

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Held on Wednesday 30 June 2010

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



Those

present:

Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson	Councillor Andrew Bradley
Councillor Mrs Prue Bray	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor Dr Paul Bryant	Councillor Mrs Diana Coad
Councillor Colin Dudley	Councillor Adrian Edwards
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Chris Harris
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons	Councillor Peter Jones
Councillor Iain McCracken	Councillor Mrs Kathy Newbound
Councillor Fred Pugh	Councillor Mohammed Rasib
Councillor Alan Ward	Councillor Miss Emma Webster
Councillor Sean Wright	

In

Attendance:

Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Mr John Giles (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
Mr Albert Gregory (Independent Chairman, Standards Committee)
Professor Christopher Guy (Independent Member, Standards Committee)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
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 Richard Coates (Horton Parish resident)

Action

93. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved:

- a) That Councillor Dr Paul Bryant be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2010/11 Municipal year.

94. CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chairman accepted his appointment, and conveyed his thanks to Members for their continued support. He paid tribute to all the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service personnel, and in particular to the Chief Fire Officer, and conveyed his thanks to the Representative Bodies for their support. The Chairman referred to the excellent work conducted with the Young Firefighters and the Phoenix Project, and to the Prevention initiatives. He passed on his congratulations to the Service's Extrication Team for their continued success, and also to those Service personnel for their work in realising the outstanding Ofsted report relating to the Learning and Development activities. The Chairman was also very proud that the Service had achieved Level 3 in the Equality Standard.

95. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2010/11 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved:

- a) That Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2010/11 Municipal year.

96. VICE-CHAIRMAN TO MAKE DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

In accepting his appointment, the Vice-Chairman hoped to continue his work with the Fire Authority to realise an effective and efficient Fire and Rescue Service for the ensuing year.

97. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phillip Bicknell, Councillor Chris Bowring, Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor John Lenton, Councillor Angus Ross and Councillor Raja Zarait.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

99. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2010

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2010 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

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

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

The Chairman reported that one Question had been received under Standing Order 25 from Mr Richard Coates (Horton Parish resident). At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Richard Coates put his question:

"The Windsor Relief Road upgrade has now started and will continue for 18 months being subject to total closure at night and reduced number of carriageways at all other times. The Brigade has indicated that Windsor would be covered by Slough appliances and could station one appliance temporarily in Windsor. If this latter option is taken then Slough and its surrounding communities becomes seriously vulnerable to delayed attendances at night a Slough already attends multiple calls during the hours 2000hrs till 0800hrs.

In May alone over 10 emergency calls were attended by Windsor to fires, lift entrapments and care homes during the period that the fire authority would have the station close. In addition Windsor attended 2 very serious high rise fires that needed all the wholtime resources currently available in East Berkshire to attend in the shortest possible time. The partial closure of the Windsor Relief road will have a direct and very serious effect in increasing the attendance times to emergency calls such as those noted above.

Now that the full effect of closures from the work on the Windsor Relief Road is becoming clear, will the Chief Fire Officer suspend the implementation of the IRMP cut backs in fire appliance cover at Windsor, as he has done with other proposed cutbacks at Dee Road, Reading and proposed changes at Twyford and

Wargrave which have also been suspended, until the 5 year re-assessment of fire cover and effect of the Heritage building fire risk study is undertaken?"

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer provided a full response to each of Mr Coates' points (*a copy of the response is attached at Appendix 1 to the Minutes*). The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a copy of the response would be provided to Mr Richard Coates.

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Mr Richard Coates asked one supplementary question, and, in referring to the impact to the local rural communities should the plans to close four Retained Fire Stations be implemented, asked how Windsor Fire Station could assist Slough Fire Station during the period when the aforementioned road closures were in place. The Chief Fire Officer responded by reiterating that no firm proposals had been submitted by Officers in respect to the future of Retained Fire Stations, that there were no plans in place to close such Stations at the current time, and that a Retained Duty System Review was currently being undertaken. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed as a result of the road closures, measures had been put in place to ensure that fire and rescue services were managed appropriately.

101. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that he would be attending the Memorial Service on 14 July 2010 with the Chief Fire Officer for Firefighter James Shears and Firefighter Alan Bannon who tragically lost their lives whilst tackling a fire at Shirley Towers in Southampton on 6 April 2010, and that he had written to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's Chairman to convey his condolences.

The Chairman conveyed his congratulations to Watch Manager Paul Whiting for being nominated for the Employee of the Year Award at the Spirit of Fire Awards 2010, a national event hosted by The Firefighters Charity.

The Chairman reported that he had:

- Attended the recent memorial dedication at the National Memorial Arboretum in memory of those firefighters who had lost their lives in the course of their duties;
- Attended, with the Chief Fire Officer, the Fire and Rescue 2010 Conference in Harrogate at which the Fire Minister had outlined the Government's vision for Fire and Rescue Services;
- Been privileged to attend an 'At Home' with the Berkshire High Sherriff, Mrs C M Stevenson.

The Chairman conveyed his thanks, on behalf of the Fire Authority, to Mr Albert Gregory, the Standards Committee's Chairman for the last four years, as this would be his last meeting, and he wished him well for the future.

The Chairman reminded Members of the invitation extended to them to attend the National New Dimension Assets event taking place at Hawley Lakes (MOD site), Hampshire on Thursday 7 October 2010.

102. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Fire Authority considered the recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 18 February 2010 to the date of the Fire Authority meeting.

Resolved:

- a) That the Fire Authority commit to achieving Level 1 of the South East Charter on Elected Member Development; and that the Standards

Committee work in conjunction with the Member Development Champion in scoping and undertaking the work required to achieve Charter status.

- b) That the Corporate Plan (2010/11) be approved.
- c) That Annual Report 2010 be approved.

103. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

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

104. 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.

105. APPOINTMENT OF A FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOUTH EAST FIRE AND RESCUE CONTROL CENTRE LIMITED

Resolved:

- a) That the decision of the Management Committee to appoint the Chairman of the Fire Authority as the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's representative at the second Annual General Meeting of the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Limited (SEFRCCL) be approved.

106. MEMBERSHIP AND STRUCTURE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY - ANNUAL UPDATE

The Fire Authority was informed of the changes to the Membership of the Authority. Consideration was given to whether named deputies be appointed for the Elected Members of the Standards Committee, whether a Member Champion for Health and Safety should be appointed, and whether the roles of the existing Equalities and Diversity Member Champion and the Member Development Champion should be aligned to include communications, therefore negating the need for the appointment of a Communications Champion.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Standards Committee be Approved;
- c) That a Health and Safety Champion be appointed;
- d) That the Communications Champion role not be re-appointed to.

107. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Resolved:

- a) That Mr Philip King be appointed as an Independent Member of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Standards Committee.
- b) That Mr Baldev Sian be appointed as the Nominated Deputy Independent Member of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Standards Committee.

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mr Philip King and Mr Baldev Sian to the Fire Authority who were both in attendance at the meeting.

108. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

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

Resolved, unanimously, with no votes against:

- a) That the rules on political proportionality should not apply to the allocation of Committee places;
- b) That the Management Committee, the Strategic Asset Management Committee, the Audit and Performance Review Committee, and the Disciplinary Appeals and Grievance Committee be appointed as Standing Committees, and that the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party be appointed as a Standing Working Party;
- c) That the number of seats on the appointed Standing Committees be determined as 24;

That the seats on those Committees be allocated as below:

Committee	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Indep't	Total places on Committee
Management	5	1	1		7
Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance	2	1			3
Audit and Performance Review	4	1	2		7
Strategic Asset Management	4	2	1		7
Total per Political Group	15	5	4	0	24

- d) That the Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups;
- e) That in accordance with, and subject to the exceptions in, SO113 of the Fire Authority's Standing Orders, all Members of each political group not appointed to a Committee or Sub-Committee be named as alternate Members for the Member or Members of that Group who have been appointed to that Committee or Sub-Committee;
- f) That the Standards Committee be re-appointed, and that four Members be appointed to serve on the Standards Committee, with named Deputies;
- g) That the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party be re-appointed to consist of 7 Members appointed on a politically balanced basis, in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, but with one seat being offered to the Independent Member;
- h) That the Independent Member be appointed as a possible substitute for all three Political Groups on the Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee (DAG).

109. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR THE 2010/11 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Resolved:

- a) That Councillor John Lenton be appointed as the Fire Authority's

representative on The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Strategic Partnership.

- b) That the Chairman of the Fire Authority be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the South East Regional Management Board, and that, in the event of the Chairman of the Fire Authority not being able to attend, then the Chairman to nominate another Member of the Management Committee to attend the South East Regional Management Board as his substitute, and, in line with the Constitution, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to notify the Clerk to the Regional Management Board accordingly;
- c) That the post of Chairman of the Fire Authority be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative at all future Company meetings of the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Limited (SEFRCCL).
- d) That the Chairman be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the Local Government Association;
- e) That Councillor Angus Ross be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative (Director) and that Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson be appointed as the Substitute Member Representative (Director) respectively on the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL);

The Chairman of the Fire Authority proposed that, given the current financial and political uncertainty regarding the continuation of the FiReControl project, a Lead Member be appointed to act as first point of reference in all matters relating to the wider aspects of FiReControl generally outside the scope of the currently appointed Member to the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd (SEFRCCL). In considering the Chairman's proposition, the Members of the Fire Authority were keen to ensure that an Elected Member had a role to play in ensuring that activities falling outside of SEFRCCL were monitored and considered. The Fire Authority **Agreed** that the Monitoring Officer (CMO) should prepare a role map/remit for this role, to be brought to the next Meeting of Management Committee, and **delegated authority** to agree the remit and to make the appointment to that Committee.

- f) That Councillor Phillip Bicknell be appointed as Director on the Board of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue (Training) Limited.

110. APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Councillor Jeff Brooks reiterated the Liberal Democrat Group's view that Party co-operation should be taken into account in respect to the appointment of Champions.

Resolved:

- a) That Councillor Fred Pugh be appointed as the Community Safety Champion;
- b) That Councillor Chris Bowring be appointed as the Environmental Champion;
- c) That Councillor Alan Ward be appointed as the Equality and Diversity Champion (who will act as Chairman of Community, Engagement and Equality Group) (CEEG);
- d) That Councillor Phillip Bicknell be appointed as the Member Development Champion;

- e) That Councillor Colin Dudley be appointed as the Health and Safety Champion.

111. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

The Fire Authority's approval was sought of the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010.

The Authority Treasurer drew Members' attention in particular to the Revenue spending, the explanation of major Revenue Budget variances, the Capital expenditure and financing, and Reserves.

Councillor Jeff Brooks, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, advised that the Group would not support any cuts to Service Delivery if Reserves were continued to be maintained at such high levels.

Resolved, unanimously:

- a) That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010, attached as Appendix A of the presented report, be Approved;
- b) That the Annual Governance Statement included within the Accounts be Approved;
- c) That the Corporate under-spend of £548,000 be added to general Reserves, to assist with future budget restrictions, be Approved.

112. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2009/10

In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice: Treasury Management in the Public Services (2002), 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.
- b) That the 2009/10 Actual Prudential Indicators be Approved.

113. ANNUAL REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, CHAMPIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

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

- a) Mr Albert Gregory - Standards Committee.

The Chairman invited Mr Albert Gregory to present his report to the Fire Authority, his report being his ultimate report to the Fire Authority. Mr Albert Gregory welcomed Mr Phillip King and Mr Baldev Sian as the newly appointed Independent Members to the Fire Authority and wished them success in their new roles. He conveyed his thanks to the Fire Authority Members for their integrity which had realised very little work for the Standards Committee in recent years. In acknowledging that Member attendance at meetings had improved, Mr Albert Gregory noted his concern that apologies were not always given. He conveyed his thanks to the Clerk and Monitoring Officer and to the Committee Manager for their help and support, and to the Service's personnel for the magnificent work in providing an exceptional Fire and Rescue Service to Berkshire.

- b) Councillor Dr Paul Bryant - Local Government Association (Fire Forum);
- c) Councillor Dr Paul Bryant - Regional Management Board;

The Chairman referred to a typing error in paragraph 2 of his report which should read "The RMB has had another successful year in making savings

and enabling **co-operation** between the South East Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs)".

- d) Councillor Angus Ross - South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd;
- e) Councillor Owen Jeffery - Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR);
- f) Councillor Iain McCracken - Audit and Performance Review Committee;
Councillor Iain McCracken conveyed his thanks to the Officers for furnishing Members with prompt responses to questions and points of clarity sought.
- g) Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons - Strategic Asset Management Committee;
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons conveyed her thanks to Officers for their credible work in relation to the delivery of the Capital Programme.
- h) Councillor Chris Bowring - Communications Champion;
- i) Councillor Fred Pugh - Community and Partnerships Champion;
Councillor Fred Pugh apologised that he had not been able to fully commit to his role as Community and Partnerships Champion during 2009/10 due to his Unitary Authority commitments, however he was looking forward to working with Officers over the coming year to look at the established programme of community safety initiatives.
- j) Councillor Alan Ward - Equality and Diversity Champion / Chairman of the Community, Engagement and Equality Group;
Councillor Mrs Diana Coad referred to her concern regarding the setting of targets generally, and in particular those relating to the recruitment of women into the Service. Councillor Paul Gittings and Councillor Mrs Prue Bray felt that equality and diversity targets should be both realistic and meaningful. In response to Councillor Paul Gittings, Councillor Alan Ward reassured him that the Community, Engagement and Equality Group would be reviewing the equality and diversity targets.
- k) Councillor Phillip Bicknell - Member Development Champion.

114. SPRINKLERS IN REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORD PROPERTIES

The benefits of sprinkler systems within Registered Social Landlord Properties was commended to the Fire Authority.

Referring to the Reading Regeneration Project, Councillor Peter Jones believed that sprinklers could be included within the new builds, and the Chief Fire Officer concurred that this would be an ideal opportunity to evolve this.

In response to Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's concerns, particularly in respect to heritage buildings being fitted with sprinklers and the potential for false activations, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that it was very rare that sprinklers were accidentally activated, however he did accept that this was a risk but that he believed the benefits outweighed the risk.

Councillor Miss Emma Webster felt that it might be helpful if the detail of the West Berkshire Council's sprinkler work be disseminated to other Unitary Authority Members.

Resolved:

- a) That the Report be Noted;

- b) That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to write 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;
- c) That Members engage with their respective Building Control staff 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;
- d) That Officers be directed to develop and promote the installation of sprinklers within Registered Social Landlord buildings within Berkshire;
- e) That a Sprinkler Strategy be developed and implemented within the Community Safety Strategy;
- f) That the lessons learnt from Studley Green in Wiltshire and Swindon Fire Authority and Kent and Medway Fire Authority be adopted within the Fire Authority's Sprinkler Strategy.

CFO

Members

115. 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:

- Audit and Performance Review Committee - 18 March 2010;
- Management Committee - 22 March 2010;
- Strategic Asset Management Committee - 29 April 2010 (not yet approved);
- Standards Committee - 13 May 2010 (not yet approved);
- Management Committee - 17 May 2010 (not yet approved);
- Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party - 18 May 2010 (not yet approved);
- Audit and Performance Review Committee - 24 May 2010 (not yet approved).

116. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2010/11

Resolved:

- a) That the Programme of meetings of the Fire Authority and Committees for 2010/11 be Approved.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the Calendar of Meetings for 2011/12 would be presented to the Fire Authority in early 2011, and, in acknowledging the difficulty in establishing dates that did not clash with other Unitary Authority meetings, stated that once approved, the meeting dates would not be re-scheduled.

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

Resolved:

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

The Fire Authority **Resolved** not to move the meeting into Part 2 and the meeting was closed.

**RESPONSE TO MR RICHARD COATES' QUESTION TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY
MEETING OF 30 JUNE 2010**

In response to Mr Coates Question, dated 2 June 2010, regarding the impact of the Windsor Relief Road road works on emergency cover in the Windsor area, our response is as follows.

We are in close liaison with Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead regarding the arrangements for these works. Our current understanding from the Project Manager of these road works is that no full road closures are planned. There are six key phases envisaged for the Windsor and Eton Relief Road starting on 21 June 2010 for completion on 15 July 2011. There are also additional works at the Clarence Road roundabout and on the spur road, none of these require the full closure of either carriageway.

The intention of the Project Manager is that the works will be conducted predominately at night with one lane in each direction being closed. When this occurs appropriate diversions will be put in place.

Our analysis is that these works should not significantly impact on attendance times as we will always have alternative diversionary routes.

It should also be noted that we are equally concerned that Windsor and other appliances attending incidents in Slough will not be unduly impeded by these proposed works.

The proposed completion date of 15 July 2011 is not far off and it would appear unlikely that the closure of Windsor Fire Station at night would have been effected by this time.

We will maintain close liaison with The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead over this issue and will take any appropriate measures as the need arises, but on the information available it would seem that no specific alternative measures are required at this time.

In line with our normal practice, any major events - road closures or other substantive changes to the transport network, will be considered and our appliances moved where necessary to minimise the disruption to our attendances.

End