

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 14 February 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) (*part meeting*)
Councillor Colin Dudley (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Iain McCracken (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)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
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 (FBU) Representatives
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers

Action

220. At the invitation of the Chairman, Maurice Whyte (Fire Brigades Union representative) stated that the Fire Brigades Union would like to address the Committee at Agenda Item 8 (Integrated Risk Management Plan 2011/2012 Consultation report) and at Agenda Item 9 (2011/2 Budget).

221. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

222. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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 any budgetary considerations associated with the SEFRCCCL. There were no further Declarations of Interest received 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.

223. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) reported that she had yet to ascertain the legal position, and advise the Committee Members accordingly, of the minimum requirement with regard to the provision of a contact address prior to a response being provided to a Freedom of Information request. (*Minute reference 214, Freedom of Information Update*).

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

224. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman reported that he had attended a meeting of the Local Government Association Fire Commission on 11 February 2011, a copy of his report from the meeting having already been circulated to Members.

225. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

226. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons **Moved** that an amendment be made to the Strategic Asset Management Committee's Recommendation regarding the establishment of a Capital Development Fund to enable the Fire Authority to manage the funding of future capital projects, that being that the reference to "Capital Development Fund" be amended to "Development Fund" and that the words "capital" be removed from within Recommendation i) text. This was **unanimously Agreed**.

Resolved:

- a) That the Fire Authority be Recommended to:
 - i) Establish a Development Fund to enable the Fire Authority to manage the funding of future projects;
 - ii) Establish a capital project to assess the options for the ongoing provision of a Brigade Headquarters facility;
 - iii) Establish a capital project to provide a wholetime fire station in the Theale area; and that
 - iv) Officers be authorised to undertake further works to examine the feasibility of a fire station in the Twyford/Knowl Hill area.

Councillor Jeff Brooks retired from the meeting during the considerations of the next item (Integrated Risk Management Plan 2011/12 Consultation report).

227. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011/2012 CONSULTATION REPORT

The Committee was advised of the outcome of the Recommendations of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Working Party at its meeting held on 7 February 2011.

The Committee heard representations from the Fire Brigades Union, which included concern over:

- The Officer Cover Review; and
- Low risk Incidents.

In response to a question from Councillor Colin Dudley, the Area Manager (Support Services) confirmed that the Fire Brigades Union had submitted its response to the Consultation on 31 January 2011, that being the last day of the Consultation period. Councillor Colin Dudley felt that, due to the number of issues raised by the Fire Brigades Union, to receive the aforementioned submission on the last day of the Consultation period did not easily facilitate sufficient time to consider it in a timely manner. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the issues raised within the Fire Brigades Union response had, however, been taken into consideration as part of the Consultation.

In response to the Chairman, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, to the best of his knowledge, there was no intention to abolish the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) as this was a new capability. He also confirmed that a review would be conducted with regard to the Rescue Support Vehicle (RSV) when it was due for renewal, and that the results would be reported to Members in due course.

In response to a request from Councillor Colin Dudley, as the Fire Authority Health and Safety Member Champion, the Director of Human Resources agreed to include, within future Health and Safety reporting, any health and safety issues arising from the implementation of the IRMP Action Plan.

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Resolved:

- a) That the Consultation report and the responses to the Consultation be Noted;
- b) That the IRMP Working Party proposed changes to the Plan be Accepted and that approval of the amended Plan be recommended to the Fire Authority (FA) on the 17 February 2011.
- c) That, having considered the responses to the Consultation process and Officer responses to, and Recommendations arising there from, the following Recommendations be made to the Fire Authority, subject to any outstanding appropriate reviews and People Impact Assessments being completed:
 - i) That Cookham Fire Station to be permanently closed;
 - ii) That Wholetime operational posts (including Officers) be removed from the establishment as vacancies arise and in accordance with the needs of the Service;
 - iii) That the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) at Newbury be switch crewed with the Wholetime pumping appliance;
 - iv) That a Retained Support Unit (12 posts) be established;
 - v) That a policy of increasing call challenge to suspected unwanted fire signals be adopted, including non attendance at commercial premises between the hours of 0900-1800, Monday to Friday;
 - vi) That a policy of attendance at domestic fire alarm signals be reduced during the waking hours of 0800 till 2100 every day of the week to one appliance;
 - vii) That, where operationally appropriate, and in accordance with policy guidelines, a 6-month validation period be commenced, and, subject to the study, Wholetime appliances be sent to low risk incidents on Retained Station grounds;
 - viii) That the vacant post of the Fire Safety Enforcement Officer be removed from the establishment with effect from 1 April 2011;

FA
Agenda
(17.02.11)

- ix) That Officers be authorised to undertake work to explore alternative options for the future provision of the Control Room functions;
- x) That Officers be authorised to undertake further work to examine the feasibility of a Fire Station in the Twyford/Knowl Hill area and a Wholetime Fire Station in the Theale area; and
- xi) That the proposed Protection Department restructure be approved.

228. 2011/2 BUDGET

In considering the proposed draft Budget presented by the Authority Treasurer, the Committee heard representations from the Fire Brigades Union, and was advised of the Recommendations of the Budget Working Party held earlier that evening.

Representations made by the Fire Brigades Union included concern over:

- Investment in capital works which could be used for front-line services;
- Crewing of the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) and its effect on the availability of the fire appliance at Newbury;
- Attendance at Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).

The Authority Treasurer reported that the DCLG (Department for Local Communities and Local Government) had now released details of the Authority's capital grant, that being £1,281,716.

The Authority Treasurer was concerned that inflation could rise in the future, however 2% had been allocated within the budget scenarios.

The Chairman retired from the meeting for a short while and Councillor Colin Dudley, as Vice-Chairman, took the Chair in his absence. On his return to the meeting, the Chairman, Dr Paul Bryant, resumed the Chair.

Councillor Iain McCracken **Moved** that Recommendation 6 within Agenda Item 9 (2011/12 Budget) report to the Fire Authority be amended to now read that "The Authority is invited to include within any Development Fund the ability to investigate Invest to Save projects and that an initial sum of £1.4m be transferred from Reserves." This was **unanimously Agreed**.

Resolved:

- a) That the Recommendations set out in the Fire Authority report (2011/12 Budget) be Adopted, subject to:
 - i) Recommendation 6 within the 2011/12 Budget report to the Fire Authority being amended to now read:
 - "The Authority is invited to include within any Development Fund the ability to investigate Invest to Save projects and that an initial sum of £1.4m be transferred from Reserves."

229. COOKHAM FIRE STATION

The Committee considered the future of Cookham Fire Station building and establishment.

In response to Councillor Angus Ross, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that, should the sale of Cookham Fire Station site be progressed, this would be at a time when it was considered that the Fire Authority would receive the best value for the site.

In response to Councillor Iain McCracken, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that consideration had been given to leasing the site, and that the Service had liaised with other Blue Light Services.

Councillor Colin Dudley **Moved** that Recommendation 2.1.2 be amended to now read "The Strategic Asset Management Committee be asked to progress the sale of, or best use of, Cookham Fire Station. This was **unanimously Agreed**."

Resolved:

- a) That the Fire Authority be Recommended to accept the following:
 - i) That Cookham Fire Station be sold to release capital and prevent maintenance and other costs;
 - ii) That the Strategic Asset Management Committee be asked to progress the sale of, or best use of, Cookham Fire Station;
 - iii) That the 3 remaining staff attached to Cookham Fire Station be offered a permanent transfer to Maidenhead Fire Station as an alternative to redundancy; and
 - iv) That the vacant operational posts attached to Cookham Fire Station be removed from the establishment.

230. REVIEW OF STRUCTURE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Committee was advised of the Chief Fire Officer's intention to conduct a full structural review of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the Chief Fire Officer be tasked to undertake a review of the structure and establishment of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and to report back to the Management Committee in due course with regard to any efficiencies in service provision; and
- c) That an interim report be taken to the Management Committee in September 2011.

231. CONTROL SUB COMMITTEE'S DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the presented Control Sub Committee's draft Terms of Reference.

Councillor Angus Ross **Moved** that the Sub Committee be re-established as a Working Party, and this was **unanimously Agreed**.

Resolved:

- a) That the Sub Committee be re-established as a Working Party; and
- b) That the draft Terms of Reference be Approved, subject to the removal of all references to "Sub Committee".

The Committee **Supported** Councillor Angus Ross' suggestion that the Chairman, having taken into account the Control Working Party Members' comments, should agree the final Fire Authority/Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service response to the Communities and Local Government's (CLG) consultation document entitled 'The future of Fire and Rescue Control Services in England - Consultation'.

232. CORPORATE PLAN (2011/15) - DRAFT

The Committee's approval was sought for the draft format of the Corporate Plan 2011/15.

Resolved:

- a) That the format of the draft Corporate Plan 2011/15 be Approved; and
- b) That Officers be authorised to make amendments and propose targets for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting on 28 March 2011 and recommend it to the Fire Authority (FA) at its April 2011 meeting.

Agenda
28.03.11 /
FA Agenda
21.04.11

233. CREWING LEVEL MONITORING

The Committee was advised of the crewing levels for Wholetime appliances for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2010, the presented report replacing the report presented to the last meeting. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the last report which was considered to have included erroneous data, was in fact accurate, however its presentational interpretation was misleading. He stated that graphs within future reports would now also include night and day crewing levels.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

234. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Monday 28 March 2011 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS.

235. 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.

236. PROTECTION DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURE

The Committee's approval was sought of the action plan to implement the restructure of the Protection Department in accordance with the earlier decision of the Committee based on the Recommendations from the IRMP Working Party.

Councillor Colin Dudley **Moved** that Recommendation 2.1.1 within the presented report be deleted as this had been dealt with earlier in the Agenda under Agenda Item 8 (*Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan, Consultation Report for 2011/12 Action Plan*). This was **unanimously Agreed**.

Resolved:

- a) That the Fire Authority be Recommended to accept the following Recommendations:
 - i) That Officers be authorised to implement the revised Protection Department structure; and
 - ii) That the authorised establishment be amended to reflect the restructure.

