plan, as recommended by the IRMP Working Party.

#### **07.06.06 FUTURE OF GROUP PERSONAL PENSION SCHEME FOR RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS**

With the imminent inclusion of firefighters working the Retained Duty System (RDS) in the New Firefighters Pension Scheme backdated to 6 April 2006, the Executive Committee was advised that it was necessary to determine the Fire Authority's future policy regarding the existing Group Personal Pension Scheme (GPPS), operated by Scottish Widows, offered to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) staff working the Retained Duty System. The Director of Human Resources recommended that the scheme be closed to new entrants with immediate effect, but that the 3 existing members be offered the opportunity to continue their membership if they wished to do so.

The Director of Human Resources alluded to the long running Employment Tribunal case relating to RDS firefighters gaining access to the Firefighters Pension Scheme which, dependent on the outcome, could alter the options for RDS firefighters. He confirmed that if the case was successful, another Options Exercise would be conducted.

The Executive Committee **Resolved** that the Group Personal Pension Scheme currently offered to RBFRS staff working the Retained Duty System be closed to new entrants with immediate effect, but that existing members of the scheme be given the option of continuing their active membership if they wished to do so.

#### **07.07.06 2007/2008 BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee was invited to consider extending the Terms of Reference of the 2007/08 Budget Sub Committee to include the consideration of budget proposals and precept levels for 2007/08.

The Executive Committee **Resolved** that the Terms of Reference of the 2007/08 Budget Sub Committee be extended to included consideration of the budget proposals and precept levels for 2007/08.

**07.08.06 PAY DIFFERENTIALS WORKING PARTY**

The Executive Committee was advised of the Part I meetings of the Pay Differentials Working Party held on 7 June 2006 and 5 September 2006.

The Executive Committee **Noted** the report and **Approved** that the concluding Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2006 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman, following the recommendation of the Chairman of the Pay Differentials Working Party that the Minutes were an accurate and true record.

**07.09.06 MONITORING OF HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION**

The Director of Human Resources advised the Committee of the proposal to consolidate the Human Resources' monitoring reports into a single regular report to the Executive Committee. He explained the approach for this recommendation, as detailed in the report presented, which he felt would improve the reporting arrangements. He noted that Fire Authority Members have access, through PBViews (*RBFRS computer programme*), to regular performance reports in relation to, for example, sickness, and ill-health retirements. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that, if agreement was reached, he would aim to present the first inclusive report to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, and that the Fire Authority would be informed of the agreed way forward.

The Executive Committee **Resolved** that the regular six-monthly sickness, accidents and retirements report currently submitted to the Fire Authority be extended to include staff retention/turnover and diversity data and be submitted in future to the Executive Committee.

**07.10.06 PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised the Executive Committee of the proposed appointment of an external Auditor to the Fire Authority, as detailed in the letter dated 10 November 2006 from the Audit Commission.

The Executive Committee, after consideration of the proposed appointment of an external Auditor to the Fire Authority, as detailed in the letter dated 10 November 2006 from the Audit Commission, **Authorised** the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to reply on behalf of the Fire Authority.

**07.11.06 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN SCHEDULE**

On the direction of the Chairman of the IRMP Working Party, the ACFO advised the Executive Committee of the revised planning schedule, as agreed by the IRMP Working Party, for progressing the IRMP 5-Year Plan. He provided an explanation of why the schedule had slipped, as detailed in the report presented, and confirmed that the IRMP Working Party was still deliberating on the final consultation strategy and the scoping of the stakeholders which might result in the consultation schedule slipping even further. He stated that, should there be any changes to the consultation process, these would be reported to the Executive Committee.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson asked that the proposals being sent to key stakeholders, eg emergency services, MPs, Parish Councils etc, should also include Town Councils, and this was **Agreed**.

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The Executive Committee **Noted** the revised planning schedule for progressing the IRMP 5-Year Plan.

#### **07.12.06 2006/07 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Authority Treasurer reported that he still anticipated a breakeven position at year-end.

The Executive Committee **Noted** the 2006/07 Budget Monitoring report.

#### **07.13.06 SUBSTANTIVE MOVE FROM RANK TO ROLE**

The Director of Human Resources advised the Executive Committee of the outcome of the substantive move from Rank to Role and the current position regarding the introduction of Additional Responsibility Allowances (ARAs), as detailed in the report presented. He described the exercise conducted for the transition from Rank to Role and referred to both the estimated additional cost in 2006/07 and the anticipated additional costs arising from the exercise in respect to the ARAs to cover the responsibilities not included in the role maps in the RBFRS. He noted the contribution made by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) during the considerations, and was grateful for their support.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson felt that expected pension costs should have been included in the report, and asked if these had been taken into account. The Authority Treasurer affirmed this. She also stated that it would have been helpful if the figures for the different jobs or groups and the numbers of people affected could have been presented in percentage terms.

The Chairman asked where the unbudgeted costs would be funded from, and the Authority Treasurer confirmed that these could be funded from reserves which, he stated, had sufficient funds.

Councillor Angus Ross sought clarification as to who had the eventual sign-off in terms of the AFAs, and the Director of Human Resources confirmed that this responsibility lay with the CFO.

The Executive Committee **Noted** the report.

#### **07.14.06 CREWING LEVEL MONITORING**

The DCFO referred Members to the 3 crewing level graphs for the period July 2006-September 2006, and was pleased to report the continued improvement to crewing levels against previous years' data.

The Executive Committee **acknowledged** this improvement, and **Noted** the report.

#### **07.15.06 NATIONAL RADIO REPLACEMENT - ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IMPLICATIONS**

George Cross advised the Executive Committee of the reasoning and costs behind the national provision of the Airwave Service for the Fire and Rescue Service, noting

in particular the current systems in place, the interim arrangements for FireLink installation, and the financial implications and risks, as detailed in the report presented.

The Executive Committee **Noted** the report.

#### **07.16.06 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Executive Committee **Noted** that the next meeting will take place on **Monday 15 January 2007 at 6.30pm** (Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters).

#### **07.17.06 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 25 September 2006 (*Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4*)
- Dee Road Planning Appeal (*Paragraph 3*)
- Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme Contracts (*Paragraph 1 and 3*)
- Award of a 5-year Engineering Maintenance Contract 2007-2012 (*Paragraphs 1 and 3*)
- REMSDAQ (Mobilising system) Upgrade (*Paragraphs 2 and 3*)
- Operational Risk Information System (ORIS) Hardware Replacement (*Paragraphs 1 and 3*)
- Employment Tribunals Applications Update (*Paragraphs 1 and 2*)
- High court decision in Co-responding Case (*Paragraphs 1 and 5*)
- Building and Surveying Facilities Management Contract (*Paragraph 1*)
- Pay Differentials Working Party (*Paragraphs 1 and 2*)

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

#### **07.18.06 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25 September 2006 were **Agreed** as a correct record for signing by the Chairman.

#### **07.19.06 DEE ROAD PLANNING APPEAL**

The Executive Committee **delegated authority** to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer relating to the recommendations presented.

**07.20.06 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME CONTRACTS**

The Executive Committee **Agreed** the recommendation presented.

**07.21.06 AWARD OF A 5-YEAR ENGINEERING MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 2007-2012**

The Executive Committee **Agreed** the award of the contract to the preferred contractor.

**07.22.06 REMSDAQ (MOBILISING SYSTEM) UPGRADE**

The Executive Committee **Endorsed** the recommended upgrade.

**07.23.06 OPERATIONAL RISK INFORMATION SYSTEM (ORIS) HARDWARE REPLACEMENT**

The Executive Committee **Endorsed** the recommendation presented.

**07.24.06 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS APPLICATIONS UPDATE**

The Executive Committee **Noted** the report.

**07.25.06 HIGH COURT DECISION IN CO-RESPONDING CASE**

The Executive Committee **Noted** the report, and **Resolved** its position in respect of financial support for further legal action in the Court of Appeal.

**07.26.06 BUILDING AND SURVEYING FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT**

The Executive Committee **Noted** the update report presented.

**07.27.06 PAY DIFFERENTIALS WORKING PARTY**

The Executive Committee **Endorsed** the recommendations of the Pay Differential Working Party, and **Approved** the concluding Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2006, and adjourned until 19 September 2006, for signature by the Chairman of the Pay Differentials Working Party as a correct record, following the recommendation of the Chairman of the Pay Differentials Working Party that the Minutes were an accurate and true record.