

AGENDA ITEM 2 MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS, DEE ROAD, TILEHURST, READING ON WEDNESDAY 21 JULY 2004 COMMENCING AT 09.30AM AND CONCLUDED AT 12.00 NOON

**Present: Mrs C Bateson, P Bryant, J S Grewal,
 J E R Mole (Substitute for Owen E Jeffery)**

Apologies: Owen E Jeffery

3.01/04 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN 2004/2005

As the allocation of Committee places had not yet been finalised it was agreed that the Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee would be deferred until the next meeting and that Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson would take the chair for this meeting in her capacity as the existing Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED: That the Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20-04/2005 be deferred until the next meeting and that Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson be elected Chairman for the meeting.

(Councillor Mrs Christine Bateson in the Chair)

3.02/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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 to be made.

NOTED

3.03/04 MINUTES: 15 JUNE 2004

The Minutes of the inaugural meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2004, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following comments:

Minute 2.03/04: Future Licensing Policy – Fire Service Input
The Assistant Chief Fire Officer reported on the outcome of a meeting held on Monday 23 February 2004 between RBFRS Officers and Unitary Authority Licensing Officers. A copy of the Notes of that meeting is attached to the Minutes as Appendix A for Members information.

3.04/04 REGIONAL FIRE CONTROL ROOMS – POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

The Committee received Agenda item 6 – not reproduced) a PowerPoint Presentation from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) on the establishment of Regional Control Rooms, with specific reference to the South East, and the issues currently under way at national level.

At its last meeting held on Tuesday 15 June 2004 the Committee had decided to consider and adopt the establishment of Regional Fire Control Rooms as a special project. Members' attention was also drawn to paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced), which set out a suggested list of questions/issues, provided by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer as an aide-memoir, which could, if necessary, be raised with the DCFO.

It was also suggested that following the Presentation Members may wish to consider presenting a report to the Fire Authority and/or Executive Committee on the progress of the project and highlighting any urgent issues that should be discussed in more detail by the Fire Authority/Executive Committee.

Prior to making his Presentation the DCFO indicated that Members might wish to discuss certain slides as they appear and he was therefore happy to take questions or points of clarification during the actual presentation. On the invitation of the Chairman the Committee received the PowerPoint Presentation from the DCFO and the following is a bullet point summary of the Headings contained in the Presentation together with brief explanatory notes where appropriate:

- ❖ The background to the establishment of Regional Fire Control Rooms emanates from the Mott MacDonald Report entitled “Future of Fire and Rescue Services Control Rooms in England and Wales (Update 2003) – Conclusions.
- ❖ Government Objectives (Draft Fire and Rescue National Framework 2004/2005)
- ❖ FiRe Control Project
- ❖ FiRe Control Project Timeline
- ❖ FiRe Control Project – Why (Business Improvement Lines)
- ❖ FiRe Control Project – Why Now
- ❖ The Regional Option (Total cost over ten years -£69.3m(NPV) with subsequent savings of £1187m(NPV)
- ❖ The Business Case (Three levels)
 - Strategic Outline Business Case
 - Outline Business Case
 - Business Case

- ❖ Critical National Infrastructure Definitions
- ❖ Security and Resilience
- ❖ Business Continuity
- ❖ Fallback Methodology/Fallback Matrix
- ❖ RCC Structure
- ❖ Accommodation Procurement
 - OJEU – Notice published 16 April, 2004
 - 169 bids received covering all eight lots
 - Stage 1 & 2 Evaluation Process
 - Statement of Requirement, ITT being prepared and evaluation model drafted
 - First Contract to be awarded by year end
 - All Contracts should be awarded by end of Quarter 1 2005
- ❖ Bid Evaluation Process
- ❖ Technical Procurement
- ❖ Component Technology
- ❖ Technology Procurement
- ❖ Mobilising Methodology (RCC (Fire Station) – Resilient Radio Infrastructure – Fire Appliance (RDT))
- ❖ FiRe Control/FiRe Link – Project Boundary Definition – Revised Scope and Supply in Mobile Resources – Fire Appliance.
- ❖ FiRe Control Governance
- ❖ Finance Working Party (FWG) – Comprising representatives from FiRe Control, Senior Users, Treasurers and OPDM)
- ❖ FWG Terms of Reference (Legal implications – ODPM Solicitors will provide Fire Authorities with template from which to work on). The relationship between Fire Authorities and RMB/RCC is to be tailored locally.
- ❖ ODPM Settlement known for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008

Members suggested that it would be prudent for an individual Officer to be based at Headquarters and made responsible for identifying issues relating to Regional Fire Control Rooms that need to be reported to the Executive Committee and/or Fire Authority for information or decision.

The DCFO reported that the South East Regional Management Board had not put forward any bids for potential Control Room development sites and it is likely therefore that the RMB will be provided with a choice of sites by the ODPM. In response to a question that the Fire Authority should be given the opportunity to comment on the proposed sites the DCFO confirmed that as this was part of the ODPM procurement this opportunity would not arise. Only the duly appointed Evaluation Team know where the sites are actually located and the South East RMB representative on the Team is DO House from Hampshire.

Whilst the ODPM has and will no doubt continue to issue consultation papers the time limit imposed for responses has been extremely short. It was suggested that a report be presented to the Fire Authority seeking member's comments on whether this Committee should be asked to look at the specific issues relating to the establishment of Regional Fire Control Rooms. This would give the Committee/Fire Authority the opportunity to provide Councillor Terry Mills, the Authorities RMB representative, with feedback and also provide him with a very clear guide on the questions to be asked.

In response to a further question the DCFO agreed to send a copy of the Ministers speech to the Local Government Association Conference to all Fire Authority Members together with a copy of the slides from the PowerPoint Presentation accompanied by an explanatory letter.

There was the overriding need to alert the Executive Committee to the Committee's concerns with regard to the legal implications of RCC and also provide Councillor Mills with the ability to report back the views of this Authority to the RMB. Whilst it is recognised that Regional Fire Control Rooms will go ahead Members were unanimous in their opinion that Fire Authorities should nevertheless be consulted on the options available and advised whether a decision is required.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for a very full and informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Chief Fire Officer be requested to prepare a report on the options available for Members to have an input and to influence the way in which the Fire Authority Chairman, in his capacity as RMB representative, is steered to make comment and ask questions at Regional Management Board level.**
- 2. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer circulates a copy of the Ministers speech to the Local Government Association Conference to all Fire Authority Members together with a copy of the slides from the PowerPoint Presentation accompanied by an explanatory letter.**

2.04/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In noting that the Fire Authority Chairman would be unable to attend the next meeting of the Committee on the previously agreed date of 29 September 2004 to speak on his

attendance at and experience of the recently established RMB (Minute 2.02/04(3) refers, it was **RESOLVED: That, to accommodate the Chairman of the Fire Authority, the date of the next meeting be changed from Wednesday 29 September to Monday 20 September 2004 at Brigade Headquarters commencing at 10.00hrs.**

**FIRE AUTHORITY'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 21 JULY 2004**

**APPENDIX A
(Minute 3.02/04 refers)**

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Meeting of Unitary Authority Licensing Officers

Monday 23 February 2004

Brigade Headquarters

Attendees:	J Mitchell	RBFRS	A Vernon	RBWM
	P Banks	RBFRS	J O'Brien	WDC
	J Ellis	RBFRS	S Richardson	WDC
	M Pinnell	RBFRS	A Lovegrove	WBDC
	G Harwood	RBFRS	B Leahy	WBDC
	I Grump	BFBC	C Bradley	RBC
	M King	BFBC	N Mounce	RBC
	U Faithful	BFBC		
	M Houska	SBC		
	R Fitton	SBC		

1 Background

John Mitchell welcomed all present to the meeting and explained the purpose of the forum. Firstly the introduction of the licensing Act 2003 would have implications for the way Fire Safety Inspecting Officers carried out their work. The transfer of responsibility for all licensing issues to local authorities across Berkshire would require effective working arrangements and protocols to ensure that RBFRS deal with Licence applications in a common way across each UA.

A draft National protocol has been produced for licence applications by CACFOA (NE Region) and this was circulated to all. Secondly, JM was to update the group on the following:-

- 1 RBFRS Fire Safety Structure
- 2 Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order
- 3 Risk Based Inspection programme

2 RBFRS Structure

JM gave an overview of the proposals for reorganisation of the Fire Safety Section. It was proposed to devolve all Fire Safety work, including Agency Work (Licence Applications etc) to local Fire Safety offices. JM will write to each Authority advising of the new addresses of each Fire Safety office. It was further agreed that email addresses would be set up for each office and these published on the RBFRS internet site.

3 Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order

JM gave an update on the proposals for the reform of Fire Safety Legislation.

4 Risk Based Inspection Programme

JM gave an update of the RBFRS Fire Safety Risk Based Inspection programme. It was emphasised that premises would not be inspected on a routine basis regardless of risk. Those premises, which present the highest risk to life would attract the more frequent inspections. Low or very low risk premises may not be inspected as a matter of routine. New licence applications would be remotely Risk graded and an initial inspection of premises would not necessarily take place.

5 Licensing Act 2003

The draft CACFOA protocol was discussed and various issues were raised regarding the detail of the Operating Schedule and other elements of the application. It was agreed that further guidance would be forthcoming from the Dept of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and that a further meeting would be held a month or so after the guidance has been issued, with a view to agreeing a common protocol within a further 6 months. Claire Bradley (RBC) would notify JM once the guidance had been received.

6 Safety Advisory Group

JM gave an undertaking that RBFRS would attend, as far as possible, each of the Unitary Authority Safety Advisory Groups and asked that details of each SAG meeting be sent to the relevant Fire Safety office.