

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Wednesday 5 January 2011

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

Those

present: Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Chairman, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)
Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority))
Councillor Colin Dudley (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)
Councillor Iain McCracken (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

In

Attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observers: Fire Brigade Union (FBU) Representatives
Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response)
Stephen Buck (Area Manager, Learning and Development)

Action

184. At the invitation of the Chairman, Jess James (FBU representative present) advised that the FBU did not wish to address the Committee on any Part I item.

185. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence received.

Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority) conveyed her apologies as she would need to retire from the meeting early.

186. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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 (SEFRCCCL) in respect to Agenda Item 12 (South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Ltd). 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.

187. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2010

(Note - The Management Committee Meeting convened for 20 December 2010 was cancelled due to adverse weather conditions and was reconvened to 5 January 2011).

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

188. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman reported that he had attended a recent conference for Combined Fire Authorities in England, the salient issue being Fire Futures. He referred to a letter which had been sent to the Local Government Association (LGA) regarding under representation of the Combined Fire Authorities on the LGA Fire Management Committee.
- b) The Chairman stated that he had written to the Fire Minister regarding the Fire Authority's stance on Fire Futures, and he agreed to circulate this letter to Fire Authority Members.
- c) The Chairman reported that he had attended a recent meeting of the LGA Fire Commission.

Chairman

189. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

There were no reports referred by the Audit and Performance Review Committee.

190. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

There were no Recommendations received from Committees.

191. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer advised of the current known position with regard to the Comprehensive Spending Review, that being that the Formula Grant had been announced but that the Capital Settlement was still awaited. He also made reference to the Government's new 'Council Tax Freeze Grant'. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Fire Authority's Budget Working Party and Officers were still working on the finer details of the budget. The Chief Fire Officer shared their concern that the financial details for years 3 and 4 were still not yet known. He stated that the Secretary of State would be reviewing, from January 2011 until July 2011, the Fire Services' Formula Grant before the 2013/14 and 2014/15 grants were announced; and, although welcome, the review gives uncertainty on post 2012/13 finances.

The Management Committee agreed to include the detail of the first 2 year's Grant in the Minutes, as follows:

- 2011/12 Grant cut - 4.14%
- 2012/13 Grant increase - 1.19%

In response to the Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) confirmed that he would prepare, on behalf of the Fire Authority, a draft submission to the Fire Minister, for consideration by the Management Committee Members, with regard to the Authority's view on the Formula Grant.

CFO

In response to Councillor Colin Dudley, and supported by the Management Committee, the Chief Fire Officer agreed to write to the Berkshire MPs to thank them for their work to date on the Authority's behalf with regard to Service's Grant, to appraise them of the Authority's current position and work being conducted, and to extend an invitation to continue to work with them to ensure the best financial outcome for the Authority.

CFO

192. WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS: INSTALLATION AND USE OF AIRWAVE SHORT DATA SERVICE (SDS) SERVER

The Committee's approval was sought to waive Standing Orders for the supply of the Short Data Service (SDS) from Airwave Solutions Limited (Airwave) and the usage of the service for a minimum 3 years.

Since the date of the presented report, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer believed that, in light of the Government's termination of the FiReControl Project, the Fire Authority may now not need to pay the associated revenue costs in the future, and that he would be putting a case to the CLG to meet these costs.

Resolved:

- a) That the waiver of Contract Standing Orders in compliance with Authority Standing Order CSO 24(a) (b) and (f) be Agreed;
- b) That the Contract be Awarded to Airwave Solutions Limited.

Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons retired from the meeting during the early consideration of the following item.

193. CONTROL ROOM OPTIONS PROJECT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, by way of a presentation (*copy available from the Committee Manager*), provided Members with an outline of what had been the Government's vision for Regional Control Centres, and with a summary of the Service's Control options for consideration now that the Government had terminated the FiReControl Project; the Control Room options, at the current time, being:

- a) Do nothing;
- b) Upgrade (stand alone);
- c) Upgrade (collaborate), which included an option for the Service to host a Fire Services' collaboration, and options for wider collaboration with other emergency services.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised of the impending FiReControl 12-week Consultation and of the related scenario options, the FiReControl legacy, and the future vision and opportunities for the Service.

In response to Councillor Paul Gittings who felt that a Berkshire led collaboration might be the best option as he believed that the Service was well placed to lead on this, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that there would be a number of issues, for example TUPE, that would need to be considered if this option was progressed.

Councillor Colin Dudley stated that his preferred option, at the current time, would be for a Fire Services' collaboration and that this be led by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. He also felt that a feasibility study should be conducted to consider the use of the Service's current Control Room, with the necessary upgrades, and that interest be sought from other Fire and Rescue Services for a Berkshire led collaboration project. This was supported by Councillor Iain McCracken. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer felt that the Service's current Control Room staffing capacity would be adequate to facilitate the Service leading a Fire Services' collaboration.

Councillor Angus Ross felt that consideration must also be given to the resilience

factors and specifications, the cost of efficiency savings, and the varying responsibilities of Control staff across other Fire and Rescue Services.

Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that any Control Room collaboration with the Police might prove difficult, and his preference was that collaborative options should, initially, be further explored with other Fire and Rescue Services.

Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that the Service's current Control Room building should be utilised as opposed to a new build.

Councillor Jeff Brooks **Moved** that a Steering Group be established, its membership to include Members and Officers, the Lead Officer being the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, to consider a route map to develop a future model for the South Central area, and that the option for a Berkshire led collaboration be explored further, with invitations being extended to Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Authorities. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Colin Dudley, and, on being put to the vote, was **unanimously carried**.

CFO /
DCFO

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the South East Chief Fire Officers had met on 4 January 2011, and that it had been agreed to extend an invitation to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to attend its next meeting on 19 January 2011, and that each Chief Fire Officer should bring to this meeting their respective Service's Control Room options to enable these options to be explored further.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer asked Members to keep the Control Room options as broad as possible at the current time, particularly until CLG (Communities and Local Government) had further published their definitive intentions for the legacy assets from the FiReControl Project.

The Chairman extended an invitation to the Representative Bodies to be fully engaged in the Control Room Options project, and Jess James (Fire Brigades Union representative present at the meeting) conveyed his thanks to the Chairman for facilitating continued partnership working.

The Chairman retired from the meeting for a short while and Councillor Colin Dudley, as Vice-Chairman, took the Chair in his absence.

194. 2010/11 BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of November 2010.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

195. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY - MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2010/11

The Committee received a Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy performance mid-year review, as a requirement of the CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

The Chairman returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

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

The Committee received a verbal update from the Fire Authority's SEFRCCCL

Board Representative, Councillor Angus Ross, who stated that the SEFRCCL meeting scheduled for 3 December 2010 had been cancelled due to the inclement weather, and that the next meeting would be taking place on 7 January 2011, the salient item to be considered being the dissolution of the Company. He stated that the Management Committee would receive a more detailed report at its next meeting.

197. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved:

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

198. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 24 January 2011 at 6.30pm in the Kennet Room, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TD.

199. 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, and 3 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.

200. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2010

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.