

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



Held on Monday 24 January 2011

Kennet Room, 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))  
Councillor Colin Dudley (Vice-Chairman, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Mrs Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority)  
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)

### 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)  
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
Councillor Fred Pugh (Member, Fire Authority)  
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)  
David Wallace (Director of Human Resources)

**Observers:** Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Representatives  
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers

### Action

**201.** The Fire Brigades Union representatives present did not wish to address the Committee on any Part I item.

### **202. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority) and Councillor Iain McCracken (Member, Fire Authority). Apologies were also received from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

### **203. 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 9 (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.

### **204. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2011**

#### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chief Fire Officer advised that the South East Chief Fire Officers had met on 19 January 2011 to discuss Control Room options, and that all Fire and Rescue Services were considering options which included shared services with

Police Forces or outside of region. He also advised that he would, with the Chairman, be attending a Control Room Options meeting on 24 February 2011 with other South East Chief Fire Officers and Chairmen to consider the options being put forward. In response to Councillor Colin Dudley with regard to a feasibility study being undertaken to consider the use of the Service's current Control Room, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he had written to the Thames Valley and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services' Chief Fire Officers with a view to a scoping study being conducted. He also confirmed that Property Consultants had been commissioned to evaluate the potential costs of keeping the current Control Room building (*Minute reference 193, Control Room Options Project*).

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

## **205. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) The Chairman reported that a 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' would be provided in due course, and that this consultation document was available on the CLG's website.
- b) The Chairman stated that he had attended, with Bryan Morgan (Area Manager, Support Services), a Local Government Association FiReControl Seminar on 24 January 2011, at which there had been representation from most Fire and Rescue Authorities. He stated that there had been an interesting exchange of views, a salient point being the need to work towards resilience.
- c) The Chairman was pleased to report that West Berkshire Council had recently passed a resolution for the installation, where appropriate, of automatic fire suppression systems in Council buildings. Councillor Fred Pugh stated that Reading Borough Council had also passed a similar resolution on 19 October 2010.

## **206. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

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

## **207. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That a further clause be included within the Strategic Asset Management Committee's Terms of Reference after CO23 G to now read:  
"Consideration of proposed capital acquisitions and disposals (for capital projects or freehold properties over the value of £100,000 or leasehold properties over a total rental value of £100,000 over the term of the lease) and formulation of recommendations to the Management Committee and/or Fire Authority as appropriate";  
and that the Committee's Terms of Reference, as amended, be recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.

## 208. UPDATE ON FIRECONTROL PROJECT

The Committee was advised of the current position regarding the Control function.

Councillor Angus Ross **Moved** that the Management Committee set up a Sub Committee, to comprise of 3-4 Members, to work with Officers on all aspects of Control, including supporting the current Control and staff, assisting in working with other Fire and Rescue Services/Fire and Rescue Authorities on possible longer term Control solutions, assisting in the preparation of a joint Fire and Rescue Service/Fire and Rescue Authority response to the CLG Control Consultation, which ends on 8 April 2011; that this Sub Committee report back to the Management Committee at each meeting; and that the Sub Committee propose recommendations, as necessary, to put to the full Fire Authority. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Colin Dudley and **unanimously Agreed**.

The Chief Fire Officer shared Councillor Colin Dudley's concern over the amount of money that had already been invested in the FiReControl project, the project having now been terminated, and of the limited outcome in terms of disposal of the project's assets.

The Chairman referred to the need to ensure that the governance of any potential partnership arrangements for the provision of the Brigade's Control Room function be considered carefully.

The Chairman stated that he had every confidence in the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Information Systems Manager in taking forward the technical aspects of the Firelink project in light of the termination of the FiReControl project.

### **Resolved:**

- a) That a Sub Committee be established, as Moved, and that its membership comprise of 3 Conservative Party Group Members (Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, Councillor Colin Dudley and Councillor Angus Ross), one Liberal Democrat Party Group Member (Councillor Jeff Brooks), and one Labour Group Member (Councillor Paul Gittings).

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

Councillor Angus Ross, in his capacity as the Fire Authority's SEFRCCCL Board Representative, advised that at the last meeting of the SEFRCCCL, discussions had taken place with regard to how to wind down the Company, and that this would also form the main Agenda item at future meetings.

**Councillor Angus Ross conveyed his apologies and he retired from the meeting.**

## 210. DRAFT 2011/12 BUDGET

The Committee was advised of the work of the Budget Working Party. The Chairman reported that a further meeting of the Budget Working Party would take place on 14 February 2011 just prior to the next meeting of the Management Committee to further consider the draft proposals for a base budget for 2011/2012 and the draft Capital Programme for 2011/2012 to 2015/2016. He gave his assurance that no resolutions had yet been passed with regard to the budget.

Standing  
Agenda  
Item

**Resolved:**

- a) That the current budget scenarios considered by the Budget Working Party be Noted.

**211. 2010/11 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Committee was advised of the revenue and capital expenditure against budgets up to the end of December 2010.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**212. FRAML (FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES MUTUAL LIMITED) UPDATE**

The Authority Treasurer updated the Committee on FRAML, and stated that the judgement relating to the appeal in the case of RMP v LAML was expected around the Easter period. He stated that the Committee would be advised when the judgement had been made.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**213. CREWING LEVEL MONITORING**

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

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer apologised to the Committee that the presented report graphs contained erroneous data, and he agreed to re-present the correct data at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**214. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION UPDATE**

The Committee was provided with an overview of the number and type of Freedom of Information Requests received during 2010.

Lincoln Ball (Station Manager, Technical) agreed to include, within future reports, a table to show the themes of the Freedom of Information requests.

General discussion took place regarding the provision of contact address details by those people submitting Freedom of Information requests. The Station Manager (Technical) confirmed that the provision of an E-mail address was deemed sufficient. Noting that at least one Fire and Rescue Authority required, at a minimum, a full contact address prior to a response being provided to a Freedom of Information request, it was **Agreed** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO) should ascertain the legal position, and advise the Committee Members accordingly.

The Chairman **Moved** that an amendment to the Authority's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme be made to include website links to the Authority's payments over £500. This was **Seconded** by Councillor Colin Dudley and **unanimously Agreed**.

**Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.

**DCFO**  
(Agenda  
14.02.11)

**Stn Mgr,  
Technical**

**CMO**

- b) That an amendment to the Authority's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme be made to include website links to the Authority's payments over £500.

## **215. FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER CHAMPIONS' BIANNUAL REPORTS**

The Committee received the following Fire Authority Member Champion Biannual reports, the salient updates provided as follows:

- i) **Equality and Diversity Champion** - the Area Manager (Prevention and Protection) advised that the I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) would be meeting with Officers on 14 February 2011 to assess any gaps within the migration to the new Equality Framework.
- ii) **Health and Safety Champion** - Councillor Colin Dudley, as the Member Health and Safety Champion, advised that the Health and Safety objectives reporting would now be SMART measured, and that a traffic light system would be used in future reports to identify progress against the objectives. Councillor Colin Dudley conveyed his thanks to Officers for their work associated with the Safety Critical Notice (*safety concerns for cross border working during the London Fire Brigade Strike period*).
- iii) **Community Safety Champion** - the Area Manager (Prevention and Protection) reported that the Prevention Department restructure had now progressed to a satisfactory stage. In response to Councillor Dudley, the Area Manager (Prevention and Protection) confirmed that there was no identified trend relating to the recent reporting of fire casualties. Councillor Colin Dudley felt that the presented report had been well written.

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the Fire Authority Member Champions' Biannual Reports be Noted.

## **216. FORWARD PLAN**

### **Resolved:**

- a) That it be Noted that there had been no significant updates since last reported.

## **217. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman advised that the next meeting on Monday 14 February 2011 in the Council Chamber, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7TD would now commence at 7.30pm.

## **218. 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.

## **219. PREVENTION DEPARTMENT REDUNDANCY EXERCISE**

The Committee was advised of the outcome of the redundancy exercise conducted in relation to the Prevention Department restructure.

The Chief Fire Officer conveyed his thanks to the Human Resources Manager and the Area Manager (Prevention and Protection) for their thorough work conducted throughout the exercise, and this was acknowledged by the Chairman.

### **Resolved:**

- a) That the report be Noted.
- b) That the outcome of redundancy exercise and associated costs be Noted.