

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Held on Tuesday 7 March 2006

Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters
103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS

Those present: Councillor Mrs Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor John Green (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)
Councillor Jagjit Grewal (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor David Howes (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority)

In attendance: Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer) (*part meeting*)
Anne Eatwell (Information Technology Development Officer) (*Item 01.11.06 only*)
Christopher Gill (Senior Divisional Officer, Performance Review)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Rosemary Lansdowne (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)

Action

01.01.06 INTRODUCTION

The Chief Fire Officer welcomed Members to the meeting. He noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) had not met since November 2004, and was pleased that this Committee had now been re-configured. He described the role that Christopher Gill would take in supporting the OSC, however asked that the Committee take into account resource and capacity issues when considering future undertakings.

The Chief Fire Officer left the meeting.

01.02.06 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer asked Members for nominations for the position of Chairman of the OSC. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray proposed Councillor Angus Ross, seconded by Councillor David Howes, and this was **supported** by the other Members present.

The OSC resolved:

- **That Councillor Angus Ross be elected Chairman** of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's OSC for the remainder of the year, until the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting on 28 June 2006.

Councillor Angus Ross took the Chair.

01.03.06 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor David Howes proposed Councillor Mrs Prue Bray for the position of Vice-Chairman of the OSC, and this was seconded by the Chairman and **supported** by the other Members present.

The OSC resolved:

- **That Councillor Mrs Prue Bray be elected Vice-Chairman** of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's OSC for the remainder of the year, until the Fire Authority's Annual Meeting on 28 June 2006.

01.04.06 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE**The OSC noted:**

- **That Councillors John Green (Conservative) and Angus Ross (Conservative) had been appointed as Members of the OSC** in the place of Councillors Christine Bateson (Conservative) and Dr Paul Bryant (Conservative).

Councillor John Green joined the meeting.

01.05.06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

01.06.06 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Having been reminded that, in accordance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, Members were required to declare interests, which were Personal or Personal and Prejudicial, where appropriate.

It was **noted** that, on this occasion, there were no such declarations to be made.

01.07.06 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2004

Councillor Jagjit Grewal, who had attended the meeting held on 30 November 2004, confirmed that the minutes were accurate. The **OSC approved** the Minutes, and the Minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

01.08.06 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**a) Committee functions and structure, and items for discussion at future 2006 meetings**

Christopher Gill introduced himself, described his responsibilities in supporting the OSC, and provided an account of the previous discussions he had had with Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, the OSC's pre-ceding Chairman, in relation to her objectives for the future role of the Committee, noting in particular some of Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson's recommendations that:

- The OSC receive a report at each meeting, for consideration, taken from the 'list of priority issues' (*copy tabled, but not re-produced*), as presented to the Fire Authority in December 2005.
- The OSC consider one report from the Executive Committee (EC) Agenda.
- The OSC receive a brief overview of the quarterly budgets.

Christopher Gill conveyed his thanks to Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson for her support.

The **Chairman agreed** with the views of Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson, and **noted** that the OSC should have a meaningful and positive role. He felt that the OSC should meet 3 times a year, and this was **supported** by the Members.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray asked if the OSC should have a 'Forward Plan', noting the benefits of such a plan. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer explained that the OSC had a wide remit, as outlined in its Terms of Reference (TOR), however this could be considered further. The Chairman proposed that the TOR be circulated (copy at **Appendix 1**) for consideration at the next meeting.

Agenda -
July 2006

Councillor John Green stated that there was no reference to a 'call-in' of reports, and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the OSC did not have the jurisdiction to stop decisions once they had been taken. She briefly outlined the role of the OSC, as contained within the TOR.

The Chairman referred to the report, entitled 'Proposal for the Future Structure of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee', which was presented to the Fire Authority on 14 December 2005, and the list of proposals contained within the reports (copy enclosed at **Appendix 2**), and these were considered by the Members:

- **Items 1-2** - no change.
- **Item 3** - the Chairman felt that 6 Members were sufficient, as Substitutes could be appointed. The **Members supported** this.
- **Items 4-7** - no change.
- **Item 8** - the **Chairman supported** Christopher Gill's proposal that OSC meetings be held 4 working days before an EC, but with the caveat, if EC Agenda reports were available earlier than the publication date, that these be circulated to OSC Members as soon as possible to allow time to consider them. The **Members supported** this.
- **Items 9 and 10** - Christopher Gill expressed concerns that, if the OSC did not have a 'Forward Plan', there might be some resource issues in the preparation of reports to support an item from the 'list of priority issues' (*further discussions took place later in meeting - refer to Section 01.13.06*).

General discussion took place in respect to considering at least one item from the EC Agenda, and it was **agreed** that, at each meeting, the Members should decide which report to consider, however if it was felt that there was an Agenda report which the OSC should reflect upon, then this be brought to the attention of the Committee prior to the meeting.

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The Clerk and Monitoring Officer suggested that the OSC might wish to consider asking the Director of Human Resources and/or the Procurement and Facilities Manager to attend future meetings, if appropriate to the item being discussed.

The Authority Treasurer confirmed that Members would, in addition to receiving budget update reports in the EC Agenda, be in receipt of monthly budget update reports via E-mail. The Chairman proposed that a Standing Agenda Item should be to consider the most recent budget update, and this was **supported** by Members.

Standing
Agenda Item

- **Item 11** - as per OSC Agenda.

Councillor David Howes asked how the views of the OSC would be conveyed to the subsequent EC meetings, particularly in view of the previously agreed tight timescale between meetings. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would liaise with the EC Chairman and that Christopher Gill would be the link into the EC on behalf of the OSC.

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Discussion took place in respect to the reporting timescales for the EC Agenda, the level of detail, clarity in respect to financial implications, and what Members were being asked to do and/or agree, and it was **noted** that the late circulation of reports caused further problems.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray felt that the OSC should also consider those Performance Indicators where respective targets were not being achieved, to ensure that appropriate action was being taken to address any significant variances.

It was **agreed** that the framework for the future of the OSC should include:

- Procurement scrutiny.
- Financial issues.
- Health and safety aspects.
- Performance effectiveness.
- Forward planning initiatives.

In response to a request for an appropriate website to view performance statistic data, this information can be found at: <http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/performance.html>

01.09.06 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA OF MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 13 MARCH 2006

Consideration was given to Agenda items 9, 10, 16, 17 and 19 being presented to the next EC, and to whether the levels of supporting detail, the quality of information provided and whether sufficient clarity in respect to financial implications provided would enable the EC to make informed judgements and appropriate decisions. The respective comments and recommendations were as follows:

a) Agenda Item 9 (Home Office Master Agreement with Microsoft)

- Process not shown - needed to demonstrate examples.
- No alternatives, options and consequences to propose outcome identified.
- Savings not demonstrated or explained.
- Report appeared to be a 'surprise' - should have been considered within a 'Forward Plan'.
- Insufficient supporting information provided, and, therefore, an incomplete report.
- No reason and justification provided in respect to the requirement of Standing Orders (SO) relating to Contracts (SO 21).
- Explanations provided needed to be more specific.

The OSC **questioned** how the EC could make an informed decision based on the information presented, and **cautioned** the EC when considering the report and decision.

b) Agenda Item 10 (Operational Risk Information System Replacement):

- Cost benefit analysis should have been included.
- Use of abbreviations should be avoided and, if used, a brief explanation provided.
- Further elaboration required with an improved analysis and explanation to support whether the national scheme would supersede the proposed replacement of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) if the MDTs were to last a further 5 years.
- Consideration should be given to whether financial implications would be within budget.
- Procurement routes should be consistent.

c) Agenda Item 16 (Reactive and Term Maintenance Contracts)

- The **OSC noted** that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer and Authority Treasurer had not been able to comment on the report presented.

The **OSC did not consider** that the agreed resolution taken at the EC meeting held on 23 January 2006, *“that the PFM (Procurement and Facilities Manager) prepare a full detailed report setting out recommendations and associated funding implications for presentation to the EC at its meeting on Monday 13 March 2006 for further consideration, in particular explaining all of the legal requirements for such contracts and confirming or otherwise if such requirements have been complied with”*, had been met in the report being presented to the EC at its forthcoming meeting on 13 March 2006.

d) Agenda Item 17 (Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges)

The **OSC acknowledged** that the report provided sufficient information, particularly in terms of financial implications, for the EC to make an informed decision.

e) Agenda Item 19 (Procurement of consultancy to support the implementation of an Integrated Workforce Learning and Development Strategy for Fire and Rescue Services of the South East of England)

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer declared an interest, reporting that her partner works for one of the contractors who bid for the contract.

- Clearer criteria should have been included.
- Variance in tendering bids submitted - more specific supporting detail required.
- Further explanation required as to why the lowest bid, and other unsuccessful bids, were discounted.
- Inclusion of further explanation required as to the reasons why the PA Consulting tender bid was in excess of £356,200.

- Inclusion of the reasons why the successful bid was awarded - this would ensure that due process had been followed to protect against any possible judicial review.
- Clearer explanation required as to how other Authorities would be contributing proportionally, the financial implications for this Authority, and the associated risks.
- No reference made to whether legal agreements were in place.

After due consideration in respect to the format of Agenda reports, the OSC asked that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer work with the EC to consider:

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- Reporting timescales.
- Quality of information provided, and how this should be presented, to enable informed and appropriate decisions to be made.
- Consistency of procurement routes.
- Clearer financial implications.
- Process, in terms of financial and legal implications.

The **OSC supported** the need to ensure that the Clerk and Monitoring Officer and the Authority Treasurer considered the reports being presented to the EC in terms of financial and legal implications, and **noted** that their comments were not available in respect to the reports being presented to the EC at its meeting on 13 March 2006.

Councillor David Howes proposed that an internal report-writing seminar be considered for Officers, and the Members **supported** this.

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01.10.06 BUDGET REPORTING

The Authority Treasurer re-affirmed that Members would, in addition to receiving budget report updates contained within the EC Agenda, be in receipt of monthly updates via E-mail.

The Authority Treasurer provided a brief explanation of the current financial position to date, noting that, although the current position reported a £169,000 underspend, he expected that the budget would be fully spent up by year-end, and that there might a slight overspend which would be as a result of pensions.

The Authority Treasurer felt that the level of breakdown provided to Members was sufficient for them to consider the financial position, and this was **supported**.

Councillor John Green asked if there was a specific Committee established which considered the zero based budget. The Authority Treasurer stated that a zero based budget exercise had been conducted approximately 5 years ago, but that there was no Committee which currently considered this. Councillor John Green recommended that a way forward would be to establish a Sub Committee for this purpose.

The **OSC noted** the current financial position and **agreed** that, at the next meeting, it should consider the 2007/08 budget, by which time the EC should have had an opportunity to look at this budget and consider the establishment of a Sub Committee.

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EC Agenda
(May 06)
Agenda
(July 2006)

01.11.06 ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION / RESOLUTION**a) The Implications and Consequences of Arson and Large Building Fires**

Christopher Gill provided a summary of the report presented, noting the salient points, as follows:

- Purpose of report.
- Fire related costs for arson related fires.
- Deliberate fires and the national targets.
- Resulting costs of arson.
- Impact reduction and the partnership work being conducted.

Anne Eatwell gave a presentation which highlighted to Members the 'Mapping System' used. She referred to the buildings' database for primary and deliberate fires, and to the community safety work being conducted in respect to the cluster 'hot-spots', which was now considered within postcode areas to identify the best fit in terms of community safety work.

Councillor John Green asked if respective Unitaries were provided with the cluster information as detailed, and Anne Eatwell confirmed this was the case and that the statistics were also circulated on a daily basis to the Area Intelligence Teams. She referred to the information sharing protocol in place, however noted that there were some restrictions in place regarding the sharing of information in terms of data protection and Freedom of Information.

Anne Eatwell tabled statistical information relating to the Mosaic Group Description and building type (*copy available from Committee Manager*).

Councillor John Green proposed that a similar presentation be given to the Fire Authority at its Annual Meeting on 28 June 2006, as he felt that Members would be extremely interested in the information which was being captured on the 'Mapping System'. The **Chairman recommended** that Christopher Gill provide the report to the Fire Authority which should include further detail on partnership working, and Councillor Mrs Prue Bray proposed that the report should also include details on the impact on Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and Local Area Agreements and initiatives. The **OSC supported** these proposals and **agreed** that the report should also link into the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

The Chairman thanked Anne Eatwell for her presentation.

01.12.06 ITEM FOR INFORMATION**a) Dates of 2006 meetings**

The **OSC agreed** to hold 2 further meetings in 2006, as follows:

- **10am, Monday 10 July 2006**
- **10am, Monday 20 November 2006**

The above meetings will be held in the Strategic Command Centre Brigade, Headquarters, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4FS.

FA Agenda
(28.06.06)
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01.13.06 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**a) List of issues to be considered at future meetings**

Christopher Gill proposed that, from the 'list of priority issues' to be considered at future meetings (*as previously referred to at item 01.08.06*), 'Equality and Ethnic Minority Involvement in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service' and the 'Retention of Staff' be considered initially.

Christopher Gill asked if there were any further topics that Members might wish to be discussed at future meetings, and the following 2 items were proposed:

- Framework and implications for the move from the Brigade's Headquarters at Dee Road to new Headquarters' premises.
- Long-term future and implications of Regional Management Boards (RMBs).

The **OSC supported** these proposals, and it was **agreed** that the following issues would be considered at the forthcoming meetings, as follows:

- **10 July 2006** - 'retention of staff'.
- **20 November 2006** - 'update on RMBs' and 'framework and implications for the move from the Brigade's Headquarters at Dee Road to new Headquarters' premises'.

The **Chairman agreed** to liaise with Christopher Gill on a possible additional item for the 10 July 2006 meeting.

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APPENDIX 1

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall perform all overview and scrutiny functions on behalf of the Authority.

Terms of Reference

- OS1 To review and scrutinise the performance of the Authority its Committees and Sub-Committees and Working Groups in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- OS2 To participate in and make recommendations on the development of Authority policy;
- OS3 To be consulted as appropriate on such decisions as those making them see fit before these are made by the Authority or its Committees or Officers;
- OS4 To approve an annual work programme for the Committee to ensure effective use of time and resources;
- OS5 To review the Best Value Programme;
- OS6 To make recommendations to and/or to make a decision to refer back decisions for reconsideration to the Authority Committees, Sub-Committees and Officers;
- OS7 To report direct to the Authority, where it considers it appropriate;
- OS8 To report annually to the Authority on the work undertaken during the year;
- OS9 To make decisions, at the request of the Executive Committee, about the priority of referrals made in the event the volume of such reports creates difficulty for the management of Executive Committee business or jeopardises the efficient running of Authority business;
- OS10 To oversee the involvement of Members in the Best Value Programme, and to receive and consider Best Value improvement plans.

Membership

- OS12 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall have "X" Members. The Authority will appoint Members at its Annual Meeting. All Councillors except Members of the Executive Committee may be Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, no Councillor may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which he/she has been directly involved.

Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

OS13 There will be at least five ordinary meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time, as and when appropriate. The Chair of the Committee has the power to convene additional meetings to consider business or to cancel a meeting for lack of business or to reschedule a meeting, having first consulted with the designated representatives of all groups recognised by the Authority. In addition, extraordinary meetings of the Committee may be called by the Clerk if he/she considers it necessary.

Quorum

OS14 The quorum for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be 3.

Work Programme

OS15 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be responsible for setting the Committee's work programme.

Agenda Items

OS16 Any Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall be entitled to give notice to the Clerk that he/she wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee. On receipt of such a request the Clerk will ensure that it is included on the agenda for the next available meeting, having due regard to the Access to Information provisions.

OS17 Any three Members of the Authority who are not Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may give written notice to the Clerk that they wish an item to be included on the agenda of the Committee. If the Clerk receives such a notification, then he/she will include the item for consideration by the Committee on its first available agenda.

OS18 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will respond, as soon as its work programme permits, to requests from the Authority and or the Executive Committee to review particular areas of the Authority's activity.

Pre-Decision Policy Development and Review of the Corporate Committee

OS19 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will contribute to the development of the Authority's policy by identifying and prioritising areas for policy development input. In so doing, it will:

- i. Examine and anticipate issues relevant to the Authority's Strategic Policy Framework;
- ii. Review the Corporate plan and consider which issues/reports/proposals they wish to examine in detail before a decision is made;
- iii. Undertake a detailed examination of any proposal in (ii) above, investigating alternatives, timeframes, costings, consultation processes, seeking background or any other relevant information and formulating

recommendations which may be passed to the decision-maker as is appropriate, before the formal decision is made;

- iv. Consult with Members, Chief Officers, Heads of Service or their nominees.

OS20 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may hold enquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisers and assessors to assist them in this process. They may go on site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration and may pay to any advisers, assessors and witnesses a reasonable fee and expenses for doing so.

Pre-Decision Policy Reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

OS21 Once it has formed recommendations on proposals for policy development, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will prepare a formal report and submit it to the Clerk for consideration by the Executive Committee.

OS22 The agenda for Executive Committee meetings shall include a standing item for pre-decision policy matters referred to it by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OS23 In preparing reports for Authority and Committee Meetings, Members and Officers will have regard to the comments and issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Pre-Decision review process.

Review and Scrutiny of Decisions

OS24 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may review and scrutinise decisions made and implemented or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Authority's functions.

OS25 In addition to reviewing relevant documentation for these reviews, the Committee may wish to question Members, Chairs of committees, Chief Officers, Heads of Service, or their nominees. In particular the Committee may seek explanations about the following in relation to matters within their remit:

- i. Any particular decision or series of decisions;
- ii. The extent to which the actions taken implement Authority policy;
and/or
- iii. Their performance.

Members, Chief Officers, Heads of Service or their nominees will be required to attend, where:

- i. The Chair of the committee informs the Clerk of the request in writing or electronically;
- ii. The Clerk informs the Member or Officer in writing giving at least 5 working days notice of the meeting at which he/she is to attend;
- iii. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is to attend and whether any papers should be produced. Where the Committee seeks the production of a report, then the Member or Officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation;

- iv. Where, in exceptional circumstances, an Officer, or his or her nominee, is unable to attend on the specified date, then the Committee will arrange an alternative date in consultation with the Officer, or his or her nominee. Chief Officers and Heads of Service should ensure that Officers nominated to appear have the appropriate knowledge and responsibilities;
- v. Those appearing before the Committee shall not be required to answer any questions which, in the opinion of the Clerk could render the Authority liable to legal proceedings in any Court or Tribunal;
- vi. Appearances before the Committee will always be conducted in accordance with the Member/Officer Protocol (*to follow at future date*).

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members' Rights to Documents

OS26 In addition to their rights as Councillors, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have the additional right to documents, and to notice of meetings as set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules (*to follow at future date*).

Attendance by Others at Policy Development or Review Meetings

OS27 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may invite people other than those referred to in paragraph OS26 above to address it, discuss issues and/or answer questions. It may for example wish to hear from residents, stakeholders Members and Officers in other parts of the public sector and may invite such people to attend.

Procedure at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings

OS28 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall consider the following business:

- i. Apologies for absence;
- ii. Minutes of the last meeting;
- iii. Declarations of interest;
- iv. Consideration of matters properly referred to the Committee;
- v. Responses of the Authority and/or Executive Committee to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- vi. The business otherwise set out on the agenda for the meeting.

OS29 Where the Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducts investigations (eg, with a view to policy development), the committee may also ask people to attend to give evidence at committee meetings which are to be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

- i. That the investigation be conducted fairly and all Members of the Committee be given the opportunity to ask questions of attendees, and to contribute and speak;
- ii. That those assisting the Committee by giving evidence be treated with respect and courtesy; and
- iii. That the investigation be conducted so as to maximise the efficiency of the investigation or analysis.

OS30 Following any investigation or review, the Committee shall prepare a report, for submission to the Executive Committee and Fire Authority as appropriate and shall make its report and findings public.

Involvement of the FBU

OS31 When the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are in public session, representatives of the FBU may attend meetings and will be given the opportunity to present material, discuss issues and answer questions, in accordance with the agenda, to enable the Committee to take account of issues raised and material presented in their reports and recommendations. Representatives of the FBU may only be present or contribute to meetings when confidential or exempt information is discussed with the permission of the Chair of the Committee.

Deputations at Meetings

OS32 Any group or society likely to be affected by a matter which appears on an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may ask that a deputation should be received by that body. Such request shall be made to the Clerk by letter by 12 noon on the day before the meeting to which it relates. The group or society making the request shall indicate the matter to which the request relates, the number (which shall not exceed 5), and names and addresses of the persons who will form the deputation and the member of the deputation who will speak for them.

OS33 On being called by the Chair, the person speaking for the deputation may speak for up to 5 minutes making such remarks as he/she thinks fit, provided that such shall relate to the matter indicated when the request was made, and that they do not make a personal attack upon any person. They will be heard in silence.

OS34 The Committee may, during a further period not exceeding 5 minutes for each deputation, ask questions of those attending. Such questions shall be asked and answered without discussion.

OS35 Thereafter the deputation shall withdraw, save that by resolution of the Committee these time periods may be extended.

OS36 No deputation shall appear before the Committee within 6 months after a deputation has appeared before the Committee with the same or similar objects.

OS37 Deputations will not be received on subjects that have a general application to all or a substantial portion of the residents of Berkshire.

OS38 The Chair shall have discretion to accept alternative arrangements to the procedure set out above in exceptional circumstances.

OS39 Political parties and/or political groups shall not be entitled to use this procedure.

OS40 Members of the Authority not on the Committee may attend and speak at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings.

APPENDIX 2**PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****Extract from report entitled, 'Future Structure of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee', which was presented to the Fire Authority on 14 December 2006**

- 1 That for the remainder of the ensuing year the Committee membership be retained at six Members and the situation reviewed prior to the Annual Fire Authority Meeting in June 2006.
- 2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will meet every four months with the proviso that additional meetings may be arranged on other occasions as deemed necessary or at the request of the Chairman.
- 3 On the appointment of substitutes the Committee Administrator/Committee Manager be authorised to approach any Member of the Fire Authority regardless of their Political Party to act as a substitute, with the exception of Executive Committee Members.
- 4 The Committee and its Chairman/Vice-Chairman will be supported by the Divisional Officer (Performance Review) and his team.
- 5 Meetings will generally be held midweek at Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters, commencing at 10.00hrs.
- 6 Any financial implications will be met from within the existing RBFRS Performance & Review Budget, part of the DO(PR)s budget will be allocated for this purpose.
- 7 If the decision is made to increase the Committee membership to nine at the Annual Meeting then the Fire Authority Chairman be authorised to seek volunteers from amongst the remaining Authority Members who are willing to be appointed to and support the work of the Committee.
- 8 Meetings of the OSC will, if possible, be held approximately ten days before the Executive Committee meetings.
- 9 At least one issue from the "list of issues to be considered at future meetings" will be presented at each meeting, along with at least one item from the Executive Committee agenda. RBFRS quarterly budget updates will also be presented.
- 10 Standing items will include:
 - (i) At least one and preferably two issues from the "". This would require a report on each issue to be produced and presented by the responsible officer.
 - (ii) At least one item from the Executive Committee agenda. This would require the responsible officer to present the report.
 - (iii) RBFRS quarterly budget updates.

11 At its first meeting in 2006 the Committee will:

- Elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the ensuing year.
- Agree on how many meetings should be held during the calendar year.
- Agree on times and venues for future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.
- Agree on what should be included on future agendas (what are they overseeing and scrutinising).