

# MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 15 February 2012

Council Chamber, Wokingham Borough Council, Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BN



(Note - the Fire Authority Meeting was originally scheduled to be held on 8 February 2012 at Bracknell Forest Council and was subsequently postponed until Wednesday 15 February 2012)

**Those present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

- Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
- Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
- Peter Driver (Committee Officer)
- John Giles (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
- Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
- Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
- Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
- Mr Baldev Sian (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
- Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)

**Observers:**

- Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Members of the public and media
- Councillor Mrs Diane King (Mayor of Wokingham)
- Representative Bodies
- Mr Richard Coats (Horton Parish resident)

The Chairman welcomed the Mayor of Wokingham, Councillor Mrs Diane King to the meeting. The Mayor of Wokingham thanked the Fire Authority for hosting their meeting at Wokingham Borough Council and commended Members and Officers for the success of the official opening of Wokingham Fire Station on 8 February 2012.

## 239. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Bradley, Councillor Andrew Cumpsty and Mr David Wallace (Director of Human Resources).

**Action**

## **240. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a) Councillors Mrs Christine Bateson, Phillip Bicknell, David Burbage and John Lenton declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead Councillors in respect to Agenda Item 14 (IRMP Action Plan 2012/13 and Consultation Report).
- b) The Chief Fire Officer declared a Personal Interest relating to Agenda Item 15 (Retirement and Re-employment of Chief Fire Officer).
- c) Councillor Angus Ross declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as the Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL) in respect of Agenda Item 16 (South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd).

There were no further Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct. There were no further Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

## **241. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2011 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

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

*Please note – The meeting scheduled on 7 December 2011 was subsequently cancelled due to lack of business.*

## **242. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25**

The Chairman reported that one Question had been received under Standing Order 25, and invited Mr Richard Coates (Horton Parish resident) to put his question, to which a written answer was provided (annexed Item 4 as appendix 1).

Mr Richard Coates asked a supplementary question regarding the fire at the Beaumont Estate Hotel at 0500hrs on New Years Day. "Chairman, with over 7 million visitors to Windsor a year and the Olympics do you not agree with me that this example at the very beginning of the trial period of reduced fire cover, shows just how important it is that 24 hour fire cover with a full crew and front line appliance is maintained across the Windsor area?"

With the permission of the Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer responded and reassured the Fire Authority that all proposals for the future emergency cover arrangements for the Windsor area would be covered by the forthcoming Integrated Risk Management Planning process in May 2012.

## **243. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) The Chairman reported of the success of the official opening of Wokingham Fire Station on 8 February 2012, which was attended by the Countess of Wessex, Mayor of Wokingham and representatives from all six Unitaries in Berkshire. The Chairman thanked Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for their hospitality and expressed his pride in being part of the day.
- b) The Chairman reported his attendance at a recent Parliamentary Fire Safety Group to discuss Sprinklers.
- c) With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Miss Emma Webster reported that she was fundraising on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire and

Rescue Service Extrication Team who were current world champions.

- d) The Chairman advised that this was the last meeting for the Director of Human Resources, David Wallace. Unfortunately, due to the change of date he was unable to attend. On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chairman expressed his gratitude for David Wallace's highly respected contribution to the work of the Fire Authority during the past twelve years. He wished him every success in the future.

#### **244. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

The Fire Authority considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 29 September 2011.

##### **Resolved:**

- a) In respect to Item 1 (Purchase of New Brigade Headquarters) the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That Officers be authorised to progress onto due-diligence measures; and
  - ii) That advice be sought from lawyers on the suitability of a bond or exclusivity contract.
- b) In respect to Item 2 (Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan – Review of Newbury Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) and Slough rescue Support Vehicle (RSV) the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
- a) That the Fire Authority maintains only one Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU);
  - b) The HRU should be relocated to Dee Road (Station 3);
  - c) That the existing Rescue Support Vehicle (RSV) should not be replaced and will be retired once the HRU is relocated to Dee Road (Station 3); and
  - d) That the Fire Authority's decision of February 2011, to switch crew the HRU with a Pump be confirmed on the basis of the evidence within the report.
- c) In respect to Item 3 ( Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan Consultation Report for 2012/13 Action Plan) the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That the amended Integrated Risk Management 5 – Year Plan be Approved.
- d) In respect to Item 4 (Final Outturn Wokingham Fire Station) the following Recommendation of the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That the additional expenditure of £137,359 or such sum as is agreed to be the final amount, not to exceed £137,359; and
  - ii) That the additional expenditure be taken from revenue budget be Approved.
- e) In respect to Item 5 (Royal Berkshire Pay Policy Statement 2012/13) the following Recommendation from the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That the amended Pay Policy Statement be approved.
- f) In respect to Item 6 (Control Options Project) the following Recommendation from the Management Committee be Approved:

- i) That the appointment of two Members of the Fire Authority (Councillors Dr Paul Bryant and Angus Ross) to the Programme Sponsoring Group be Approved.

#### **245. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

##### **Resolved:**

- a) That it be Noted that there had been no reports referred by the Audit and Performance Review Committee.

#### **246. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30**

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

#### **247. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44**

There were no submissions of Notices of Motion received under the provisions of the Fire Authority's Rules of Procedure.

#### **248. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE TRAINING LTD: PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2012/13**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer sought the Fire Authority's approval for the proposed 2012/13 Budget for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Training Limited (RBFTRL).

Councillor Phillip Bicknell, Director of (RBFTRL) advised RBFTRL budget process for 2012/13 figures were adjusted in order to make a small profit in that year.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster advised she had recommended RBFTRL .

The Chairman stated that RBFTRL provided an excellent service to the people of Berkshire and echoed Councillor Miss Emma Webster's commendation of the company.

##### **Resolved:**

- a) That the proposed 2012/13 budget for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Training Limited (RBFSTL) be Approved.

#### **249. BUDGET 2012/13**

The Chairman moved an amended Budget 2012/13 paper which was then tabled. (attached as Item 11 , appendix A).

Councillor Jeff Brooks **Moved** for the adjournment of the meeting for a short period in order for the Fire Authority to consider the amended tabled paper. Councillor Dr Paul Bryant seconded Councillor Jeff Brooks Motion.

##### **Resolved:**

- a) That the meeting be adjourned for a period of 15 minutes for the convenience of the meeting. At the conclusion of this period, the meeting of the Fire Authority recommenced.

The Authority Treasurer took the Fire Authority through the amended tabled paper with scenarios of 4%, 6% and 8% cut in the grant.

The Chairman **Moved** that the Fire Authority do not accept the Agenda Report based on the Management Committee recommendation. Councillor Alan Ward seconded the Chairman's Motion.

The Fire Authority discussed the budget risks, and the tabled amended budget paper in some detail.

Councillor Jeff Brooks advised that the Liberal Democrat Group were not in support of the amended tabled paper and highlighted the risks to the Fire Authority in years to come.

Councillor Alan Ward stated that there were risks to be weighed up, and he supported the amended budget which accepts the one-off government freeze grant. The grant was public money, and there was an element of the public being charged twice if the council tax grant was increased to 3 ½ %.

**On being put to the vote, the tabled amended Budget Recommendations were carried with 11 votes in favour.**

**Resolved:**

- 1.1 That the Fire Authority Resolve, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (“the Act”), that year following amounts be now calculated for the year 2012/13:
  - 1.1.1 The aggregate council taxbase of the six Berkshire unitary authorities has been notified as 336,149.50.
  - 1.1.2a £35,033,089.61 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Fire Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (2)(a) to (d) of the Act
  - 1.1.2b £876,228.44 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Fire Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 42A (3) (a) to (b) of the Act
  - 1.1.2c £34,156.861.17 being the amount by which the aggregate at (1.1.2a) above exceeds the aggregate at (1.1.2b) above
  - 1.1.2d £15,426,363 being the aggregate of the sums which the Fire Authority estimates will be payable for the year in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant
  - 1.1.2e A surplus of £20,417 being the net aggregate of the surpluses and deficits on billing authorities’ Collection Funds to be received in 2012/13
  - 1.1.2f £18,710.081.17 being the amount at (1.1.2c) less the amount at (1.1.2d) above, less the amount at (1.1.2e) above, calculated by the Fire Authority in accordance with Section 42A (4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year
  - 1.1.2g £55.66, being the amount at (1.1.2f) above divided by the aggregate council taxbase at (1.1.1) above, calculated by the Fire Authority, in accordance with Section 42B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
  - 1.1.2h The Fire Authority, in accordance with Section 40(2)(a) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts of Council Tax for the year 2012/13 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	£
A	37.11
B	43.29
C	49.48
D	55.66
E	68.03
F	80.40
G	92.77
H	111.32

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (1.1.2g) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Fire Authority, in accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- 1.1.2i The Fire Authority, in accordance with Section 40(2)(b) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts payable as precepts by the billing authorities for the year 2012/13:

Authority	Taxbase	Precept	Collection Fund Surplus/ (Deficit)	Net Yield from Council Tax
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>	<b>44,620.00</b>	<b>2,483,549.20</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,483,549.20</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>53,879.00</b>	<b>2,998,905.14</b>	<b>18,569.00</b>	<b>3,017,474.14</b>
<b>Slough</b>	<b>41,981.50</b>	<b>2,336,690.29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,336,690.29</b>
<b>West Berkshire</b>	<b>64,190.21</b>	<b>3,572,827.09</b>	<b>(35,564.00)</b>	<b>3,537,263.09</b>
<b>Windsor &amp; Maidenhead</b>	<b>65,584.59</b>	<b>3,650,438.28</b>	<b>9,764.00</b>	<b>3,660,202.28</b>
<b>Wokingham</b>	<b>65,894.20</b>	<b>3,667,671.17</b>	<b>27,648.00</b>	<b>3,695,319.17</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>336,149.50</b>	<b>18,710,081.17</b>	<b>20,417.00</b>	<b>18,730,498.17</b>

- 1.1.2j The Fire Authority determines that in accordance with the set of principles set by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for the year, its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2012/13 is not excessive.
- 1.2 That the Fire Authority Approve the Medium Term Financial Plan set out in Appendix A (amended tabled paper, copy attached as Item 11 appendix A to the Minutes), and the Prudential Indicators, Treasury Strategy and Investment Strategy set out in Appendix F.
- 1.3 That the Fire Authority Note the proposed Capital Programme set out in Appendix E and Authorise the Management Committee to review the programme once details of the Capital Grant distribution are known.

## 250. BUDGET MONITORING

The Fire Authority was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of December 2011.

The Authority Treasurer reported funding from the Bellwin claim for the Swinley Forest incident submitted to the Department of Communities for Local Government (DCLG) had still not been received. He further advised that the claim would be put before Ministers.

The Chairman advised he would write to the Minister regarding Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's submitted Bellwin claim.

Chairman

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Budget Monitoring Report be Noted.

**251. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY – MID YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2011/12**

The Fire Authority reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy performance at mid-year.

The Authority Treasurer reported that the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority had not borrowed any money during the year and advised that the Authority's funds were kept in a Liquid Reserve Account.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**252. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2012/13 AND CONSULTATION REPORT**

The Fire Authority were advised of the results of the Consultation process for the proposed 2012/13 Action Plan as part of the 5-year IRMP 2010/11-2015/16, and of the Management Committee recommended amendments in the report.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the IRMP Working Party had identified a standard size appliance at Windsor. Further information would be reported through the IRMP Consultation process regarding crewing options.

Councillor Mrs Diana Coad stated that Slough Borough Council would be participating in the IRMP consultation process particularly regarding the removal of the Aerial Ladder Platform at Slough.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster reassured Members that the IRMP Working Party would consider all available options at its next meeting, and took the opportunity to thank all Members and the public for their contribution in the IRMP Consultation process, commending their detailed level of understanding of the issues.

In response to concerns expressed by Councillor Jeff Brooks on the operational solution for Windsor, Councillor David Burbage stated he welcomed the option of a standard size appliance at Windsor. Councillor Burbage welcomed progress to date, but queried whether the wording used by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the Public Engagement Forum, gave a particular steer, and asked that alternative research services be considered.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the consultation report be Noted ; and
- b) That the changes to the plan, recommended by the Management Committee, in 3.8 be Accepted and the amended plan be Approved.

**253. RETIREMENT AND RE-EMPLOYMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised the Fire Authority's of its' options regarding the continued employment of the Chief Fire Officer.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer made two points of clarification in the report. Under 3.4 it should read that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer is able to retire in 5 years, and under 4.1 where the potential savings arising from the proposals should be referenced to table 3.14 of the report.

The Chairman reported the potential saving and advised that the recommendation set out in the report would benefit the people of Berkshire and the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Councillor Paul Gittings commented on the challenging times Royal Berkshire Fire Authority faced and his view that it was incumbent upon the Fire Authority to seek to secure the continuity of the Chief Fire Officer to see the Fire Authority through those challenging times.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Recommendation of the Management Committee be Considered, namely  
*“That the Chief Fire Officer’s retirement be accepted and that he be re-employed on the terms and for the reasons contained within the report “ and;*
- b) That the Chief Fire Officer be re-employed on the basis set out in and for the reasons contained within the report be Confirmed.

**256. SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCCL)**

Councillor Angus Ross, as the Fire Authority’s Representative on the SEFRCCCL, provided a verbal update on the current position. He had hoped to report the acceptance by Companies House of the removal of SEFRCCCL from the companies register. The winding up of the company was now imminent and Councillor Angus Ross further advised that he would inform the Fire Authority when the process was complete.

**257. MINUTES OF STANDARD COMMITTEES**

The Fire Authority Received the Minutes of the following meetings of the Fire Authority’s Committees.

- a) Strategic Asset Management Committee – 12 July 2011;
- b) Strategic Asset Management Committee – 8 September 2011;
- c) Standards Committee – 15 September 2011; (not yet approved)
- d) Management Committee – 19 September 2011;
- e) Audit and Performance Review Committee – 22 September 2011;
- f) Strategic Asset Management Committee – 11 October 2011;
- g) Management Committee – 10 November 2011;
- h) Audit and Performance Review Committee – 15 December 2011; (not yet approved)
- i) Strategic Asset Management Committee – 11 January 2012; (not yet approved)
- j) Management Committee – 23 January 2012; (not yet approved)

**258. FORWARD PLAN**

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

## **257. 2012/13 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Programme of meetings of the Fire Authority and Committees for 2012/13 be Agreed, subject to the appointment of the Fire Authority Committees and Working Parties at the Annual Meeting on 28 June 2012.

## **258. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Wednesday 11 April 2012 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1AQ.

## **259. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 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.

## **260. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2011 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

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

## **Item 4 - Appendix 1**

### **QUESTION AND RESPONSE TO QUESTION RECEIVED FROM MR RICHARD COATES TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING ON 15 FEBRUARY 2012**

#### **QUESTION PUT:**

“With the exception of 3 nights when the Windsor fire appliance was off the run during 3 months between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, a full crew of between 4 and 5 firefighters manned the full size Mercedes front line appliance for 89 shifts between 2000hrs and 0800hrs attending over 45 mobilisations during the period when the Wokingham appliance was also fully manned at night and attended 33 mobilisations.

It is patently obvious from the initial 3 month test period that both manpower is available to provide a crew of 4 or 5 every night, and that the Windsor main fire appliance is available every night. Therefore given that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will provide accommodation for the appliance and crew, will the fire authority now agree to continue to provide essential 24hr fire emergency cover in Windsor ?

Note: Mobilisation figures exclude standbys. Figures obtained via Freedom of Information request to the RBF&RS”

**RESPONSE PROVIDED BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER THROUGH THE CHAIRMAN:**

“Thank you for your correspondence submitting a question to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority at its meeting to be held on 15 February 2012.

The figures that you have quoted in the question are correct, but the detail behind the figures for the number of times the appliances were mobilised gives a better representation of the underlying risk factors in the respective areas.

Of the 45 incidents attended by Windsor’s appliance only 20 were in the Windsor area, the remaining 25 incidents were in the other station areas.

32 of the 45 incidents were false alarms.

Only six were primary fires of which three were out on arrival and required no action on the part of the service.

It attended no RTC persons trapped.

Of the 33 incidents attended by Wokingham’s pump during the same period 16 were in the Wokingham area the remaining 16 were in other station areas.

12 of the 33 incidents were false alarms.

Seven incidents were primary fires of which one was a nine pump fire in a factory in the Workingham area; one was a three pump house fire.

One of the seven incidents was found to be out on arrival requiring no action by the service.

Two incidents were RTC persons trapped.

On balance, during the hours of 20:00 to 08:00 during the period from 1 October to 31 December 2011, Windsor’s pump attended three high risk incidents compared to the eight high risk incidents attended by Wokingham’s pump.

All proposals for the future emergency cover arrangements for the Windsor area are being dealt with through the Integrated Risk Management Process and will be decided by the Fire Authority with the benefit of full public consultation.”