

**MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**



Held on Thursday 10 November 2011

**Strategic Command Centre, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
Service, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4FS**

Those present: Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Colin Dudley (Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Iain McCracken (Member, Fire Authority).

In Attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Mark Deacon (HUB Professional Services)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

Observers: Fire Brigades Union Representatives
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers

301. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Representative present, Maurice Whyte, advised that he wish to address the Management Committee on a point of clarity in the minutes of the Management Committee held on 19 September 2011.

302. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority) and Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer).

303. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Olaf Baars), Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Paul Southern), Clerk and Monitoring Officer (Caroline Redzikowska), Director of Human Resources (David Wallace) and Authority Treasurer (Andrew Vallance) declared a Personal Interest as the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Principal Officers in respect to Agenda Item 23 (Review of Car User Scheme and Allowances for Principal Officers).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer declared a Personal Interest as the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Principal Officers in respect to Agenda Item 25 (Staffing Issues – B).

There were no 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.

Action

304. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2011

In response to FBU representative point of clarity in referring to minute reference 285 (Control Options Project), the Deputy Chief Fire Officer amended the paragraph in question to read the following *“The Deputy Chief Fire Officer received news during the meeting that a paper would be put to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority on the 28th October that would recommend that they did not proceed with a London option but would put forward the Thames Valley option alongside an option to outsource this work to Cambridgeshire to be considered by the Authority”*.

In response to a question from Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, referring to minute reference 285 (Control Options Project) the Chairman advised that he attended a meeting with the Chief Fire Officers and Chairman of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (FA) and Oxfordshire County Council and had made representations to them on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

The Chairman reported Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FA approved the option to outsource with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and its withdrawal from the Thames Valley project (Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire FRS).

The Chairman confirmed that subsequent to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority approval at its meeting held on 28 September 2011 a joint Resilience and Efficiency Grant Bid was submitted to Communities for Local Government (CLG) on 4 November 2011 by Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire FRS.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the Audit and Performance Review’s concerns in relation to minute reference 288 (Fire Control Resilience Works – Waiver of Standing Orders) had been addressed at its meeting held on 22 September 2011.

Resolved:

- a) That subject to the amendment of minute reference 285 (Control Options Project) the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

305. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman reported of his attendance at a Conference for Combined Fire Authorities. He advised of a presentation from the ex Chief Executive of the Local Government Association (LGA) on Control Options who recommended a closer working relationship with Combined Fire Authorities and the LGA.
- b) The Chairman advised he attended a South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP) meeting in London. He reported that Combined Fire Authorities made up a large part of the Fire Service in the UK and that a Working Group had been established made up of five Combined Fire Authority Chairman to make representations to the LGA Fire Management Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the SEFIP Working Party would be addressing the current appointment system as an electoral system was the preferred option.

- c) The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that it had been reported that a smoke detector supplied by Humberside FRS had caught fire. He advised that Royal Berkshire FRS distribute the same make and model as part of Community Safety. The Committee were informed that a press release was in progression and that Royal Berkshire FRS was waiting for the results on the Humberside FRS inquiry.
- d) The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported of the high number of Freedom of Information requests and responses received in relation to Windsor Fire Station of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Annual Action Plan 2012/13 consultation.

306. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

307. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Recommendations made by the Fire Authority's Committees from 20 September 2011 to the date of the Management Committee on 10 November 2011 in respect to Brigade Headquarter Options were considered elsewhere on the Agenda.

308. EXTENSION OF PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY SERVICE CONTRACT

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised of the intention to extend the Professional Property Service contract. He reported that as the Strategic Asset Management Committee were currently overseeing an extensive programme of premises works, it would be appropriate to continue the existing contract as the current provider's of the service have been intrinsically involved in the current programme.

In response to a question received from Councillor Jeff Brooks in relation to the recommendation within the report to extend the professional service contract for a 2 year period, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised of the current extensive programme of works in progress and reported that 2 years was the desired timeframe for the completion of the premises portfolio.

The Committee received clarification of matters relating to the costs for the provision of professional property services for the 2010/11 work programme that equated to £218,986.93.

On discussing the costs for the 2010/11 work programme, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that reports would be presented to the relevant Committees and/or Working Parties as required.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

309. DISPOSAL OF FIRE KIT

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer sought approval for the disposal of old fire kit through a disposal agency.

In answer to a question from Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that the option to donate the old fire fit through a charitable organisation would be at cost to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) due to lack of storage availability. The old fire kit was currently stored at Cookham Fire Station which would need to be vacated in response to the sale of the aforementioned fire station.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- b) That Officers be Authorised to dispose of the old fire kit through the Ministry of Defence Disposal Services Authority (DSA).

310. BREATHING APPARATUS PROCUREMENT

The Committee was provided with feedback following the detailed assessment of the Breathing Apparatus (BA) procurement process.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee that Fire Authority Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor Jeff Brooks were satisfied with the procurement process for the BA sets based on the information provided at a review meeting held on 20 June 2011.

The Chairman thanked Assistant Chief Fire Officer for the arrangement of the review meeting and advised that his concerns were alleviated as a result. The Chairman reassured the Committee that the Fire Authority took Fire-fighters safety and opinions seriously by not opting for the cheapest option, but opting for the best piece of equipment recommended by the test team.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that a draft version of the Fire Authority's Contract Standing Orders would be presented to the Audit and Performance Review Committee's next meeting in December 2011 and then a subsequent meeting of the Fire Authority in 2012.

APRC
15.12.11

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

311. 2011/12 BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee was informed of revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of September 2011.

In answer to a question from Councillor Iain McCracken, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the Bellwin claim for the Swinley Forest fire incident was a one-off request and that measures had been put in place to avoid the incident occurring again.

The Vice-Chairman advised of the measures the Forestry Commission had put in place in response to the Swinley Forest fire incident.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted

312. FIRE CONTROL RESILIENCE WORKS - WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Committee was updated on the progress since the Fire Authority meeting of 28 September 2011 and Committee's approval was sought to proceed on the basis of this report.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Contract Standing Orders had not been updated for some years and once updated, would not be too dissimilar to Oxfordshire County Council's current Contract Standing Orders.

In response to a question from Councillor Paul Gittings, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that Oxfordshire County Council would provide professional procurement support and would not manage the Control Room project. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that a joint Steering Group of Members and Officers would be established.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that he would recommend two Members and Chief Fire Officer's from each Thames Valley Fire Authority to establish the joint Steering Group.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the expenditure used to fund Fire Control resilience works would be used from current year funding and advised that if the Communities for Local Government (CLG) Resilience and Efficiency Grant were not awarded to the Thames Valley Control Project, it would not have a direct impact on the Development Fund.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Fire Authority gave remit to manage the spending of future projects from the Development Fund.

In response to a question from Councillor Jeff Brooks, Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the equipment necessary for Fire Control resilience works outlined in the report was viable to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in spite of the joint Control Project with Oxfordshire FRS.

Resolved:

- a) That Officers submission of a joint bid to CLG Resilience and Efficiency Grant Funding for a joint Control Room Facility serving Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire areas be Noted;
- b) That Oxfordshire County Council Procurement Services be commissioned to manage collaborative procurement in relation to the Joint Control Room project on behalf of the Fire Authority including those listed in 3.4
- c) That Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Contract Standing Orders be waived in favour of the Oxfordshire County Council Contract Standing Orders in relation to joint procurements being managed on behalf of the Fire Authority by Oxfordshire County Council,
- d) That Contract Standing Orders be waived and that a contract be entered into with Infographics Ltd. for the supply and installation Firewatch modules to allow integrated planning of vehicle availability for mobilising
- e) That Contract Standing Orders be waived and that a contract be entered into with Capita Secure Systems for the supply and installation of an upgrade to the ICCS in order to bring it up to the standard of the DS3000, subject to a quotation of less than £150,000;
- f) That a tender process be commenced in accordance with Contract Standing Orders for the procurement of:
 - i) Station end equipment
 - ii) Station PA system
 - iii) A Gazetteer management System
- g) That the procurements proposed within the report shall be funded from any Section 31 Resilience and Efficiency Grant received, but that in order to expedite the project, procurements, the subject of this report, shall be funded from within current year funding where this is possible

- h)
 - i) That the procurement of 30 Mobile Data Terminals at a cost of £125,000 be Noted;
 - ii) That an extension to the existing Easynet network to provide a high speed data connection to OFRS HQ be Noted; and
- i) That the involvement with the Unicorn project that will lead to connection to the Public Service Network (PSN) via a Framework Agreement be Noted.

313. ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURE - VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES

The Director of Human Resources outlined the benefits of seeking voluntary redundancies from Officers affected by the Officer Cover review and related reduction of flexible duty posts.

The Human Resources Manager advised that the option to use a Preference Exercise was sought by the Committee to allow if required, the option for Officers technically at risk to opt for voluntary redundancy.

The Director of Human Resources advised that a number of project posts would need to be filled to fulfil the new structure of the establishment.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Preference Exercise would provide an alternative option for those individuals that do not want to be involved in project work.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) That voluntary redundancies can be sought from staff in the substantive roles of Area Manager to Station Manager; and
- c) That, as a consequence, the Chief Fire Officer be Authorised to exercise the delegated powers set out in Standing Order ASD4.

314. REPORT FROM RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Committee was advised of the latest assessment of the risks affecting Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) as assessed by the Risk Management Group (RMG).

In answer to a question from Councillor Jeff Brooks regarding the increasing risk of the Impact of Olympics (to include New Dimensions risk), the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that National Assets was co-ordinated through the London team.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported there were planned multi-agency exercises organised through the Local Resilience Forum in preparation to the forthcoming Olympics.

Councillor Iain McCracken reported that the Olympics Gold Command would include Berkshire due to the Olympic torch would go through the county.

The Authority Treasurer informed the Committee that Industrial relations was an ongoing risk.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman regarding FBU's failure to agree Retained Duty Systems terms and conditions, the Chairman recommended for the FBU's response to the Vice-Chairman to be made outside of the Management Committee meeting.

In response to a question by Councillor Iain McCracken in relation to his concern of the rise of metal theft and its impact on the Vodafone connection used by the Brigade, the Authority Treasurer advised this risk was included under the IS and Comms department highlighted as an increasing risk and red in Appendix A of the report.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) That an updated report from the Risk Management Group be presented at the next Management Committee in January 2012.

Agenda
23.01.12

315. WINDSOR EMERGENCY COVER UPDATE

The Committee was provided with an update on the emergency cover arrangements following the implementation of the day crewing arrangements and pending the introduction of a "Local Fire Engine" subject to consultation.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that RBFRS had provided 24 hour cover with day and switch crewing by Slough. He reported that cover was maintained by using ad hoc arrangements and confirmed that no significant financial impact had been made.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed the Committee of the level of interest received around this issue based on the number of Freedom of Interest requests received from the IRMP Consultation.

In response to a question from Councillor Jeff Brooks, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that the FBU, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor David Burbage were informed of the interim arrangements to provide cover.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Chairman; Maurice Whyte informed the Committee of the speed at which consultation was given to FBU on the interim arrangements.

At the request of the Chairman, the meeting was adjourned briefly so that the Committee could seek advice on whether it was appropriate to move this item into Part 2 of the Agenda. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that there appeared to be no grounds to do so on this occasion.

The meeting was reconvened, and the Committee **resolved:-**

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) A detailed briefing be arranged for Members of the Management Committee regarding the provision of interim emergency cover.
- c) That the Windsor Overnight incident report be circulated to the Committee.

DCFO

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

The Human Resources Manager notified the Committee of staff retention, medical retirements, workplace accidents, sickness absences, and Equality and Diversity statistics during the period April 2011 to September 2011 at Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS).

The Human Resources advised that Progress on the Health and Safety Objectives 2010-2012 was referred to in Appendix 8.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the presentation of long term and short term absences be Demonstrated in future reports;
- c) That Officers develop a consistent approach in the layout of the report.

HRM

HRM

317. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

- a) That the next meeting will be held on Monday 23 January 2012 at 6.30 pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS.

318. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Resolved:

- a) That the meeting be adjourned for a period of 10 minutes for the convenience of the meeting. At the conclusion of this period, the meeting of the Management Committee recommenced.

319. 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.

320. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman,

321. RESILIENCE – VERBAL UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an update on resilience options.

322. FITNESS EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT

The Director of Human Resources advised the Committee in accordance with Contract Standing Order 37, that Members award the contract for fitness equipment to the tenderer named in the report.

Resolved:

- a) That the contract for fitness equipment be awarded to the tenderer named in the report.

323. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS OPTIONS

The Committee were provided with an update on the progress of the purchase of the new Brigade Headquarters and their agreement was sought to the proposed Heads of Terms to progress to the next stages of acquisition of the property.

Resolved:

- a) That the recommendations in the report be Agreed;

324. REVIEW OF CAR USER SCHEME AND ALLOWANCES FOR PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

The Director of Human Resources advised the Committee of the outcome of a review of the Car User Scheme and Allowances for Principal Officers and sought guidance as to whether the scheme should continue and if so, in what form.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That a Principal Officer Car User Scheme and Allowances Working Party be established and that the Members be the Fire Authority Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley, Councillor Jeff Brooks and Councillor Iain McCracken.

325. STAFFING ISSUES - A

The Committee was advised of the current staffing issues and approval was sought of the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:

- a) That the recommendations in the report be Agreed.

326. STAFFING ISSUES - B

The Committee was advised of the current staffing issues and approval was sought of the recommendations in the report.

Resolved:

- a) That the recommendations in the report be Agreed.

DHR