

## AGENDA ITEM 2

## MINUTES

### MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2004 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED AT 7.45PM

**Present:** T Mills (Chairman), J C G Brooks (Vice-Chairman)  
M Adams, Christine Borgars, B J S Patman, D Swindells

#### 2.01/04 2004/2005 BUDGET

Following announcements by the Minister for Fire, Nicholas Raynsford MP, that warned of potential capping or designation action against Fire Authorities if they exceeded "low single figure" the Executive Committee re-examined the Budget proposals agreed at the Executive Meeting held on Thursday 22 January 2004.

The Authority Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer advised that many Authorities were contemplating setting Budgets that would entail a double figure increase in the Precepting levels, with some considering rises above 20%. The ODPM had indicated that it is minded to increase the notional level calculated for this year's Precept, had one existed, but there is no indication of how large such an increase might be.

Any such increase will have the effect of reducing the percentage, which the ODPM will consider the Precepting level has been raised. After discussing the issues and considering the effect of the original proposals it was **RESOLVED: That a revised 2004/2005 Budget of £28,594,879 resulting in a Band D Precept of £43.97 and being a 9.8% increase over the notional Council Tax 2003/2004 be endorsed and referred to the Fire Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 11 February 2004 with a recommendation that it be approved.**

#### 2.02/04 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

The Committee considered the issue of the Constitution for the proposed Regional Management Boards (RMB) and received a verbal report from the Clerk and Monitoring Officer on the outcome of a meeting of Legal Advisors for the South East Fire Authority's which she had attended earlier in the day.

The Clerk advised that the Constitution is well advanced, being now in its third version, but that two areas still required clarification. Firstly the budget setting process needed clarification to make it explicit that the RMB would only have budgets that were delegated to them by the Constituent Authorities.

Secondly the distribution of the administration costs also needed further explanation, in that the current proposal suggests that the "host" Authority will bear all administration costs. As Surrey have indicated that if they become the host Authority,

as is proposed, they are happy to bear the year one administration costs with future cost processes being discussed and agreed in year one.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the Budget setting and distribution of administration costs being the subject of further clarification and amendment, the proposed Regional Management Boards Constitution be endorsed and referred to the Fire Authority with a recommendation that it be approved.