

MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday 1 March 2012

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



Those

present: Professor Christopher Guy (Independent Member, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)
Councillor Chris Bowring (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Peter Jones (Member, Fire Authority)
Mr Baldev Sian (Deputy Independent Member, Fire Authority)
Mr Jonathan Taylor (Independent Member, Fire Authority)
In Attendance: Caroline Redzikowska (Clerk and Monitoring Officer)
Carolyn Rowe (Committee Manager)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)

Action

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Independent Members Mr John Giles, Mr Philip King, and Mr Ronald Webb, and Councillor Andrew Bradley, Councillor Adrian Edwards (Councillor Chris Bowring substituting). Councillor Peter Jones advised he would need to leave at 6pm.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, there were no Declarations of Interest received from Councillors or Independent Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting. There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

65. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2011

Resolved:

a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2011 be Approved.

66. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

67. LOCALISM ACT 2011

The Clerk and Monitoring Officer outlined her paper and the key implications for the Fire Authority Standards Committee. The Bill gained Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, and the accompanying regulations which should provide further guidance, are not yet published.

There is no longer a requirement for a Standards Committee. However, it is a requirement to adopt a code of conduct, uphold the standards of public life under Nolan, and investigate complaints. As such, a number of authorities plan to adopt a standards committee voluntarily, based on the existing code of conduct.

Members of the Committee confirmed this was their view, and as well as taking the opportunity to refresh the existing code of conduct, asked that the monitoring officers across Berkshire work together towards a common code. It was recognized this might not be achieved across all 6 unitary authorities.

Members were dismayed at the drafting of the Bill whereby existing Authority Independent Members were precluded from that Authority's future voluntary arrangements. Councillors asked, and it was agreed, that a letter be sent to the Local Government Minister to this effect.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted, and a further report be brought to the next meeting seeking formal adoption to recommend to the Fire Authority.

Agenda
19.04.12

68. VERBAL UPDATE

Member Training and Development. The Clerk and Monitoring Officer updated members on the delay in progressing members' development and training. This was due to the officer being called back on duty, however, members were advised that this role now forms part of an officer's duties with effect from 1 April 2012. It was hoped that the members' needs assessment could be undertaken by the 28 June 2012 meeting.

Annual Induction An annual induction is proposed to again take place on the day of the annual Fire Authority meeting on 28 June 2012. Feedback and suggestions would be incorporated: these included shorter presentations, and longer on fewer things, choices for returning members, and using other opportunities throughout the year – e.g. member attendance at live exercises.

Councillor Prue Bray suggested that use of sprinklers be added. Perhaps a video, using the current work from the Fire Commission and the LGA.

Elections in May will affect 1/3rd of 3 authorities this year, and overall numbers may alter at this time reflecting proportionality.

The service restructure is rolling out on the 1st April and 1st of June 2012. A briefing sheet for members is being prepared and it will include who to contact under the new arrangements.

Committee Manager. Carolyn Rowe has joined temporarily, initially for 6 months, as Committee Manager.

Complaints and investigations The clerk and monitoring officer advised members that there had been no complaints and as such there were no investigations at present.

69. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is **Thursday 19 April 2012 at 5.30pm** in the Strategic Command Centre.

The chairman offered his apologies for this meeting as he will be in Beijing.

- The future dates are currently
- Monday 16 July 2012
 - Thursday 20 September 2012
 - Thursday 22 November 2012
 - Thursday 7 February 2013
 - Thursday 18 April 2013.

at 5.30 pm in the Strategic Command Centre, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature

[Handwritten Signature]

Print Name

CHRIS GOY

Date signed:

10/5/2012