

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 23 September 2009

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



Those present:

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson	Councillor Phillip Bicknell
Councillor Chris Bowring	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (<i>Chairman</i>)	Councillor Adrian Edwards
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor John Lenton	Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound
Councillor Mohammed Rasib	Councillor Angus Ross
Councillor Sean Wright	Councillor Raja Zarait

In Attendance:

- Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
- Professor Christopher Guy (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
- Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
- Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response)
- Jacky Manning (Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality & Diversity))
- Tracey Mitchell (Health and Safety Manager)
- Bryan Morgan (Area Manager, Support Services)
- Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
- Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
- David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observers:

- Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Representative Bodies
- Members of the public

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Councillor Colin Dudley (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Chris Harris, Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons, Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Fred Pugh, Councillor Alan Ward and Councillor Miss Emma Webster.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made by Members:

- Councillor Angus Ross declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as the 2009/10 Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL), in respect to Agenda Item 15 (South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd).
- Councillor Phillip Bicknell declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as a Director of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd, in respect to Agenda Item 22 (Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd - progress report).
- Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest as a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Councillor in respect to Agenda Item 23 (Sustainable Communities Act 2007).

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- d) Councillor Phillip Bicknell declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Councillor in respect to Agenda Item 23 (Sustainable Communities Act 2007).
- e) Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Councillor in respect to Agenda Item 23 (Sustainable Communities Act 2007).
- f) Councillor John Lenton declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as a Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Councillor in respect to Agenda Item 23 (Sustainable Communities Act 2007).

The following Declarations of Interest were made by Officers of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service:

- i) The Clerk and Monitoring Officer declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as the Company Secretary of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd, in respect to Agenda Item 22 (Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd - progress report).
- ii) The Director of Human Resources declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as a Director of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd, in respect to Agenda Item 22 (Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd - progress report).

No further Declarations of Interest were made.

27. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2009

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 24 June 2009 be Approved for signing by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:
 - Item 8, Scheme of Member Allowances Report, 10th paragraph - to now read "On being put to the vote, the moved amendment was not carried (7 votes in favour (recorded vote), 10 votes against, 3 abstentions)."

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

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that a cost analysis was being undertaken of private healthcare insurance against use of the NHS for staff in circumstances where an earlier return to work from a period of sickness absence from workplace might be realised (Action referred to under Minute 19, Statement of Accounts 2008/9), and that a progress report would be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in December 2009.

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

There were no submissions from members of the public under the provisions of the Fire Authority's Rules of Procedure.

29. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman advised that Councillor Andrew Bradley had now replaced Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons as the Conservative Member appointed to the Standards Committee.

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- b) The Chairman reported that he had been appointed as a member of the Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee.
- c) The Chairman reported that he had attended the following events:
 - A Young Firefighters tournament on 19 July 2009, a very worthwhile initiative.
 - A High Sherriff's reception in Bradfield.
 - A Firefighters' memorial service in London, also attended by Bryan Morgan (Area Manager, Support Services).
 - A New Dimensions demonstration held at Hawley Lake.
 - A South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) conference in Milton Keynes (with the Chief Fire Officer and others).

The Chairman reported that Councillor John Quinton, Independent Co-opted Member of the Fire Authority's Standards Committee had recently tendered his resignation. The Chairman sought the Fire Authority's approval to appoint Professor Christopher Guy (Deputy Independent Co-opted Member) as a full Independent Co-opted Member of the Committee with effect from 23 September 2009. The Fire Authority **unanimously Agreed** this appointment.

CMO

30. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

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

31. 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.

32. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority received and considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority Committees from 25 June 2009 to date of Fire Authority meeting.

The Fire Authority noted that the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), with the agreed amendments and updates, had been considered by the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party and forwarded to the Management Committee for further consideration at its meeting on 23 September 2009. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that the Management Committee had recommended to the Fire Authority that the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan for 2010/11 - 2015/16 - Action Plan 2010/11 be approved.

The Fire Authority considered the draft Plan, and the following salient inclusions were agreed:

- Page 29, under Specialist Vehicles - add details of the station location(s) for the specialist vehicles.
- Page 37 ('Do you want to become a Part-time Fire-fighter') - move this page to be adjacent to Pages 26/27 (Retained Duty System Staff Review 2010), however if this proved difficult to do due to layout of document, to insert relevant text at bottom of page 26 linking to page 37.

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The Chief Fire Officer and the Area Manager (Response) confirmed, in response to Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound, that Cookham Fire Station

remained temporarily closed due to insufficient Retained Duty System personnel being available to crew the appliance. It was reported that, to date and despite recruitment campaigns, there had been no prospective Retained Duty System recruits. The Chairman concurred with Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's view that Members must be kept informed of any significant operational changes to Fire Stations.

Resolved, with four abstentions, that:

- a) The Five-Year IRMP 2010/11-2015/16 - Action Plan 2010/11 be Approved as amended.

33. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2009-10

Resolved:

- a) That Councillor Owen Jeffery be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative to the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) for the ensuing year (2009/10), following the recent resignation by Councillor Andrew Bradley.
- b) That, as no proposer was put forward for the appointment to the Standing Deputy representative to the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) for the ensuing year (2009/10) following Councillor Owen Jeffery's appointment, this appointment would be made at a future date.
- c) That Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson be appointed as the Fire Authority's Substitute Member Representative on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL) for the ensuing year (2008/09).

34. PURCHASE OF A GAS ANALYSER FOR TESTING FIREFIGHTER FITNESS

The Fire Authority's approval was sought for the purchase of a Gas Analyser for testing firefighter fitness in order to improve the accuracy of fitness testing results where suitability to undertake operational duties is being considered.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed, in response to Members' points of clarity, that, subject to staff resources, a Gas Analyser for testing firefighter fitness, if purchased by the Fire Authority, could be utilised by other Fire and Rescue Services or by the private sector to generate income for the Authority, and that the Gas Analyser's life expectancy was believed to be many years.

Resolved:

- a) That the purchase of a Gas Analyser for testing firefighter fitness from the underspend in the 2009/10 Revenue Budget be Approved.

35. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY AND SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Fire Authority was provided with the equality and diversity statistics and an update on the progress of the Equality Action Plan, and approval was sought for the Single Equality Scheme.

In response to Members' requests, the Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality and Diversity) (SHRA(E&D)) agreed to action the following:

- To advise, when published, of the number of returns to the Fire Minister in

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**SHRA
(E&D)**

response to the Communities and Local Government's endorsement of Equality and Diversity key values and commitments.

- To incorporate, within future reports, measurables in terms of progress made against the Action Plans.
- To amend the text "actively welcome" on page 39 to "actively consider all such cases"
- To circulate within the Brigade a summary statement on the actions and issues contained within Equality and Diversity Strategy and Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan.

The work conducted by the Connections Teams to engage with people not currently in work and linking them in with employability services when appropriate was referred to. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to further explore the attendance in schools by a Senior Officer to promote career awareness, particularly in respect to gender equality within the Fire Service, to work with the Human Resources and Service Delivery Directorates, and to report back to the Fire Authority, at a future date, on proposed detailed plans. The Chief Fire Officer invited Members to advise him of any further suggestions that might enable this agenda to be taken forward.

In noting the work conducted by the Connection Teams, Councillor Sean Wright wished to place on record the excellent work carried out by Red Watch at Slough Fire Station to engage with the local youth clubs within the Slough area. Councillor Paul Gittings suggested that Officers liaise with the Slough Borough Council Fire Authority Members to consider ways of further progressing partnership working.

Resolved:

- a) That the Single Equality Scheme (Appendix 1 of the presented report) be Approved.
- b) That the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy and proposed Action Plan for 2009-12 (Appendix 2 of the presented report) be Approved.
- c) That the current position on the 2008-2011 Action Plan (refer to Strategy) be Noted.
- d) That the annual statistical data for 2008/9 (Appendix 3 of the presented report) be Noted.

36. 2009/10 BUDGET MONITORING

The Fire Authority was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of August 2009. The Authority Treasurer reported that the Strategic Asset Management Committee had concerns regarding financial slippages and that it had been agreed that, at each meeting, any such slippages be reported.

In response to Councillor Adrian Edwards, the Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality and Diversity) did not believe that any responses had been received to date in respect to the vacancy within Community Safety, as referred to in the presented report. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to keep Councillor Adrian Edwards advised of any progress.

Resolved:

- a) That the Budget Monitoring report be Noted.

CFO

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37. ANNUAL REVIEW OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OBJECTIVES

The Fire Authority was provided with a review of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service health and safety performance for the period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009, together with an overview of the accidents and significant points, and the progress made against the 2008-2010 Health and Safety Objectives to date. The Fire Authority was also invited to pledge its support to the Health and Safety Executive's Strategy "Be Part of the Solution".

In response to Members' questions, the Health and Safety Manager confirmed that Crew Managers, and above, all received accredited Health and Safety training, that the reporting of near misses was encouraged, and that consideration would be given to associating with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). The Chief Fire Officer was confident that, within the Brigade, there was a good culture to report all accidents, including near misses.

Resolved:

- a) That the excellent report be Noted.
- b) That support be pledged to the Health and Safety Executive's strategy "Be Part of the Solution" (Appendix C of the presented report).

38. FIRECONTROL AND FIRELINK - UPDATE REPORT

The Fire Authority was advised of the progress in both the FiReControl and FireLink projects that are two aspects of the Government's resilience agenda.

Resolved:

- a) That the FiReControl and FireLink update report be Noted.

39. SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCCL)

Councillor Angus Ross, as the 2009/10 Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL), provided an overview from the SEFRCCCL meeting held on 11 September 2009 (*a copy of his report is attached as an Appendix (1) to the Minutes*).

Councillor Angus Ross confirmed, in response to the Chairman, that work was ongoing in respect to 'out-of-scope' activities.

40. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Fire Authority was advised of the progress made by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to address the environmental agenda, and the Area Manager (Support Services) took Members through the work being undertaken to address this agenda, as detailed in the presented report.

The Area Manager (Support Services) (AM (SS)) agreed to include within the next 6-monthly Environmental report (*February 2010*) the expected results of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's carbon footprint.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the newly designed computer monitors that automatically switch off after a period of inactivity were currently being trialled by the Brigade.

The Area Manager (Support Services) confirmed that the use of bio-fuels was being considered.

AM (SS)

Resolved:

- a) That the Environmental report be Noted.

41. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman provided an update report as the Fire Authority's appointed Member to the Regional Management Board appointed Member.

Resolved:

- a) That the Regional Management Board report be Noted.

42. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES WORKING PARTIES AND OTHER GROUPS

The Fire Authority received the Minutes of the following meetings of the Fire Authority's Committees:

- a) Audit and Performance Review Committee - 24 June 2009 (not yet approved).
- b) Executive Committee - 24 June 2009.
- c) Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 24 June 2009.
- d) Management Committee - 24 June 2009.
- e) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 24 June 2009.
- f) Standards Committee - 24 June 2009.
- g) Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 6 July 2009.
- h) Management Committee - 27 July 2009 (not yet approved).
- i) Standards Committee - 10 August 2009 (not yet approved).
- j) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 17 August 2009 (not yet approved).

43. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved:

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

44. PROGRAMME OF FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS

Consideration was given to commencing the Fire Authority's meetings at 7.30pm, but it was **Agreed** that there should be no change to the start time of the meetings.

Resolved:

- a) That the next Fire Authority meeting would be held on Wednesday 9 December 2009 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TD.
- b) That the Committee Manager should seek Members' availability for both Monday 19 April 2010 at 6.30pm and Wednesday 21 April 2010 at 6.30pm as prospective April 2010 meeting dates, and that the final date be subsequently decided upon dependent on the majority outcome.
- c) That the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Fire Authority be held on Wednesday 30 June 2010 at 6.30pm (venue to be advised).

**Committee
Manager**

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor John Lenton conveyed his gratitude to Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response) for attending a recent Wraysbury Parish Council meeting to advise them following a fire in the Wraysbury area. He suggested that, to effect good communication channels, Officers might wish to consider attending Parish Council meetings and/or annual meetings to further promote the Fire Service.

45. 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 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.

The meeting was adjourned at 2011 hours, and reconvened at 2020 hours.

Note - the full Part II Minutes, once approved, will be indexed at pages 23-25 inclusive.

46. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE (TRAINING) LTD - PROGRESS REPORT

The Fire Authority was advised of the performance of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited (RBFRTL) since the last report in February 2009.

Resolved:

- a) That the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Ltd progress report be Noted.

47. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

The Fire Authority was informed on the current position with regard to the proposed application under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (SCA) by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

Resolved:

- a) That the contents of the report be Noted.
- b) That the Fire Authority endorse the actions taken by Officers under delegated powers in consultation with the Chairman and Group Leaders to preserve the Fire Authority's position.
- c) That a letter, to be agreed with the Chairman and other Party Group Leaders, be sent to the Leaders of Bracknell Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council, and Wokingham Borough Council, and copied to the Chief Executive Officers, advising them of the SCA Application and of the Fire Authority's concerns regarding the future delivery of fire and rescue services in Berkshire; and to invite them to support the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in remaining as a county-wide service serving all Berkshire communities; and to support the continuance of the delivery of excellent fire and rescue services that have been provided for many years.



14th September 2009

SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL CENTRE LIMITED

**REPORT BY RBFA BOARD REPRESENTATIVE
CLLR ANGUS ROSS
MEETING OF BOARD 11 SEPTEMBER 09**

1. In general, the pace of work is decreasing to take account of the delay in the programme. However it is still important to achieve good dialogue with all unions, especially the FBU who have been reluctant on a national basis to cooperate, though we hope this has been largely overcome now. However, it is important some of the personnel issues are agreed soon to enable current Control Room staff to understand the opportunities available and the associated terms of employment. We are working on Role Matching at present.
2. Members are gradually putting in place the various company requirements in Legal, Finance, Boardroom Practice, Culture of the company etc. This has raised issues where a better understanding exists than when we first met two years ago and some areas of practice need to be revisited – e.g. Who sees Board papers, whether Board members should be Corporate or Individual etc. There is also a national consultation on what organisation should control FireControl in the future.
3. Within my role in Facilities, Security and Property I reported again on the continual delays to fix certain parts of the building. The lifts are still not fully functional albeit work is now almost complete. The concern is that delays to get items fixed would still occur under current involvement of CLG & Flagship, the Facilities provider nationally once the Centre become operational – this would be unacceptable. With the Chief Executive I will be meeting senior CLG officers again.
4. The programme to recruit a Senior Operations Manager, on 18 month initial secondment, is now complete and an appointment has been made. The appointee starts in November.
5. Next meeting in October at RCC and it is planned that Shona Dunn, Director, Fire and Resilience Directorate will attend.

Angus Ross 14.9.09