

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL MEETING (PART I)

Held on Wednesday 25 June 2008

Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council,
Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire,
RG12 1AQ



Those

present:

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson	Councillor Phillip Bicknell
Councillor Chris Bowring	Councillor Mrs Prue Bray
Councillor Jeff Brooks (<i>part meeting</i>)	Councillor Dr Paul Bryant
Councillor Shafiq Chaudhry	Councillor Colin Dudley
Councillor Adrian Edwards	Councillor Mrs Sue Evans
Councillor Geoff Findlay OBE	Councillor Paul Gittings (<i>part meeting</i>)
Councillor Jagjit Grewal	Councillor Chris Harris
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons	Councillor John Lenton
Councillor Iain McCracken	Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound
Councillor Fred Pugh	Councillor Angus Ross
Councillor Alan Ward	Councillor Miss Emma Webster

In

attendance:

Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Jacky Manning (Senior Personnel Adviser, Equality and Diversity) (*Item 02.25.08*)
Tracey Mitchell (Health and Safety Manager) (*Item 02.24.08*)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)
Jane Weller (Community Safety Officer) (*Item 02.20.08*)

Observers:

Officers, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
Independent Members of the Standards Committee
Representative Bodies
Members of the public

02.01.08 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (2008/09)

The Chief Fire Officer invited nominations for the position of Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year (2008/2009).

Councillor Colin Dudley nominated Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, and this was seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster.

There were no further nominations received.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that Councillor Dr Paul Bryant be elected Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year (2008/2009).

Action

Councillor Dr Paul Bryant in the Chair.

02.02.08 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN (2008/09)

The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year (2008/2009).

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray proposed Councillor Jeff Brooks, and this was seconded by Councillor Jagjit Grewal. Councillor Colin Dudley nominated Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, and this was seconded by Councillor Phillip Bicknell. On being put to the vote, Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson was elected by 15 votes in favour to 7 against.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray was disappointed that it appeared that a political element had been introduced during the voting.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson be elected Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year (2008/2009).

02.03.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Jones and Councillor Sean Wright.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Shafiq Chaudhry, Councillor Jagjit Grewal and Councillor Paul Gittings as newly appointed Members to the Fire Authority. He also conveyed his thanks and appreciation to the retiring Members, namely Councillor Tom Crisp, Councillor Mrs May Dodds and Councillor Dexter Smith.

02.04.08 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Having been reminded that in accordance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, Members were required to declare interests which were Personal or Personal and Prejudicial, where appropriate, it was **Noted** that on this occasion there were no such declarations made.

02.05.08 MEMBERSHIP OF FIRE AUTHORITY

The Fire Authority was advised of the appointments by the Unitary Authorities of Members to the Fire Authority.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the Membership of the Fire Authority.

02.06.08 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2008

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 13 February 2008 were received and **Approved** as a correct record, for signing by the Chairman.

02.07.08 PART I MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OTHER GROUPS

The Authority was advised of the meetings of the Audit Committee, Community Safety Forum, Executive Committee, Fire Liaison Group, Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Property and Property Resources Committee, and the Standards Committee that have taken place since reported to the last meeting of the Fire Authority on 13 February 2008.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the Part I Minutes of the Standing Committees, Working Parties and other Groups.

02.08.08 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

The Fire Authority Noted that no Petitions or Questions had been received under Standing Orders 19 and 25.

02.09.08 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- a) The Chairman introduced Caroline Redzikowska (*in attendance as an observer at the meeting*) who would be taking up the position of Clerk and Monitoring Officer for the Fire Authority from August 2008.
- b) The Chairman stated that bespoke training for new Members would be provided.
- c) The Chairman referred to a Members' Family Day taking place on 27 September 2008, to which Members and their families would be invited. The Chief Fire Officer stated that details would be circulated shortly.
- d) The Chairman reported that he had attended the following events:
 - A memorial dedication at the National Memorial Arboretum on 20 May 2008 in memory of those firefighters who had lost their lives in the course of their duties.
 - A Phoenix course certificate ceremony on 13 June 2008. The Chairman praised the course attendees for their achievements, and he hoped that more such courses would be conducted, and this was supported by Councillor Geoff Findlay.
 - Operation Wilbur, a Thames Valley joint major incident exercise conducted on 18 May 2008. The Chairman referred to the professional work conducted by all the emergency services involved in this exercise, and he welcomed Members to attend any future comparable events.
 - An Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) Equality and Diversity meeting in Brighton on 7 May 2008, which had highlighted the need to consider operational diversity and service provision in terms of what could be offered to the varied communities in Berkshire.

- A Business Continuity exercise, the scenario involving the closure of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services' Headquarters.

e) The Chairman reminded Members to advise the Clerk and Monitoring Officer or the Committee Manager in advance of any Fire Authority or Committee meeting should they be unable to attend a respective meeting to ensure that the meeting would be quorate.

02.10.08 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

The Fire Authority Noted that no Questions had been received from the Fire Authority Members under Standing Order 30.

02.11.08 NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

The Fire Authority Noted that no Notices of Motion had been received under Standing Order 44.

02.12.08 APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES - POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

The Fire Authority was invited to consider its Committee structure in the light of the recent appointments to the Fire Authority from the six Unitary Authorities. The Fire Authority was also invited to consider whether they wished to comply with the rules on political proportionality.

Councillor Jeff Brooks recognised how well the Party Groups had worked together in previous years when the Fire Authority had resolved not to comply with the rules on political proportionality, and he moved that the Fire Authority, for 2008/09, should not comply with the rules on political proportionality. This was seconded by Councillor Chris Harris. On being put to the vote, this motion was **not unanimously approved**, and, therefore, **the Fire Authority Resolved** to comply with the rules on political proportionality.

The Chairman moved that the structure detailed in Table 4 of the presented report be adopted, and this was seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley, and, on being put to the vote, was carried.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved and Adopted** the following political proportional structure for the allocation of 28 Committee places between Political Groups for the municipal year 2008/09:

Committee	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Total
Executive	5	1	1	7
Overview and Scrutiny	4	1	1	6
Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee	1	1	1	3
Audit	4	1	1	6
Property & Property Resources	4	1	1	6
Total per Political Group	18	5	5	28

02.13.08 RE-APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES, AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE, AND TO THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In accordance with the decision made at the previous item, the Fire Authority was invited to re-appoint its Standing Committees (Audit Committee, Executive Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee, and Property and Property Resources Committee) and its Working Parties (Community Safety Forum, and Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party). The Fire Authority was also invited to appoint three Members to the Standards Committee, and the Fire Authority's Member representative on The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Miss Emma Webster and seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley) that the Audit Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following membership:
 - Councillor Phillip Bicknell
 - Councillor Jeff Brooks
 - Councillor Paul Gittings
 - Councillor John Lenton
 - Councillor Iain McCracken
 - Councillor Miss Emma Webster

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Colin Dudley and seconded by Councillor Geoff Findlay) that the Executive Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following membership:
 - Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson
 - Councillor Dr Paul Bryant
 - Councillor Colin Dudley
 - Councillor Jagjit Grewal
 - Councillor Fred Pugh
 - Councillor Angus Ross
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat - to be advised)

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Geoff Findlay and seconded by Councillor Adrian Edwards) that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following membership:
 - Councillor Chris Bowring
 - Councillor Geoff Findlay
 - Councillor Paul Gittings
 - Councillor John Lenton
 - Councillor Alan Ward
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat - to be advised)

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Geoff Findlay and seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley) that the Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee (DAG) be

re-established for the ensuing year, and that the appointment of Members to the DAG be dealt with as and when required, and be dependent on Members' availability.

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Colin Dudley and seconded by Councillor Adrian Edwards) that the Property and Property Resource Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following membership (one Member from each Unitary Authority):
 - Councillor Phillip Bicknell (Conservative, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead)
 - Councillor Shafiq Chaudhry (Labour, Slough Borough Council)
 - Councillor Colin Dudley (Conservative, Bracknell Forest Borough Council)
 - Councillor Adrian Edwards (Conservative, West Berkshire District Council)
 - Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons (Conservative, Wokingham Borough Council)
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat, Reading Borough Council - to be advised)

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Colin Dudley and seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster) that the Community Safety Forum be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:
 - Councillor Colin Dudley
 - Councillor Mrs Sue Evans
 - Councillor Paul Gittings
 - Councillor Fred Pugh
 - Councillor xxx (Conservative - to be advised)
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat - to be advised)

The Fire Authority was invited to amend the Terms of Reference of the Community Safety Forum to enable the Chairman of the Forum to be appointed at the Fire Authority Annual General Meeting. Councillor Miss Emma Webster moved that the Chairman of the Community Safety Forum for 2007/08 should remain as the Chairman of the Forum until its first meeting in 2008/09. This was seconded by Councillor Iain McCracken, and, on being put to the vote, was carried.

The Fire Authority Resolved that the 2007/08 Chairman of the Community Safety Forum should remain as the Chairman of the Forum until its first meeting in 2008/09 following this annual meeting of the Fire Authority.

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Miss Emma Webster and seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley) that the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party be re-appointed for the ensuing year, with the following membership:
 - Councillor Peter Jones
 - Chairman of Community Safety Forum
 - Councillor xxx (Conservative - to be advised)
 - Councillor xxx (Conservative - to be advised)
 - Councillor xxx (Conservative - to be advised)
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat - to be advised)

- **Resolved** (moved by Councillor Miss Emma Webster and seconded by Councillor Angus Ross) that the following three Members, one from each political

Party, be appointed as the Fire Authority Member representatives on the Standards Committee:

- Councillor Andrew Bradley
 - Councillor Peter Jones
 - Councillor xxx (Liberal Democrat - to be advised)
- In considering the appointment of the Fire Authority's representative on The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Strategic Partnership, Councillor Alan Ward noted his concern that there might be a conflict of interests in terms of representation should the Member representative be appointed from The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The Vice-Chairman referred to the Fire Authority's decision at its last annual meeting, and Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that a Member appointment to this Local Strategic Partnership should be made on the skills and competencies of that Member.

The Chairman moved that Councillor Phillip Bicknell be appointed, and this was seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster. No further nominations were received. Councillor Phillip Bicknell was pleased to accept this appointment, and he reassured the Fire Authority that he would consult with the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer should any instance arise that he felt might conflict with his position as a Councillor for The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and as the Fire Authority's representative.

Councillor Paul Gittings retired from the meeting.

02.14.08 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SOUTH EAST REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (2008/09)

The Fire Authority's approval was sought to the re-appointment of the Fire Authority's representative and the appointment of substitute Members to the South East Regional Management Board for 2008/09.

Councillor Colin Dudley moved that the Recommendations presented be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster.

The Fire Authority:

- **Agreed** that the Chairman of the Fire Authority be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the South East Regional Management Board for 2008/09.
- **Agreed** that, in the event of the Chairman of the Fire Authority not being able to attend, then the Chairman will nominate another Member of the Executive Committee to attend the South-East Regional Management Board as his substitute, and, in line with the Constitution, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer will notify the Clerk to the Regional Management Board accordingly.

02.15.08 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) (2008/09)

The Fire Authority was invited to appoint the Fire Authority's representative on the

Local Government Association (LGA) (2008/2009).

Councillor Colin Dudley moved that the Chairman be appointed as the Fire Authority representative to the Local Government Association for 2008/09 and this was seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that the Chairman be appointed to represent the Fire Authority on the Local Government Association for the ensuing year (2008/09).

02.16.08 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE, AND STANDING DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE, TO THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS FOR THE THAMES VALLEY REGION (ACTVaR) (2008/09)

The Fire Authority's approval was sought to the appointment of the Fire Authority's representative, and Standing Deputy representative, to the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) for 2008/2009.

The Chairman moved that Councillor Andrew Bradley be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the ACTVaR, and this was seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley.

The Chairman moved that Councillor Geoff Findlay be appointed as the Fire Authority's Standing Deputy representative on the ACTVaR, and this was seconded by Councillor Adrian Edwards.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** Councillor Andrew Bradley be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the ACTVaR, and that Councillor Geoff Findlay be appointed as the Fire Authority's Standing Deputy Representative on the ACTVaR for the ensuing year.

02.17.08 RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority was advised that the term of office of Mr Ronald Webb (Independent Member, Standards Committee) would expire on 30 June 2008, and that he had served a term of three years but was willing to serve as an Independent Member for a further period if the Authority so wished.

The Fire Authority was also advised of the implications of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") and The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 which would have significant implications for Standards Committees and the procedures for dealing with complaints against Members, and was invited to make recommendations with regard to the Authority's Standards Committee.

Councillor Colin Dudley moved that Recommendation 2a) be resolved, and this was

seconded by Councillor Miss Emma Webster. Councillor Miss Emma Webster moved that Recommendation 2b) be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley. Councillor Miss Emma Webster moved that Recommendation 2c) be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** to extend the term of office of Mr Ronald Webb as an Independent Member of the Standards Committee for a further term of three years until the annual meeting of the Authority in 2011.
- **Resolved** to invite the Standards Committee to consider a report, to be prepared by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, concerning the changes to its functions brought about by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008, and to recommend to the Fire Authority, at its next meeting, appropriate amendments to its Terms of Reference and the size of the Committee.
- **Resolved** that, pending the above report, no amendment to the structure and Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee be made for the time being.

02.18.08 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER AS COMMUNICATIONS' CHAMPION

The Fire Authority was invited to appoint a Fire Authority Member representative to act as Communications Champion for the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer conveyed, on behalf of Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager), her thanks to Mr Dexter Smith for his support and hard work as the Fire Authority's Communications Champion during 2007/08.

Councillor Geoff Findlay moved that Councillor Colin Dudley be appointed as Communications Champion for the ensuing year, and this was seconded by Councillor John Lenton. There were no other nominations received.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that Councillor Colin Dudley be appointed as the Communications Champion for the ensuing year.

02.19.08 APPOINTMENT OF A FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER AS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CHAMPION

The Fire Authority was invited to appoint a Fire Authority representative to act as Equality and Diversity Champion for the Authority.

Councillor Jeff Brooks moved that Councillor Mrs Prue Bray be appointed and this was seconded by Councillor Chris Harris. There were no other nominations received.

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that Councillor Mrs Prue Bray be appointed as the Equality and

Diversity Champion for the ensuing year, and that this appointment to also assume the position of Chair of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Equal Opportunities Working Party.

02.20.08 SAFE DRIVE STAY ALIVE - A THEATRE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The Chief Fire Officer introduced Jane Weller (Community Safety Officer) who advised the Fire Authority of the Safe Drive Stay Alive Programme, and to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Road Safety Strategy. She referred to the partnership work being conducted across Berkshire, and described how the campaign was reaching new and pre-drivers in an emotive and hard-hitting way, both influencing their behaviour and attitude on the roads. She supported this by screening part of a film shown to young people of a crash which demonstrated both the impact and affect to personal lives and the work of the emergency services.

Jane Weller encouraged the Members to attend a Safe Drive Stay Alive event, as detailed in the presented report, and invited them to encourage schools and colleges, through the use of their Unitary contacts, to participate in these events. This was supported by the Chief Fire Officer. She also agreed to circulate a full list of the Berkshire schools who have, to date, participated in these events.

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The Chief Fire Officer stated that £1,700 had been allocated this year within the budget to support this programme, and that a financial breakdown of this could be provided.

The Fire Authority:

- **Endorsed and Supported** the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's participation in the Safe Drive Stay Alive programme for a further three years.
- **Agreed** to assist in encouraging schools and colleges, through the use of their Unitary contacts, to participate in the Programme.

02.21.08 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (2007/08)

The Fire Authority's approval was sought to the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008, as submitted, to the Annual Governance Statement, to the use of the underspend to fund carry-forwards and the creation of a protective equipment reserve and an operational equipment reserve.

The Authority Treasurer referred specifically to the revenue outturn, the reasons for the major variances, the capital outturn, and the reserves, including how the Executive Committee had agreed to set up the protective equipment reserve to fund the replacement of all of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's firefighter protection clothing. He also referred to the actual Statement of Accounts for 2007/08, which now included an annual Governance Statement for 2007/08, which he confirmed had been considered by the Audit Committee, to the review of effectiveness and to the plan to address the significant governance issues identified during 2007/08.

Councillor Colin Dudley wished to place on record his concerns regarding the Government's reduction in financial support to Fire and Rescue Services to conduct,

for example, home fire safety checks, and that this was, as a result, placing 'at risk' groups in danger. The Chief Fire Officer assured the Fire Authority that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service would still continue to target all 'at risk' groups.

Councillor Iain McCracken, as Chairman of the Audit Committee in 2007/08, conveyed his thanks to the Authority Treasurer for his perseverance with the Audit Commission to reduce their fees to the Fire Authority for the coming year. This was also **Acknowledged** by the Fire Authority.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster proposed that the Recommendations be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Angus Ross.

The Fire Authority:

- **Approved** the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008, as submitted.
- **Approved** the Annual Governance Statement included within the Accounts.
- **Approved** the underspend to be used to fund carry-forwards and the creation of a protective equipment reserve.

02.22.08 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT (2007/08)

The Fire Authority was presented with the Annual Treasury Report, as submitted in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice: Treasury Management in the Public Services (2002) to submit the Annual Treasury Report, which set out the actual Treasury operations for the last financial year.

The Authority Treasurer took Members through the report presented, and referred specifically to the interest received in the year, and to the comparable interest rate for the Public Works Loan Board loan.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster proposed that the Recommendations be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Colin Dudley.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the Annual Treasury Report.
- **Approved** the 2007/08 Actual Prudential Indicators.

02.23.08 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME - EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS

The Fire Authority was advised of the options for the Authority's Statement of Pension Policy as required by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2007 (as amended), and the Director of Human Resources took the Fire Authority through the two new Regulations (13 and 5).

Councillor Miss Emma Webster proposed that the Recommendations presented be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor John Lenton.

The Fire Authority:

- **Approved** that Regulation 13 is not adopted at this time unless a scheme member requests a review of their contribution rate as a result of a material change in pensionable pay, and that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service should not re-determine the contribution rate in the course of the financial year in respect to Regulation 5.
- **Approved** that the Statement of Pension Policy (as annexed at Appendix 1 of the report presented) be adopted.
- **Noted** that the other Regulations detailed in the Statement of Pension Policy were resolved previously by the Authority in 1998 and 2006.

02.24.08 ANNUAL REVIEW OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, AND NEW 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 2007 - 31 March 2008, including a review of accidents for the past year, the overall performance against the objectives which were set for 2006-2008, and the new objectives recommended for 2008-2010.

The Director of Human Resources introduced Tracey Mitchell who took Members through the report presented.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Tracey Mitchell confirmed that no trends had been identified relating to the four RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) reportable dangerous occurrences this year relating to Breathing Apparatus failures. In answer to an enquiry by Councillor Adrian Edwards, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that operational Officers, including Retained Duty System personnel, underwent twice-yearly fitness tests and that medical reviews and further assessments were in place should any operational personnel fail the tests. He was pleased to report that fitness levels over recent months had improved.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell proposed that the Recommendations be resolved, and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the progress for the Health and Safety performance for the period 1 April 2007 - 31 March 2008, and the outcomes and progress from the Health, Safety and Welfare Objectives for 2006-2008.
- **Endorsed** the new Health and Safety Objectives for 2008-2010.

02.25.08 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY REVIEW AND STATISTICAL DATA

The Fire Authority was provided with an update on the progress of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, and was invited to approve an updated Equality and Diversity Strategy and associated Action Plan, which had been updated taking account of the

findings from the recent independent Equality Standard For Local Government report completed by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and National Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-18.

The Director of Human Resources reminded Members that the review reports were now being presented to the annual meeting of the Fire Authority to accommodate the reporting of year-end statistical data. He introduced Jacky Manning (Senior Personnel Adviser, Equality and Diversity) who took Members through the salient points within the report presented, including the three key amendments within the Strategy (targets, inclusion of the corporate strategic aims, and implementation), the statistical data relating specifically to the firefighter recruitment in 2007, the recruitment of female firefighters and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff, and the number of disabled staff in the Service. She also referred to the Diversity and Equality Action Plan (June 2008 - June 2011) and the updates made to the Plan since last reported to the Fire Authority. She assured Members that through the ongoing positive action work, the links with Connexions staff and with the increased activity from other functions driving the Equality agenda, the Fire Authority would continue to move forward in this area.

In response to a question from Councillor Adrian Edwards regarding how equality and diversity was appraised across the Service, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, internally to the Service, this was closely monitored by the Senior Personnel Advisers for Equality and Diversity, and that, in addition, the Equal Opportunities Working Party carried out regular reviews. He stated that, externally to the organisation, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) considered performance, regionally, using the Equality Standard for Local Government (The Standard) as a measure.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray moved that the Recommendation relating to the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy and the proposed Action Plan for June 2008 - June 2011 be approved, subject to an amendment that the dates shown in Sections 27 and 28 within the Plan to read 30 June 2008 and not 31 June 2008. Councillor Phillip Bicknell seconded this, and, on being put to the vote, was carried.

The Fire Authority:

- **Approved** the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy and the proposed Action Plan for June 2008 - June 2011, subject to the aforementioned amendment being made.
- **Noted** the current position on the Action Plan.
- **Noted** the annual statistic data for 2007.

02.26.08 FIRE LIAISON GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Fire Authority's approval was sought to an amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Fire Liaison Group. The Chief Fire Officer was pleased to report that effective communications exercised by the Fire Authority and the Representative Bodies continue.

Councillor Angus Ross proposed that the Recommendation be resolved, and this was seconded by Councillor Jeff Brooks.

The Fire Authority:

- **Approved** an amendment to the Fire Liaison Group's Terms of Reference, Standing Order CO95 (Rules and Regulations) to now read:
 - "The Fire Liaison Group shall meet 6-monthly, prior to a meeting of the Executive Committee, with further meetings being arranged at the discretion of the Chairman and in consultation with the other Party Leaders."

02.27.08 POSITION OF CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

The Fire Authority was informed of the appointment of Caroline Redzikowski as Clerk and Monitoring Officer of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that she would be joining the Authority on 4 August 2008. The Chairman welcomed Caroline Redzikowski to the Authority.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the appointment of Caroline Redzikowski as Clerk and Monitoring Officer of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

02.28.08 CORPORATE PLAN (2008/09)

The Fire Authority was advised of the publication of the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2008/09, Strategic Plan, Best Value Performance Plan and the Community Safety Plan (the Corporate Plan to be published electronically on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website by 30 June 2008).

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray regarding comparative records of targets across the Unitaries, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that Gene Ashe (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection) corporately monitored the Local Area Agreements, and that regularly updated performance information for the Berkshire Local Area Agreements was published on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In addressing the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Councillor Jeff Brooks and Councillor Chris Harris sought the Vice-Chairman's position as to whether she was supportive of the Corporate Plan and whether she would impartially represent the Fire Authority, if required, as part of the Judicial Review by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead regarding the closure of Windsor Fire Station at night between 8pm to 8am, as part of the Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan. The Vice-Chairman stated that the Fire Authority, as a corporate body, had agreed its position regarding the Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan, and she gave her assurance that she would represent the Fire Authority's interests, subject to any conflicts of interest. She also stated, that, as The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's position was now part of a Judicial Review, it was, therefore, sub-judiciary and she could not comment further, however she noted that the changes to Windsor Fire Station were not expected until 2010.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** that the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2008/09 would be published electronically on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website by 30 June 2008.

Councillor Jeff Brooks retired from the meeting.

02.29.08 2008/09 BUDGET MONITORING

The Fire Authority was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets, up to the end of May 2008.

The Authority Treasurer reassured Councillor Iain McCracken that adjustments had been made within the budget to take into account the recent rise in fuel costs, and that the situation would be monitored.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets, up to the end of May 2008.

02.30.08 PROPOSED IT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN (2008/09)

The Fire Authority was advised of the IT and Communications expenditure, over £10,000, during 2007/08 and of the proposed expenditure for 2008/09.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer introduced the presented report, and, in response to Members' points of clarity, he confirmed that effective control measures were in place to address any virus issues and data protection issues, which included controlled and restricted access to data and removal of data from premises. He stated that a software package, known as Crisis Commander, daily backed up the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's systems to three places around the world. He noted that this back-up system had been tested during the recent Business Continuity exercise conducted. In respect to the costs associated with the FireLink project, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Service's FireLink Sub Group was considering, in detail, the costs associated with the project. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that definitive costs were not yet known, but that they would be provided to Members when advised.

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the proposed expenditure for 2008/09, including any carry forward costs into 2009/10.

02.31.08 2007/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT ON THE REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the 2007/08 Chairman's Report on Extraordinary Regional Management Board.

02.32.08 2007/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA)

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the 2007/08 Chairman's annual report on the Local Government Association.

02.33.08 SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCCL) UPDATE REPORT

Councillor Angus Ross provided an update from the meeting of the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd held on 20 June 2008, noting in particular that the Directors Training Programme, the Forward Programme and the outline working arrangements had been considered, and that communications with the Fire Brigades Union were continuing. He stated that he was confident that the South East Regional Control Centre would realise the go live date.

The Fire Authority:

- Noted Councillor Angus Ross' update report on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL).

02.34.08 ANNUAL REPORT (2007/08) - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Fire Authority:

- **Noted** the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

02.35.08 DATE OF NEXT FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING:

The Fire Authority Noted that the date of the next Fire Authority meeting will take place on:

- **Wednesday 8 October 2008 at 6.30pm**
Dolman 1, Dolman Suite, Shaw House, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury, West Berkshire, RG14 2DL.

02.36.08 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

The Fire Authority:

- **Resolved** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business 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:
 - Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2008 (*Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5*)
 - Part II Minutes of Standing Committees, Working Parties and other Groups (*Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4*).
 - Award of Professional Property Services Contract (2008-2012) (*Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3*).

Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda:

02.37.08 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2008

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 13 February 2008 were received and Approved as a correct record, for signing by the Chairman.

02.38.08 PART II MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OTHER GROUPS

The Fire Authority was advised of the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that have taken place since last reported to the Fire Authority on 13 February 2008. It was noted that there had been no other Part II meetings of the other Standing Committees, Working Parties and other Groups since the last meeting of the Fire Authority on 13 February 2008. The report was Noted.

02.39.08 AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES CONTRACT (2008-2012) ARRANGEMENTS

The Fire Authority Agreed the Recommendation presented.