

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



Held on Monday 23 January 2012

**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 Helliard-Symons (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

In Attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
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

327. 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 Agenda Items 8 (Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan – Consultation Report for 2012/13 Action Plan), 11 (Royal Berkshire Pay Policy Statement 2012/13), 12 (Control Options Project – update report), 13 (Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Corporate Plan 2012/13), 15 (Crewing Level – Quarterly report) and 16 (Report from Risk Management Group).

328. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Iain McCracken (Member, Fire Authority).

329. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Fire Officer (Iain Cox) and Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Olaf Baars) declared a Personal Interest as the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Principal Officers in respect to Agenda Item 27 (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.

330. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 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.

Action

331. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chief Fire Officer announced that volunteers re-planted trees at Swinley Forest on 20th and 21st January 2012. He advised that natural fire breaks using different types of trees were planted to prevent the spread of forest fires in future years.
- b) Members were advised that the Chairman, Chief Fire Officer and Councillor Dr Paul Bryant were due to attend a Fire Safety Parliamentary seminar on 6 February 2012.
- c) The Chairman advised that the official opening of Wokingham Fire Station will be held on Wednesday 8 February 2012.
- d) At the request of the Chairman, Councillor Dr Paul Bryant gave a comprehensive report on the issues discussed at a recent Local Government Association (LGA) meeting.

332. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

333. 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.

In respect to Item 2 (Integrated Risk Management 5-year Plan, Consultation Report for 2012/13 Action Plan) the Chairman **Moved** that this item be taken elsewhere on the Agenda.

In respect to Item 3 (Final Outturn Wokingham Fire Station) the Authority Treasurer advised that the additional expenditure appeared as an overspend in the Capital Programme and reported that it could be financed from the revenue underspend.

Resolved:

- a) In respect to Item 1 (Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan – Review of Newbury Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) and Slough Rescue Support Vehicle (RSV)), the Committee accepted the recommendations from the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party and made the following Recommendations to the Fire Authority for final approval;
 - i) That the Fire Authority maintains only one Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU);
 - ii) That the HRU should be relocated to Dee Road (Station 3);
 - iii) That the existing Rescue Support Vehicle (RSV) should not be replaced and should be retired once the HRU is relocated to Dee Road (Station 3); and
 - iv) That the Fire Authority's decision of February 2011, to switch crew the HRU with a Fire Appliance be confirmed on the basis of the evidence within the report.
- b)
 - i) In respect to Item 3 (Final Outturn Wokingham Fire Station) the Committee accepted the Strategic Asset Management Committee recommendation to authorise the additional expenditure of £137,359 or such sum as is agreed to be the final amount, not to exceed £137,359; and

- ii) That the additional expenditure be taken from revenue budget and that a recommendation be made to the Fire Authority for final approval.

334. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT 5-YEAR PLAN - CONSULTATION REPORT FOR 2012/13 ACTION PLAN

The Committee were informed of the results of the Consultation process for the 2012/13 Action Plan that forms one year of the 5-Year IRMP for 2010/11 - 2015/16. The report gave the main areas of interest with the comments and views received from stakeholders.

In response to a question by the Fire Brigade Union Chair; Maurice Whyte, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported that he sought advice from Opinion Research Services (ORS) on the attendance of Member Councillors and Union Representatives at Public Engagement meetings held in the past and the advice given at the time was for Public Engagement Forum meetings to be restricted to the attendance of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Officers involved in the consultation and the public.

However, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he would once again request the attendance of Member Councillors and Union Representatives at future Public Engagement Forum meetings could be accommodated.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer circulated an additional amendment to the Consultation as a recommendation, to reflect the discussions held at the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Working Party on 4 January 2012. He advised that the Members of the IRMP Working Party examined responses received from stakeholders and through internal assessments; Officers identified a standard Fire Appliance as an alternative to the 'Local' small appliance for Windsor, as consulted under IRMP.

The Committee were advised that further assessments were to be made in order to provide additional options for the crewing of the identified appliances across the service area.

On behalf of the Fire Brigades Union, Maurice Whyte advised that he did not support the option of crewing the proposed appliance with 3 firefighters at Windsor.

In response to concerns raised on the reduction of daytime cover at Windsor from being crewed from 5 firefighters to 3, the Chief Fire Officer advised that the recommendation set out below was in response to the public, Members and Fire Brigade Union views and comments received from the recent consultation. He further explained that Officers would continue to examine the crewing at Windsor in order to deliver cost neutral options.

Councillor Dr Paul Bryant reported he was satisfied with the proposals, subject to costs not being increased.

Councillor Angus Ross felt it was pertinent to advise that the future options provided by Officers were compliant to the requirements of the Brigade.

On being put to the vote, 6 Members were in favour of the Recommendations set out below with one abstention received by Councillor Jeff Brooks.

Resolved:

- a) That the consultation report be Noted.

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- b) That subject to any amendments of comments arising from the Committee that a Recommendation be made to the Fire Authority on 8th February 2012 for final approval.

335. 2012/13 BUDGET

The Fire Authority Treasurer reported on the work of the Budget Working Party to date and requested the Committee to consider its latest budget proposals.

The Chief Fire Officer gave a short presentation which illustrated the savings RBFRS had made since the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and highlighted the issues affecting the Brigade namely, pay freeze and the uncertainty of the grant figures of the final 2 years of the CSR.

The Chairman advised the Committee of the recommendation made by the Budget Working Party held earlier in the evening. He further reported that the Budget Working Party recommend the refusal of the Council Tax Freeze grant and to increase Council Tax in 2012/13, as it was a more effective way to manage potential reductions in future years.

Members individually expressed their view on the recommendation and advised of their position when the recommendation was put to the vote.

Councillor Angus Ross reported of his difficulty in accepting the proposed recommendation and requested for further information on how the increased funding from the Council Tax would be spent.

In response to Councillor Angus Ross concerns, the Chairman explained that the additional funds received from the proposed increase of Council Tax from 3% to 3 ½ % would be transferred into the Development Fund. The Chairman further advised that in future years the additional ½ % would reduce the overall savings to be made.

The Chairman informed the Committee that it was important to highlight that the proposed increase of Council Tax in 2012/13 at 3 ½ % amounted to £1.95 pence per year to each household in Berkshire based on a Band D property.

The Chief Fire Officer added that the Budget Working Party recommendation was below inflation and reiterated the statement previously made of the Fire Authority's ability to reduce Council Tax in future years, should it become necessary.

Councillor Jeff Brooks suggested the proposed recommendation should be transferred into the base budget.

Resolved:

- a) That the Report be Noted; and
- b) That the budget set out below for the financial 2012/2013 be Recommended to the Fire Authority.
- i) That the Council tax freeze grant be refused; and
- i) That Council Tax be increased to 3 ½ %, amounting to £1.95 per year (based on Council Tax Band D properties).

The Vice-Chairman took over the Chair during the early considerations of the next item.

336. 2011/12 BUDGET MONITORING

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

The Committee were advised that RBFRS was still waiting to receive the Bellwin claim as a result of the Swinley Forest Fire held in May 2011 and was further advised that the claim would be going for Minister approval imminently.

In response to a question regarding a point of clarity, the Authority Treasurer confirmed that the current under-spend for 2011/12 of £650,000 would be transferred to the Development Fund on receipt of the Bellwin claim, if successful. The Authority Treasurer further advised that if RBFRS were not successful with the Bellwin claim an underspend of £250,000 would be transferred into the Development Fund.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

The Chairman took over the Chair during the early considerations of the next item.

337. ROYAL BERKSHIRE PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2012-2013

The Committee's views were sought on a draft Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 prepared for the Fire Authority to meet its obligation under Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 to publish such a statement by 31st March 2012. The Committee was invited to amend the draft statement as it saw fit and finalised it for recommendation to the Fire Authority on 8th February 2012.

In response to a question from Fire Brigades Union Chair, Maurice Whyte, the Director of Human Resources advised he would confirm and update the number of RBFRS employees in the policy. The Director of Human Resources took the Committee through proposed amendments to the policy, namely, the inclusion of the cycle to work scheme and regional payments (Removal of Fringe Allowance).

The Chairman briefly informed the Committee of the Fire Brigades Union involvement in the negotiation of the removal of fringe allowance.

In response to a request from the Chairman, the Director of Human Resources agreed to provide a comparison of Pay Multiples with other Fire and Rescue Services.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the Committee Recommend the Fire Authority approve the Pay Policy Statement at its meeting on 8th February 2012.

338. CONTROL OPTIONS PROJECT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated the Committee on the progress of the work being undertaken to review the options for updating/replacement of the current Control Room as a consequence of the cancellation of the FiReControl Project.

The Committee were informed that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) were due to announce successful Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) awarded with the Section 31 Resilience grant in February 2012.

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The Deputy Chief Fire Officer requested the Committee to consider the appointment of two Fire Authority Members on to the Programme Sponsoring Group, in order to establish the Control project. He further advised that the Programme Sponsoring Group would provide Programme governance and not Fire Authority governance.

In response to a question from Fire Brigades Union Chair, Maurice Whyte, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised that subject to the approval of the recommendations set out below to the Fire Authority on 8 February 2012; the Unions would formally be invited to engage in discussions regarding Control options.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That the proposed structure for the Programme Sponsoring Group be Agreed;
- c) The appointment of two Members of the Fire Authority (Councillors Dr Paul Bryant and Angus Ross) to the Programme Sponsoring Group be recommended to the Fire Authority on 8 February 2012.
- d) That the Control Options Project / Programme Sponsoring Group be a Standing Agenda Item.

339. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the Strategic Policy and Programme Manager to the Committee. Members were informed the proposed format for the Corporate Plan/Annual Report for 2012/13.

Members welcomed the Strategic Policy and Programme Manager and suggested for the inclusion of the following into the Corporate Plan;

- Summary of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service achievements
- Detail of where the Fire Authority have come from and proposed future accomplishments
- The inclusion of year on year trends (performance against targets)
- Detail on the activity of the Fire Authority as well as the service.

Resolved:

- a) That the proposed Corporate Plan/Annual Report structure for 2012-13 and provided comments to inform the final draft be considered.

340. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION UPDATE

The Committee was provided with an overview of the number and type of Freedom of Information Requests during 2011.

Members advised of their disappointment on the increase cost to the RBFRS year on year in the time spent on Freedom of Information. In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he would provide her with the number of Information requests received by the media.

In answer to a question on the rules of recharging, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer advised that recharging applied to whether the information requested was complex or large.

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Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

341. CREWING LEVEL (QUARTERLY REPORT) – JULY – SEPTEMBER 2011

The Committee was advised of the crewing levels for Wholetime appliances.

The Fire Brigade Union Chair, Maurice Whyte advised of his concern that the crewing level fell below normal on 78 occasions (42.3%) requiring one or more pumping appliances to crew with four personnel.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that station establishment had fallen due to retirements and the recruitment freeze. He advised that a transfer programme of fire-fighters from other fire and rescue services was planned to coincide with the implementation of the Retained Support Unit (RSU).

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer advised despite the aforementioned fall in station establishment, wholetime frontline pumping appliances were crewed for 88.5 % of all incidents attended during the report period.

In response to a question by the Vice-Chairman, the Director of Human Resources advised that training was given to RBFRS Senior Officers on the management and implementation of the sickness policy.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer briefly updated the Committee on Crewing levels in October and November 2011. He reported the crewing levels had improved due to the reallocation fire-fighters from Newbury, arising from the decisions relating to the Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU)

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

342. REPORT FROM RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Chief Fire Officer reported the latest assessment of the risks affecting Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) as assessed by the Risk Management Group (RMG).

Discussion was held on the risks indicated in red, namely the Impact of Olympics to RBFRS and the Retained Duty System. Members were advised since the writing of the report a shift pattern had been negotiated with the Fire Brigades Union to enable the Retained Support Unit to be implemented.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;

343. CONSULTATION ON NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Committee was informed of the consultation, issued recently on the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England.

Councillor Dr Paul Bryant advised that he would provide the Chief Fire Officer with comments made at the recent Local Government Association on the above issue.

Resolved:

**Councillor
Dr Paul
Bryant**

- a) That the report be Noted.

344. FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER CHAMPIONS' BIENNIAL REPORTS

The Committee was provided with the Fire Authority Member Champions' biennial reports, namely Communications, Community Safety, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety Champions 6-monthly reports.

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that a Member Development 6-monthly report would be presented to the Fire Authority Annual meeting in June 2012.

Resolved:

- a) That the reports be Noted.

345. AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the Audit and Performance Review Committee's Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

- a) That no changes be made to the Terms of Reference at this time.

346. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) WORKING PARTY'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the IRMP Working Party Terms of Reference.

Resolved:

- a) That no changes be made to the Terms of Reference at this time.

347. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered their Terms of Reference.

Councillor Jeff Brooks **Moved** for future Terms of Reference of the Fire Authority's Committees to be brought to the Management Committee to approve as and when an amendment or insertion had been made. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Resolved:

- a) That no changes be made to the Terms of Reference at this time.

348. FORWARD PLAN

Resolved:

- a) That the Forward Plan be Noted.

349. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

- a) That the next meeting will be held on Monday 26 March 2012 at 6.30 pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS.

350. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

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- 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.

351. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

352. STAFFING ISSUES A – REMOVAL OF POST

The Committee's approval was sought to remove a post from the organisational structure at the earliest opportunity.

Resolved:

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

353. STAFFING ISSUES B

The Committee was updated of the outcome of discussions regarding on-going staffing issues and approval was sought for a Recommendation to the Fire Authority regarding the proposals contained in the report.

Resolved:

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