

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 28 September 2011

Council Chamber, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 7TD



(Note - the Meeting was moved from the Kennet Room, Reading Borough Council)

Those present:

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

In Attendance:

- Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
- Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
- Mark Deacon (Operations Manager, HUB Professional Services) (*Part meeting*)
- Peter Driver (Committee Officer)
- John Goodarce (Estates Surveyor, HUB Professional Services) (*Part meeting*)
- Jacky Manning (Senior Human Resources Adviser, Equality and Diversity) (*Part meeting*)
- Tracey Mitchell (Health and Safety Manager) (*Part meeting*)
- Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
- Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
- Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
- Mr Baldev Sian (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
- Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
- David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)
- Mr Ronald Webb (Independent Member, Standards Committee)

Observers:

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

212. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, Councillor Mrs Diana Coad and Councillor David Holtby.

213. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Action

- a) Councillor Angus Ross declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as the Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL) in respect of Agenda Item 16 (South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd).
- b) Councillor Peter Jones and Fred Pugh declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as Reading Borough Councillors in respect to Agenda Item 24.
- c) Councillors Mrs Christine Bateson, Phillip Bicknell, David Burbage and John Lenton declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead Councillors in respect to Agenda Item 26.

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

214. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 29 June 2011 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

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

215. 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.

216. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman congratulated Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Extrication Team current World Champions and winners of the National Champions who had come first in each of the three categories they entered as Team Leader, Medic and Technical.

The Chairman reported of his attendance at the Remembrance Service held on 11 September 2011 at Reading Minster. The service had been well attended with representatives from all six Unitary Authority's. The service had paid tribute to all those who had lost their lives on September 11 2001 in New York and special tribute had been paid to Firefighters Barnes and Goldsmith from Stations 1 and 2 (Caversham Road Fire Station and Wokingham Road Fire Station, Reading).

The Chairman **Moved** that Agenda Item 26 (Windsor Crewing Options - a "Local Fire Engine") be taken under Part I of the Meeting on the grounds of public interest, and this was **unanimously Agreed**.

217. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 30 June 2011.

Resolved:

- a) In respect to the Officers' Review, the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
 - i) That the Officers' duty rota be changed from a 5-week frequency to a 4-week frequency from 1 January 2012;
 - ii) That the current number of Officers be reduced from 40 to 36, on a natural wastage basis, to accommodate the new rota;

- iii) That the projected final number of Officers be embedded within the Service restructure being considered as a separate matter by the Fire Authority; and
 - iv) That Management be authorised to finalise the necessary agreements, policies and procedures to enable implementation of the new rota from 1 January 2012.
- b) In respect to the Risk Modelling Report, the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That, subject to identifying a suitable site within the Fire Authority's Strategic Premises Strategy, a new fire station be built in a location identified in Appendix C2(b) (*Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party Agenda, Agenda Item 6, dated 5 September 2011*) to provide an improved emergency response to the community of Berkshire;
 - ii) That upon completion of the new Fire Station, the resources from Dee Road be relocated, and that the existing Fire Station be closed; and
 - iii) That Wargrave Fire Station remain in its current location and that the previous option to build a new Fire Station in Twyford not be progressed.
- c) In respect to the Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan - Review Of Newbury Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) and Slough Rescue Support Vehicle (RSV), the following Recommendations of the Management Committee be Approved:
- i) That the report be deferred for 3 months commencing on 1 September 2011 to allow further evidence to be gathered and assessed to establish if the case is proven; and
 - ii) That such evidence include details of when and why the RSV/HRU is deployed, occasions when the RSV/HRU is requested from an incident, any refusal to deploy, and reasons for the refusal.

Note - the Recommendations of the Management Committee in respect to the Control Options were considered later in the meeting under Agenda Item 14.

218. 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.

219. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

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

220. 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.

Agenda Item 26 (Windsor Crewing Options - a "Local Fire Engine") was taken next.

221. WINDSOR CREWING OPTIONS - A 'LOCAL FIRE ENGINE'

The Fire Authority considered the proposals resulting from ongoing discussions between the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer outlined the benefits of Windsor Crewing options *namely*, the release of a Capital receipt, viability of provision of service and addressing the concerns of the community of Windsor. He advised that Windsor Crewing options would be incorporated as part of the 2011/12 Annual Action Plan and confirmed that consultation would commence on 3 October 2011.

Councillor Jeff Brooks advised of his discontentment of the Windsor Crewing options and referred to the Chairman's response made to Mr. Richard Coats (Horton Parish resident) question to the Fire Authority on 29 June 2011, which stated there was no requirement for a wholetime pump in Windsor (*please refer to page 11 of the Fire Authority Agenda on 28 September 2011 which reads "...Windsor's fire appliance attended less than one significant operational incident (dwelling fires or road traffic collisions) per month between the hours of 2000 and 0800, the time during which the appliance will not be crewed*)).

In response, Councillor David Burbage provided two recent examples of the swift action on the deployment of the Windsor firefighters in response to recent incidents. He reported that he was grateful to both the Fire Authority and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the Windsor crewing option which in his view would avoid further degradation of response times, provide local presence for local people and end the debate between the Fire Authority and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The item was discussed at length by Members and Councillor Iain McCracken **Moved** that an amendment be made to the Recommendations to include provision of alternative premises, rent free, by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

On being put to the vote, all Members were in favour of the recommendations set out below with 3 votes against received from Councillors Mrs Prue Bray, Jeff Brooks and Ricky Duveen.

Resolved:

- a) That the Recommendations of the Management Committee, held on 19 September 2011, be Accepted, and the proposals as set out in the presented report at Paragraph 3.4 be Agreed **subject to**
 - i) This option being included within the Integrated Risk Management Plan Action Plan for 2012/13;
 - ii) A public consultation exercise regarding this option be commenced as soon as practicable;
 - iii) A formal consultation with staff and Representative Bodies regarding this option be started immediately;
 - iv) Officers be directed to produce draft Implementation Plans for this option;
 - v) A review be undertaken 12 months after implementation; and
 - vi) The provision of an alternative Fire Station by the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead on a rent free basis to the Fire Authority within 12 months of implementation.

The Chief Fire Officer left the meeting to brief the press and media on the Windsor Crewing Option.

222. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT (2010/11)

In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services the Annual Treasury Report, which sets out the actual Treasury operations for the last financial year, was submitted.

Resolved:

- a) That the Annual Treasury Report be Noted; and
- b) That the 2010/11 Actual Prudential Indicators be Approved.

223. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (2010/11) (INCLUDING DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT)

The Fire Authority's approval was sought for the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2011.

Resolved:

- a) That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 be Approved; and
- b) That the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2011 be Approved.

224. BUDGET MONITORING

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

The Authority Treasurer drew Members' attention to the completion of the capital programme of the rebuild of Wokingham Fire Station and advised construction was completed to schedule.

Resolved:

- a) That the Budget Monitoring Report be Noted.

225. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN (2012/13)

The Fire Authority considered the draft Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan (2012/13).

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer circulated an amended insert to the Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan (2012/13) based on **Approval** received from the Fire Authority earlier in the evening on the Windsor Crewing Options.

The Fire Authority was advised that comments and further amendments to the document were welcome from Members until Friday 30 September 2011, as consultation was due to commence on Monday 3 October 2011.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster requested Officers to publicise the document to a wide audience in order to receive responses from across the County.

Resolved:

- a) That the draft Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan (2012/13), as recommended by the Management Committee, be Approved for formal consultation.

The Chairman retired from the meeting during the early considerations of the next item (Control Options Project) and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair in his absence. The Chairman returned to take the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer returned to the meeting prior to the item being concluded.

226. CONTROL OPTIONS PROJECT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided a presentation on the work undertaken to review the options for updating/replacing of the current Control Room as a consequence of the cancellation of the FiReControl Project (*copy of presentation available from the Committee Officer*).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Communities and Local Government (CLG) was committed to building national resilience through local solutions and that CLG had agreed to provide up to 1.8 million in grant funding to each Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) in England. He reported the Thames Valley Control Project had the potential of being awarded a grant of 5.4 million (1.8 million x 3 Thames Valley Brigades) and confirmed that a meeting would be held with CLG to discuss the bidding process in greater detail. The deadline for bids was 4 November 2011 and approved grants would be allocated to bidders in January 2012.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised of the Recommendations outlined in the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and reported that both Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire FRS were in support of the SOC Recommendations and would advise their Cabinet and Fire Authority of the Recommendations respectively. He reported that direction would be given and known by each of the Thames Valley FRS by 28 September 2011.

In answer to a question raised by Councillor Iain McCracken on the position if there was slippage in CLG's allocation of the resilience grant by January 2012, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Members would be asked to consider a business case for the allocation of funding from the Development Fund.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster urged Members to spend a day with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Control by appointment and reported of her valuable experience on the day she spent with them.

Councillor Angus Ross advised of his support of the Recommendations and advised of the requirement of governance for the Thames Valley Project.

The Fire Authority Received the Recommendations of the Management Committee from its meeting held on 19 September 2011 and in light of information received by Officers after the Management Committee meeting, the Chairman **Moved** to amend the recommendation to authorise officers to continue to explore all other available contingency options and in consultation with the Chairman and Control Working Party be authorised to discontinue/pull out of any option if it appears to be no longer in the Fire Authority's interest to pursue. **The Amended Recommendation was carried with no votes against.**

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- b) That the Recommendations of the Management Committee be Accepted, namely:
 - i) That the preferred option of the Thames Valley Control (3 Fire and Rescue Services) be progressed;
 - ii) That, subject to endorsement in the three respective Fire Authorities, to proceed with Phase I;

- iii) That the option to progress with 2 Fire Authorities collaborating in a joint Control Room Options Project in the event of not all 3 respective Fire Authorities proceeding with Phase I be reserved;
- iv) That further detailed work to move towards Phase II and III by the appointment of staff to deliver Phase I and prepare the full Business Case following clarification of the building strategy be undertaken;
- v) That the Royal Berkshire Fire and Service invite other Fire and Rescue Services to express an interest in joining a collaborative Control Project, subject to agreement of Thames Valley partners;
- vi) That further Fire and Rescue Authority approvals in February 2012 meetings, aligned with the availability of the full Business Case, be sought; and
- vii) That Officers be authorised to continue to explore all other available contingency options and that Officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Control Working Party be authorised to discontinue/ pull out of any option if it appears to be no longer in the Fire Authority's interest to pursue.

227. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY AND ASSOCIATED ACTION PLAN

The Fire Authority was provided with the results of equality and diversity monitoring, in accordance with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Single Equality Scheme, and an update on the progress against the Equality Action Plan. Approval was also sought for the Equality and Diversity Strategy and the 2011-2014 Action Plan.

In response to a question received from Councillor Peter Jones, the Senior Human Resources Equality and Diversity Adviser (SHRED Adviser) reported that positive action was being made to assist Minority Ethnic applicants in providing information on the standard required to pass the written tests.

Councillor Alan Ward thanked Senior Human Resources Equality and Diversity Advisers, Jacky Manning and Kathie Summers for their sterling efforts.

Resolved:

- a) That the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy and the Action Plan for 2011-14 be Approved;
- b) That the current position on the 2010-2011 Action Plan be Noted; and
- c) That the annual statistical data for 2010/11 be Noted.

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

Councillor Angus Ross, as the Fire Authority's Representative on the SEFRCCCL, provided a verbal update on the current position, the salient points being:

- i) Final Accounts had been signed off by all 9 Authorities
- ii) 3 month period until the company was struck off by Companies House in November 2011

229. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Chairman, as the Fire Authority's Representative on the Regional Management Board, provided a brief update. He advised that no Regional Management Board Meeting had been held since April 2011 and would provide Members with further information from the next meeting which was due to be held

in October 2011.

230. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Fire Authority was advised of the progress to improve the RBFRS's environmental performance and arrangements, the report also incorporated the Environmental Champion's bi-annual report.

The Fire Authority **supported** Councillor Mrs Prue Bray's suggestion that future reports pertaining to Member Champions' specific areas of relevance should include a short supporting statement by the respective Member Champion.

In response to a question from Councillor David Burbage, Area Manager (Support Services) advised that RBFRS carbon reduction target was 3.71% per annum.

Area Manager (Support Services) reported of the application of Feed in Tariffs was included in the development of Wokingham Fire Station, which was invested in a photovoltaic array and advised that SMART electricity metering had been installed at all RBFRS premises. He thanked Councillor Chris Bowring for his support and leadership as Environmental Champion.

Councillor Chris Bowring thanked Officers for their work and paid particular appreciation to Environmental Systems Adviser, Mike Cox.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

231. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANE REVIEW AND PROGRESS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES

The Fire Authority was provided with a review of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's health and safety performance for the period 1 April 2010-31 March 2011.

In response to a question received from the Chairman, Health and Safety Manager advised that the Breathing Apparatus (BA) failures reported were during training.

The Chairman congratulated RBFRS on the reduction of injuries and thanked the Health and Safety Manager for her comprehensive report.

The Health and Safety Champion, Councillor Alan Ward confirmed that he would be attending future Health, Safety and Welfare Committee meetings alongside Officers and FBU representatives.

Resolved:

- a) That the overview of accidents and significant points be Noted; and
- b) That the progress made against the health and safety objectives for 2010-2012 be Noted.

232. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved:

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

233. 2011/12 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Resolved:

- a) That the Annual Meeting in June 2012 be moved from Wednesday 27 June 2012 to Thursday 28 June 2012 (Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1AQ).

Member
Champions /
Lead
Officers

Committee
Officer

234. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday 7 December 2011 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1AQ.

235. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

- a) That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

236. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS OPTIONS

The Fire Authority considered the future premises' provision for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Headquarters.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- b) That the Recommendations of the Management Committee held on 19 September 2011 be Accepted.

237. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Management Committee.

Resolved:

- a) In respect to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Re-structure, the following Recommendation of the Management Committee be Approved:
 - i) That the proposed restructure as set out in the report to the Management Committee on 19 September 2011 be Approved.

Note - the Recommendations of the Management Committee at its meeting held on 19 September 2011 in respect to the Brigade Headquarters Options, the Windsor Crewing Options, and Resilience Options were considered elsewhere on the Agenda.

238. RESILIENCE OPTIONS

The Fire Authority was advised of the current position regarding industrial relations in the Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, and the potential options available to manage emergency cover in the event of strike action was outlined.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- a) That the presented Recommendations be Agreed.