



BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

REPORT OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY FROM ITS MEETING ON 5 FEBRUARY 2010 TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MEETINGS

Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority (CFA) held a meeting on 5 February 2010 at Dunstable Community Fire Station. The major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below:

1. THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY SUPPORT SERVICE (FESS)

Members received a presentation by the British Red Cross on FESS, which was delivered by trained volunteers, using a specially adapted vehicle, to provide practical help and emotional support to vulnerable people affected by a domestic fire or similar incident.

A Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the partnership between the Red Cross and the Fire and Rescue Service was signed after the meeting.

2. PERFORMANCE ACHIEVEMENT SCRUTINY GROUP: 13 JANUARY 2010

Members agreed a draft Anti Fraud Statement, Policy and Fraud Response Plan for consultation with employee representative bodies and the Authority's Standards Committee.

3. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING SCRUTINY GROUP: 20 JANUARY 2010

All Members agreed to act as 'Sprinkler Champions' to encourage colleagues involved in the provision of education services to ensure sprinkler systems are installed in schools.

Following a review of the Service's Flood Contingency Arrangements Members urged Government to make a decision on whether response to flooding should be a statutory duty of the fire and rescue service and, if so, to provide the necessary funding to ensure a national response capability.

4. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – 2009/10

Members noted their fourth monitoring report on the management of the 2009/10 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

5. BUDGET 2010/11 TO 2012/13

Members' Budget Workshops held on 11 December 2009 and 26 January 2010 had considered the detail of the proposed Budget which was set out in the Budget Book 2010/11 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13.

The agreed Revenue Budget of £28,498,725 involved an increase in Council Tax for 2010/11 of 1.0% for all properties.

6. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2010/11

Members considered a calendar of meeting dates for the Fire Authority and its associated Committees and Groups in 2010/11.

In view of the local government elections to be held in May 2011, Members agreed that the calendar should be agreed up to and including the CFA meeting on 12 April 2011, with any further meetings being considered at a later date.

7. INFORMATION BULLETIN

The Combined Fire Authority received a Bulletin containing information on various matters relating to the Fire and Rescue Service, including incidents of note and compliments.

Amongst the items reported were:

Kempston White Watch and Harrold received thanks from a family in Turvey:
.....'To the gallant firemen who rescued our old pony from a pond (last year).

We had a terrible fatal accident at the farm in October but Harrold came out and were a huge help - Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service are magnificent.'.....

Station Commander Mark Barter received an expression of thanks from the Deputy Manager, First Place (Bedfordshire):

.....'I am writing to thank you for arranging the visit to the Fire Station for a group of our young learners.

The learners thoroughly enjoyed themselves and appreciated all the time and effort the staff at the Fire Station gave to them all. One of the learners is hoping to pursue a course in Public Services when she has finished her programme with us. On behalf of everyone at First Place may we please extend our thanks and gratitude to all the staff that gave us such an enjoyable experience. We very much hope that you will be able to arrange further visits for our young people'

The Managing Director, London Luton Airport thanked personnel involved in an exercise at the airport:

.....'I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in Exercise Redkite at London Luton Airport. Your contribution helped us to make the emergency exercise as realistic as it can be and contributed to what was undoubtedly a great success. We look forward to a continued partnership with you to make future events equally successful.'.....

Thanks were sent to Firefighter Ryan Grant, Kempston Blue Watch:

.....'Just a card to say a big thank you to the off duty fireman who witnessed our car accident on Ampthill Road on Wednesday 11 November. Everyone involved was shaken and dazed, but this individual immediately took charge of the situation, checking everyone was ok and calling the fire station and generally holding the fort until the police and fire engine arrived.

We were too dazed to say a proper thank you at the time, but we really appreciated his help and that of his colleagues who arrived shortly afterwards. Thank you!'.....

Crime Scene Supervisor Claire Firth, Bedfordshire Police expressed thanks to the crew from Leighton Buzzard:

.....'On Tuesday 24 November 2009 I was the on duty Bedfordshire Police Crime Scene Supervisor when I was notified by the Forensic Resource Management Unit of a fatal fire in Leighton Buzzard.

This was an extremely demanding and challenging investigation in which I would like to pass on to each and every attending officer my enormous thanks and appreciation for their professionalism and conscientious approach to what was a highly complicated scene to examine under a set of very sad circumstances. All of the officers were a credit to their organisation and I was particularly impressed with their dedication and unquestionable commitment.

I would further like to pass my particular thanks to Mark Barter and Steve Allen for their consistent hard work, dedication, resilience and extensive knowledge and support in investigation fire scenes. This particular incident involved many added complications and demands which required collective and structured thinking.

The attending fire crews are also to be commended for their role in this investigation. They had to negotiate a highly cluttered, hazardous environment with little or no visibility in order to carry out their duties. The depth of debris alone could have caused some serious injuries. Fantastic and admirable actions.

This incident is a key example to highlight the importance of inter agency team working. Each individual excelled in their specific abilities but at the same time maintained team work which shared and valued others' inputs and advice. I feel very privileged to have been part of this team and wish to commend you all for your extremely hard work and professionalism. I believe your actions have led to a thoroughly competent investigation being carried out, which is to be praised with the utmost compassion based on the complicated and added pressures this case posed.'.....

Kempston Blue Watch, received a letter of thanks from Mark Thompson, Chief Inspector, RSPCA:

.....'I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you and your team for your very valued assistance in the removal of the 200+ Koi Carp and the draining of the 25ft pond at the address in Kempston on the 25 November 2009. I understand from RSPCA Officer Jane Folly that it really was a hard, arduous task and without your team's help would have been certainly much more difficult and possibly even unachievable given our limited resources.

I would be very grateful if you could pass on my thanks to your team who certainly showed that the Fire and Rescue Service in Kempston are as resilient as they are professional.

I have requested that you and your team receive an RSPCA Certificate of Merit to formally recognise your efforts on that day.'.....

**COUNCILLOR J STREET
EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF THE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**