

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Held on Monday 23 MAY 2011

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

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

In Attendance: Olaf Baars (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
Conor Byrne (Senior Accountant)
Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Becci Jefferies (Human Resources Manager)
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 Representative
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers

Action

262. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Fire Brigades Union Representative present, Mark Stollery, advised that he did not wish to address the Management Committee at any Part I Agenda item.

263. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeff Brooks (Member, Fire Authority) and Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority).

264. 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.

265. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2011

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 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, and that the actions referenced at Minute 242f) and 242g) (Location of Heavy Rescue Unit (HRU) had been deferred to the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party meeting on 4 July 2011 and the Management Committee meeting on 25 July 2011 respectively.

266. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a) The Chairman reported that he had attended the recent Firefighters' Memorial Service at the Arboretum.
- b) The Chairman advised that he had attended the last meeting of the Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Management Committee. He referred to the salient points of discussion, firstly that any submissions for breakaway Brigades would be scrutinised by the CLG, and secondly of the Fire Minister's concern that some Brigade's did not have robust Business Continuity Plans in place. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reassured Members that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Pandemic Flu Business Continuity Plan was robust, however the Plan to deal with the onset of industrial action still required some further work. The Chairman suggested that Members may wish to consider this at a future meeting.
- c) The Chairman reported that he had been pleased to attend the recent Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Award Ceremony held at Bearwood College.
- d) The Chairman reminded Members that the 'Last Brick Ceremony' at Wokingham Fire Station would be taking place on Friday 27 May 2011. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer alluded to some of the suggestions already put forward for inclusion within the Time Capsule.

267. SWINLEY FOREST FIRE INCIDENT (MAY 2011)

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave a briefing and pictorial presentation from the recent large fire incident at Swinley Forest. He described the nature of the incident, the working conditions, the tactics used, the size of the incident, the involvement with 12 other Fire and Rescue Services, the support provided by London Fire Brigade, the disruption caused to the local community including local school closures, the containment put in place which proved critical to the management of the incident, and the involvement of other agencies including the Forestry Commission, local Councils, other emergency services and voluntary agencies. He was pleased to report that the only injuries suffered were minor.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer also referred to the notable successes, which included containing the fire so that it did not reach a number of local establishments, for example, the Transport Research Laboratory, Broadmoor Hospital, Brookers Row, and local housing, and to some other significant issues relating to local pipelines, gas mains and electrical cabling.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that a full debrief would now take place, however some immediate key learning points identified which would need to be re-examined in more detail included the provision of catering at large incidents, options for off-road capability and the contracted provision for the fueling of off-road vehicles.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that he was extremely proud of the professionalism shown by all those personnel involved in the Swinley Forest fire incident which had ensured the containment and extinguishment of the fire with no loss to property.

Councillor Colin Dudley, Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons and Councillor Iain McCracken paid particular tribute to the Brigade in how it had managed the incident and in how it had worked with all the other Services and agencies. In

response to Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he would be writing to all those involved to convey his thanks and appreciation.

The Chairman read a complimentary letter received from Richmond Fire Station regarding this incident which he stated he had been very pleased to receive.

268. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

269. ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011 (DRAFT)

The Committee's approval was sought for the draft framework of the 2010-2011 Annual Report.

Councillor Iain McCracken asked that reference to the Annual Audit Plan be included, and Members asked that the use of acronyms should be avoided.

In response to Members questions, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the distribution of the Annual Report, once approved, would be by electronic means, however hard copies could be made available on request, and, that the Plan could be translated, again on request, if required.

Councillor Colin Dudley accepted the Chairman's invitation to Members to receive an electronic copy of the final draft for his consideration prior to its presentation to the Fire Authority for approval.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted;
- b) That Officers be Authorised to finalise the Annual Report in consultation with the Chairman; and
- c) That the Fire Authority be Recommended to approve the 2010-2011 Annual Report at its Annual Meeting on 29 June 2011.

270. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS (DEE ROAD) PLANNING APPLICATION

The Committee was advised of the outcome of the Fire Authority's planning application, and approval was sought to enter into a Section 106 agreement.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reminded the Committee that no decision had yet been made with regard to the future of the Brigade Headquarters site.

In referring to the issue of planning permission which was dependent on the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 18 May 2011, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer confirmed that an extension to this date had now been agreed.

In response to Councillor Colin Dudley, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer advised that he did not consider that future development of the Brigade Headquarters site would be prejudiced should the Control Building remain in its current location.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- b) That Officers be Authorised to agree terms and enter into a Section 106 agreement in respect of the Dee Road site.

CFO

CFO

CFO

Fire Authority
Agenda
(29.06.11)

271. FRAML (FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES MUTUAL LTD) ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee was advised of the current position regarding FRAML - a Fire Service Mutual Insurance venture, and that there now exists a legal basis for the formation of a Fire Service Mutual Insurance venture.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted; and
- b) That further reports to the Committee be deferred at the discretion of the Authority Treasurer.

272. CONTROL WORKING PARTY - UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that options for a collaborative Control Room provision were still being explored, and that evaluations were being undertaken by each of the Thames Valley Brigades to consider the future potential for partnership working. He then referred to the other options also being explored, including those with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and London Fire Brigade, and to two commercial options to outsource Control options. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer then alluded to the recent meeting held with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services regarding options for the way forward.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that the draft Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service Control Scoping and Feasibility Study would now be completed by the end of June 2011, a slight delay on the previously reported timeframe, for presentation to Members for consideration at its meeting on 25 July 2011.

Agenda
25.07.11

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

The Fire Authority's SEFRCCCL Board Representative, Councillor Angus Ross, stated that he did not have any significant position updates to report at the current time and that he would be presenting his annual report to the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting on 29 June 2011.

274. 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 October 2010 to March 2011 at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and of progress on the Health and Safety Objectives 2010-2012.

Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliard-Symons were both concerned regarding the reported data for the average working time lost per employee and felt that this could be improved further, however they applauded those staff whose sickness records were exemplary. The HR Manager agreed to consider further training opportunities for Middle Managers and any other measures that could further reduce the level of sickness absence.

HR Manager

In response to Members questions and points of clarity:

- The HR Manager agreed to include, within future reports, an additional column within the table data for the number of duty days lost due to

HR Manager

sickness (excluding Retained Duty System personnel) detailing the actual number of staff equated to the days lost.

- The HR Manager agreed, where references within future reports were made regarding progress on Health and Safety Objectives, that these references be augmented with how progress was being realised. HR Manager
- The HR Manager agreed to ascertain whether there was any available benchmark data for other Fire and Rescue Services in relation to working time lost due to absences of 4 weeks or longer. HR Manager
- The HR Manager confirmed that:
 - The statistics to support the fitness testing for the period post October 2010 had not yet been confirmed;
 - That to measure whether a member of staff was fit for duty, advice would be sought from Occupational Health; and
 - That the Health and Safety Department evaluated any trends resulting from workplace accidents.

Councillor Angus Ross was pleased to note the improvement in the overall fitness levels for operational personnel since April 2007, and that this was to be congratulated.

The Chairman conveyed his thanks for a well informed report.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

275. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee Manager advised that the reference to the "Communications Champion" as the Lead Officer against the "Health and Safety Champion - annual report" to the Fire Authority in June 2011 should read "Health and Safety Champion".

Resolved:

- a) That the report be Noted.

276. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Monday 25 July 2011 at 6.30pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS.

The Management Committee will also meet immediately following the Annual Fire Authority on Wednesday 29 June 2011 for the purposes of appointing its Chairman and Vice-Chairman.