

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Thursday 17 February 2011

Dolman 1, Shaw House, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury,
West Berkshire, RG14 2DL



Those

present: Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (*Chairman*) Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons
Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor Phillip Bicknell Councillor John Lenton
Councillor Jeff Brooks Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound
Councillor Chris Bowring Councillor Fred Pugh
Councillor Colin Dudley Councillor Mohammed Rasib (*part meeting*)
Councillor Adrian Edwards Councillor Alan Ward
Councillor Paul Gittings Councillor Sean Wright

In

Attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Mr Phillip King (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Mr Jonathan Taylor (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observers: Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Members of the public and media
Representative Bodies

Action

141. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Councillor Mrs Diana Coad, Councillor Chris Harris, Councillor Iain McCracken, Councillor Angus Ross, Councillor Miss Emma Webster and Councillor Raja Zarait.

142. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no 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 Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

143. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2010

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2010 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

(Note - the meeting of the Fire Authority on 8 December 2010 was cancelled in the absence of any items for decision.)

The Chief Fire Officer, in referring to the law passed by the Welsh Assembly on

16 February 2011 requiring builders to install sprinkler systems in all new homes in Wales, agreed to share the protocol with Members if requested.

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

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

No submissions had been received from members of the public, in accordance with the Fire Authority's Rules of Procedure.

145. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that he had attended a recent Fire Management Committee meeting at which issues pertaining to the FiReControl Project had been considered. He advised that a Control Working Party of the Fire Authority's Management Committee had been established to consider issues relating to the current and future provision for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Control Room functions.

The Chairman advised that he had attended a Local Government Association Fire Commission meeting on 11 February 2011, a copy of his report from the meeting having been previously circulated to Members.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to a major national inter-agency counter terrorism exercise, co-ordinated by Cobra, that had recently taken place.

146. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 30 September 2010 to the date of Fire Authority meeting, an amended report being made available to Members following the Recommendations of the Management Committee arising from its meeting on 14 February 2011.

The Fire Authority **Agreed** to note the report at this juncture of the meeting, and to defer consideration of the report until its considerations of the 2011/12 Budget at Agenda Item 10.

147. 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.

148. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

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

149. 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.

Councillor Mohammed Rasib retired from the meeting during the early considerations of the next item.

150. 2011/12 BUDGET

The Fire Authority considered the proposed Budget presented by the Authority Treasurer, as recommended by the Management Committee. The Fire Authority

also considered the Recommendations of Committees report, as deferred from Agenda Item 6.

The Authority Treasurer referred to the Management Committee's Recommendation that the Fire Authority be invited to include within any Development Fund the ability to investigate Invest to Save projects and that an initial sum of £1.4m be transferred from Reserves.

The Authority Treasurer reported that the DCLG (Department for Local Communities and Local Government) had now released details of the Authority's capital grant, that being £1,281,716.

Councillor Ward **Moved** that the presented Recommendations, as amended to include the Management Committee's Recommendation, be Resolved, and this was **Seconded** by Councillor Colin Dudley.

Councillor Paul Gittings **Moved an amendment** that the 'Removal of the London Fringe Allowance' be removed from the list of potential savings indefinitely, as detailed at Appendix C of the presented report. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Peter Jones. On being put to the vote, the Motion was **lost**.

Councillor Paul Gittings **Moved a further amendment** that the 'Removal of meal provision at internal courses' be removed from the list of potential savings, as detailed at Appendix C of the presented report. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Peter Jones. On being put to the vote, the Motion was **carried**.

Councillor Paul Gittings **Moved** that remuneration for Directors of Service, Senior Uniformed Officers up to, and including, the Chief Fire Officer, be frozen for the forthcoming year. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that remuneration for this staff group was considered, annually, by the Management Committee as part of the Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges. Having considered the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's advice, Councillor Paul Gittings **withdrew his Motion**. The Chief Fire Officer stated that he would not wish to receive an increase to his remuneration whilst remuneration for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service personnel was frozen.

During the course of the debate on the budget, the Fire Authority **gave its consent** for a further amendment that the words "once details of the Capital Grant distribution are known" be removed from Recommendation 4.

The Fire Authority **Supported** Councillor Paul Gittings' suggestion that regular update reports be presented to the Fire Authority relating to the deployment of the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) at Newbury and the related switch crewing with the Wholetime pumping appliance, and to the attendance at Automatic Fire Alarms in commercial premises.

The Fire Authority **Supported** Councillor Jeff Brooks' suggestion that no further changes be made to the Officer Rota until the Management Committee had considered the options, including the Fire Brigades Union's recently presented alternative proposal, noting that any such options must be within budget.

In response to Councillor Peter Jones, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer reassured him that the current standards were expected to be maintained in relation to the maintenance, and purchase, of the Service's IT hardware, despite the proposed budgetary savings.

In response to Councillor Peter Jones' concerns regarding the proposed additional posts being added to the establishment, namely an Information Manager and a Strategic Planning and Projects Manager, the Chief Fire Officer outlined the

Regular
update
reports

objectives for these posts, as detailed in the presented Project Initiation Documents. He stated that both these posts would be appointed for a period of 2 years after which they would be subject to a review.

On being put to the vote, the Recommendations within the Recommendations of Committees report (Agenda Item 6) and the 2011/12 Budget (Agenda Item 10), as amended, were **Carried** by a vote of 11 in favour to 4 against.

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, Councillor Phillip Bicknell, Councillor John Lenton and Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound wished their votes against to be recorded, stating that they did not vote in favour as they did not agree with any Service reduction at Windsor Fire Station.

Resolved:

a) Strategic Asset Management Committee's Terms of Reference

- i) That a further clause be included after CO23 G to now read:
"Consideration of proposed capital acquisitions and disposals (for capital projects or freehold properties over the value of £100,000 or leasehold properties over a total rental value of £100,000 over the term of the lease) and formulation of recommendations to the Management Committee and/or Fire Authority as appropriate";

b) Integrated Risk Management Plan 2011/2012 - Consultation report

- b-i) That the IRMP Working Party proposed changes to the Plan be Accepted and that the amended Plan be approved.
- b-ii) That, having considered the responses to the Consultation process and Officer responses to, and Recommendations arising there from, the following Recommendations, subject to any outstanding appropriate reviews and People Impact Assessments being completed be approved:
 - i) That Cookham Fire Station be permanently closed;
 - ii) That Wholetime operational posts (including Officers) be removed from the establishment as vacancies arise and in accordance with the needs of the Service;
 - iii) That the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) at Newbury be switch crewed with the Wholetime pumping appliance;
 - iv) That a Retained Support Unit (12 posts) be established;
 - v) That a policy of increasing call challenge to suspected unwanted fire signals be adopted, including non attendance at commercial premises between the hours of 0900-1800, Monday to Friday;
 - vi) That a policy of attendance at domestic fire alarm signals be reduced during the waking hours of 0800 till 2100 every day of the week to one appliance;
 - vii) That, where operationally appropriate, and in accordance with policy guidelines, a 6-month validation period be commenced, and, subject to the study, Wholetime appliances be sent to low risk incidents on Retained Station grounds;
 - viii) That the vacant post of the Fire Safety Enforcement Officer be removed from the establishment with effect from 1 April 2011;

- ix) That Officers be authorised to undertake work to explore alternative options for the future provision of the Control Room functions;
- x) That Officers be authorised to undertake further work to examine the feasibility of a Fire Station in the Twyford/Knowl Hill area and a Wholetime Fire Station in the Theale area; and
- xi) That the proposed Protection Department restructure be approved.

c) Protection Department Restructure

- i) That Officers be authorised to implement the revised Protection Department structure; and
- ii) That the authorised establishment be amended to reflect the restructure.

d) Cookham Fire Station

- i) That Cookham Fire Station be sold to release capital and prevent maintenance and other costs;
- ii) That the Strategic Asset Management Committee be asked to progress the sale of, or best use of, Cookham Fire Station;
- iii) That the 3 remaining staff attached to Cookham Fire Station be offered a permanent transfer to Maidenhead Fire Station as an alternative to redundancy; and
- iv) That the vacant operational posts attached to Cookham Fire Station be removed from the establishment.

e) Establishment of Development Fund

- i) That the Recommendation of the Strategic Asset Management Committee, on 12 January 2011, as amended by the Management Committee on 14 February 2011, be Adopted, as follows:
 - That a Development Fund be established to enable the Fire Authority to manage the funding of future projects;
 - That a capital project to assess the options for the ongoing provision of a Brigade Headquarters facility be established;
 - That a capital project to provide a Wholetime Fire Station in the Theale area be established; and
 - That Officers be authorised to undertake further works to examine the feasibility of a Fire Station in the Twyford/Knowl Hill area.

f) 2011/12 Budget

- i) That the Management Committee's Recommendation be Approved, that being that Recommendation 6 within the 2011/12 Budget report to the Fire Authority be amended to now read "The Authority is invited to include within any Development Fund the ability to investigate Invest to Save projects and that an initial sum of £1.4m be transferred from Reserves";
- ii) That the removal of meal provision at internal courses be removed from the list of potential savings;

- f)i) That, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2011/12:
- i) The aggregate council taxbase of the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities has been notified as 334,159.64;
 - ii) £34,364,636.56 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(2)(a) to (d) of the Act;
 - iii) £1,013,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(3)(a) to (b) of the Act;
 - iv) £33,351,636.56 being the amount by which the aggregate at f)i)ii) above exceeds the aggregate at f)i)iii) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 43(4) of the Act as its budget requirement for the year;
 - v) £14,782,338 being the aggregate of the sums which the Authority estimates will be payable for the year in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant;
 - vi) A deficit of £30,027 being the net aggregate of the surpluses and deficits on billing authorities' Collection Funds to be received in 2011/12;
 - vii) £55.66 being the amount at f)i)iv) above plus the amount at f)i)vi) above less the amount at f)i)v) above, all divided by the aggregate council taxbase at (1) above, calculated by the Authority, in accordance with Section 44(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
 - viii) The Authority, in accordance with Section 40(2)(a) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts of Council Tax for the year 2011/12 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 f)i)vii) above 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 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.

- ix) The 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 2011/12:

Authority	Taxbase	Precept	Collection Fund Surplus/ (Deficit)	Net Yield from Council Tax
Bracknell Forest	44,310.00	2,466,294.60	4812.00	2,471,106.60
Reading	53,404.00	2,972,466.64	(9,284.00)	2,963,182.64
Slough	41,567.20	2,313,630.35	0.00	2,313,630.35
West Berkshire	64,029.94	3,563,906.46	(13,556.00)	3,550,350.46
Windsor & Maidenhead	65,394.00	3,639,830.04	(11,999.00)	3,627,831.04
Wokingham	65,454.50	3,643,197.47	0.00	3,643,197.47
Total	334,159.64	18,599,325.56	(30,027.00)	18,569,298.56

- f)ii) That the Medium Term Financial Plan set out in Appendix A, and the Prudential Indicators, Treasury Strategy and Investment Strategy set out in Appendix E of the Budget 2011/12 report be Resolved.
- f)iii) That the proposed Capital Programme set out in Appendix D of the Budget 2011/12 report be Noted, and that the Programme be reviewed by the Management Committee (Mgt Comm).
- f)iv) That the November 2009 revision of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management be Adopted;
- f)v) That a Development Fund to enable the Authority to manage the funding of future projects be established, that the ability to investigate Invest to Save projects be included and that an initial sum of £1.4m be transferred from Reserves;
- f)vi) That Officers be authorised to commence negotiations with the Representative Bodies with a view to the withdrawal of the London Fringe Allowance as soon as possible and by no later than 1 October 2011;
- f)vii) That, to avoid future compulsory redundancies, the principle of reducing the establishment through natural wastage be adopted; and the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to amend the establishment accordingly;
- f)viii) That a moratorium on the recruitment of Wholetime operational trainee firefighters be implemented; and that the following vacant non uniform posts be removed from the establishment with effect from 1 April 2011:
- i) Driving Instructor (x1);
 - ii) Community Liaison Officer (x1);
- f)ix) That the following posts be added to the establishment:
- i) Information Manager;
 - ii) Strategic Planning and Projects Manager; and
- f)x) That the annual provision for ill health retirements be reduced from £280,000 to £130,000 per annum.

Mgt
Comm

151. 2010/11 BUDGET MONITORING

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

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

152. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Fire Authority was advised that recent announcements by the Government have changed the political landscape for collaborative working by Fire and Rescue Authorities, the presented report making proposals for how such work should be progressed in the South East Region in the future. The presented report also provided updates on the work of the South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) which Kent administers on behalf of the region.

Resolved:

- a) That the winding-up of the South East Fire and Rescue Services' Regional Management Board (RMB) at the appropriate time be Supported;
- b) That regular Chairs/Portfolio Holders and Chiefs meetings be reinstated in its place; and
- c) That the update on the work of the South East Fire Improvement Partnership and the draft Minutes of the last meeting of the Regional Management Board be Noted.

153. FUTURE OF THE SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL COMPANY LIMITED (SEFRCL)

The Fire Authority was advised of the recent Board Meeting of the Company and its future in light of the Government decision to cancel the FiReControl Project. Authority was sought to take such steps as maybe necessary to wind up the Company at the appropriate time in order to avoid any potential liability for the Fire Authority and its appointed Director.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the winding-up of the South East Fire and Rescue Control Company Limited at the appropriate time be Supported; and
- c) That Councillor Angus Ross be authorised to take such steps as may be necessary, in his capacity as the Member appointed to attend the Company's Board meetings for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, to implement the cessation of the Company.

154. REVIEW OF THE PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER CHAMPIONS

The Fire Authority considered its Protocol for Member Champions, as amended.

Resolved:

- a) That the updates to Section 2.1 of the Protocol be Agreed; and
- b) That the Clerk and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any necessary consequential amendments to the Fire Authority's Constitution.

155. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

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

- a) Audit and Performance Review Committee - 21 September 2010;
- b) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 12 October 2010;
- c) Management Committee - 25 October 2010;
- d) Management Committee - 8 November 2010;
- e) Audit and Performance Review Committee - 16 December 2010 (not yet approved);
- f) Management Committee - 5 January 2011;
- g) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 12 January 2011 (not yet approved);
- h) Management Committee - 24 January 2011 (not yet approved).

156. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved:

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

157. 2011/12 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Resolved:

- a) That the Programme of meetings of the Fire Authority and Committees for 2011/12 be Agreed, subject to the appointment of the Fire Authority Committees and Working Parties at the Annual Meeting on 29 June 2011, and subject to the April 2012 Fire Authority meeting date being brought forward by 2 weeks.

CMO

158. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

- a) That the next meeting on 27 April 2011 (at 6.30pm in Dolman 1, Shaw House, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 2DL) be re-convened to either 13 or 14 April 2011, and that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer be authorised to seek Members' availability and to select the preferred date.

CMO