

## MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 29 September 2010

Kennet Room, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading,  
Berkshire, RG1 7TD



### Those

**present:**

Councillor Dr Paul Bryant ( <i>Chairman</i> )	Councillor Owen Jeffery
Councillor Phillip Bicknell	Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor Mrs Prue Bray	Councillor Iain McCracken
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound
Councillor Chris Bowring	Councillor Mohammed Rasib
Councillor Colin Dudley	Councillor Angus Ross
Councillor Adrian Edwards	Councillor Miss Emma Webster
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Sean Wright
Councillor Chris Harris	Councillor Raja Zarait

### In

**Attendance:** Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)  
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)  
Mr Baldev Sian (Independent Member, Standards Committee)  
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
Tracey Mitchell (Health and Safety Manager)  
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)  
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)  
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)  
Kathie Summers (Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality & Diversity))  
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  
Representative Bodies  
Mr Paul Watts (Registered Local Government elector within the  
Combined Area)

### 118. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, Councillor Andrew Bradley, Councillor Mrs Diana Coad, Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons, Councillor John Lenton, Councillor Fred Pugh and Councillor Alan Ward.

### 119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made by Members, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct:

- a) Councillor Angus Ross declared a Personal non Prejudicial Interest as the 2010/11 Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL) in respect to Agenda Item 19 (South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd).

No further Declarations of Interest were made, and no Declarations of Interest were received from Officers.

### Action

**120. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2010**

In response to Councillor Angus Ross, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) agreed to provide Members with a copy of the letter he had written to all the Berkshire Unitary Authorities inviting them to encourage the fitting of sprinkler systems as 'retrospective fit and initial build' as part of their Unitary Authority's process of mitigating risk to occupants (*Minute Reference 14 - Sprinklers in Registered Social Landlord Properties*).

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

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 30 June 2010 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

**121. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25**

The Chairman advised that 5 Questions had been received from Mr Paul Watts (Registered Local Government elector within the Combined Area). Councillor Miss Emma Webster **Moved** that the Fire Authority should take the 5 Questions and allow Mr Paul Watts to ask one supplementary Question to each Question. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Jeff Brooks and **unanimously Agreed**.

The Chairman, at the request of Mr Paul Watts, put each of the 5 Questions (*a copy of the Questions and respective responses is attached at Appendix 1 to the Minutes*).

The Chairman agreed to Mr Paul Watts' request that a Supplementary Question to Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 be submitted to the Chairman after the meeting for a subsequent response.

Mr Paul Watts asked one Supplementary Question relating to the response provided to Question 4, that being what was the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's intention should there be a further delay to the FiReControl Project. The Chief Fire Officer reported that long term options had to be considered should the Regional Control Centre not come to fruition, and that Officers were currently researching the possibility of transferring the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Control and mobilising function to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, however he reassured Mr Paul Watts that this work was at an early stage.

**122. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reported that he had attended the recent Local Government Association Fire Management Committee, and that he was now a Substitute Member on this Committee.

The Chairman referred to the Fire Minister's expectation that EADS must deliver the FiReControl Project on time, ie by 1 June 2011, and to contract.

The Chairman reported that the Vice-Chairman and Councillor Angus Ross would be visiting Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Control Room, and that he too would also be visiting it in the near future.

The Chairman reminded Members of the invitation extended to them to attend the Fire and Rescue Service display event at Hawley Lakes on 7 October 2010.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster referred to her recent day spent with Green Watch at Station 20, conveyed her thanks to the Watch, and acknowledged the

excellent work the fire crews undertake. In recognising the invaluable experiences she had gained, Councillor Miss Emma Webster suggested that consideration might wish to be given to including such days within Member training, particularly for new Members within the first 6 months of their appointment to the Fire Authority.

In response to Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer briefed Members on the actions taken at a recent fire incident in Aldermaston. The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that some elements of the incident had been misinterpreted by some Bodies and the media, and, in response to Councillor Miss Emma Webster, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured her that work was being undertaken to ensure that any misuse of information and inaccurate reporting of information was corrected.

### **123. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

The Fire Authority considered the recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 1 July 2010 to the date of the Fire Authority meeting.

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Management Committee's Terms of Reference be Approved, as amended.
- b) That the Audit and Performance Review Committee's Terms of Reference be Approved, as amended.

### **124. 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.

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

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

### **126. 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.

### **127. BUDGET AND INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION PROCESSES**

The Fire Authority considered the integration of the Budget and Integrated Risk Management Plan Consultation processes and the proposed amendment to the current Schedule of Meetings.

Councillor Jeff Brooks, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, **Moved** that one additional informal meeting be convened prior to the Fire Authority's meeting in February 2011, to enable all Fire Authority Members to be briefed on how the budget considerations were progressing. The Vice-Chairman **Moved an Amendment to the Motion** that the Budget Working Party Meeting on 5 January 2011 at 6.30pm take the form of an informal Budget Briefing for Members. Councillor Jeff Brooks agreed, and the **Amended Motion was carried with no votes against.**

Councillor Paul Gittings stated that the Labour Group would not support any frontline cuts.

The Chief Fire Officer, in response to Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, reassured her that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service staff were, and would continue to be, consulted with and kept informed of the budgetary process and its implications. Councillor Jeff Brooks, supportive of a zero base budget exercise, reminded Members that, although all aspects of the budget were being considered, not all the measures would necessarily be recommended.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster conveyed her thanks to the Fire Brigades Union for their contribution to, and attendance at, a recent Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party.

The Vice-Chairman advised that a meeting was being convened with Berkshire MPs to seek their support in lobbying Ministers in the event that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was disadvantaged by the funding formula that determines its Government grant levels.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Report be Noted;
- b) That integration of the Integrated Risk Management Planning and Budget Setting consultation processes be Agreed;
- c) That the revised Meeting timetable, as set out in Appendix 1 of the presented Report in relation to meetings of the Integrated Risk Management Plan and Budget Working Parties, the Management Committee and the Fire Authority, be Agreed, subject to:
  - i) The Budget Working Party Meeting on 5 January 2011 at 6.30pm now taking the form of an informal Budget Briefing for Members;
  - ii) An alternative date being sought for the Fire Authority's meeting in February 2011 to facilitate Members' availability.

Committee  
Manager

**128. REVISED HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**

The Fire Authority's approval was sought for an updated Human Resources Strategy which aimed to provide a framework for addressing the people management issues arising from the delivery of the Integrated Risk Management (IRMP) and Corporate Plans.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the updated Human Resources Strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to the presented report, be Approved.

**129. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Fire Authority was provided with the results of equality and diversity monitoring, in accordance with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) Single Equality Scheme; and with an update on the progress against the Equality Action Plan. The Fire Authority's approval was sought for the Equality and Diversity Strategy, and the 2010-2013 Action Plan.

The Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality and Diversity) noted the hard work that had been conducted by Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Managers and Officers which had led to the Service achieving Level 3 in the Equality Standard for Local Government. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray conveyed her congratulations to all those involved, and this was also acknowledged by the Chairman.

In response to Councillor Sean Wright's referral to the excellent work of the Slough Fire Station crews and their engagement with young people in the Slough area and how this might be incorporated within the Strategy, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that youth work with the Fire and Rescue Service was part of the Prevention Agenda and planning.

Referring to the Equality and Diversity Update Action Plan for June 2009 - June 2012 and those Actions not completed to timescale, the Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality and Diversity) assured Councillor Adrian Edwards that modular equal opportunities awareness training would be delivered to all non uniformed staff by the Autumn 2010, with the modular Equality and Diversity training programme to firefighters by the end of 2011.

Councillor Angus Ross, in congratulating the Equality and Diversity Team for their hard work, felt that in light of the current financial climate there must be a balance between available resources and statutory obligations. In response to the Vice-Chairman who asked whether there were any equality and diversity areas that could be moderated in terms of cost implications, the Chief Fire Officer stated that all activities would be considered as part of the budgetary considerations and that they would need to be proportional. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray stated that equality and diversity work was important, and that by not doing it would pose be a risk to the organisation.

The Senior Human Resources Adviser (Equality and Diversity) accepted the data percentage error, as highlighted by Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, within Appendix 2 of the presented report (Operational recruitment, numbers offered post within the 2009-10 data for the 45-54 age group) which should have stated "100%" and not "8.1%".

**Resolved:**

- a) That the updated Equality and Diversity Strategy (Appendix 1 of the presented report) and proposed Action Plan for 2010-13 (Appendix A of the Strategy) be Approved;
- b) That the current position on the 2009-2012 Action Plan (Appendix B of the Strategy) be Noted;
- c) That the annual statistical data for 2009/10, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the presented report, be Noted.

**130. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND PROPOSED HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES 2010-2012**

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 2009 - 31 March 2010, including an overview of the accidents, significant points and progress made against the 2008-2010 objectives, and the proposed health and Safety Objectives and Action Plan for 2010-2012.

Councillor Adrian Edwards asked if any benchmarking had been carried out against other Authorities in terms of accidents resulting in injury. The Health and Safety Manager stated that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was consistent with other Services and that benchmarking criteria were being developed nationally.

The Chief Fire Officer, in noting Councillor Jeff Brooks' concerns regarding whether the costs outweighed the benefits of installing a common standard traffic light and audio warning system on all fire station automatic doors to realise a

reduction in the likelihood of accidents, stated that any accidents to appliances or assets impacted on the delivery of a service to the public. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that a tendering process would be undertaken with regard to the installation of a common standard traffic light and audio warning system on all fire station automatic doors, and that the Strategic Asset Management Committee would be considering any recommendations. The Chief Fire Officer noted Councillor Mrs Prue Bray's concerns that the presented report was pre-empting the Fire Authority's decision to approve the cost of the aforementioned installs, and accepted that Officers need to be more mindful of correct use of phrasing and wording within reports.

The Vice-Chairman referred to the excellent work being conducted by the Health and Safety Team which was also realising the outsourcing of its expertise to outside organisations.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the overview of the accidents and significant points (Appendix A of the presented report) and the progress made against the 2008-2010 objectives (Appendix B of the presented report) be Noted;
- b) That the new Objectives at Appendices C and D of the presented report be Approved.

**131. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT (SEPTEMBER 2010)**

The Fire Authority was advised of the progress to improve the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's environmental performance and arrangements.

The Area Manager (Support Services) conveyed his thanks to the Vice-Chairman for his support and contribution as the Environmental Champion during 2009/10.

Councillor Paul Gittings, in referring to the additional litres of fuel used in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's appliances and plant as compared with 2008/09, felt that it would be prudent to raise staff awareness of transport and travel as this could realise a saving. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that the increase in the number of Home Fire Risk Checks was having an effect on the increased litres of fuel used, and the Area Manager (Support Services) stated that, without standbys, it would be difficult to maintain optimum fire cover across the County, which also realised an increase in fuel consumption.

Councillor Chris Bowring conveyed his thanks to Mike Cox (Environmental Systems Adviser) and to Bryan Morgan (Area Manager, Support Services) for their hard work.

Councillor Adrian Edwards noted that there was no reference within the presented report to the fitting of solar energy devices which could potentially reduce costs. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that any initial outlay of costs would need to be offset against longer term savings, and that the Strategic Asset Management Committee would be considering an overall Premises Strategy which would include premises costs and environmental issues.

In response to the Vice-Chairman, the Area Manager (Support Services) confirmed that gas Smart Meters were now fitted and that Smart metering for electricity was being progressed.

Councillor Angus Ross noted his concern that premises energy usage was being based on estimated readings. The Area Manager (Support Services) confirmed that this would cease once Smart Meters had been installed.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**132. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE (TRAINING) LIMITED - SIX MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT**

The Fire Authority was provided with a report of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited (RBFRTL) progress in the period April to August 2010.

In response to the Vice-Chairman's concerns regarding the budgetary forecasting and the expected net costs, the Director of Human Resources was confident that the financial predictions would be realised as they had been based on a profile of earnings in the previous year.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**The Chairman retired from the meeting for the early considerations of the next item (2010/11 Budget Monitoring) and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair in his absence. The Chairman returned to take the Chair prior to the item being concluded.**

**133. 2010/11 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Fire Authority was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of August 2010.

Councillor Jeff Brooks noted that there was no end of year forecast prediction included within the presented report. In response to Councillor Iain McCracken, the Authority Treasurer (AT) agreed to include a column within future Monitoring Reports detailing an end of year forecast, and an establishment line of the actual budget.

Councillor Jeff Brooks **Moved** that the Chief Fire Officer be tasked to deliver a £750k underspend target by year-end. The Vice-Chairman **Moved an Amendment to the Motion** that the Fire Authority's Budget Working Party consider this Motion, that the Budget Working Party make a recommendation to the Management Committee for consideration at its next meeting, and that the Management Committee approve the underspend target to be delivered by the Chief Fire Officer by year-end. Councillor Jeff Brooks agreed, and the **Amended Motion was carried with no votes against.**

**Resolved:**

- a) That the Budget Monitoring Report be Noted.
- b) That the Fire Authority's Budget Working Party consider the amended Motion that the Chief Fire Officer be tasked to deliver a £750k underspend by year-end, that the Budget Working Party make a recommendation to the Management Committee for consideration at its next meeting, and that the Management Committee approve the underspend target to be delivered by the Chief Fire Officer by year-end.

**134. REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARD - CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

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

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

AT

Budget  
Working  
Party

### **135. FIRECONTROL AND FIRELINK UPDATE REPORT**

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

Referring to paragraph 3.3.7 within the report (*"Due to budgetary considerations; Officers are currently researching the possibility of transferring our Control and mobilising function to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. This work is at an early stage and the Representative Bodies and all staff are being kept fully informed via face to face briefings."*), Councillor Jeff Brooks had concerns regarding the costs associated with Officers' time to work on this research. The Chief Fire Officer stated that he had serious concerns regarding the future of the FiReControl Project and, therefore, there was a need to conduct a proof of concept in the event of this project not coming to full fruition. He also confirmed that any future options would be brought before the Fire Authority.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray was disappointed that the text within paragraph 3.3.7 of the presented report was, in fact, the only reference within the entire Agenda to the possibility of transferring the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Control and mobilising function to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, and she felt that the Members should have been advised earlier that this option was being considered. The Vice-Chairman stated that this option was only one option currently being considered and that this had clearly been outlined to the recent Budget Working Party meeting. The Chief Fire Officer stated that Representative Bodies and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue personnel had been advised, and he apologised if Members had not been kept fully informed.

In noting Councillor Owen Jeffery's concern that Members must be kept better informed, the Chairman stated that no decision had yet been made and that options were only being considered at the current time.

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

### **136. SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL CENTRE LTD (SEFRCCCL) - UPDATE REPORT**

The Fire Authority received a report from Councillor Angus Ross, as the 2010/11 Fire Authority's representative and Board Member on the South East Fire and Rescue Service Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCCL), from the SEFRCCCL meeting held on 9 September 2010.

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Report be Noted;

### **137. 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) Management Committee - 30 June 2010 (4.45pm meeting);
- b) Management Committee - 30 June 2010;
- c) Audit and Performance Review Committee - 30 June 2010 (not yet approved at time of publication of Fire Authority Agenda);
- d) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 30 June 2010. Councillor Adrian Edwards stated that the Committee had, and would continue to

hold, its meetings at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's premises, and he conveyed his thanks, on behalf of the Committee, to the Station fire crews who had accommodated the Committee and had given of their time to show the Committee the relevant Stations' facilities, fire appliances and equipment;

- e) Standards Committee - 30 June 2010;
- f) Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 30 June 2010;
- g) Strategic Asset Management Committee - 13 July 2010 (not yet approved);
- h) Standards Committee - 19 July 2010 (not yet approved);
- i) Management Committee - 26 July 2010 (not yet approved);
- j) Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 11 August 2010 (not yet approved).

### **138. FORWARD PLAN**

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

### **139. FAILURE TO MEET FIRST APPLIANCE ATTENDANCE STANDARD - INCIDENT NO:4060, GRENFELL ROAD, MAIDENHEAD - 27 JULY 2010**

The Fire Authority was advised of an incident on 27 July 2010 in Grenfell Road, Maidenhead to which the Authority's attendance standard for the first appliance was not met due to a sequence of errors.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reassured Members that an investigation was always conducted when the 8 minute first response standard had not been met.

In response to a request from the Vice-Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) agreed to provide a performance rating for each Station where the response standard for the first appliance of 8 minutes had not been met. Councillor Iain McCracken, as Chairman of the Audit and Performance Review Committee, asked that this be considered by the Audit and Performance Review Committee.

Councillor Phillip Bicknell felt that the Service must strive to meet the optimum response standard for the first appliance of 8 minutes and second appliance of 10 minutes, as anything outside of this target could lead to a fatality, and he asked what must be done to achieve this. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reminded the Fire Authority that it had set very challenging response standards but, that to be able to guarantee every incident was attended by a first appliance within the optimum response standard, would need more resources in place to be able to deliver this.

Councillor Kathy Newbound advocated the need to monitor when crews were out on training to ensure that the events leading up to this incident never happens again. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reassured her that policy measures had now been put in place to negate this happening again.

The Chief Fire Officer apologised to the Fire Authority that the Authority's response standards for the first and second appliances had not been met on this occasion due to a sequence of errors.

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**CFO**

A&PRC  
Agenda  
(16.12.10)

**140. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 8 December 2010 at 6.30pm in the Kennet Room, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TD.

## Appendix 1

<b>RESPONSE TO MR PAUL WATTS' QUESTIONS TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING OF 29 SEPTEMBER 2010</b>
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**Q1 - Can the Fire Authority Chairman please justify his comments as reported in the Reading Evening Post dated 7th September 2010 and further disclose what costings and knowledge he has based his comments on?**

**Source -**

**<http://www.getreading.co.uk/news/s/2077809> fire hq to merge with surrey**

**Extract - West Berkshire councillor Paul Bryant, who chairs Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "It costs £1 million to run our control room and if we throw our lot in with Surrey we would half that cost. These days in a control room you really don't need to have local knowledge because of the technology available. "In Dee Road, they don't necessarily know about Lambourn or Slough."**

*The Authority's Control Room function currently costs £1.35m per annum. This includes nominal recharges from support departments in relation to the control room function of £240k p.a. A target saving has been set of £500k p.a. as a baseline assumption for the project to explore the possibility of outsourcing our Control Room function to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. As the project progresses, a full business case will be developed that will identify the actual savings that can be realised. If these savings do not amount to the target savings it will draw into question whether or not the project should progress.*

*Local knowledge does not form any part of the Job Description or Person Specification for any position within the Control structure neither does it fall within the role map for these roles. Local knowledge does not form part of the training for Control staff and neither is it used in the selection for appointment to these roles. Therefore, whilst it can not be denied that on occasions, fortuitous local knowledge has proved to be immensely useful in making mobilising decisions this has been by coincidence not through planning. Local knowledge should be captured at a local level by the local personnel at local fire stations; this local knowledge should be used to populate the gazetteer to which control staff refer to assist in locating incidents.*

**Q2 - Can the Fire Authority confirm what funding it has sought from CLG to ensure that Berkshire's fire control mobilising system and associated communications equipment is capable of reaching cutover date to RCCs? and, what funding it has received for FiReControl project work and how has it been spent?**

*No funding bids have been made to CLG in order to ensure that Berkshire's fire control mobilising system and associated communications equipment is capable of reaching cutover date for RCCs. Ministers and CLG maintain the following position with regard to New Burdens Funding and legacy systems*

*"FRS's are funded for meeting the costs of providing their Control Rooms through existing funding arrangements – The Department can not legitimately fund through New Burdens the full replacement or refresh of existing technology or infrastructure"*

*“Where current costs of supporting and maintaining existing legacy systems are simply being extended to cover an extended time period this will not be eligible for new burdens”*

*The Authority has received £511,134 in New Burden funding from CLG as a contribution towards the project work necessary to prepare the service to migrate to a Regional Control Centre. The funding has been used to fund the Authority’s contribution to the Regional Project Team (£9,000 per annum). The balance has been spent on improvements to the information systems, for Building Risks and Incident recording (approx £40K per annum), Crew, Appliances and Equipment availability (approx £30K per annum), and end user training (approx £30K per annum) these costs all include the relevant staff costs. This has all been necessary preparatory work for the transition to the Regional Control Centre.*

**Q3 - In relation to Surrey Fire and Rescue Services control room, what technical abilities over and above RBFRS control room does Surrey have and how much investment is required to bring RBFRS control to an equivalent level?**

*Surrey County Council invested in a new, integrated mobilising and resource management system and associated technologies that went live in 2008. This system is at the forefront of current technology and provides integrated communications (telephony/radio) management that allows the integration of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP), Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) Call Line Identification, EISEC/ALSEC, TETRA radio, including the management of talkgroups and Request to Speak. The system also supports Automatic Vehicle Location System, Dynamic Mobilising, and status updates via data. National Land Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address data and the integration of Mobile data. They are currently adding dynamic risk modelling software.*

*In order to upgrade our current control room to provide a similar range of integrated technologies we would need to produce a user requirement and output specification and go out to formal European tender. However, a budgetary estimate of what this might cost net of project management and implementation costs is expected to be in the Region of £500k - £600k.*

**Q4 - Prior to informing your staff on 28 July 2010 that you were looking to outsource the control function to Surrey Fire and Rescue, did RBFRS management inform/consult members of the Berkshire Fire Authority and if so, who were the members consulted/informed and how was this done ?**

*Members of the Authority’s Management Committee were informed of the work that had been commenced in relation to the outsourcing of the mobilising function at an informal briefing session on 26 July 2010.*

**Q5 - Is the Fire Authority aware that RBFRS's Incident Control Unit has cost the local taxpayers in the region of £1 million plus so far which; to the knowledge of the FBU was never budgeted for and is continuing to cost money, yet it continues to fail to deliver what was promised due to the continuous IT failures?**

*The cost to the taxpayer of the Incident Command Unit to which this question refers is in fact £283999.57 including the Command Support System Software of which there are 19 licenses attributed to the Incident Command Unit. However, 10 of*

*these licenses are installed on deployable tablet Computers, the cost of which is also included. This expenditure was properly authorised by the Fire Authority. There have been associated ICT costs of £128k, funded from within existing budgets. The costs of the deployable tablet computers and the associated software are included for completeness but are in fact a general enhancement to Command Support arrangements, used for instance during the severe snow events in the off road vehicles. The total cost therefore is £412k, considerably short of the £1m plus asserted in the question.*

*It is true that there have been a number of problems both with the vehicle and the software that we have been working with the suppliers to resolve. Most are now resolved and a plan is in place to finally resolve the remaining problems by the end of October. However, despite these problems the Incident Command Unit has provided a good service since it was put into operational use in January 2009 and has been consistently available for use with a very few exceptions whilst remedial work has been undertaken. Whilst these problems have meant that the unit has not consistently provided the level of service we would have wished, it was and indeed remains at the forefront of Command Support available nationally.*