

## MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 24 June 2009

Desborough Hall, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF



**Those present:**

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson	Councillor Phillip Bicknell
Councillor Chris Bowring	Councillor Mrs Prue Bray
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Dr Paul Bryant
Councillor Colin Dudley	Councillor Adrian Edwards
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Chris Harris
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons	Councillor Owen Jeffery
Councillor John Lenton	Councillor Iain McCracken
Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound	Councillor Fred Pugh
Councillor Angus Ross	Councillor Alan Ward
Councillor Miss Emma Webster	Councillor Sean Wright

**In Attendance:**

- Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
- Mr John Giles (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
- Mr Albert Gregory (Independent Chairman, Standards Committee)
- Dr Declan Hall (University of Birmingham)
- Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
- Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
- Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
- Mr Ronald Webb (Independent Member, Standards Committee)

**Observers:**

- Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Representative Bodies
- Mr Richard Coates (Horton Parish resident)
- Members of the public and media

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

**Resolved:**

- a) That Councillor Dr Paul Bryant be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

### 2. CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chairman accepted his appointment, and conveyed his thanks to Members for their continued support.

### 3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Two nominations were received, Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor Jeff Brooks.

**Resolved:**

- a) That Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

### 4. VICE-CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Vice-Chairman accepted his appointment.

**Action**

## 5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Jones.

## 6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- a) All Members of the Fire Authority present declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest in relation to Agenda Item 17 (Scheme of Member Allowances Report).
- b) Councillor Angus Ross declared a Personal non Prejudicial interest as the 2008/09 Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL), in respect to Agenda Item 21(g) (Annual Reports from Committee Chairmen, Champions and Representatives - South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd).

No further Declarations of Interest were made.

## 7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2009

### Resolved :

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2009 be Approved for signing by the Chairman, subject to the following minor amendment - delete 'Mrs' before 'Fred Pugh' within the 'Those Present' list.

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

The Chairman advised that one Question had been received from Mr Richard Coates, in accordance with the Fire Authority's Rules of Procedure, and he invited Mr Coates, present at the meeting, to put his Question, as follows:

- *"Following the High Courts decision on 17th February 2009 not to allow an appeal against closure of the Windsor Fire Station at night, the Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Chief Fire Officer Iain Cox stated during his subsequent interview on BBC Radio Berkshire the following morning that he would re-consider the situation should circumstances change or additional information become available that appeared to warrant a further review (paraphrase not exact words).*

*Given that circumstances have changed and additional information is now available would the Chief Fire Officer agree that the time is now right to reconsider the proposal to close Windsor fire Station at night and retain a 24-hour service?"*

The Chief Fire Officer, at the invitation of the Chairman, provided a response (*copy attached as an Appendix (1) to the Minutes*).

Mr Coates asked one supplementary question relating to the proposed extensions to Legoland, including an increase in hotel accommodation, and to the fact that his figures indicate that Windsor Fire Station attends more calls at night, between the hours of 8pm and 8am, than does Wokingham Fire Station. The Chief Fire Officer provided a brief response, and confirmed that he would further provide Mr Coates with a more detailed written response, a copy also to be circulated to Members.

## 9. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman paid tribute to the Chief Fire Officer, and Officers, of the

CFO

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, for the service and support they provide to Members to realise the delivery of the Fire Authority's agenda.

- b) The Chairman thanked the retiring Members, Councillor Shafiq Chaudhry, Councillor Mrs Sue Evans, Councillor Geoff Findlay and Councillor Jagjit Grewal. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mohammed Rasib as a new Member, and welcomed back Councillor Owen Jeffery as a returning Member to the Fire Authority.
- c) The Chairman conveyed his congratulations to Councillor Jagjit Grewal on his election as Deputy Mayor of Slough Borough Council, and to Councillor Fred Pugh on his election as Mayor of Reading Borough Council.
- d) The Chairman referred to the 2009 Young Firefighters Tournament taking place on 19 July 2009, and advised that Members were very welcome to attend.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

The Fire Authority received and considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority Committees since 17 April 2009.

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Executive Committee's considerations relating to the Scheme of Member Allowances be Noted, and that the decision be reserved until Agenda Item 17 (Scheme of Member Allowances Report) was considered.
- b) That the Recommendation made by the Executive Committee in relation to the Corporate Plan be Approved.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Corporate Plan would be published on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's website, and hard copies of the Plan would be available on request.

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

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

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

There were no Notices of Motion received under Standing Order 44.

## **13. REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

The Fire Authority received the revised Fire Authority's Committee Structure, the revised Terms of Reference, and the Champions' Protocol.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster conveyed her thanks to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer for ensuring that all previous Members' comments and amendments had been incorporated within the presented proposed structure.

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the proposed revised Committee Structure with effect from this Meeting (24 June 2009) be Adopted.
- b) That the Terms of Reference for each Committee be Approved, subject to each Committee reviewing their respective Terms of Reference during the forthcoming year, and to report back to the Management Committee with any suggested amendments for consideration and ratification, for subsequent presentation to the Fire Authority for approval.

- c) That the Protocol for Member Champions be Adopted.
- d) That the Clerk and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any necessary consequential amendments to the Fire Authority's Constitution.

**14. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

The Fire Authority considered its Committee Structure, and appointment of its Committees, in accordance with the Constitution.

**Resolved:**

- a) With no votes against, that the rules on political proportionality should not apply to the allocation of Committee places.
- b) That the Management Committee, the Strategic Asset Management Committee, the Audit and Performance Review Committee and the Disciplinary Appeals and Grievance Committee be appointed as Standing Committees.
- c) That the number of seats on the appointed Standing Committees be determined as 24.
- d) That the seats on those Committees be allocated as below:

Committee	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Independent	Total places on Committee
Management	5	1	1		7
Disciplinary, Appeals & Grievance	2	1			3
Audit & Performance Review	4	1	2		7
Strategic Asset Management	4	2	1		7
Total per Political Group	15	5	4	0	24

- e) That the Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.
- f) That, in accordance with, and subject to the exceptions in, SO113 of the Fire Authority's Standing Orders, all Members of each Political Group not appointed to a Committee or Sub Committee be named as alternate Members for the Member or Members of that Group who have been appointed to that Committee or Sub Committee.
- g) That the Standards Committee be re-appointed and that 4 Members be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee.
- h) That the Integrated Risk Management Working Party be re-appointed to consist of 7 Members, appointed on a politically balanced basis, in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups and with one seat being offered to the Independent Member.

The Vice-Chairman paid tribute to the Members (Independent) of the Standards Committee for their contribution to the Fire Authority.

**The Chairman moved that the meeting be suspended to enable the Standing Committees to meet to appoint their respective Chairman and Vice-Chairman. This was unanimously Approved, and Agenda Item 24**

**(Election of Chairman of the Fire Authority pro-tem for the appointment of Chairman of Committees and Working Parties) was taken next.**

**15. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY PRO-TEM FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Chairman be appointed Chairman pro-tem for the appointment of Chairman of Committees and Working Parties.

**The meeting was suspended at 1910 hours, and was re-convened at 1917 hours.**

**16. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2009-10**

**Resolved:**

- a) That Councillor John Lenton be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Strategic Partnership for the ensuing year.
- b) That the Chairman, Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the South East Regional Management Board for the ensuing year; and that, in the event of the Chairman of the Fire Authority not being able to attend, then the Chairman should nominate another Member of the Management Committee to attend the South East Regional Management Board as his substitute (the Vice-Chairman as the Standing Deputy in the first instance); and, in line with the Constitution, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer should notify the Clerk to the Regional Management Board accordingly.
- c) That the Chairman, Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the Local Government Association for the ensuing year.
- d) That Councillor Andrew Bradley be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative and Councillor Owen Jeffery be appointed as Standing Deputy representative on the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) for the ensuing year.
- e) That Councillor Angus Ross be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL) for the ensuing year.
- f) That Councillor Phillip Bicknell be appointed as the Director on the Board of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited for the ensuing year.

**17. APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPIONS**

**Resolved:**

- a) That Councillor Chris Bowring be appointed as the Fire Authority's Communications Champion for the ensuing year.
- b) That Councillor Fred Pugh be appointed as the Fire Authority's Community and Partnerships Champion for the ensuing year.
- c) That the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley, be appointed as the Fire Authority's Environment Champion for the ensuing year.

- d) That Councillor Alan Ward be appointed as the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Champion for the ensuing year, and that he also act as the Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community, Engagement and Equality Group (CEEG).
- e) That Councillor Phillip Bicknell be appointed as the Fire Authority's Member Development Champion for the ensuing year.

## 18. SCHEME OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES REPORT

The Fire Authority was advised of the outcome of the Independent Review of the Fire Authority's Scheme of Member Allowances and the recommendations of the Standards and Executive Committees.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer introduced Dr Declan Hall (from INLOGOV, University of Birmingham, and author of the Independent Review of Members' Allowances), and welcomed him, and the 3 Independent Members of the Standards Committee present, to the meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Albert Gregory as the Independent Member Chairman of the Standards Committee addressed the Fire Authority. Mr Gregory referred Members to the Standards Committee's Minutes of its meeting held on 8 June 2009, and, in particular, to the Committee's considerations at paragraphs 01.04.09 v) (*page 125*) and d) (*page 126*). He suggested that Members might wish to consider donating all or part of their allowance to a charity, and that the Firefighters Charity might be an appropriate charity.

Councillor Alan Ward, in noting that the Independent Report was well written and a well reasoned report, **moved that the Recommendations in their entirety be approved, with the adjustments taking effect from 25 June 2009, but that should more that 12 Members become eligible for a Special Responsibility Allowance, the decision on which Special Responsibility Allowance should lie fallow to comply with the 12 maximum Special Responsibility Allowances payable rule should not be reserved to the Standards Committee, but to the Fire Authority.** This was seconded by Councillor Iain McCracken.

**Councillor Jeff Brooks moved an amendment to the motion that the recommended increases to Members' Allowances be implemented over a 3-year period in 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> % tranches between the existing and proposed allowances.** This was seconded by Councillor Mrs Prue Bray.

Councillor Paul Gittings supported the phasing in of any increases to the Members' Allowances.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray was concerned regarding the budgetary implications should the recommended increases be implemented, as the £50k previously agreed by the Fire Authority for Members' Allowances would not be sufficient to cover the proposed increases, and, therefore, additional funding would need to be found. The Authority Treasurer advised that any shortfall in the allocated funding could, in the short term, be taken from the current underspend.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stressed the importance of Members meeting their respective Fire Authority responsibilities, ie attendance at meetings, and felt that sanctions should be imposed by the Unitary Authorities on any Member who failed to fulfil these satisfactorily.

Dr Declan Hall retired from the meeting. The Chairman conveyed his thanks to Dr Hall for the Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances, and this was

supported by Members, who asked that a letter of thanks be prepared on behalf of the Fire Authority.

On being put to the vote, the moved amendment was not carried (7 votes in favour (recorded vote), 10 votes against, 3 abstentions).

In favour: Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Councillor Jeff Brooks,  
Councillor Paul Gittings, Councillor Chris Harris,  
Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound,  
Councillor Sean Wright.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote (recorded vote), and carried (10 votes in favour, 7 votes against, 3 abstentions).

In favour: Councillor Chris Bowring, Councillor Dr Paul Bryant,  
Councillor Colin Dudley, Councillor Adrian Edwards,  
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons, Councillor Iain McCracken,  
Councillor Fred Pugh, Councillor Angus Ross,  
Councillor Alan Ward, Councillor Miss Emma Webster.

Against: Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Councillor Jeff Brooks,  
Councillor Paul Gittings, Councillor Chris Harris,  
Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound,  
Councillor Sean Wright.

Abstained: Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, Councillor Phillip Bicknell,  
Councillor John Lenton.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the remunerated time for Members of the Fire Authority be assessed at a minimum of 12 days per year.
- b) That in relation to the Basic Allowance, Option A be adopted (the 2008 Local Government Association (LGA) Daily Session Rate: 12 days minimum annual expected mean input x £149.34 per day = £1,792.08) rounded up/down to the highest £10; and therefore the Basic Allowance be £1,800.
- c) That the Factor Approach be adopted for calculating the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance and that the Factor be 5 times Basic Allowance - therefore the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman be £9,000.
- d) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice Chairman be 50% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £4,500.
- e) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for a Leader of an Opposition Group be 20% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance (with 10% being for Group leadership and 10% for sitting on the Management Committee) - £1,800.
- f) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL) be 25% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £2,250, save for any year when the appointed Member is Chair of SEFRCCCL, in which case in that year, the recommended Special Responsibility Allowance be 30% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £2,700.
- g) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairmen of the 'Audit and Performance Review' and 'Strategic Asset Management' Committees, be 25% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £2,250.

- h) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairman of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Working Party be 10% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £900.
- i) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for the five Member Champions be 10% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £900.
- j) That the Special Responsibility Allowance for Members of the Management Committee who are not already in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance be 10% of the Chairman's Special Responsibility Allowance - £900.
- k) That there be no change to the current policy so that a Member who holds more than one remunerated post is only eligible to receive one Special Responsibility Allowance, normally the higher Special Responsibility Allowance.
- l) That, should more than 12 Members become eligible for a Special Responsibility Allowance, the decision on which Special Responsibility Allowance should lie fallow, to comply with the 12 maximum Special Responsibility Allowances payable rule, should be reserved to the Fire Authority.
- m) That the Co-optees' Allowance for the statutory Independent Members on the Standards Committee is £360, being 20% of the Basic Allowance.
- n) That the Co-optees' Allowance for the statutory Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee is £450, being 25% of the Basic Allowance.
- o) That, in the future, all Members should claim travel and subsistence allowances directly from the Fire Authority on the following rates and terms and conditions (all vehicle sizes of private motor vehicle - up to 10,000 miles - 40p per mile; over 10,000 miles - 25p per mile; private motor cycles - 24p per mile; pedal cycles - 20p per mile; passenger supplement - 5p per passenger per mile), and that Members should claim mileage allowances for undertaking approved duties on behalf of the Authority at HM Revenue and Customs' rates.
- p) That where a Member undertakes an approved duty on behalf of the Authority, subsistence and overnight accommodation costs should be reimbursed on the same terms and conditions that apply to Officers of the Authority, up to the maximum rates permissible, subject to exemption by the Management Committee if it deems necessary, unless booked through Members' Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value.
- q) That the following indices be applied to the specified allowances:
  - Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, Co-optees' Allowances - indexed to the annual Local Government percentage salary increase (known as the 'spinal column point 49 of the National Joint Councils agreement) to be implemented from the date of the Authority's Annual Meetings (commencing from 25 June 2009).
  - Travel and subsistence - mileage allowances indexed to the relevant HM Revenue and Customs' rates; public transport - maximum rates payable indexed to the same rates that apply to Officers, unless booked through Members' Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value; subsistence - maximum rates payable indexed to

the same rates that apply to Officers, unless booked through Members' Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value.

- r) That in accordance with the Regulations, the indices recommended above be utilised for 4 years from 25 June 2009, or until the Fire Authority requires a further review, whichever is the earlier.
- s) That the above Recommendations be implemented from 25 June 2009.
- t) That appropriate representations to the Government for consideration of a national scheme for Fire Authority and Local Authority Member Allowances be made, and that this should be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

The Chairman reminded Members that, under MA8 (Members' Handbook), a Member may, by notice in writing to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this Scheme.

**The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Prue Bray and Councillor Chris Harris briefly retired from the meeting at the commencement of the next item, returning prior to a decision being taken. (Councillor Colin Dudley in the Chair during the absence of the Chairman).**

#### **19. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2008/9**

The Fire Authority's approval was sought for the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009.

Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons conveyed her congratulations to Members and Officers for the good management and processes in place which had realised an underspend.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons, the Director of Human Resources agreed to consider conducting a cost analysis 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 the workplace might be realised. He confirmed that the Fire Authority had, in the past, provided funding to enable access to private healthcare for Service personnel.

**DHR**

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009, as submitted in Appendix A of the report, be Approved.
- b) That the Annual Governance Statement included within the Accounts be Approved.
- c) That the corporate underspend of £1,111,000 be used to add £500,000 to the protective equipment reserve and £250,000 to the Retained pension reserve.
- d) That the remaining balance of £361,000 be added to general reserves.
- e) That a Budget Working Party should examine the level and use of reserves as part of the budget setting process for 2010/11.

#### **20. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2008/9**

The Annual Treasury Report, which sets out the actual Treasury operations for the last financial year, and the 2008/09 actual prudential indicators were presented.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Annual Treasury Report be Noted.
- b) That the 2008/09 actual prudential indicators be Approved.

**21. 2009/10 BUDGET MONITORING**

The revenue and capital expenditure against budgets, up to the end of May 2009, was presented.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets, up to the end of May 2009 be Noted.

**22. ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, CHAMPIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

The following Annual and Update Reports for 2008/09 were received and Noted:

- a) Councillor Dr Paul Bryant - Local Government Association (Fire Forum).
- b) Councillor Dr Paul Bryant - Regional Management Board.
- c) Councillor Iain McCracken - Audit Committee.
- d) Councillor Alan Ward - Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- e) Mr Albert Gregory (Independent Chairman, Standards Committee - Standards Committee).
- f) Councillor Mrs Prue Bray - Equality and Diversity Champion / Chairman, Community, Engagement and Equality Group.
- g) Councillor Angus Ross - South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd.
- h) Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (written report not received from Councillor Andrew Bradley).

**23. 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) Executive Committee - 11 February 2009.
- b) Property and Property Resources Committee - 5 March 2009.
- c) Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 17 March 2009 (not yet approved).
- d) Community Safety Forum - 19 March 2009 (not yet approved).
- e) Executive Committee - 23 March 2009.
- f) Audit Committee - 26 March 2009 (not yet approved).
- g) Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 5 May 2009 (not yet approved).
- h) Property and Property Resources Committee - 12 May 2009 (not yet approved).
- i) Executive Committee - 18 May 2009 (not yet approved).
- j) Standards Committee - 8 June 2009 (not yet approved).

The Chairman requested that any outstanding actions from those Committees

now dissolved be followed up. He conveyed his thanks to Councillor Mrs Prue Bray as retiring Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community, Engagement and Equality Group during 2008/9.

#### **24. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2009/10**

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Programme of meetings of the Fire Authority and Committees for 2009/10 be Approved, and that the Programme of meetings replace all previously publicised meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees from the Annual Meeting until 31 December 2009.

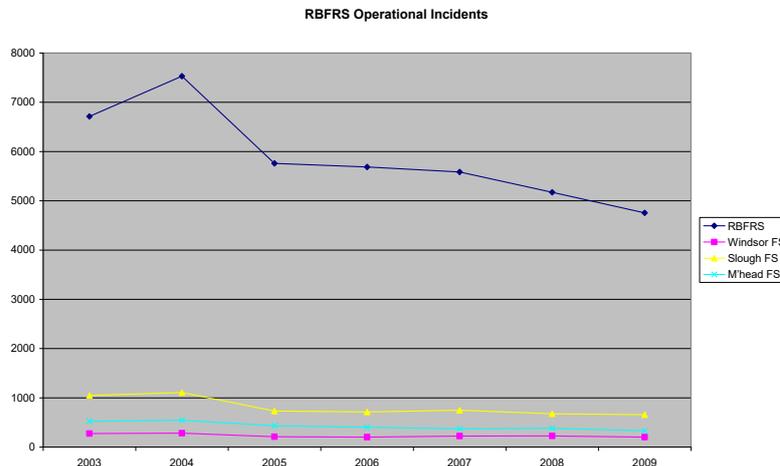
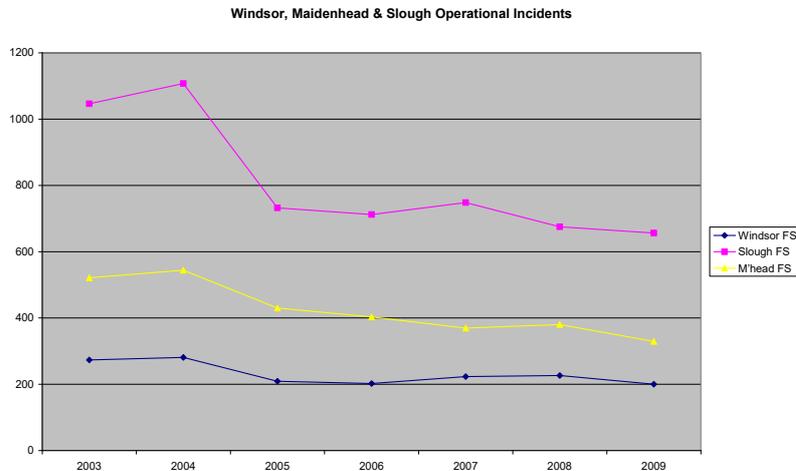
**Response to question received from Mr Richard Coates (Horton Parish resident) from the Chief Fire Officer, Iain Cox, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service**

*I accept that this is based on a paraphrasing of my radio interview. The key element of my comment however is that it would only be appropriate to undertake a review should fresh information warrant such an action.*

*I am not aware of any change in circumstances or additional information that would change the advice that I would give to the Authority.*

*In the past year (to April 2009) operational incidents (not including Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs)) attended by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) have dropped from 5,172 to 4,754. This represents a continuing downward trend, as demonstrated in the table and graphs below.*

	<i>RBFRS</i>	<i>Windsor FS</i>	<i>Slough FS</i>	<i>M'head FS</i>
<i>2009</i>	<i>4754</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>656</i>	<i>329</i>
<i>2008</i>	<i>5172</i>	<i>226</i>	<i>675</i>	<i>380</i>
<i>2007</i>	<i>5584</i>	<i>223</i>	<i>748</i>	<i>369</i>
<i>2006</i>	<i>5686</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>712</i>	<i>403</i>
<i>2005</i>	<i>5757</i>	<i>209</i>	<i>732</i>	<i>430</i>
<i>2004</i>	<i>7528</i>	<i>281</i>	<i>1107</i>	<i>544</i>
<i>2003</i>	<i>6711</i>	<i>273</i>	<i>1046</i>	<i>521</i>



*This trend can also be seen in the reduction of primary fires (fires in buildings and cars that are not abandoned). For RBFRS such fires dropped from 1620 in 2007/8 to 1451 in 2008/9. Over the same period Windsor Fire Station's calls dropped from 71 to 56. [Fifty six calls per year equates to 4.66 per month or fractionally over one call per week]. Information - data - does change over time, however it is important to distinguish between statistical "noise" and genuine changes of direction. The trend shown by this data gives me no reason to recommend that RBFA reconsider its previous decisions regarding fire and emergency cover from Windsor Fire Station.*

*So in answer to your question: I cannot agree that the time is now right to reconsider the proposal to close Windsor at night.*