

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

Held on Tuesday 17 March 2009

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 Geoff Findlay (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Alan Ward (Member, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)

In attendance: Councillor Dr Paul Bryant (Chairman, Fire Authority)
Lynda Kenyon (Committee Manager)
Andrew Mancey (Area Manager, Response) (*Items 02.04.09 and 02.05.09 (part meeting)*)
Nicholas Oxborough (Group Manager, Performance Review)
Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer)

Action

02.01.09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority).

2.02.09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was **Noted** that there were no Declarations of Interest made.

02.03.09 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2009

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009 were received and **Approved** for signing by the Chairman as a correct record.

02.04.09 WATER SAFETY GROUP

The Area Manager (Response) presented some Police thermal image footage of a successful water rescue carried out by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Water Rescue Team in response to an incident on the River Thames in December 2008. He confirmed that this rescue had demonstrated that firefighters were exposed to risks, however all potential risks were taken in a controlled manner to ensure a safe outcome. The Area Manager (Response) reported that the Water Rescue Team had also carried out a successful resuscitation at the scene of the incident which demonstrated the improved first aid skills being acquired by firefighters. The Area Manager (Response) advised that the future provision of water resilient radios was being explored.

The Committee felt that 'good news' stories should be more widely publicised through local media coverage, and asked that the Corporate Communications Manager (CCM) ensures that such stories are communicated.

CCM

The Area Manager (Response) conveyed his gratitude to the Fire Authority for its continued investment in water safety which had realised new equipment, training and improved capabilities, and which was also ensuring that water rescues were carried out safely.

The Area Manager (Response) confirmed that the Water Rescue Group's final report would be available in the near future.

02.05.09 DEVELOPMENT UPDATE ON THE POLICY RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF DEFIBRILLATORS ON APPLIANCES

The Area Manager (Response) reported that the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's aspiration was to provide defibrillations on all front-line fire appliances. He referred to the future development of Co-responder Schemes and the ongoing national Representative Bodies dispute issues, and advised that he was currently liaising with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and the British Heart Foundation. The Chairman was concerned that lives were being put at risk as a result of the national dispute. The Area Manager also referred to the Fire and Rescue Service Circular entitled 'Publication of Research Report on Co-Responding' which he agreed to circulate to the Committee Members.

AM
(Response)

The Area Manager (Response) confirmed that, as part of firefighters' trauma training, stand-alone training, and refresher courses, in the use of defibrillators would be provided to operational personnel.

02.06.09 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its draft annual report to the Fire Authority, as presented, and the Committee **Agreed** that no changes were required. The Chairman confirmed that he would present this report to the forthcoming annual meeting of the Fire Authority.

Chairman
Fire Authority
Agenda
24.06.09

02.07.09 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MONDAY 23 MARCH 2009

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the forthcoming Executive Committee Agenda, items for resolution and noting:

- **Agenda Item 7 (Review of the structure of the Fire Authority)** - the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, after due consideration of the proposals presented for the future size of the Membership of the Authority preferred the option to reduce the Membership to 22, 16 being felt too risky in terms of ensuring Member availability to enable the business of the Fire Authority to be conducted as and when required. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were in support of the presented Committee structure options which it felt would enhance the effectiveness of the Fire Authority, and, in particular, Councillor Geoff Findlay supported the proposal for Task and Finish Groups. The Chairman of the Fire Authority, Councillor Dr Paul Bryant, advised Members of the early considerations of the Party Group Leaders regarding the Executive Committee's future membership.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommended to the Executive Committee that the option for reducing the Fire Authority's Membership to 22 and the presented proposals for its future Committee structure be recommended to the Fire Authority.

- **Agenda Item 8 (Minister's response to proposed Equality and Diversity Recruitment Targets)** - the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Supported** the presented Recommendations.

The Authority Treasurer provided Members with an update on the current position regarding Insurances, Consortium and FRAML.

The Authority Treasurer briefly outlined the salient points within the 2008/09 Budget Monitoring report (Agenda Item 10).

The Area Manager (Response) retired from the meeting during the next item.

02.08.09 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with an overview and review of performance against independently selected performance indicators (BV12 suite- working days lost to sickness (uniform and all staff), and BV143 - number of deaths in dwellings per 100,000 population). The Group Manager (Performance Review) reported that the paragraph entitled 'Future Considerations/Issues' within the 'BV12 Suite - % of Working Days Lost to Sickness' report was an error and did not relate to this issue, and he apologised for this oversight.

The Group Manager (Performance Review) confirmed that Performance Review was conducting a review of BV143 to identify any trends, for subsequent presentation of any recommendations for improvement. The Area Manager (Response) confirmed that the current data reporting was subject to the receipt of Coroners' reports relating to the most recent fire deaths.

The Group Manager (Performance Review) provided an overview of the Best Value Balanced Scorecards for 'General Health', 'Operations' and 'Local Performance Indicators', and he referred specifically to BV209ii (dwelling fires where smoke alarms had not been activated) and BV209iii (percentage of dwellings where no smoke alarms) which he would be reporting on in more detail at a future meeting. He noted the improving trends within the Local Performance Indicators relating specifically to fire safety and crewing levels, and stated that more detailed work was being conducted in relation to LP10 (attendance standards) and how these were being measured.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agreed** that the Group Manager (Performance Review) should provide a more detailed report to the next meeting on the number of casualties in dwellings per 100,000 population (BV143ii).

The Chairman conveyed his thanks to the Group Manager (Performance Review) for the well presented and informative performance reports.

The Group Manager (Performance Review) then provided a demonstration of intranet's capabilities in respect to performance data availability. He reported

Gp Mgr
(Perf Review)
Agenda
21.07.09

SIGNED COPY

Chairman's Initials

AW

that access for all Fire Authority Members to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's intranet had now been set up. In response to the Committee's concerns regarding password access for Members, the Group Manager (Performance Review) agreed to liaise with the IT Department to enable only the initial login to be generic, and that once these changes had been made to the system, Members would be advised accordingly.

Gp Mgr
(Perf Review)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Noted the report presented.

02.09.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Noted that its next meeting would take place on Tuesday 21 July 2009 at 10am in the Strategic Command Centre, Headquarters, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

02.10.09 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

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:

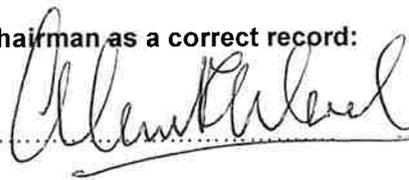
- Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009 (*Paragraphs 1 and 2*).

02.11.09 PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2009

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2009 were received and **Agreed** for signing by the Chairman as a correct record.

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature



Print Name

ALAN WARD

Date signed:

18/07/09