

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



Held on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 5.30pm

New BHQ Headquarters, Pincent's Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire,  
RG31 7SD

- Members:**
- \* Councillor Joginder Bal
  - \* Councillor Christine Bateson
  - \* Councillor Paul Bryant
  - \* Councillor Adrian Edwards (*Vice-Chairman*)
  - Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
  - Councillor Chris Maskell
  - \* Councillor Tom McCann
  - \* Councillor Angus Ross (*Chairman*)
  - \* Councillor Paul Gittings (substitute for Councillor Chris Maskell)
- (\* present)

- In Attendance:**
- Andy Fry (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
  - Andrew Mancey (Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer, A/ACFO)
  - Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer, PPO)
  - Caroline Redzikowska (Director, Corporate Services, DCS)
  - Fayth Rowe (Committee Officer, CO)
  - Paul Southern (Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer, T/DCFO)
  - Andrew Vallance (Director of Resources, DR)

### Action

#### 18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Pauline Helliar-Symons and Chris Maskell. Councillor Paul Gittings attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Chris Maskell.

#### 19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Angus Ross and Paul Bryant declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as they were Members of the Sponsoring Group for the Joint Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

#### 20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING

##### Resolved:

That the Part I Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Paul Bryant referred to page 2 of the minutes where under Thames Valley Control it mentioned that one of the projects which would be completed would be the replacement of all station and BHQ corporate and public Wi-Fi. He queried whether the words 'public Wi-Fi' was correct. It was clarified that

technically this would be a guest Wi-Fi but that a code would be required to connect to it.

Fleet/Transport Strategy – It was confirmed that a report on this issue would be brought to the next SAMC meeting which would include further clarification of details in relation to the fleet such as mileage, value of vehicles and the operational purpose.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried what sort of discussions had taken place with public bodies to consider opportunities for sharing and rationalisation of property assets. The CFO confirmed that various e-mails had been exchanged with the Police as to the possibility of sharing which would align with the policy direction of the Fire Authority and he advised that he would be meeting with the Chief Constable in the near future to discuss this issue. The DR also stated that once work had been completed on a number of major projects in November then the priority would be to look at the options of sharing property assets with the Police and Ambulance services by trying to expand on current informal links. Councillor Joginder Bal queried what sort of resources could be shared. The CFO responded that resources which could be shared included buildings, systems and the overlap in the preventative work around crime and fire safety where it might be possible to have one officer dealing with both areas.

Drill Tower at Slough – The CFO confirmed that he had had an e-mail discussion with Councillor Tom McCann on this issue. He advised that costs had been higher than expected both in terms of building work and demolition costs. The demolition cost had been considerably higher than anticipated as this would have to be undertaken by hand due to the location of the tower and this had not been included in the original assessment. He confirmed that contract work was continuing.

## **21. PREMISES ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – PRIORITISATION OF MAINTENANCE WORK**

Andrew Vallance, Director of Resources (DR), updated Members of the Strategic Asset Management Committee on the proposed prioritisation of maintenance work on the brigade property portfolio.

Condition surveys on all of the buildings within the Fire Authority's property portfolio had recently been completed. This was a fundamental foundation for the evolving Asset Management Plan and would enable an assessment of the value of works required to individual buildings along with prioritisation of work packages. The analysis of the condition surveys would assist in the allocation and delivery of the capital programme for building works.

The Planned Maintenance Programme had been developed after analysing the identified maintenance and repair issues arising from the recently completed condition surveys. As requested at the last SAMC meeting, the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party (IRMP WP) and the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) had been consulted. However, due to the fact that the IRMP WP had slipped to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 it had not been possible to include its comments in the development of the works programme included in this report. This works programme would be amended to reflect the comments from the IRMP WP and the CFO once they had been received. The proposed works programme only included the worst case situations i.e. Grade C (Poor) and D (Bad) and Priority 1 (Essential work) and 2 (Urgent work). There had been limited consideration taken on the future strategic use of any of the stations, apart from the fact that no works

had been planned for the Dee Road HQ. This strategic context would be informed by any comments received from both the IRMP and CFO once consultation had been completed and the programme of works would be amended accordingly.

The repairs programme as set out in Appendix A identified the priority work for each station which had further been broken down into trades and also included a high level summary of all the properties and estimated costs for each. Costs had been estimated and would be confirmed during the production of detailed specifications and through the procurement process. It might be possible for some of the work, such as redecoration, to be carried out by uniformed staff during downtime which could realise some savings. All the works outlined in Appendix A would be put out to tender through the normal procurement process.

Councillor Tom McCann asked if the Fire Authority had a list of approved contractors and he queried the appropriateness of having fire fighters bidding for contracts where there might be a conflict of interest. The DR confirmed that there was a list of approved contractors. In regard to the use of uniformed staff in downtime this would only be for small repair jobs or redecoration. It was felt that this would be a way of empowering staff as some fire fighters were also qualified tradesmen. The plan was that each station would be given a small budget which could be used for minor repairs/redecoration. The CFO stated that he was keen to recalibrate the service and one way of doing that was giving the workforce a sense of pride in the building in which they worked. For example, work could include fixing signs which were dirty or broken. If this type of work was undertaken by a contractor it could often take a long time to complete and might not be up to the required standard.

Councillor Paul Gittings stated that if uniformed staff were being asked to undertake redecoration work they might want to go to Green Machine based in Bracknell which was a community interest company who supplied paint very cheaply.

Councillor Paul Bryant asked whether the unions were happy with this proposal to use uniformed staff to undertake minor repairs. The CFO responded that the unions would say that this sort of work was not a job for fire fighters to do but if staff were not prepared to undertake the repairs then they would not get done as the money was not available.

The DCS stated that this programme of works did not include the Fire House and she confirmed that a meeting would take place with Facilities to discuss how that would be taken forward.

Councillor Paul Bryant stated that there appeared to be a lot of repair work listed for Dee Road and he hoped that not too much money would be spent on it if it was not proposed to use it in future. Councillor Angus Ross confirmed that this was just an indicative cost as to what would need to be spent on Dee Road should a decision be made to retain it.

## **Resolved:**

The report be noted.

## **22. 2014/15 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Andrew Vallance, Director of Resources (DR), presented a report which informed the Strategic Asset Management Committee of capital expenditure against

budgets for 2014/15. It was noted that all of the capital projects were currently forecast to be within budget. The DR stated that the majority of spend so far had been on the refurbishment of the new HQ.

A report would be going to the Fire Authority meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 in relation to cover at Ascot whereby the Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party (IRMP WP) had made a recommendation to the Fire Authority to move forward with Ascot. It was proposed that a second wholetime pump, established at Bracknell Fire Station, would be established which would provide satellite cover at Ascot Fire Station and the Multi Role Vehicle (MRV) would be moved from Dee Road Fire Station to Ascot Fire station and that the crew be switched with the Bracknell appliance. This would be an interim solution whilst a longer term cheaper option was sought. Councillor Angus Ross hoped that initial proposals could be brought forward to the next SAMC meeting.

In relation to Dee Road the A/ACFO reported that the Fire Authority was continuing to look for alternative sites in Theale (Plan A) but that this was proving to be difficult. It was therefore essential that a Plan B was in place which would look at remaining at Dee Road or a combination of moving somewhere closer. There was potential to redevelop Dee Road and bring in the community infrastructure. Caversham Road was an old site and was in need of refurbishment/ rebuilding but there was a possibility of combining the two sites. The IRMP WP had agreed to look at the options for Plan B if Plan A could not be achieved. Councillor Paul Gittings said that it was good that the Fire Authority had a site which it owned as he felt that a new site would be expensive. It was noted that the Police were looking to relocate out of the town centre at Reading and that might be another option which could be considered. The CFO confirmed that Plan A was proving to be difficult to put in place and there was also a need to find around £4m of savings in the near future. The decision around whether Pangbourne was retained or not was dependent on which option was eventually decided upon. Councillor Angus Ross asked if an update on Dee Road could be provided at the next SAMC meeting. Councillor Tom McCann stated that the redevelopment of Dee Road had been on the agenda for around 4 years. He would like to have some idea of what timescales were proposed as having a building stand empty would cost the Fire Authority. The A/ACFO confirmed that an interim report on options for Plan B would be taken to the IRMP WP at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014 but in the meantime Officers would still be looking to see if Plan A could be achieved. Councillor McCann asked if Members could be kept in the loop and that they should have a copy of the report which would be going to IRMP. It was confirmed that the report would also go to SAMC on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 together with a verbal update on the discussion and any recommendations arising from the IRMP WP.

It was noted that a 4-5 year rolling programme would be put in place to replace all appliance bay doors across the Brigade. The doors at Wargrave were particularly bad.

The Water Tender and Light Vehicles items on the Capital Programme would be deferred until the following year.

**Resolved:**

The report be noted.

**23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 5.30pm – venue Brigade Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

**24. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

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.

**25. PART II MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2014**

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**26. PROPERTY UPDATE PART II**

Andrew Vallance, Director of Resources (DR), introduced the report. Following detailed consideration by the Committee the recommendation in the exempt report was agreed.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations be agreed.

*The meeting concluded at 6.49pm*

**Minutes signed by Chairman as a correct record:**

Signature



Print Name

ANGUS J ROSS

Date signed

18.11.2014

