

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

Held on Monday 20 November 2006

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



Those present: Councillor Mrs Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Tom Crisp (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Geoff Findlay (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor John Green (Member, Fire Authority (*Chairman*))

In attendance: Iain Cox (Chief Fire Officer)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)

Action

03.01.06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jagjit Grewal (Member, Fire Authority) and Councillor David Howes (Member, Fire Authority).

Apologies were received and noted from the Clerk and Monitoring Officer and the Authority Treasurer.

03.02.06 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.

03.03.06 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2006

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 10 July 2006, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

03.04.06 REPORT ON REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

The Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation entitled 'Regional Management Board for the South Eastern Fire and Rescue Authorities' (*copy available from the Committee Manager*). He outlined the background and the considerations given to the evolution of Regional Management Boards (RMB) as detailed in the report presented, and alluded to the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2006-2018.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to the RMB's principles, its mission statement, control of expenditure, the 6 key collaborative workstreams, the costs to the respective workstreams and the annual maintenance costs for each Fire and Rescue Service. He referred to the recently published Fire Control draft Business Case, the associated costs per head of population and the total investment by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in Regional Controls.

The Chief Fire Officer provided an overview of the allocation of responsibilities across the South East Region and referred to the South East Fire Improvement Partnership (SEFIP), in particular its vision and how this would be achieved, the critical success factors aligned to it, the funding elements, the resource allocation and the timescales.

The Chairman asked whether the Regional Control Centres' effectiveness would be monitored, and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed this.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer for his presentation.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Noted** the report and was encouraged by the pragmatic approach being taken by the South East Regional Management Board and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS).

03.05.06 ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman proposed that, following the recently held diversity training for Fire Authority Members, it would be pertinent to consider, at the next meeting, 'Equality and Ethnic Minority Involvement in the RBFRS', as per the List of Items previously agreed, the report to include measurable targets and references to the national agenda. This was **Agreed**.

Agenda
(13.03.07)
(Director of
Human
Resources)

03.06.06 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA OF THE MEETING TO BE HELD ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2006

Consideration was given to whether the reports being presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 27 November 2006 were timely, whether the appropriate procedural processes were being adhered to and to the quality of information provided.

The Committee identified that Agenda Item 19 (Dee Road Planning Appeal) had not yet been prepared. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Appeal would be heard this week, and that the latest position would be reported to the Executive Committee. Councillor Mrs Prue Bray asked why the report was being presented to Part II of the meeting, and the Chief Fire Officer stated that the Agenda had been published prior to the Appeal being heard and was, therefore, not yet in the public domain. Councillor Prue Bray felt that the Executive Committee should receive an update report in Part I of its meeting, and that if required, elements could be reported in Part II of the meeting if it was deemed to be exempt information. This was **Supported**.

The Committee **Noted** that, whilst at this time no comments were required regarding the Human Resources' reports, issues relating to ethnic and minority considerations would be of particular interest to the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Noted** the improvement to the quality of the reports and the procedural aspects, including the comments now received by the Chief Fire Officer, Authority Treasurer and the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.

The Committee **Agreed** that all the reports met the required criterion and did not require any further scrutiny.

03.07.06 PERFORMANCE OF THE AUTHORITY, ITS COMMITTEES, SUB COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

The Chief Fire Officer presented this item in the absence of Christopher Gill due to annual leave.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that an amendment (*shown in bold type below*) to Page 1, last paragraph, of the report presented should read:

- Accidental fire-related deaths in the home - to reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20%, averaged over the eleven-year period to 31 March 2010, equivalent to **0.280** fire-related deaths per annum, compared with the average recorded in the five-year period to 31 March 1999 of 350 fire-related deaths.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that the data presented had been mapped against national targets. He referred to each Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI), as detailed in the report:

BVPI 143(i) The Chief Officer noted his disappointment relating to the 2006/07 data to date, however this had yet to be correlated.

BVPI 206 The Chief Fire Officer was pleased to report that the RBFRS had achieved significant reductions in the number of deliberate fires over a 5-year period which was over and above the Government's targets for reductions over a 10-year period.

BVPI 12 and 15 The Chief Fire Officer noted the decreasing trend for the proportion of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence, however recent ill-health retirements might impact on this data.

BVPI 17 The Chief Fire Officer noted the improvement to the percentage of minority ethnic representation.

BVPI 210 The Chief Fire Officer felt that the Committee might wish to consider the definition of 'operational' staff when considering ethnic and minority issues at its next meeting.

The Committee **Confirmed** that the reporting style for this Standing Agenda Item was appropriate.

03.08.06 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman stated that the Committee would be continuously reviewing the development of Authority policy, and that it should 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. He recommended that appropriate reports to Committees should include consideration of the aforementioned, and this was **Supported**.

The Committee **Recommended** that the Terms of Reference should be amended as follows:

OS12 First sentence to now read - "The Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall have **6** Members."

OS13 First sentence to now read - "There will be at least **quarterly meetings** of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee each year".

03.09.06 MONTHLY BUDGET UPDATE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Noted** the current underspend position, and had no adverse comments on the position to date.

03.10.06 DATES OF NEXT AND FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Agreed** the dates of the next and forthcoming meetings for 2007, as follows:

- **Tuesday 13 March 2007 at 10am** (Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters).
- **Tuesday 10 July 2007 at 10am** (Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters).
- **Tuesday 13 November 2007 at 10am** (Strategic Command Centre, Brigade Headquarters).

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Agreed** to consider its annual report to the Fire Authority's annual meeting at its next meeting.

Agenda
13.03.07

03.11.06 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 items 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:

- Part II Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10 July 2006 (*Paragraph 3*)

Note: The following is a summary of the item considered in the Part II meeting:

03.12.06 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JULY 2006

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 10 July 2006, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.