

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



Held on Tuesday 15 July 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 Geoff Findlay (Member, Fire Authority) (*part meeting*)  
 Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)  
 Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority)  
 Councillor Alan Ward (Member, Fire Authority)

**In attendance:** Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer) (*part meeting*)  
 George Cross (Area Manager, Support Services)  
 Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)  
 Andrew Mancey (Area Manager, Response, Service Delivery)  
 Nicholas Oxborough (Group Manager, Performance)  
 Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager)

**Action**

**03.01.08 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (2008/09)**

The Committee Manager invited nominations for the position of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Chris Bowring nominated Councillor Alan Ward, and this was seconded by Councillor John Lenton. There were no further nominations received.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Resolved** that Councillor Alan Ward be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year until the Fire Authority's annual meeting in June 2009.

**Councillor Alan Ward in the Chair.**

**03.02.08 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN (2008/09)**

The Chairman nominated Councillor Chris Bowring for the position of Vice-Chairman, and this was seconded by Councillor Geoff Findlay. There were no further nominations received.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Resolved** that Councillor Chris Bowring be elected Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year until the Fire Authority's annual meeting in June 2009.

**03.03.08 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee Manager advised that Councillor Mrs Prue Bray had been appointed as the Liberal Democrat Committee representative on the Committee, and the Chairman welcomed Councillor Paul Gittings as a new Committee Member for 2008/09.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Noted** the Membership of the Committee.

After introducing Nicholas Oxborough as the lead Officer support for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Fire Officer retired from the meeting.

**03.04.08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer).

**03.05.08 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.

**03.06.08 PART I MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2008**

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008 were received, and the following inclusion under 02.06.08 (Future items for consideration) was **Agreed**:

- Rules of engagement for Fire Officers and the levels of risk that Officers were required to undertake within the boundaries of policies (Agenda 18.11.08).

The Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008 were then **Approved**, subject to the above inclusion, for signing by the Chairman as a correct record.

Nicholas Oxborough introduced Nicole Targett (Corporate Communications Manager). Nicole Targett advised the Committee that, following the July 2007 floods, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service had circulated a number of press releases and had conducted press interviews. Andrew Mancey conveyed his apologies for any misunderstanding that had occurred regarding the Committee's recommendation at its last meeting regarding a press release 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 Committee. Nicole Targett confirmed that a draft press release was currently being considered which incorporated aspects of the Pitt Review recommendations, and she agreed to circulate to the Chairman, for comments, a revised draft, prior to publication, which would also now incorporate the Committee's views.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Supported** Councillor John Lenton's consideration that the Committee Members should be furnished with a copy of the draft Minutes once the Chairman had endorsed them.

**NO**  
Agenda  
18.11.08

**NT**

**Committee  
Manager**

In response to Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Nicole Targett confirmed that she had yet to meet with the newly appointed Fire Authority's Communications Champion (Councillor Colin Dudley) and that she would be considering, with him, appropriate communication channels for Members.

### **03.07.08 JULY 2007 FLOODING OVERVIEW**

Andrew Mancey, in response to the Committee's agreed actions at its last meeting, advised that:

- Batch mobilising was being considered within the new Regional Control Centre mobilising system.
- Work was progressing with the Local Authorities and the Local Resilience Forum, and that a Flooding Sub Group had been established by the Local Resilience Forum.

Andrew Mancey reported that the final report of the Water Safety Working Group had not been presented to the Committee as it had yet to be finalised, although it was near completion. He provided a summary of the Group's recommendations, as follows:

- To review the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's policy and procedures and roll-out of training for fire crews.
- The adoption of the national training recommendations (five phases) in their entirety.
- The provision of enhanced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including dry suits to frontline firefighters.
- The provision of life jackets for Officers.
- The enhancement of the resilience of the Water Rescue Unit equipment by provision of another reserve vehicle.
- The provision of additional inflatable boats.
- The standardisation of equipment across the Thames Valley region.
- The adoption of the national standard for Over The Border (Team Typing).
- The provision of a minimum number of off-road vehicles within the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Andrew Mancey noted that, to realise the recommendations of the Water Safety Working Group, capital costs in the region of £100k, as well as on-costs, would be required.

In response to Councillor Mrs Prue Bray, Andrew Mancey confirmed that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Driving School would provide the necessary driver training for the varying vehicle types, and that significant improvements had

been made in advance flooding and weather implications to Fire and Rescue Services by Community Resilience.

### **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Agreed** that the Water Safety Working Group's final report be considered at the next meeting prior to it being considered by the subsequent Executive Committee, and that the report be circulated, if practicable, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members as soon as it was available, for comment, in advance of the next meeting.

Nicole Targett confirmed that a press release would be prepared, subject to Members' direction, following receipt of the Water Safety Working Group's final report.

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

### **03.08.08 FIVE-YEAR INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) UPDATE**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from George Cross entitled '5-Year IRMP Update' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) in which he referred to:

- The National Framework 2006-2008 being the basis of the current 5-Year IRMP, but that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was currently reviewing the implications for the IRMP of the new National Framework for 2008-11.
- The comments from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Review (2005) and to the subsequent consideration of the Shift System Review and Officer Cover Review.
- The relevant strengths, notable practice and the areas for improvement of the Operational Assessment Audit (2006) conducted by the Audit Commission, and to the re-investment and efficiencies of the IRMP Strategy.
- The specific IRMP project based public risks and organisational risks, as detailed within the Risk Register, based on current understanding of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's capabilities as an organisation to address incident types, and which Officers and Project Teams would be considering the incident types.

George Cross provided a summary update of the 5-Year IRMP (2007/08-2011/12) projects, noting that the Property and Property Resources Committee would be considering the Premises Strategy which would involve the Wargrave/Twyford, Wokingham/Windsor and Dee Road/Headquarters site/Caversham Road projects. In addition, George Cross referred to the 2007/08 Action Plan supplementary projects and to the 2008/09 Action Plan consultation which had been reported to the IRMP Working Party on 14 July 2008.

**AM**  
Agenda  
18.11.08

Councillor John Lenton declared a Personal Interest (in his capacity as Councillor for The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) when George Cross advised that a court date was still awaited in respect to the Judicial Review being brought by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The Chairman conveyed his thanks to George Cross for his presentation.

### **03.09.08 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MONDAY 21 JULY 2008**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the forthcoming Agenda of the Executive Committee (meeting on 21 July 2008), and the following Agenda Item was considered:

- **Agenda Item 10** (Single Tender Action - Fabrication of External Staircase at Dee Road Fire Station, and Balustrading at Bracknell Fire Station) - **the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended** that the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) should advise the Executive Committee, at its meeting on 21 July 2008, of what day to day measures and monitoring of premises and safety issues were in place to ensure that required maintenance works were carried out before deemed to be urgent.

**Committee  
Manager**  
(to advise  
ACFO)

### **03.10.08 ASSESSMENT OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS**

Nicholas Oxborough apologised that he had not been able to provide the Committee with a written report due to recent technical problems which had temporarily distorted the target reporting. Nicholas Oxborough provided a presentation of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Best Value (BV) Scorecards and measured targets for General Health, Operations, and Local Performance Indicators (LPI). He reported that, from 2009, the Government would no longer be using Best Value Performance Indicators for performance, but that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service would continue to report on the Scorecard Performance Indicators as it was felt to be a useful performance tool and a way of identifying trends.

With regard to the General Health Scorecard, Nicholas Oxborough reported that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service was actively working towards achieving the equality and diversity targets particularly in respect to female and ethnic minority recruitment. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray advised that, as the recently appointed Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Champion, she would be meeting with the Equality and Diversity Advisers shortly, and would report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required.

Nicholas Oxborough referred to the Home Fire Risk Assessments conducted which, he believed, had realised a significant improvement and impact on a number of the measures within the Operations Scorecard. He reported that there appeared to be some reporting anomalies, particularly in respect to BV 146i (malicious false alarms not attended per 1,000 population) and BV 206 (deliberate fires) which he would be addressing.

In response to Councillor Chris Bowring, Nicholas Oxborough agreed to consider and report on the data in respect to the number of incidents where smoke alarms had been fitted and activated. **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Supported** Councillor Mrs Prue Bray's recommendation that the Community Safety Forum should analyse the data relating to the number of fitted smoke alarms and the respective incident indicators and should consider what improvements could be made.

**NO**

**NO**  
(to liaise with Area Manager, Prevention & Protection)

Reporting on the Local Performance Indicators, Nicholas Oxborough advised that the Senior Management Team would be considering the increased number of amber and red reporting in respect to the emergency call handling by Control, which, he believed, might be as a result of the increased information that Control was now required to capture in response to such calls prior to the deployment of appropriate appliances and crews.

Nicholas Oxborough then provided the Committee with a brief presentation entitled 'Performance Assessment' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*) in which he advised of the targets that had been further assessed, including absence management (BV 12), fire engine crewing (LPI 07), optimum response time (LPI 10a), standard attendance time (LPI 10b) and Road Traffic Collision attendances (LPI 11).

Nicholas Oxborough provided a brief demonstration of the database for performance statistics available on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's website, and advised of the additional available data on the intranet. The Committee Manager agreed to clarify whether Fire Authority Members had access to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's intranet.

**Committee Manager**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

- **Agreed** that Nicholas Oxborough should provide a written report to each Committee meeting in respect to any exception reporting and presentation of the overall Best Value Scorecards.
- **Agreed** that Nicholas Oxborough should present to the next meeting the intranet's capabilities in respect to performance data availability.

**NO**  
Standing Agenda reporting

**NO**  
Agenda 18.11.08

**Councillor Geoff Findlay conveyed his apologies and he left the meeting.**

**03.11.08 MONTHLY BUDGET UPDATE**

The Committee was disappointed that the Authority Treasurer was not able to attend the meeting and that the Senior Accountant was also not available to attend as his representative, and asked that the Senior Accountant be advised of the dates of the meetings. **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Noted** the 2008/09 Budget Monitoring report as detailed in the forthcoming Executive Committee's Agenda.

**Committee Manager**

**03.12.08 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was **Noted** as Tuesday 18 November 2008 at 10am in the Strategic Command Centre,

Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and it was **Agreed** that the provisional 2009 meeting dates be advised at the meeting on 18 November 2008 for consideration.

**Committee  
Manager**

### **03.13.08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **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 14** (Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008) (*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:**

### **03.14.08 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2008**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008 for signing by the Chairman.