

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

Held on Tuesday 15 January 2013 at 6.30pm

Wokingham Fire Station, 11-13 Easthampstead Road,
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 2EH



Committee Members: Councillor Alistair Auty
Councillor Christine Bateson (*Councillor Diana Coad substituting*)
*Councillor Prue Bray
Councillor Adrian Edwards (*Councillor Paul Bryant substituting*)
Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons (*Councillor Emma Webster substituting*)
*Councillor Paul Gittings
*Councillor Chris Maskell
*Councillor Angus Ross (*Chairman*)
*present

In Attendance: Andy Mancey (Area Manager (AM), Response)
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

A site visit to Wokingham Road Fire Station (Station 2) Reading, Berkshire RG6 1JU preceded the meeting.

193. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alistair Auty, Councillor Christine Bateson (*Councillor Diana Coad substituting*), Councillor Adrian Edwards (*Councillor Paul Bryant substituting*) and Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons (*Councillor Emma Webster substituting*).

194. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in relation to agenda item 8 (Brigade Headquarters – Theale Cross) and item 12 (Brigade Headquarters – Theale Cross - Part Two Briefing) stating that she lived in the area.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

195. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2012

Resolved:

- a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2012 be agreed as a true record and approved for signing by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted that the actions in the minutes had been discharged subject to minute reference 187 (Strategic Asset Management Committee Terms of Reference). He offered to liaise with the Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA), Councillor Colin Dudley and report back to the next SAMC meeting in order to implement any changes to the Terms of Reference at the Annual Fire Authority meeting in June 2013.

Action

DCS

196. WATER RESCUE PRESENTATION – CAVERSHAM WEIR

AM (Response) introduced Station Manager Jesse James and advised that Station 1 (Caversham Road, Reading) was the base for the Water Rescue Unit.

The Committee was shown footage of a water rescue filmed by a police helicopter on 19 December 2008. It had been believed that a woman and a child were involved but the Station Manager confirmed that the incident only involved the rescue of a woman.

AM (Response) advised that a similar water rescue had taken place in the Thames in December 2012 and briefly described the rescue. The Committee was advised that the conditions had been particularly hazardous due to the flooding of the Thames.

In talking through the footage, the Station Manager highlighted that the Firefighter had experienced difficulty in trying to communicate with the crew on the bank of the river.

The Station Manager thanked Members for supporting both training and the purchase of equipment which had helped prevent fatalities.

In response to the Chairman, the AM (Response) reported that the Performance Review Team had been tasked to debrief crews following incidents to learn any lessons on procedures and mobilisation.

In response to a question from Councillor Prue Bray regarding the use of radio communications in the water, the AM (Response) advised that in such conditions radio communications did not work. He added that following a recent water rescue in the Summer 2012, the IT department had been tasked to research the market for a radio robust enough to be used in the water.

In response to Councillor Diana Coad, the Station Manager advised that the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) have radio devices embedded into their helmets which enabled hands free communication, however, their water rescue operations were different from FRS's. A business case had been submitted to examine the water rescue communications that are used by the Military and Navy Seals. The civilian market place did not have a communications device that was waterproof.

Councillor Emma Webster noted the investment RBFA Members had made to water rescue and she suggested that a letter be written on behalf of RBFA to thank the water rescue team.

ACFO reported that the Chief Fire Officer had sent letters of congratulations and that a commendation would be presented to some of the teams at the Awards Ceremony in May 2013.

AM (Response) thanked RBFA Members for their investment in the Service.

On behalf of SAMC the Chairman expressed his gratitude to the water rescue crews who carried out the water rescue shown in the footage and who undertook the more recent rescue in December 2012. The Chairman stated that he would suggest the possibility of Member attendance at a water rescue training demonstration at the next Fire Authority meeting.

197. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Resources (DR) advised that the draft annual report would include the progress of the new Brigade Headquarters and an update of the Invitation to Tender (ITT process). A draft report would be presented at the extraordinary SAMC meeting in March 2013. DR agreed to liaise with the Chairman prior to the SAMC meeting in March 2013.

DR

198. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The DR introduced the item and advised Members that on a national level Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) potentially amounted to £1 billion per year. The DR advised Members that there were four outstanding Unitary Authority (UA) CIL schemes that he would pursue in the months ahead.

Councillor Emma Webster reported that a levy was raised by the London Borough of Haringey for the London Fire Brigade, and said that she would send the report to DR for information.

Councillor Paul Bryant reported that in West Berkshire, Section 106 funding was allocated solely to organisations in the immediate area, and CIL was allocated across the whole of the local authority area.

The Committee discussed ways of getting involved in CIL in their UAs and suggested that an item could be put on the agenda of Berkshire Leaders. Councillor Paul Gittings highlighted the need for transparency and the issue of competing interests.

The Chairman stated that he would liaise with the Chairman of RBFA, and would draft a letter to Berkshire Leaders to request that the RBFA be involved in future CIL discussions.

DR

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

199. 2012/13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

In response to a query from Councillor Diana Coad, the Director, Corporate Services (DCS) reported that investigative works had been carried out on the foundation and shared wall of the Drill Tower at Slough and that an investigatory trench was required.

DR advised that all appliances had been fitted with Hydraulic Cutting Equipment.

In response to a question from Councillor Prue Bray, AM (Response) advised that the purchase of replacement cameras would be made within two or three months as a result of a joint arrangement with Kent FRS.

Councillor Emma Webster suggested that the cameras be provided based on need and potential usage.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

200. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS (THEALE CROSS)

This item was moved to Part Two and considered with item 12 (Brigade Headquarters (Theale Cross) Part Two Briefing).

201. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Extraordinary meeting – Wednesday 13 March 2013 at 5.30 pm, Strategic Command Centre (SCC), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters.

Next scheduled meeting – Tuesday 30 April 2013 at 5.30 pm at Crowthorne Fire Station (Station 15), High Street, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 7AH.

202. 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.

203. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2012

Resolved:

- a) That the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2012 be Approved for signing by the Chairman.

204. BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS (THEALE CROSS) PART TWO BRIEFING

An update was received on the progress of the Brigade Headquarters.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

205. PREMISES UPDATE – WINDSOR, THEALE & DEE ROAD

A premises update was received on Windsor, Theale and Dee Road.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

206. SHARED PREMISES UPDATE

An update was received on shared premises.

Resolved:

- a) That the report be noted.

The meeting finished at 9.01pm.

Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:

Signature

Print Name A. J. Ross

Date signed 13 3 13