

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PART I

Held on Tuesday 11 March 2008

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



Those present: Councillor Chris Bowring (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Mrs Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Alan Ward (Member, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)

In attendance: Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Andrew Mancey (Group Manager, Support Services) (*Item 02.04.08*)
Nicholas Oxborough (Group Manager, Performance)

Action

02.01.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs May Dodds (Member, Fire Authority) and Councillor Geoff Findlay (Member, Fire Authority). Apologies were also received from Richard Taylor (Clerk and Monitoring Officer (CMO)) and Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer).

02.02.08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Having been reminded that in accordance with the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct, Members are required to declare interests which are Personal or Personal and Prejudicial, where appropriate, it was **Noted** that on this occasion there were no such declarations made.

02.03.08 PART I MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2008

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2008 were received and **Approved**, and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

02.04.08 ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S EXPERIENCES DURING THE 2007 FLOODING

Group Manager Andrew Mancey (Support Services) gave a presentation entitled 'July 07 Flooding Overview' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) in which he described the calls received by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and the resulting responses, the areas affected, and the RBFRS and local emergency planning issues which had been identified as a result. He also referred to the specialist support provided to, and by, the RBFRS following the initial floods, and to the resulting national reports and the local ongoing work being conducted to address the key issues.

Andrew Mancey then provided further explanation to the points of clarity raised by the Members.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreed that an update report be presented to its next meeting on 15 July 2008 detailing the outcomes and actions resulting from the Committee's recommendations below: | <p>AM
Agenda
15.07.08</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that Andrew Mancey approach George Cross (Area Manager, Support Services) to ensure that the lessons identified within the RBFRS on batch mobilising and any others pertaining to mobilising are incorporated into the new Regional Control Centre mobilising system. | <p>AM / GC</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that Andrew Mancey approach the Chief Fire Officer to invite him to write to each Unitary Authority Chief Executive Officer to request their respective Authority's support to the Local Resilience Forum's taking ownership and driving forward more cross service exercising involving both aspects of flooding and wider Contingency issues. | <p>AM / CFO</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that the Water Safety Working Group consider the number and location of 4x4 vehicles and any additional equipment that might be required to support future responses to similar flooding incidences as part of their project remit. | <p>AM</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that the Water Safety Working Group's final report and recommendations be circulated to Fire Authority Members, and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the findings of the report at its meeting on 15 July 2008. | <p>AM
Agenda
15.07.08</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that the Authority Treasurer (AT) invite the Executive Committee, at its meeting on 17 March 2008, to consider any recommendations of the Water Safety Working Group pertaining to firefighter clothing for use in flooding incidences when the apportionment of the 2007/08 revenue underspend to help finance the replacement firefighting clothing is considered. | <p>AT</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreed that the Committee Manager should circulate a copy of the presentation given by Andrew Mancey to all Fire Authority Members for their information. | <p>CM</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended that Nicholas Oxborough should liaise with the Corporate Communications Manager to prepare a press release, for ratification by the Chairman, detailing the work being undertaken by the Water Safety Working Group to address the internal issues following the July 2007 floods and of the considerations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. | <p>NO</p> |

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee conveyed its thanks and gratitude to all the RBFRS personnel involved during the floods in July 2007.

The Chairman conveyed his thanks to Andrew Mancey for his presentation.

02.05.08 PROCESS FOLLOWED FOR THE AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES CONTRACT

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was advised of the process undertaken in

working with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to provide Professional Property Services for one year, through a Service Level Agreement (SLA), and of the reasons why the provision of Professional Property Services now required to be tendered for, and of the process to be followed over the coming months.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Noted the benefits of effecting framework agreements similar to those exercised by Local Authorities, and, **Recommended** that:

- The Executive Committee consider seeking such arrangements for the Fire Authority.
- All Unitary Authorities should be invited to bring this matter to the attention of their local Member of Parliament.

Procurement & Facilities Mgr / **CMO**

Procurement & Facilities Mgr / **CMO**

02.06.08 FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nicholas Oxborough invited the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider which items the Committee wished to consider at its forthcoming meetings. The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agreed** that Nicholas Oxborough should co-ordinate and invite the appropriate Officers to present the following items:

NO

- Progress report on the Integrated Risk Management 5-Year Plan and this year's Action Plan (July 2008 meeting).
- Data security review (November 2008 meeting).
- Actual effects to the Retained Duty System firefighters at Bracknell Fire Station of the Wokingham fire appliance being used as an additional appliance at Bracknell (2009 meeting).

Agenda 15.07.08

Agenda 18.11.08

Agenda 2009

02.07.08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was invited to consider its annual report to the Fire Authority. Nicholas Oxborough reminded the Committee of the work it had undertaken in the previous year, as detailed in the report presented.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- **Agreed** that Nicholas Oxborough should amend the report presented, as follows, for final ratification by the Chairman:
 - Amend the 2nd sub bullet of the 3rd bullet point in Section 3 to now read - "The Committee agreed on a list of priority issues that it would discuss, and the Committee supported the Chairman's recommendation that the issues should be relevant to the public."
 - Include within the report the recommendations of the Committee at item 02.04.08 above.
 - Amend the last paragraph in Section 3 to read - "It was agreed that the Committee Members be invited to attend the passing-out parades of the Phoenix and Evolution courses."

NO

- **Agreed** that the Chairman would present the Committee's annual report at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 25 June 2008.

Chairman

02.09.08 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MONDAY 17 MARCH 2008

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the forthcoming Part I Agenda of the Executive Committee (meeting on 17 March 2008), and the following observations and recommendations were made:

- **Agenda Item 6** (Sprinkler Strategy) - as it was not clear in the report if the proposed strategy was for the Fire Authority to adopt a policy to actively encourage the fitting of sprinkler systems in new builds (schools, high risk residential and other high risk premises), or whether this should be retrospective fitting, the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommended** that the Chief Fire Officer should clarify this prior to inviting the Executive Committee to approve the proposals for a Strategy to encourage the fitting of sprinklers within targeted premises.
- **Agenda Item 8** (Corporate Uniform Purchase (Non-Personal Protective Equipment)) - the Overview and Scrutiny Committee hoped that this issue would be resolved as soon as possible.

CFO

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the forthcoming Part II Agenda of the Executive Committee (meeting on 17 March 2008), and **Resolved** that Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the paragraphs 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:

- **Agenda Item 15** (Award of Grounds Maintenance Contract) (*Paragraphs 1 and 3*).

Note: The following is a summary of the item considered in the Part II meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommended that the Executive Committee be provided with further information regarding the methodology and weighted criterion for scoring used to select the preferred provider.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee then resumed the meeting in Part I.

02.10.08 PERFORMANCE OF THE AUTHORITY IN RELATION TO ITS POLICY OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Nicholas Oxborough gave a presentation entitled 'Reporting Performance Indicators' in which he referred the Committee to the second month's Performance Scorecard (Brigade Operations).

Nicholas Oxborough invited the Committee to consider how it wished the future reporting of the Fire Authority's performance to be presented. He confirmed that he would be liaising with Jonathan Ball (Information Systems Manager) regarding how the data recording and reporting might be made more user friendly.

Councillor Mrs Prue Bray suggested that it would be helpful to include upward and downward arrows to identify the direction of travel of the performance indicators.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray regarding how the RBFRS could pragmatically link its objectives into locally agreed themes which would help secure pool funding, Nicholas Oxborough stated that he would be meeting with David Phillips (Group Manager, Community Fire Safety) to consider this further. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray suggested that the Committee be advised as appropriate.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- **Agreed** that future reports should include Performance summary Scorecards and that the top five significant performance variations be reported in more detail, including any other areas of concern, and that any recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be conveyed to the Senior Management Team. **NO**
- **Agreed** that Nicholas Oxborough should remind Fire Authority Members how the Performance Scorecards could be accessed via the RBFRS's website. **NO**

02.11.08 MONTHLY BUDGET UPDATE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agreed that this item could not be considered as the Authority Treasurer was not present at the meeting.

02.12.08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was **Noted** as Tuesday 15 July 2008 at 10am in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, RBFRS.