

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE
AUTHORITY**



Held on Wednesday 5 December 2012

**Council Chamber, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading,
Berkshire RG1 7TD**

Members:

Councillor Alistair Auty	*Councillor Christine Bateson
*Councillor Phillip Bicknell	Councillor Chris Bowring
*Councillor Prue Bray	*Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor Dr Paul Bryant	*Councillor David Burbage
*Councillor Diana Coad	*Councillor Andrew Cumpsty
*Councillor Colin Dudley (<i>Chairman</i>)	*Councillor Haqeeq Dar
*Councillor Adrian Edwards	*Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor David Holtby	*Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons
*Councillor Peter Jones	*Councillor John Lenton
*Councillor Chris Maskell	*Councillor Iain McCracken
*Councillor Edward Plenty	*Councillor Mohammed Rasib
Councillor Angus Ross	Councillor Rebecca Rye
*Councillor Alan Ward	*Councillor Miss Emma Webster
<i>present</i>	

In Attendance:

Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Caroline Redzikowska (Director Corporate Services, DCS)
Carolyn Rowe (Committee Manager)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
Andrew Vallance (Director Resources, DR)

Observers: Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Members of Public
Representative Bodies

343. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Alistair Auty, Cllr Chris Bowring, Cllr Paul Bryant, Cllr Angus Ross and Cllr Rebecca Rye.

344. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Members or Officers. Cllr Prue Bray queried whether it was a requirement for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Members to complete Disclosure Pecuniary Interest (DPI) forms in order to make precept decisions, as it was a requirement for councillors in their unitary authorities.

In response, DCS advised that she would examine whether it is a requirement for RBFA Members to complete DPI Dispensation forms to take part in precept decisions.

Action

DCS

345. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

In response to an action on Health and Safety cross border audit data in the minutes, and a further query from Cllr Edwards, the ACFO confirmed that he would liaise with Cllr Edwards and would present the relevant comparative data at the next meeting.

ACFO

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 September 2012 be approved for signing by the Chairman.

346. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

There were no items received under standing orders 19 and 25, participation of the public.

347. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman, Cllr Dudley, reported that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Extrication Team won the World Rescue Challenge for the 2nd year in a row in London on 18 October 2012. The Chairman stated that the Extrication Team's skills made the people of Berkshire safer and he led RBFA in congratulating the Team with a round of applause.
- b) The Chairman reported that the RBFRS Water Rescue Team's rescue boat was mobilised to Gloucestershire FRS during the recent flooding. The rescue boat was on standby on the 22 November but was not deployed. The Chairman thanked Station 1 Commander Jessie James and his team efforts during the floods in parts of Berkshire. The Chairman further stated that RBFRS was condition AMBER on the 22 and 23 November, and that a small number of flood rescue operations had been carried out during that period. Dry suits had been used for the first time by crews who were not part of the Water Rescue Team, and a water rescue of a mother and her three year old child from a car was undertaken on 26 November.
- c) RBFA Members were advised that Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) had joined Thames Valley Control (TVC). The Chairman reported that he had attended BMKFA on 23 October 2012 where the Member decision to join TVC had been unanimous. It had been approved by RBFA's Management Committee on 26 November 2012 and Oxfordshire County Council were considering on 10 December 2012. On behalf of RBFA the Chairman welcomed BMKFA to TVC.
- d) The Chairman thanked the crews at Newbury, Hungerford and Dee Road for their attendance and the extrication that had been undertaken at a recent RTC. The RTC had involved an articulated lorry and had taken 5 ½ hours. The Chairman added that the Newbury Station Commander, Jerry Allen had advised that it had been the lengthiest and most complicated extrication of his career. The rescued casualty was doing well in hospital in Bristol.

The Chairman stated that the crews who had been involved would receive awards and that he would have great pleasure in congratulating them at the Awards Ceremony on the 31 May 2013 at Bearwood College in Wokingham. He added that the Lord Lieutenant was due to attend.

In response to a question from Cllr Edwards the CFO advised that he would arrange for a selection of photos to be forwarded to RBFA Members via email.

CFO

- e) The Chairman announced that he had attended a Fire House demonstration at Whitley Wood Fire Station with the Reading MP Alok Sharma.
The MP had subsequently circulated a press release expressing his admiration for the work RBFRS do.
- f) The Chairman announced the retirement of Area Manager (AM), Stephen Buck and stated that he would be missed by both colleagues and Members. On behalf of RBFA, the Chairman extended his best wishes to AM Buck for a well earned retirement.
- g) The Vice-Chairman announced that Wokingham Borough Council had taken a unanimous decision to install sprinklers in new buildings e.g, care homes and schools. She advised that the AM (Prevention & Protection) had attended Wokingham Borough Council meeting and given a presentation on the work of the Prevention Team.

348. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr McCracken, Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee advised that there were no issues arising.

349. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no Questions received from the Fire Authority Members under Standing Order 30.

350. NOTICES OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of motion under Standing Order 44.

351. RECOMMENDATION OF COMMITTEES

The DCS introduced the report and requested that Item 1 (IRMP Five Year Plan: Results of Consultation) be considered under the separate item, Agenda Item 10. With regard to Item 2 (IRMP WP Terms of Reference) she drew attention to the recommendation from the IRMP WP to amend CO116 as set out in the report. Members unanimously agreed to adopt the amendment.

Resolved:

That CO116 be amended to:

“To assist in the development, review and scrutiny of the IRMP, including the annual action plans and associated document, for recommendation to the Management Committee”.

352. RESULTS OF IRMP CONSULTATION

The ACFO introduced the report and referred to the **tabled amendment** as recommended by the Management Committee on 26 November 2012, which sought **to replace paragraphs 3.10 and 3.11** of the Management Committee report, annexed to the Fire Authority report on pages 19 and 20 :

'Day Crew Plus

Day Crewing Plus is in use in a number of fire and rescue services throughout the country. This project will review the way the Service staffs its wholetime fire engines to assess the possibility of implementing this duty system. This will work alongside the established watch based duty system whilst maintaining or improving the level of fire cover to the community.'

The ACFO also drew attention to the demographic of public who had participated in the Community Engagement Forum and some of the public responses that had been received. He advised that there had been one suggestion which was to change the title of Day Crew Plus and that the tabled amendment from the Management Committee reflected their view not to support that change.

Cllr Emma Webster, Chairman of IRMP WP thanked members of the public and RBFPS Officers who had participated in the consultation and advised that she had been pleased to receive the high level of responses from Pangbourne and Mortimer Fire Stations. She also commended the work of the Community Engagement Forum which had given an indication of the views of the people of Berkshire regarding the issues in the IRMP.

The Vice-Chairman reported that she had received an email which had been sent to all RBFA Members from the FBU and which stated their view that they had not been adequately consulted. She advised that the FBU attended meetings of the Management Committee and had been invited to IRMP WP meetings. Their response had been largely questions and there had not been many suggestions or alternatives given. She stated that there was sometimes confusion, and that consideration of consultation did not mean that views would necessarily be agreed with. However, she confirmed that all their comments were considered at length, and that she had been disappointed to receive the email.

Cllr David Burbage stated that the Opinion Research Services (ORS) questions had steered the public to increase tax when we should be asking members of the public about ways to reduce the tax burden. He suggested that ORS should not be commissioned again. He said that he shared the FBU's concern regarding performance going down, but that he was disappointed that their response asked a number of questions and did not suggest any solutions.

Cllr Prue Bray agreed that there were a lot of questions, and recommended that RBFA engaged more directly with the FBU in the future to help produce fewer questions and more answers.

The CFO advised that there was regular liaison with the FBU through the Fire Liaison Group meetings as well as, more recently, some meetings regarding the budget. He further advised that it was the union's prerogative to ask questions.

Cllr Alan Ward agreed with Cllr David Burbage, that the FBU's response had not offered any solutions, or ways of making savings, and he stated that this negativity had detracted from their response and the focus of their argument. He stated that some suggestions were needed, but he had been interested to read the FBU's response.

With regard to ORS, Cllr Peter Jones responded to Cllr David Burbage's view, and advised that ORS was an independent body. He referred to the question on council tax in the report, which had provided the public with the opportunity to put nil. He stated that the ORS report was reflecting that members of the public valued the good service they received from RBFRS, and he did not agree with not commissioning ORS in future. Cllr Jeff Brooks welcomed the FBU's response and referred to a time when the FBU would not engage with RBFA. He advised that he would rather not send the message that they were negative. He took the opportunity to thank them for their response and added that their views would be taken seriously.

The Chairman moved the report recommendations **as amended by Management Committee** regarding Day Crew Plus. This was seconded by Cllr Emma Webster and it was unanimously

Resolved:

- a) That the consultation report be noted,
- b) **That the changes to the plan, as amended and recommended by the Management Committee be accepted,** and
- c) That the amended plan be approved.

353. 2012/13 BUDGET MONITORING

The DR presented the report and referred first to the revenue budget. He advised that the underspends in the budgets for retained firefighters, non-uniformed costs and for uniformed employees that had been made this year would contribute towards next year's savings.

The DR referred to the capital budget and advised that the most significant item was the new BHQ. He advised that the tenders for work were now underway and that the costs for the refurbishment of the building would be in the new financial year.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

354. MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

On agreement that they be taken together as one item, it was unanimously

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings of the Fire Authorities Standing Committees be received as follows:

- a) Audit & Governance Committee – 12 September 2012 (not yet approved)

- b) Management Committee – 17 September 2012 (approved on 26/11)
- c) Strategic Asset Management Committee – 9 October 2012 (not yet approved)

355. FORWARD PLAN

It was requested that the Forward Plan be updated throughout to reflect the change of wording to Day Crew Plus.

Committee
Team

Resolved:

- a) That the forward plan be noted.

356. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AND DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Resolved:

- a) To note that the next meeting will be held on **Wednesday 13 and / or 20 February 2013**, at 6.30 pm at Bracknell Forest Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ and that both dates may be required.
- b) That it be agreed to hold the Annual meeting on **Wednesday 26 June 2013** at 6.30 pm, Bracknell Forest Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1AQ (instead of Thursday 27 June 2013).

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.