

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 09 October 2012

Langley Fire Station, London Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7HS



Committee Members: Councillor Alistair Auty (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Christine Bateson (Member, Fire Authority)
Councillor Prue Bray (Member, Fire Authority)
*Councillor Paul Bryant (Member, Fire Authority), (*Substitute*)
Councillor Adrian Edwards (Member, Fire Authority) (*Vice-Chairman*)
*Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons (Member, Fire Authority)
*Councillor Paul Gittings (Member, Fire Authority)
*Councillor John Lenton (Member, Fire Authority), (*Substitute*) *part meeting*
*Councillor Chris Maskell (Member, Fire Authority)
*Councillor Angus Ross (Member, Fire Authority) (*Chairman*)
**present*

In Attendance: Caroline Redzikowksa (Director, Corporate Services)
Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer)
Paul Southern (Assistant Chief Fire Officer)
Andrew Vallance (Director of Resources)

Observers Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Officers

Action

179. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alistair Auty, Councillor Christine Bateson (Councillor John Lenton substituting), Councillor Prue Bray and Councillor Adrian Edwards (Councillor Paul Bryant substituting).

180. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Members and Officers.

181. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2012

Resolved:

a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 be agreed as a true record and approved for signing by the Chairman.

182. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2012

a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2012 be agreed as a true record and approved for signing by the Chairman.

183. PROVISION OF SPACE FOR WET / DRY SUITS AT STATION 1 - PRESENTATION

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) gave a presentation on the provision of space for wet / dry suits at Station 1 (Caversham Road, Reading) on behalf of the Area Manger (Response). He advised that Station 1 was Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's (RBFRS) base for the water rescue unit. Station 1 was built between the 1920s' – 30s' and he advised that the storage of

equipment had become problematic as the facilities were now inadequate.

The Strategic Asset Management Committee (SAMC) identified the inadequacy of the provision of space around 1 year ago and the ACFO advised that improvements had been made since that meeting. He tabled photographs of the provision of facilities that had now been provided for the storage of wet / dry suits.

The Committee was informed of the asset plans on the future refurbishment of Slough and Caversham Road Fire Stations and was further advised that the water rescue training equipment (central training equipment for all RBFRS fire stations) was previously based at Ascot Fire Station and was currently temporarily relocated to Pangbourne Fire Station until the location of adequate storage space was found.

ACFO reported a water rescue incident highlighting the importance of water rescue equipment. In answer to a question from Councillor Chris Maskell, ACFO advised that the length of time the water rescue team spent in the water was monitored by the Officer in charge as well as determined by the Officer (s) in the water. He added that the water rescue team were highly skilled and trained and depending upon the incident type, over the border Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) resources may be used in support.

The Chairman suggested Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Members attend a water rescue training session at Station 1. He reported that he would make his suggestion at the next RBFA meeting. The Chairman noted the attendance of only two RBFA Members at a previous water training event organised. In response, Councillor Chris Maskell requested the time of year to be considered when RBFA Members attend future water rescue training events.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons felt it was important for RBFA Members to observe water rescue training despite the weather condition, as fire-fighters were called to water rescue incidents during all weather conditions.

In response to a question from Councillor Paul Bryant, ACFO advised FRS's respond to water rescue, albeit the statutory duties of water rescue were yet to be determined.

In discussing RBFA Member attendance at a water rescue training event, ACFO recommended the Queen Mother Reservoir as the training venue provided the opportunity to experience the range of capabilities for the boat and informed the Committee of the option for a training event by Station 1 to be arranged on a Saturday, rather than a Friday, which was Station 1's scheduled weekly training day. He suggested the attendance of a minimum of 12 RBFA Members.

ACFO continued by advising Members that water rescue Officers were trained not to go sub surface. He reported that current Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets were not designed for underwater and informed the Committee of an incident more than 25 years ago where two fire-fighters went underwater with their BA sets. The result of the incident ended as a success, which led to those fire-fighters being awarded for their efforts.

ACFO reported that policy does not allow fire-fighters to go sub surface and advised of a Thames Valley Police (TVP) unit specialised in underwater recovery. RBFRS sometimes use weighted triple extension ladders to recover a casualty that was sub surface and added that live rescues were generally

Chairman

carried out by RBFRS, whereas body recovery is normally done by the police.

In response to a suggestion made by the Director, Corporate Services (DCS), the Chairman requested that a video of a water rescue at Caversham Weir at dusk be presented to SAMC at its next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at this point for a tour of Langley Fire Station. The meeting reconvened after a period of approximately 30 minutes.

ACFO

184. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS PROGRESS REPORT

ACFO reported that a variation to the existing planning permission had been submitted to West Berkshire Council (WBC). The Committee were informed that another planning permission had been submitted to WBC in liaison with IKEA regarding a variation to the public footpath between both sites.

ACFO advised that the invitation to tender (ITT) was scheduled to be completed during the third week of October 2012, followed by a four week period to allow contractors to return their tenders. He invited Members to attend the opening of tenders and reported that he would inform Members when a date had been scheduled.

ACFO

ACFO further added the successful contract would be awarded in December 2012/January 2013 on the basis of the lowest reasonable compliant cost. If the successful contract was more than the lowest reasonable cost, SAMC would be asked to consider the tender in question. Tenders must be capable of delivering the project on time, within budget and for a 30 year building life.

The Committee was advised on the integration of the Thames Valley Control project into the new Headquarters site. Engagement and site visits had been arranged with both RBFRS and Oxfordshire FRS control staff.

The Committee was informed that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) had completed the purchase of the new Headquarters on Wednesday 5 September 2012. ACFO reported interest in the site was received from passers by, which warranted the implementation of security measures and 24 hour on-site security.

In response to Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons, ACFO advised that the security guard manned the site on his own and reported that additional support was available, if required, by TVP or RBFRS Control.

ACFO reported pygmy shrews had been identified on the site by an ecology surveyor and the Committee was informed that they would be relocated in a humane way.

Councillor Paul Gittings queried whether the environmental agenda would be addressed in the refurbishment of the new Headquarters building and whether the building would be refurbished to BREEAM standards.

In response, the Chairman advised that the environmental agenda for the new Headquarters had been discussed with the Management Committee which was informed that the roof was not a suitable structure for solar panels, without additional costs to upgrade the roof supporting structure.

ACFO added that BREEAM standards were not a requirement, as the new Headquarters was not a new build. He provided a brief update on the level of insulation required on the roof and advised that planned works on the new Headquarters were based around the approved budget.

In response to a query from the Chairman, Director of Resources (DR) advised that the insurance company had been informed of the purchase price of the new Headquarters and it would be re-valued once the refurbishment works were completed. To date, the building was insured based on its current value.

185. SECTION 106 RECEIPTS

DR introduced the report and advised that the report followed a request from SAMC at its last meeting in June 2012. In referring to Appendix A, DR reported that RBFRS had received a total of £22,083.75 in Section 106 receipts (provision of hydrants) during the last five years. There were no developments of a significant size to justify new Fire Stations and he advised that Whitley Wood Fire Station (Station 20) was built 20 years ago. The predicted housing had yet to be developed.

Hydrants were not time limited and the cost was around £500. The remainder of the balance identified in Appendix A could install approximately 20 hydrants.

The Committee was advised that RBFRS were notified of developments that required the installation of hydrants to be made by the water company. The funds received from developers were reimbursed back into the hydrant budget.

Councillor Paul Bryant advised that applications were submitted to the West Berkshire Community Infrastructure Levy Fund (CIL) which had contributed to the infrastructure in West Berkshire and queried whether a similar system could be adopted elsewhere by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. He agreed to discuss the issue with West Berkshire Planning Officers and advised that he would report back his findings to SAMC in due course.

Cllr Paul
Bryant

ACFO reported that RBFA had responded to West Berkshire Council's (WBC) invitation to comment on the development of houses in West Berkshire. He advised that if any monies were received these could be used towards the extension of Newbury Fire Station or the new Theale Fire Station to accommodate day crewing facilities. In contrast, ACFO advised that a developer had challenged RBFA regarding the need for Section 106 contributions to be made, as the current emergency resources were suitable. He added, the provision of domestic sprinklers was advised as an alternative to building a new fire station.

In response to a query from the Chairman, DR agreed to contact Unitaries in Berkshire (excluding West Berkshire Council) to examine whether they sought CIL applications from RBFA.

DR

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

186. 2012/13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

DR took the Committee through the report and advised that £1.8 million was used to secure the purchase of the new BHQ building in September 2012.

In examining Appendix A which detailed the capital schemes for 2012/13, ACFO in response to a question advised that the projects to install heating systems was scheduled for a specific time of year.

In response to a question, DR advised that Voice Over IP had been completed.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

187. STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SAMC) TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairman advised of his request to examine SAMC's Terms of Reference. DCS advised that SAMC's current role was to examine the management of RBFA assets. DCS suggested that the Committee consider the current practice of generally making recommendations to Management Committee rather than to the Fire Authority when considering its Terms of Reference. The existing terms permit recommendation to either or both bodies referred to.

The current practice of generally making recommendations to Management Committee has raised an issue of duplication of reports. This places pressure on RBFRS Officers to produce reports for all three bodies, namely SAMC, Management Committee and then Fire Authority for final approval. DCS suggested that the Committee might wish to consider the following :

- Whether more recommendations from SAMC could/should to go straight to the Fire Authority, or
- consider a recommendation to the Fire Authority to increase SAMC's remit beyond £100,000

In response, Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons gave an example of where the Management Committee voted down a financial recommendation from SAMC. DCS responded that usually the Management Committee accepted SAMC's recommendations but did occasionally make amendments. DCS also reminded the Committee that since establishment a number of its members had been both members of this Committee and of the Management Committee, thus meaning that a member could potentially be asked to consider a report on two if not three separate occasions. There was also the issue that having to report up to 3 different bodies meant that there was on occasion delay in a decision being made.

Members expressed their thoughts with the salient points being:

- SAMC examined asset management in detail
- They did not wish to see a duplication of reports
- Suggestion to put to the vote the review of SAMC's Terms of Reference and to identify future pressures
- There was a role for SAMC due to Management Committee examining items on a strategic level (an example was provided when SAMC made a recommendation to Management Committee for a development fund)
- Suggestion for a report from SAMC to consider the increase of its financial remit

ACFO reported that the Property and Property Resources Committee was originally established as a one-off committee which developed into SAMC. He reported on the importance of SAMC and advised of the support received from SAMC Members when recommendations were presented to the Management Committee. He suggested that the Committee may wish to consider or review its capital spend remit.



DCS suggested, that if the Committee was to recommend that the Fire Authority increase SAMC's remit, it would enable recommendations to be made direct to the Fire Authority for approval. She advised that the suggested method would streamline the decision process and avoid the duplication of reports.

The Committee made no changes to its Terms of Reference, but the Chairman requested that a meeting be held between himself, Chairman of the Fire Authority, DCS, ACFO and DR to discuss SAMC's Terms of Reference and to present options to the Management Committee.

DCS

Councillor John Lenton left the meeting shortly before the next item.

188. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15 January 2013 at 5.30 pm at Wokingham Road Fire Station, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1JU.

189. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

- a) That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraph 1, 2 and 3 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.

190. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2012

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

191. SHARED PREMISES OPPORTUNITIES

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

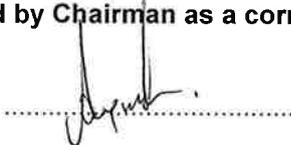
192. PREMISES UPDATE – WINDSOR, THEALE & DEE ROAD

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

The meeting finished at 8.01pm.

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature 

Print Name A. J. Ross

Date signed 15.1.13