

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Monday 8 November 2010

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

- Those present:** Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority) (*Substitute for Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority)*)
Councillor Colin Dudley (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)
Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority) (*Substitute for Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority)*)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)
- In Attendance:** Gene Ashe (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection)
Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Becci Jefferies (Human Resources Manager)
Andy Mancey (Area Manager, Response)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Sylvia Simmonds (PA, Executive Support)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)
- Observers:** Christopher Glenn (Unison Representative)
Mark Stollery (FBU Representative)
Paul Watts (FBU Representative)

Action

167. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons and Councillor Iain McCracken.

168. 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.

169. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2010

An amendment to Minute Reference 156, Paragraph 5, was advised on behalf of Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons, that being to amend the word "actual" to now read "actuarial".

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the above amendment, and signed by the Chairman.

170. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman stated that, and on the advice of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, an additional Agenda item would be taken in Part II, namely 'Resilience Contracts - Contingency Arrangements for Periods of Industrial Action by RBFRS Operational Personnel', due to its urgency.
- b) The Chairman reported that the 'turning of the tilth ceremony' held at Wokingham Fire Station on 8 November 2010 had been a great success, with many Dignitaries present. He expressed his thanks to both Pat Arthur (Procurement and Facilities Manager) and Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager) for their role in organising this event. He stated that building works at Wokingham Fire Station were expected to be completed during August/September 2011.
- c) The Chief Fire Officer reported that no Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) appliances had been required to cover 'over the border' incidents resulting from the London Fire Brigade strike action. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the RBFRS Representative Bodies and many RBFRS staff were concerned about going into London's ground. He stated that Senior Officers were in discussions to establish a mutually agreeable arrangement which the Chairman very much wanted to see in place before further strike dates were announced. The Chairman reported that the Fire Brigades Union would be meeting with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) on 16 November 2010, and he urged the Chief Fire Officer to continue discussions to enable a resolution to be reached.
- d) In response to a question from the Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer reported there had been no significant events over Bonfire night.
- e) The Chairman reported that he had attended, with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, a very interesting Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Conference at Wyboston Lakes on 28 October 2010. He stated that the CFAs were unhappy with representation on the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Management Committee.

171. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

172. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Committee received and considered the Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees and Working Parties since last reported to the Management Committee.

Councillor Angus Ross enquired about the future of Crowthorne Fire Station. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer stated that the two year trial using Surrey fire appliances had concluded, and that these localised arrangements would continue, but that the closure of Crowthorne Fire Station would not be progressed at the present time as cross-border support could not be guaranteed into the future.

Concerning the Retained Duty System (RDS) Review, Recommendation 7, the Vice-Chairman asked that the word "drivers" (3rd line, 1st paragraph) be changed to now read "factors", and this was **Agreed**.

Resolved:

- a) That it be Agreed that the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Retained Duty System Review Project Research Report was now complete and that it be Commended for publication;
- b) That the Officers' Recommendations in Appendix E of the Retained Duty System Review Project Research Report be Agreed, subject to Recommendation 1 being re-phrased to now read:
"As Cookham Fire Station is unviable, and as the station ground is adequately covered by Maidenhead fire station, and as it has been assessed as lower risk to the community and less able to deal with the risk to the Authority, Cookham Fire Station should formally close";
- c) That Recommendation 1 within the Review should now be Recommendation 6, with the order of the other Recommendations being adjusted accordingly;
- d) That an amendment be made to Recommendation 7 within the Review, that being to amend the word "drivers" (3rd line, 1st paragraph) to now read "factors".

173. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW AND BUDGET WORKING PARTY UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer provided a verbal update on the Comprehensive Spending Review, and a verbal report from the 2011/12 Budget Working Party meetings.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray regarding potential cuts in Service levels, the Chief Fire Officer assured her that, should any proposals be made that affected the public, then those proposals would go through the Integrated Risk Management Planning process.

174. REVISED BUDGET TARGETS 2010/11

The Committee considered the underspend target (£750k) to be delivered by the Chief Fire Officer by year-end, as Recommended by the Budget Working Party, broken down as follows:

- £300k - Uniformed salaries (mainly Retained);
- £150k - Non-uniform vacancies (posts not being filled);
- £100k - Underspend on training;
- £50k - Insurance, as the RBFMS managed to extend its existing contracts of insurance;
- £150k - Ill health retirement provisions.

Resolved:

- a) That the underspend target (£750k) to be delivered by the Chief Fire Officer by year-end be Approved.

175. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011/12 ANNUAL ACTION

The Committee considered the final draft IRMP Annual Action Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the presented report.

The following salient amendments and comments were made:

- Page 11 - under Crowthorne, second line - insert space between "outcome" and "of".

- Page 19 - Figure 1 - remove "B" from "SMB" to now read "SM (Station Manager)".
- Page 13 - Heritage - Councillor Lenton felt that a more specific figure to that given for the number of listed buildings within the County as a whole should be included.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Angus Ross on the closure of Cookham Fire Station, the Chief Fire Officer stated that once a decision had been made concerning this site, the disposal of this property would become a new project; and in response to a question raised by Councillor Lenton, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority did own both the land and buildings at Cookham.

The Management Committee **Noted** that, dependent upon further financial constraints, it may be necessary to produce a further IRMP, if required, with another 12-week consultation period.

Resolved:

- a) That the draft Integrated Risk Management Annual Action Plan for 2011/12 be Approved for formal consultation.

Councillor Paul Gittings joined the meeting at 1910 hours.

176. CONTROL ROOM OUTSOURCING PROJECT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided a verbal update on the position to date, and stated that, currently, Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Cassadian (EADS) still had some issues to resolve regarding the FiReControl project.

The Vice-Chairman supported Councillor Jeff Brooks' suggestion that all options must be considered, not just those options for outsourcing.

The Committee **Agreed** that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer should present a report to the December 2010 meeting of the Management Committee which should include all options, not just outsourcing.

177. 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 next SEFRCCCL meeting was scheduled for 3 December 2010. He reported that guidance from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) was still awaited as to the future of this project. Councillor Angus Ross stated that new lifts had been fitted, that work on the facilities was ongoing.

178. HUMAN RESOURCES MONITORING REPORT - RETIREMENTS, ACCIDENTS, SICKNESS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND RETENTION

The Committee was advised of staff retention, medical retirements, workplace accidents, sickness absences, and Equality and Diversity statistics during the period April 2010 to September 2010, together with the progress on the Health and Safety Objectives (2010-2012).

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman relating to differences between summer and winter months, the Human Resources Manager stated that

this comparison would be feasible at the end of March 2011 when a yearly comparison could be made.

In noting that there was one long-term injury resulting from fitness training, the Human Resources Manager confirmed that guidance had been produced for fitness training.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray relating to the national pass standard being raised for fitness testing and whether this could lead to more failures, the Human Resources Manager stated that every effort was being made to promote health and fitness and that she could not envisage any problems for the Service.

Councillor Paul Gittings enquired about the continuation of the Cycle to Work Scheme as he had been informed of a new approach by the Inland Revenue when individuals lose tax benefits. The Human Resources Manager stated that the Service was currently establishing what these implications might be.

Councillor Angus Ross commended the reduction in sickness levels. He found the report to be very clear and concise, and he praised the Officers who had compiled it, and this was also acknowledged by the Chairman.

In response to a question from the Chairman regarding 'near miss' reporting, the Chief Fire Officer stated that Fire and Rescue Services, as a whole, were not good at reporting near misses, however the RBFRS's Management and the Representative Bodies felt that it was important to report them.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

179. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 20 December 2010 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TD.

180. 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.

181. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2010

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

182. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW OF PREVENTION

The Area Manager (Prevention and Protection) took the Committee through the proposed restructure of the Prevention Department.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the Recommendations from the IRMP Working Party be Approved;
- c) That the restructure of the Prevention Team be Approved;
- d) That the timetable for implementation of the Prevention Team be Approved;
- e) That Officers be Directed to implement the revised Prevention structure.

183. RESILIENCE CONTRACTS - CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERIOD OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY RBFRS OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer took the Committee through the proposals to seek to enter into Resilience Contracts with operational staff to provide emergency Fire and Rescue cover during periods of industrial action by members of the Fire Brigades Union in Berkshire, if and when these might arise.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) That authorisation be given to Officers to seek to negotiate Resilience Contracts in line with the principles set out in the report.