

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Headquarters · 103 Dee Road · Tilehurst · Reading · Berkshire · RG30 4FS
Telephone Reading (0118) 945 2888 Facsimile (0118) 959 0510

Your reference:

My reference: RBFA/DRW
(please quote on all correspondence)

When calling ask for: David R Weller
Direct Line: (0118) 932 2288

Date: 30 August 2000

Dear Member

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

I have pleasure in attaching your Agenda for the Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to be held on Wednesday 6 September 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Bradley Moore Square, Harts Hill Road, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm.

The Memorial Hall is situated in Bradley Moore Square which is accessed via the A4/Floral Way and Harts Hill Road, Thatcham. A map showing the venue is reproduced overleaf.

For Members travelling from the east of the County it is advisable to use the M4 Motorway, leave at Junction 12 and join the A4 signposted Newbury. Follow the A4 through Woolhampton and after approximately 3 miles you will approach the first of three roundabouts. Continue on the A4 for the first two roundabouts and at the third turn right into Floral Way. At the next roundabout turn left into Harts Hill Road and then almost immediately right into Bradley Moore Square (The Mill House Restaurant will be on your right) The Memorial Hall is located at the far end where adequate parking facilities are available.

As you enter the Memorial Hall the Committee Room is located on the right hand side of the entrance lobby and Hall 2 a little further along the entrance corridor on the right. Hall 1 is situated on the left hand side of the entrance lobby just past the public telephone. Cloakroom facilities are to be found through the door at the end of the entrance lobby.

If any Member will be travelling to Thatcham by train please let me know if you will require transport from Thatcham Station, as it is quite some distance from the venue for the meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David R Weller".

David R Weller
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Headquarters · 103 Dee Road · Tilehurst · Reading · Berkshire · RG30 4FS
Telephone Reading (0118) 945 2888 Facsimile (0118) 959 0510

MEETING: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Meeting**

DATE AND TIME: **Wednesday 6 September 2000 at 6.30pm**

VENUE: **Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Bradley
Moore Square, Harts Hill Road, Thatcham
Berkshire**

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above meeting at the time and date indicated, when it is proposed to deal with the business set out in the attached Agenda. A buffet will be provided before the meeting.

D C H Williams
Clerk to the Authority

To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Mrs C Bateson, J C G Brooks T Bucknell, R J Day, T P Dredge, R A Flood,
E L Glasson, A Gregory, J P Green, E E Herbert, Mrs V Howes O E Jeffrey,
D W Liddiard, T D McCann, D McCarthy, T Mills, J E R Mole, J Morris,
Mrs J Orton, D Parker, T Pritchett, B J S Patman, Ms K Peak, A J Ross, J Tryon

Briefing Meetings:

Conservative Group: 5.45pm - Hall 2
Labour Group: 5.45pm - Hall 1 (Screend Off Area)
Liberal Democrat Group: 5.45pm - Committee Room

**For Further Information regarding this meeting, please contact:
David R Weller (0118) 932 2288**

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2000



AGENDA

PART I AGENDA

PAGE NO.

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ITEMS FOR RESOLUTION

11	Final Accounts - Year Ended 31 March 2000	20
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20	Date of Next Fire Authority Meeting	-

To note that the next Fire Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13 December 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm.

Members are advised that the Fire Authority meetings in March and June 2001 will be hosted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Bracknell Forest Borough Council respectively.

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PART II AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL

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**AGENDA ITEM 2: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of changes in the representative membership of the Fire Authority.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no contribution to the Strategic Plan.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Fire Authority has been advised of the following changes in its Member representation:

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Councillor M Pritchett replacing Councillor Mrs S Lanehart (Lib/Dem)

Wokingham District Council

Councillor John P Green replacing Councillor D Ball (Con)
Councillor A J Ross replacing Councillor R Turner (Con)

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letters from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham District Council

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 3: MINUTES: 14 JUNE 2000

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE FRANK HUTCHINGS MEMORIAL HALL, BRADLEY MOORE SQUARE, THATCHAM ON WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED AT 9.00PM

Present: Mrs C Bateson, J C G Brooks, T Bucknell, T P Dredge, R A Flood, E L Glasson, Mrs V Howes, O E Jeffery, D W Liddiard, T D McCann, T Mills, J E R Mole, Mrs J Orton, D Parker, B J S Patman, Ms K Peak, J Tryon

Apologies: R J Day, A Gregory, E E Herbert, Mrs S Lanehart, D McCarthy, J Morris,

2.01/00 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor J C G Brooks be elected Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

2.02/00 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor B J S Patman be elected Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year.

2.03/00 ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM

In response to a request from the Chairman it was **Agreed** that the following additional Part II Agenda item be included for consideration at the meeting on the grounds of urgency:

Agenda item 39: Provision of Interim Estates Management Services

2.04/00 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Authority was advised of the District/Borough Council appointments to the Fire Authority following the Elections held on Thursday 4 May 2000.

The Chairman in welcoming new Members to the meeting explained that although Mr D J Harper, the Chief Fire Officer, was in attendance he had been seconded to the Home Office in March and in his absence the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mr M

Clement-Green, was currently acting Chief Fire Officer. Mr Harper would however be returning to the Brigade on 1 July 2000.

The Chairman also wished to place on record his thanks to all retiring Members for the very valuable contribution they had made to the work of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

NOTED

2.05/00 MINUTES: 15 MARCH 2000

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 15 March 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2.06/00 PART I MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 6 – not reproduced) of the Personnel Committee, Urgency Committee, Community Fire Safety Panel and Fire Liaison Group meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting in March 2000. In noting that the Performance Review and Audit Panel meeting on 18 May 2000 had been cancelled, Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available from the Committee Administrator.

NOTED

2.07/00 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the following issues:

1 Fire Conference in Manchester

The Chairman sought approval in principle for Members to attend the Fire Conference in Manchester on 6-9 November 2000 and to the appointment of the Fire Authority's delegates. A report seeking approval to the nominated delegates would be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2000. **RESOLVED:** That the attendance of Members at the Fire Conference in Manchester be approved in principle and that each Party Spokesperson be requested to nominate one person to be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative.

2 Members' Induction Days

It had been decided to hold Members Induction days to brief new and update existing Members on various issues involved with the work of the Fire Authority/Brigade and

would include practical demonstrations. The dates chosen were Monday 31 July, Saturday 5 and Monday 7 August 2000. Details of the times and venues would be circulated in due course. In addition the Chairman invited Members to visit their local Fire Station and drew attention to an Officers Contact list that had been tabled.

2.08/00 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Authority noted that no Petitions or Questions had been received from the Public under Standing Orders 8 and 9.

2.09/00 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Authority noted that no Questions had been received from Members under Standing Order 10.

2.10/00 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Authority noted that no Notices of Motion had been received from Members under Standing Order 12.

2.11/00 COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY PANEL – CHANGE OF NAME AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Authority approval was sought (Agenda item 11 – not reproduced) to a change in the name of the Community Fire Safety Panel together with its Terms of Reference as recommended by the Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000.

The decision to change the Panel's name was to reflect the fact that it would be dealing with other equally important initiatives in addition to those relating to fire safety and a reduction in fire deaths.

In addition there was a clear need for Terms of Reference to be established to support the future direction of Community Safety for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

RESOLVED: That :

- 1 The Community Fire Safety Panel be re-named the Community Safety Panel.
- 2 The Panel's Terms of Reference as set out in the report (not reproduced) be approved and adopted.

2.12/00 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, PANELS AND WORKING PARTIES

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 12 – not reproduced) to re-appoint its Committees, Working Parties and Panels for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1 Personnel Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors Mrs C Bateson, O E Jeffery, T D McCann, J Morris, B J S Patman and Ms K Peak

- 2 Urgency Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors J C G Brooks, B J S Patman and Ms K Peak

- 3 The Performance Review and Audit Panel be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors T Bucknell, E E Herbert, Mrs V Howes, T D McCann, T Mills and Mrs J Orton

- 4 The Community Safety Panel be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors J C G Brooks, D Parker and Ms K Peak

- 5 The Budget Working Party be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors J C G Brooks, T Mills, J E R Mole, Mrs J Orton, B S J Patman and Ms K Peak

- 6 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Party Spokesperson of the Labour Group be appointed as Ex-Officio members of the Performance Review and Audit Panel for the ensuing year.

2.13/00 APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY'S REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 13 – not reproduced) to appoint up to four representatives to attend the Local Government Association's Annual Meeting and

Conference to be held at the Bournemouth International Centre from 27 to 30 June 2000.

RESOLVED: That Councillor B J S Patman be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative to attend the Local Government Annual Meeting and Conference.

2.14/00 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS FOR THE THAMES VALLEY (ACTVaR)

The Authority was requested (Agenda item 14 – not reproduced) to consider whether it should become a member of the Association of Councils for Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) and if minded to join to appoint the Member representative. The cost of becoming a member was £1,111 per annum which could be funded by virement from the approved accommodation Budget.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority becomes a member of the Association of Councils for Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR).
- 2 Councillor J C G Brooks be appointed as the Authority's representative and subject to ACTVaR's agreement, Councillor B J S Patman be appointed as substitute.

2.15/00 PUBLICATION OF THE PART I FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES ON BRIGADE WEB-SITE

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 15 – not reproduced) on their ability to publish the Part I Fire Authority Minutes on the Brigade's information web-site which is accessible to the public. In supporting the proposal to publish the Part I Minutes an amendment to the suggested resolution set out in Section B of the report was proposed, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Part I Fire Authority Minutes, once approved by the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer, be published on the Brigade's Internet Web-Site.
- 2 A copy of the Minutes be circulated to all Fire Authority Members and Public Protection Sections (or equivalent) of the six Unitary Authorities by means of a hard copy or E-Mail if available.
- 3 Fire Authority Minutes for 1998 and 1999 be published on the Brigade's Internet Web-Site.

**2.16/00 EMERGENCY SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS – ISSUES AND
IMPLICATIONS OF LEVYING CHARGES: PROGRESS
REPORT**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 16 – not reproduced) of progress nationally in respect of charging for Brigades' attendances at emergency special service calls (non-fire incidents) and were requested to determine whether or not to apply charges for attending such incidents.

At its meeting in June 1998 the Authority received a report outlining the issues and implications of levying charges in respect of the Brigade's attendance at emergency special service incidents. The Authority resolved to direct the Chief Fire Officer to write to the Local Government Association, the six Constituent Councils and local Members of Parliament seeking support for a recognition of the wider, non-statutory rescue role of the fire service, and to provide proper funding to carry out that role. In addition the Budget Working Party at its meeting in December 1999 resolved to reconsider charging for emergency special services and recommended that a report on progress nationally be presented to this meeting.

In noting the aim of the Local Government Association and the views of the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report respectively, Members were advised that, to date, only Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Fire Authority had commenced charging for such services in September 1999. However in March 2000 Staffordshire reviewed their policy and a summary of the main areas highlighted were set out in paragraph 7 of the report (not reproduced). The outcome of the review was that Staffordshire decided to stop charging for the extrication from RTA's and animal rescues and not to pursue any outstanding invoices. Four categories of special services were still the subject of a charge by Staffordshire, two of which (persons locked out of premises and non-emergency phase of Hazardous Materials incidents) were already the subject of a charge by this Authority.

In supporting the principle of introducing charges for attending emergency special service incidents Members asked the Chief Fire Officer to present a further progress report to the Fire Authority at its meeting in March 2001 and that the Local Government Association be asked to take the lead and lobby Government on the introduction of a national scheme.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The proposal to introduce charges for Brigade attendance at emergency special service incidents be approved in principle and that the Chief Fire Officer be asked to present a progress report to the Fire Authority at its meeting in March 2001.
- 2 The Local Government Association (LGA) is asked to take the lead in helping to draw up a Charging Scheme that can be applied nationally.

- 3 The LGA should be asked to lobby Government to recognise that Fire Brigades are incurring considerable costs in dealing with road traffic accidents, and that these costs should be taken into account when allocating SSA.

2.17//00 CHANGE OF SHIFT TIMES FOR WHOLETIME STATION BASED PERSONNEL

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 17 – not reproduced) on the outcome of a survey amongst staff who would be affected by the proposed change to shift start times and approval was sought to a proposal to defer the introduction of this measure in 2000/2001 but with an option to reconsider it in future years.

RESOLVED: That the introduction of this measure in 2000/2001 be deferred and reconsidered as an option for future years should budget pressures so dictate.

2.18/00 PROVISION OF ESTATES MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 18 – not reproduced) on the inability of the current estates management services provider to meet the Authority's estate management needs and were requested to approve the introduction of an alternative strategy for the provision of these services.

In response to notification from Reading Borough Council, the existing estates management services provider, that they were unable to satisfy the level of service required by the Brigade and did not wish to continue, a briefing was held on 22 May for five facilities management companies concerning the Authority's requirements for an immediate, interim Estates Management Contract for a period of eight to ten months. Three of the five companies have expressed an interest and have submitted proposals which are currently being evaluated.

Work was already well advanced on the production of a single specification for the consolidated estates and facilities management needs and requirements of the Authority. Once complete, it would be necessary to undertake the full European Tendering procedure prior to the award of a new Estates Management Contract. It was therefore essential that effective interim arrangements were in place.

As the report referred to in Resolution 1 had been added to the Agenda at the commencement of the meeting and the need for an Urgency Committee was no longer necessary, Members agreed to the deletion of that Resolution and the renumbering of Resolution 2 as 1. In addition the following new Resolution 2 was proposed, seconded and agreed:

“That a report on the maintenance of Wholetime and Retained Stations, based on the condition survey received to date, be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2000.”

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The consolidated Estates and Facilities Management Services be subjected to European Tender at the earliest opportunity.
- 2 A report on the maintenance of Wholetime and Retained Stations, based on the condition survey received to date, be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2000

2.19/00 BRIGADE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE – PROPOSALS FOR A BEST VALUE EXERCISE

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 19 – not reproduced) to an invitation to enter into a Best Value exercise to expose the provision of the Brigade's vehicle maintenance services to external competition.

If Members were minded to approve the proposed course of action then Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, who had already undertaken a competitive tendering exercise for their vehicle maintenance services, had offered the support of their Brigade Engineer to assist with the preparation on an internal bid. All staff affected by the proposal have been informed of this initiative and further staff and Representative Body consultation would be undertaken as the project progresses.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Brigade's vehicle maintenance services be exposed to external competition using the European Tendering Process.
- 2 The Brigade prepares and submits a commercial internal bid for the provision of the Brigade's vehicle maintenance services.

2.20/00 MOTION FROM BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 20 – not reproduced) to a recommendation from the Community Fire Safety Panel meeting held on Thursday 20 April that a Motion received from the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service relating to the fitting of domestic fire sprinklers be supported. The Motion was to be submitted to the Local Government Association for consideration at its General Assembly to be held in Bournemouth on 27 June 2000.

RESOLVED: That the Motion received from the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service be supported and that the Local Government Association and the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service be advised accordingly.

2.21/00 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2000/2001

The Authority's retrospective approval was sought (Agenda item 21 – not reproduced) to the Community Safety Plan 2000/2001 as recommended by the Community Fire Safety Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000.

The Plans were designed to help Brigade's develop a more strategic, data driven, approach to fire prevention and to instill a regular planning cycle for Community Fire Safety Work. The Plan would be updated annually with a copy submitted to the Home Office in April each year. For this year a copy had already been submitted, having been approved by the Panel, and retrospective approval was now being sought from the Fire Authority.

Having considered the suggested arrangements for the publication of the Plan, Members agreed that Resolution 2 of the report be deleted and replaced with the following new Resolution 2 relating to the publication of the Plan in different languages:

“That the Chief Fire Officer be requested to investigate the cost implications of printing the Community Safety Plan in different languages and present a report on the outcome of that investigation to the Community Safety Panel at its meeting on Monday 24 July 2000.”

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Community Safety Plan 2000/2001 be approved and adopted.
- 2 The Chief Fire Officer be requested to investigate the cost implications of printing the Community Safety Plan in different languages and present a report on the outcome of that investigation to the Community Safety Panel at its meeting on Monday 24 July 2000.

2.22/00 STRATEGIC PLAN 2000 – 2005

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 22 – not reproduced) to the Strategic Plan 2000 – 2005.

Members were reminded that the Fire Authority at its meeting in July 1999 approved the adoption of a Strategic Plan as the basis for the long term direction of the Brigade and that the Plan should develop year on year to meet the changing circumstances of the service. Therefore updated versions of the Plan should be presented every 12 months to the Authority at its Annual General Meeting for approval.

In noting that the framework of the Plan remained the same the Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to the Appendix (not reproduced), circulated separately to the Agenda, which highlighted the changes made to the Strategic Plan 2000-2005 in

contrast to the previous year's Plan. In addition he also briefly summarised the ongoing work that would take place in respect of the Strategic Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Plan for 2000 – 2005 be approved and adopted.

2.23/00 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 1999/2000

In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice, Treasury Management in Local Authorities 1996, the Authority received a copy (Agenda item 23 – not reproduced) of the Annual Treasury Report which sets out the actual Treasury operations for the last financial year.

In noting the contents of the report the Chairman wished to place on record his congratulations to Mr A Vallance (Brigade Management Accountant) and Mr D Illingworth (Authority Treasurer) for all their hard work in producing the Report.

NOTED

2.24/00 OUTTURN 1999/2000 – PROVISIONAL INDICATION OF FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS POSITION

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 24 – not reproduced) of the likely final Revenue and Capital expenditure position for 1999/2000. A full report would be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2000.

NOTED

2.25/00 FUTURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND ITS FINANCING

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 25 – not reproduced) on the current position regarding the financing of future capital requirements. Although the Chief Fire Officer undertook to present a report on future capital requirements to this Authority meeting, the Government had decided to review the whole subject of capital financing and it was anticipated that Green Paper would be published in July 2000. In view of this it was considered prudent to defer submission of the report pending the issue of the Green Paper. If the Green Paper were published then a report would be presented to the Fire Authority meeting in September 2000.

NOTED

2.26/00 THEMATIC REVIEW OF UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 26 – not reproduced) of the outcome of an

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inspection of the Brigade in respect of the Home Office's review on unwanted fire signals. In noting the contents of the report, Members asked the Chief Fire Officer to present a further progress report to the Fire Authority at its meeting in March 2001.

NOTED

**2.27/00 REVIEW OF SPECIAL APPLIANCES OTHER THAN AERIAL
UNITS – PROGRESS REPORT**

The Authority received a detailed report (Agenda item 27 – not reproduced) on the progress being made into the Review of Special Appliances other than Aerial Units. A further report, setting out any costs or savings arising from the Review would be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in December 2000.

NOTED

**2.28/00 REPORT OF THE INQUIRY INTO THE MACHINERY FOR
DETERMINING FIRE-FIGHTERS CONDITIONS OF SERVICE
PROGRESS REPORT**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 28 – not reproduced) of the outcome of Professor Burchill's Inquiry into the Machinery for Determining Fire-Fighters' Conditions of Service. Members were advised that further progress reports would be presented to future Fire Authority meeting if considered necessary.

NOTED

**2.29/00 HALF YEARLY REPORT FOR MEDICAL RETIREMENTS,
WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCES**

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 29 – not reproduced) on the number of medical retirements, workplace accidents and sickness absences that had occurred during the period October 1999 to March 2000.

In noting the contents of the report, Members asked the Chief Fire Officer to arrange for additional information relating to the total number of staff involved, comparisons with other Brigades, Police and Ambulance Services and historically within this Brigade, to be included in the next progress report to be presented to the Fire Authority in March 2001.

NOTED

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2.30/00 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2000/2001 – PROGRESS REPORT

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 30 – not reproduced) of the progress made in respect of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2000/2001.

NOTED

2.31/00 FIRES, INCIDENTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 31 – not reproduced) summarising some of the incidents attended by the Brigade during the period 1 February to 30 April 2000.

NOTED

2.32/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 6 September 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm. In response to a request from Members the Chief Fire Officer was requested to approach Bracknell Forest Borough Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with a view to their hosting the Fire Authority meetings in either March or June 2001.

2.33/00 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated:

	Agenda item	Paragrph
34	Part II Minutes: Wednesday 15 March 2000	1, 8, 9 & 11
35	Part II Minutes of Sub-Groups	1, 8 & 9
36	Grievance Panel – DO Doyle	1
37	Recommendation of the Grievance Panel – Fire-Fighter D Halligan	1
38	Brigade Vehicle Maintenance – Proposals for Best Value Exercise	8 & 9

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39 Provision of Interim Estates Management Services 8 & 9

(Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority meeting held on Wednesday 14 June 2000)

2.34/00 PART II MINUTES: MARCH 2000

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 15 March 2000 were received and approved as a correct record.

2.35/00 PART II MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 35 – not reproduced) of the Sub-Group meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting.

2.36/00 GRIEVANCE HEARING – DO DOYLE

The Authority authorised the Grievance Panel hearing DO Doyle's Grievance to reach a decision without further reference to the Fire Authority.

2.37/00 RECOMMENDATION OF THE GRIEVANCE PANEL – FIRE-FIGHTER D J HALLIGAN

The Authority approved the recommendations of the Grievance Panel in respect of the Grievance by Fire-Fighter D J Halligan.

2.38/00 BRIGADE VEHICLE MAINTENANCE – PROPOSALS FOR A BEST VALUE EXERCISE

The Authority approved the award of a contract for consultancy services in support of the Brigade vehicle maintenance Best Value exercise subject to the Authority Treasurer approving the financial implications.

2.39/00 PROVISION OF INTERIM ESTATES MANAGEMENT SERVICES

It was Agreed that consideration of this item be deferred and the report presented to the Fire Authority's Urgency Committee for consideration and determination.

AGENDA ITEM 4: PART I MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members on meetings of the Personnel Committee, Urgency Committee, Performance Review and Audit Panel Community Fire Safety Panel and the Fire Liaison Group that have taken place since the last meeting of the Fire Authority in March 2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 The following meetings have taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting in June 2000:

Personnel Committee: Tuesday 15 August 2000

**Performance Review
and Audit Panel** Thursday 13 July 2000

Urgency Committee Wednesday 21 June 2000

Fire Liaison Group Monday 21 August 2000

Community Safety Panel Monday 24 July 2000

2 Copies of the Part I Minutes (if available) can be obtained from David Weller on (0118) 932 2288)

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda's and Minutes for the above mentioned meetings

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

**AGENDA ITEM 9: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ATTEND
FIRE CONFERENCE IN MANCHESTER**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To approve the appointment of the Fire Authority's delegates to attend the Fire Conference in Manchester.

B PROPOSED ACTION

**The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That Councillors.....
be appointed to attend the Fire Conference in Manchester on 6 - 9 November 2000.**

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of accommodation and travel can be funded from the approved budget for Conferences.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no contribution to the Strategic Plan

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At the Fire Authority meeting in June 2000 the Chairman sought and received approval in principal for Members to attend the Fire Conference in Manchester on 6 - 9 November 2000 (Minute 2.07/00 refers).
- 2 It was agreed that each Political Group would nominate one Member to attend and their appointment would be ratified at the Fire Authority meeting in September. Members are therefore invited to approve the Fire Authority's representatives as set out in Section B above.

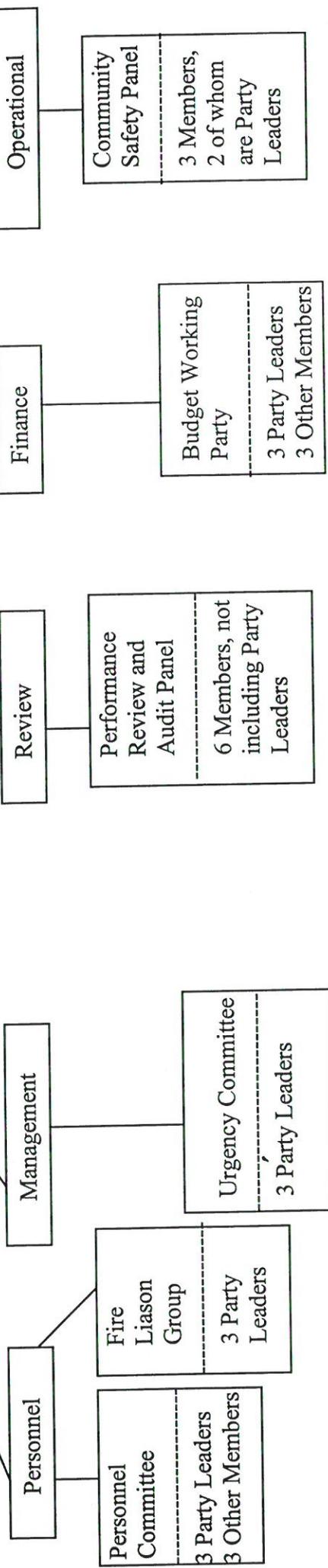
E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Fire Authority Minutes: 14 June 2000

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

Bracknell Forest Borough	Reading Borough	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	Slough Borough	West Berkshire	Wokingham
3 Members	4 Members	5 Members	3 Members	5 Members	5 Members

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
25 Members



Chief Officers: (1) Chief Fire Officer (2) Clerk and Monitoring Officer, (3) Treasurer

AGENDA ITEM 10:**MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE
STRUCTURE OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk and Monitoring Officer
 Chief Fire Officer
 Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek views from the new Authority as to whether they are satisfied that the present structure of the Authority is best suited to meet the Authority and Service's Strategic Objectives.

B PROPOSED ACTION

- 1 The Authority is invited to consider whether they wish to confirm the present structure (see attached Annex) or suggest amendments, in particular whether they wish to change the role of Committees/Panels. (See Paragraph E7) and RESOLVE accordingly
- 2 The Authority is also invited to RESOLVE: That
 - (i) a Standards Committee be appointed, comprising 3 Members and 1 Member being not a member of the Authority and that Councillors.....be appointed as Members of the Standards Committee.
 - (ii) in future membership of any Grievance or Disputes Panel should be open to every Member of the Fire Authority subject to suitable training.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

These are minimal but there could be some increase in Members' attendance allowances.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Under the provision of the agreed Strategic Plan, the Clerk is required to raise this subject with Members.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Combined Fire Authority came into being on 1 April 1997 as a shadow Authority and only assumed its full powers on 1 April 1998.

- 2 It started life with 2 Committees and 1 Working Party. These were its Personnel and Urgency Committees and Budget Working Party. It was also agreed that these would be all party with an equal distribution of places between the three Party groups.
- 3 Since its inception the Authority has found a need to establish a further 3 fulltime Panels and a Fire Liaison Group. The Panels are i) the Grievance or Disputes Panel (whose members are presently drawn from the Personnel Committee) where in future it is felt that membership should be extended. ii) a Performance Review and Audit Panel iii) a Community Safety Panel. The Fire Alison Group is composed of the 3 Party Leaders and representatives of the FBU and Unison.
- 4 It is anticipated that by the time the Authority meets, the Local Government Bill will have become law and the Authority will be required to appoint a Standards Committee, with independent membership, to consider any cases involving a potential breach of Code of Conduct.
- 5 In addition major Councils, though not this Authority, will be required to adopt one of three systems of Government ranging from an elected Mayor to a Cabinet system. Three of the Unitary Councils have already adopted the Cabinet system.
- 6 In every case, including both major and minor Councils, Councils are required to set up systems where back bench Members can play a role in scrutinising the activities of the Executive, whether a Cabinet or elected Mayor. Again, this part of the Act does not apply to CFA's but nevertheless it is felt timely that the Authority should consider whether they find the present structure does enable all Members to participate in the work of the Authority and carry out effective scrutiny.
- 7 In the case of the Authority, the Party leaders, de facto, form the Authority's Executive. They act as the Authority's Urgency Committee and are also represented on the Personnel Committee, the Fire Liaison Group, the Budget Working Party, while 2 of the 3 Members of the Community Safety Panel are also Party leaders.
- 8 By the same token it was felt appropriate that none of the Party Leaders should be Members of the Performance Review and Audit Panel, which is also responsible for recommending on Best Value.
- 9 The Authority has always wished in the past to keep Committee/Panel etc numbers down but under the present structure there are only 16 Committee places available in total which means that 9 Members of the Authority do not sit on any Committee or Panel.
- 10 If therefore the Authority wished to make changes, they could consider strengthening the role of the Committee structure by say giving Panels executive powers, widening their terms of reference and at the same time extending membership.
- 11 Alternatively the Authority could remain within its present structure but create a Scrutiny Committee with the power to inquire into any aspect of the Authority's work and ask questions of the Executive and/or the Brigade.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government Bill 1999
- 2 Fire Authority's Strategic Plan

Contact Officer: Clive Williams (0118) 932 2284

AGENDA ITEM 11: FINAL ACCOUNTS - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2000

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officer Contributing: Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To obtain approval of the statement of accounts for year ended 31 March 2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2000 as submitted, be approved.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

These are fully set out in the Statement of Accounts. However attention is drawn to paragraph 3 of the Treasurer's Explanatory Foreword which summarises Actual expenditure compared with Budget and sets out the provisions made in the Final Accounts.

The provision made toward meeting the cost arising from restructuring from four Directorates to three from 1 April 2000 means that the full financial benefit from the change will accrue in 2001/02.

The addition of £497 000 to the provision for the Firefighters Pension Scheme toward liabilities building up from past service is prudent and is encouraged by HM Fire Service Inspectorate in their January 2000 Inspection Report.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Authority's financial position is an essential component of strategic planning.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The main legislative requirements relating to the preparation, publication and audit of statements of accounts of Local Authorities in England and Wales are contained in Part III of the Local Government Finance Act 1982 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996.
- 2 The statement of Accounts has been drawn up in accordance with the statutory requirements. The Explanatory Forward to the Statement provides an understandable guide to the most significant matters reported in the accounts. *A copy of the Statement of Accounts is attached to this Report but is separately page numbered from the main Agenda.*

3 In accordance with the Regulations:

- accounts have to be made up yearly to 31 March
- the accounts have to be prepared as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and approved by a resolution of the Authority or one of its committees within six months of the year end (ie by 30 September)
- the Statement of Accounts has to be published within 9 months of the year end (ie by 31 December)
- the Accounts should be published, together with any certificate, opinion or report given by the auditor or, if published before the conclusion of the audit, with an explanation of the fact.

4 The External Audit Process will be:

- the auditor appoints a date on which any local government elector for the area of the Authority to which the accounts relate can attend before the auditor and make objection to any of these accounts. Notice has been received from the District Auditor setting the 10 October 2000 as the appointed date.
- the accounts and other documents are available for 15 full working days before the date appointed by the auditor
- not later than 14 days before the commencement of the period during which the accounts and other documents are made available notice by advertisement be made of the various rights and time-scales
- the time table for the audit provided for field work during July/August with a report in November. The Management Letter meeting is likely to take place in November/December.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government Finance Act 1982
- 2 Accounts and Audit Regulations
- 3 CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Handbook
- 4 Accounting Records and Supporting Documents

Contact Officers:	Donald H Illingworth	(0118) 932 2284
	Andrew Vallance	(0118) 932 2251

AGENDA ITEM 12: FUTURE OF BRIGADE FIRE CONTROL ROOM

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officers Contributing: Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of the publication of a national report by HM Fire Service Inspectorate into the future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications in England and Wales, the possible effects upon this Brigade's Control Room, and the way forward currently being explored by the Chief Fire Officer.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report, and **RESOLVE:** That:

- 1 The recommendations made by HM Fire Service Inspectorate be Noted.
- 2 The Chief Fire Officer be authorised to explore the creation of a Thames Valley Fire Control as a separate agency, of which the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority would be a full partner, and:
- 3 The Chief Fire Officer be requested to submit further reports to the Authority as appropriate to keep Members updated or to seek political direction.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The basis of the report by HM Fire Service Inspectorate is to achieve substantial financial savings for all fire authorities. As detailed work has yet to be undertaken on the delivery of the Brigade's control room services via a partnership agency, it is not possible to quantify these for the Authority at this stage.

It is considered likely that there might be set up costs incurred in the development of the partnership agency. Again, work is not sufficiently advanced to identify these. Similarly, it is anticipated that there might be capital costs in expanding existing control room equipment to meet the needs of the greater number of fire brigades which would be served by that equipment, to which this Authority would need to contribute on a proportional basis.

Any savings to be accrued are likely to come from the reduced number of staff needed to operate a single, larger control room, than those needed to operate the current number of smaller control rooms. Members are advised therefore of the potential to incur the costs of redeploying existing staff to other duties (where possible) within the Brigade, or where this is not possible, redundancy costs.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This report contributes to the functional Best Value review of fire control, and thus to the Brigade's service target of improving efficiency by 2% per year.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Members are advised that with the exception of the Isles of Scilly (which is a separate fire authority, but which 'shares' its Chief Fire Officer with Cornwall County Council, and contracts its control room services from that Authority), each of the 50 fire authorities in England and Wales, the 8 fire authorities in Scotland and the Northern Ireland Fire Authority operates its own Fire Control Room. This is the function responsible for the receipt of emergency calls to the fire service from the 999 (or 112) network and the mobilisation and control of appropriate resources.
- 2 In November 1999, the Home Office commissioned consultants (Mott MacDonald) to develop authoritative advice for fire authorities in England and Wales on how best to meet their future mobile communications and control requirements, and to report this to Ministers by 31 March 2000. The report (which amounts to some 300 pages including appendices) was subsequently presented to the Central Fire Brigades' Advisory Council (CFBAC) on 16 May, and further discussed on 19 July 2000.
- 3 The report seeks to identify Best Value options in the provision of fire control rooms, considering amalgamations with other emergency services' control rooms, amalgamations with other fire authority control rooms, and a mixture of both options. That part of the report outlining the options for communications (radio schemes) has, yet to be published.
- 4 The report considered that the requirements of Best Value would best be met by appropriate amalgamations of fire control rooms, and concluded that 'fire authorities must work together to eliminate control rooms that handle less than 20,000 incidents per year.' Members are reminded that in 1999/2000, this Brigade's control room handled 14,220 incidents, and would thus fall into the category for 'elimination'.
- 5 The report offered an illustrative model of fire authorities' control rooms' amalgamations to achieve its recommended 'medium scale' arrangement of 21 fire control rooms serving the 50 fire authorities in England and Wales. This model identifies the amalgamation of this Authority's fire control room with those of Oxfordshire County Council, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and Northamptonshire County Council, and seeks to achieve full implementation by 2003. It is not clear, as yet, whether any central funding will be made available for implementation.
- 6 Members will recall that one of the projects identified for the Service Delivery Directorate within the Brigade's Strategic Plan for 1999/2000 was to review collaboration of Fire Controls with Buckinghamshire and implement if appropriate.

This emanated from a request from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority to both this Authority and Oxfordshire County Council to give consideration to absorbing that authority's fire control function. As part of this process, a meeting of the three Chief Fire Officers was held on 15 May 2000 to set the parameters for a competitive tender arrangement limited to this Brigade and Oxfordshire. However, advice was given at that meeting by the consultants to the Home Office, Mott MacDonald, that publication of the report to the CFBAC on 16 May would direct the successful bidding authority to then proceed to absorb the remaining Thames Valley authority's fire control function, together with that of Northamptonshire. This was not considered to be an appropriate way forward by the attending officers as neither this Brigade nor Oxfordshire had assessed the ability of its Control Room to absorb 3 brigades' control room functions rather than one, nor was Northamptonshire represented at the meeting.

- 7 Members may consider that a more acceptable alternative to the absorption by any one brigade of a number of other brigades' control room functions might be the creation of a separate Control Room agency on a partnership basis, responsible for the effective operation of a single control room serving all participating brigades. This agency might be funded proportionately by the constituent brigades and directed by a Board comprising a small number of Elected Members from each of those Authorities, but would employ its staff directly and would develop a common service level agreement with each constituent brigade. The Board could be advised by appropriate Officers from within the constituent Brigades.
- 8 Notwithstanding that the Best Value review into the Control functions had not yet been concluded, the Chief Fire Officer feels able to recommend this course to Members, as do the Chief Fire Officers of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire to their authorities. However, notwithstanding the illustrative model of the Home Office report, the Chief Fire Officer of Northamptonshire considers that alignment of that authority lies more naturally with the East Midlands, rather than the Thames Valley. This would not preclude a single Control room serving the three Thames Valley brigades from being viable within the parameters of the Home Office report.
- 9 The 3 Chief Fire Officers have already submitted this proposal for consideration to HM Chief Inspector of Fire Services, with a request for the Home Office to fund appropriate consultancy to assist a feasibility study. At the time of drafting, no response has been received. It is considered that the first task of consultants would be to examine the ability of each of the participating brigades' control rooms to absorb the workload of the other brigades, or otherwise to identify needs (including costings). Consultants would also need to be used to develop an agency model which is acceptable to all of the constituent authorities and achievable in law. It is intended that this work should be completed by the end of 2000, at which time further reports will be submitted to the Authority.
- 10 Home Office guidance already exists to enable authorities to determine appropriate staffing levels for Control Rooms (Home Office Staffing Model for Control Rooms). It is possible that this model, applied to a single Control Room serving the three Brigades would result in the need for less Control staff than the accumulated total

employed currently by those Brigades. Whilst it is too early to determine how staff would be selected for employment within an agency-based Control Room, it is possible that some existing members of this Brigade might not be selected. At the appropriate time therefore, Members may wish to consider opportunities for redeployment of those staff as an alternative to compulsory redundancy.

- 11 Members will be aware that a functional review of fire controls is a Best Value requirement directed by the Home Office for 1999/2000. It is intended that the Mott MacDonald report and this project should inform that review. Further guidance is anticipated in the form of a Fire Service Circular.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Report into the Future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications in England and Wales
- 2 Strategic Plan 1999-2004

Contact Officer: Mike Clement-Green (0118) 932 2226

AGENDA ITEM 13:

2001/02 BUDGET

To:

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Date:

6 September 2000

Officer Contributing:

Authority Treasurer

Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of:

- Preliminary indications of Budget requirements for 2001/02 and prospect for 2002/03
- Budget pressures
- The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2000
- Best Value and Efficiency Savings
- Service and Financial Planning
- Standard Spending Assessments and Government Expectations
- Budget Process and Timetable

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That:

- 1 The Officers be asked to submit a report on detailed budget requirements to the Budget Working Party on the implications of setting a budget at the following overall levels.

a	£22.0m ^{21.7}	(2000/01 Budget plus 2.5%)
b	£22.25m	(2001/02 Budget plus 5.0%)
c	£22.5m	(2001/02 Budget plus 7.5%)
- 2 Any proposal for budget growth or contractions must incorporate a defined link to Strategic Plan priorities and be prioritised.
- 3 Bearing in mind the Strategic Plan target to improve financial efficiency by 2% per year and the similar aim of the Government's Best Value initiative, the Performance Review and Audit Panel and the officers to report on the meeting of the financial saving set out in Appendix A.
- 4 A forecast of the likely budget requirements for 2002/03 and 2003/04 be produced.
- 5 The proposed budget process and timetable be adopted.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this stage.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This is the first stage of the Review of Strategic finance strategy.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Preliminary Indications of Budget requirements for 2001/02 and prospect for 2002/03.

- 1 Appendix A sets out a statement of Budget prospects for 2001/02 and 2002/2003.
- 2 It shows that a stand still budget for 2001/02 is likely to be of the order of 22.1M providing a 2% efficiency saving of £367 000 is made.
- 3 A forward look at revenue growth was undertaken during the 2000/01 budget process and the forecast figures are shown under the 'Other Pressures' heading in Appendix A. An update of Revenue growth bids is currently being appraised.
- 4 The Fire-fighters pension scheme deficit is anticipated to grow by £493 000 in 2001/02 and fall by £79 000 in 2002/03. These figures are based on projections made by CSL using profiles of the Fire-fighters employed by the Authority.
- 5 The Service Targets set in the approved Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan indicate that the Service will 'Improve financial efficiency by 2% per year.' Appendix A, shows as a deduction what this means in financial terms.
- 6 The Capital Schemes forward look undertaken as part of the 2000/01 budget process shows a likely capital programme in 2001/02 of £725 000 and in 2002/03 of £932 000. An update of the projected programme is currently being undertaken. The critical factor will be the allocation of basic credit approval for 2001/02. Any shortfall will mean consideration of further leasing particularly for fire appliances with consequent revenue budget implications.

The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review

- 7 The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2000 to the House of Commons on 18 July. Details of the Government's new three year spending plans are set out in the White Paper 'Prudent for a Purpose: building opportunity and security for all.'
- 8 The Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs) and year on year changes for Fire Service expenditure are:-

Year	Total £M	Year on Year Percentage Increase %
2000/01	1393.4	
2001/02	1462.5	5
2002/03	1521.0	4
2003/04	1582.6	4

- 9 The Government has also announced decisions on credit approvals for the Fire Service capital expenditure for the next three years. These show additional provision as follows:-

Year	£M	Year on Year Percentage Increase %
2000/01 (current provision)	35.7	
2001/02	59.7	67
2002/03	59.7	-
2003/04	61.7	3

- 10 It is understood that further guidance will be issued indicating areas of priority which include equality issues, control and communications and airwaves.

Efficiency Savings

- 11 A key assumption that underpinned the SSA control totals announced in the July 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review was that efficiency savings of 2% per annum would be generated across local government services as a whole.
- 12 Added impetus to the delivery of efficiency savings has been given by the introduction of Best Value. Best Value now provides the framework for the delivery of continuous improvement including efficiency savings. Paragraph 30 of Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions Circular 10/99 is reproduced below:-
- “As far as possible comparisons should be made on the basis of outcomes, although detailed comparisons of inputs and outputs will be required to assess the scope for greater efficiency consistent with the Government’s overall target of 2% per annum efficiency improvements for local government as a whole. This does not mean that each review is expected to identify efficiency improvements for 2% a year. Some Reviews may identify much greater opportunities for improved efficiency, others less so, and in some cases such improvements will be difficult to quantify precisely. Nor is it expected that improved efficiency will be used to reduce overall spending. The Government is committed to ensure that resources freed up through greater efficiency are made available to meet nationally and locally agreed priorities.”
- 13 The new Local Government Public Service Agreement (PSA) includes the following council wide target:-
- “Ensure continuous improvement in the economy efficiency and effectiveness of Local Authorities through.....overall annual improvements in cost effectiveness of 2% or more..... Pilot PSA Authorities are being asked to identify a cost effectiveness target as one of their twelve key outcomes.”
- 14 The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service approved Strategic Plan for the period 2000/2005 says the Service “will improve financial efficiency by 2% per year.”
- 15 The HM Fire Service Inspectorate Performance Review Inspection which took place in January 2000 and of which the report was issued in July says in Paragraph 3.2.12:-

“Although the management of the Service seeks to achieve and sustain the economies, it is difficult to suggest substantial reductions will be possible **unless the Authority is determined to make significant changes in Service Delivery**. On the basis of the examination within this performance review inspection, reductions in this area should be difficult to support.”

Service and Financial Planning

- 16 The Authority has adopted a Strategic Plan containing Service Aims, Targets and a Review Process intended to shape the direction and future resource needs of the Service. Best Value and the Performance Plan are integral to the process.
- 17 The District Auditor in his report of January 2000 set out three issues relating to Financial Planning.
- “As the Authority sets its arrangements for Best Value it is important that there is consideration of the way in which reviews impact on financial planning.
 - Outputs of reviews in the Tactical Plan should include five year budget proposals, so ensuring long term budgeting and over five years a thorough review of the total budget.
 - **Any proposal for budget growth or contractions whether arising from annual bids or strategic reviews should incorporate a defined link to Strategic Plan priorities.”**

Best Value Functional Reviews

- 18 The Best Value Performance Plan 2000/01 sets out the following programmes of Functional Reviews.

Year 1 - 2000/01	Communications and Control Operations: Flexible Duty Officer Cover Arrangements Operations: Special Appliances other than Aerial Units Operations: General Discipline and Standards on Fire Stations Information Systems
------------------	--

Year 2 - 2001/02	Procurement (and stores) Personnel Engineering Operations: Road Traffic Accident and Extrication Strategy Operations: Damage Control
------------------	--

- 19 It would be reasonable to anticipate that the 2000/01 reviews could have budgetary implications for 2001/02 and afterwards and the 2001/02 reviews for 2002/03 and subsequent years.

20 The performance Review and Audit Committee were informed at their meeting held on 13 July 2000 that “detailed project plans have now been prepared for all reviews for 2000/01 and will be similarly prepared for future years.”

21 **Clearly the reviews are of importance to the realisation of the efficiency savings which are a target of the Strategic Plan and have been built in to the Budget Prospects table at Appendix A.**

Standard Spending Assessments, Grant and Capping

22 Appendix B sets out the 2000/01 Standard Spending Assessments and Budgets of the six constituent authorities and the amounts included for the Fire Service.

23 It will be noted that the Fire Authority budget represents just over 3% of the overall budgets of the six constituent authorities. The Fire Authority’s approved budget was 7.78 % in excess of Fire Service SSAs compared with an average 12.46% over SSA in respect of total constituent authority budgets.

24 Appendix C shows how Fire Brigades’ budgets nationally compared to SSA in 1999/2000 Berkshire’s budget was 5.88 % above SSA. The Berkshire spend in excess rose to 7.78 % in 2000/01 compared with an average of 11.3% nationally.

25 The central government set in motion a three year programme of research to investigate thoroughly whether there is a better way of determining the distribution of revenue support grant which is simple, more stable, more robust and fairer than the present arrangements for SSAs. A Green Paper is expected to be issued during the Autumn.

26 Whilst the consideration of the future path of Local Government financing continues, the Government will not expect to make fresh changes to the method of calculation of SSAs, except for example where there are changes in the functions, or financing or particular councils. The SSAs of individual councils will change to reflect changes in demand for their services as reflected in the data used to calculate SSAs.

27 The Fire Authority is not subject to capping. The Government is currently using its existing powers as a reserve power to limit excessive council tax increases of principal councils. Capping principles are not announced in advance but those councils considered to have set excessive budgets are capped or given warning of potential capping for the following year. None of the Berkshire Unitary Authorities were in this category in respect of the 2000/01 financial year.

Budget Process and Timetable

28 Whilst the Fire Authority is not subject to capping, Members clearly have to consider firstly the essential needs of the Fire Service and secondly to reconcile these with the constituent authorities budget position, level of council tax and possibility of the Government’s potential to use its capping powers to limit excessive council tax increases.

- 29 Appendix D sets out a timetable for the budget process and in view of the importance of the possible contribution of Best Value reviews to the possible achievement of efficiency savings the already arranged meetings of the Performance Review and Audit Panel have been included.
- 30 Paragraph B1 shows a suggested approach to aid consideration of the Budget for 2001/02.
- 31 The overall levels are based as follows:-

	£m
a	
Fire Authority Budget 2000/01	21.2
Plus 2½% (Required efficiency savings target to be increased by £100 000)	0.8
	22.0
b	
Fire Authority Budget 2000/01	21.2
Plus 5% (Net percentage increase for 2001/02 under the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review)	1.05
	22.25
c	
Fire Authority Budget 2000/01	21.2
Plus 7½% (Allows for other pressures to be considered)	1.3
	22.5

- 32 The Authority has already set up a Budget Working Party and it is suggested that it gives initial consideration to Budget requirements and report with recommendations to the meeting of the Authority to be held on 13 December 2000. The Timetable at Appendix D gives suggested dates for meetings of the Working Party.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting held on 15 December 1999.
- 2 The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2000.
- 3 DETR Circular 10/99 Best Value.
- 4 HM Fire Service Inspectorate - Performance Review Inspection, January 2000.
- 5 Best Value Performance Plan 2000/01.

Contact Officer Donald H Illingworth (0018 932 2284)

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
BUDGET PROSPECTS 2001/02 AND 2002/03**

	2001/02 £000	2002/03 £000
Budget 2000/01	21190	22147
Less one off costs	<u>131</u> 21 059	<u>101</u> 22 046
Efficiency Savings target 2% of budget excluding pensions deficit (Note 1)	<u>367</u> 20 692	<u>377</u> 21 669
Inescapable additions to budget		
Pensions deficit - increase (Note 2)	493	(79)
Capital/Leasing Costs	60	60
Inflation - pay awards 3% (3% 2002/03) and general 2½ % each year (Note 3)	605	625
LG Pension Scheme - Increase in employers contributions (Note 4)	138	?
Revised Grading Structure - non uniformed staff	21	-
Other Pressures		
Revenue Bids List (from 2000/01 budget process) (Note 5)	38	38
Capital Bids (from 2000/01 budget process)		
Need for Revenue Contribution to fulfil programmes (Note 5)	-	-
One off costs (say)	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
	<u>22 147</u>	<u>22 413</u>

BUDGET PROSPECTS 2001/02 AND 2002/03 (Cont'd)

	2001/02	2002/03
Budget required likely to be of order of		
	£22.1M	£22.4M
Percentage increase over previous year's budget	4.2%	1.4%
Percentage in excess of SSA	7.3%	4.2%
If efficiency savings not realised the bottom line figure is		
	£22.5 M	£22.8M
Percentage increase over previous year's budget	6.1%	1.3%
Percentage in excess of SSA	9.2%	6.0%
The potential budget figures can be compared with an estimate of Standard Spending Assessment for Fire Services incorporated in the SSA of Constituent Authorities of		
	£20.6M	£21.5M
Percentage increase over previous year's SSA	5%	4%

NOTES

- 1 The 2000/01 Budget process identified potential savings in 2001/02 of £317 000 and in 2002/03 of £265 000. The most significant potential saving was £270 000 in 2001/02 in respect of retained crewing of specials at Station 4,17 and 20 growing to £540 000 in 2002/03 with the potential over time of achieving savings in the region of £800 000 to £1M. This is the subject of a Best Value Review in 2000/01.
- 2 These figures are taken from the CSL table of projected net costs produced for the 15 December 1999 meeting of the Fire Authority. An updated projection will be prepared prior to the fixing of the Budget for 2001/02.
- 3 Each additional 1% pay for Firefighters (above 3%) would require further budget provision of £178 500.

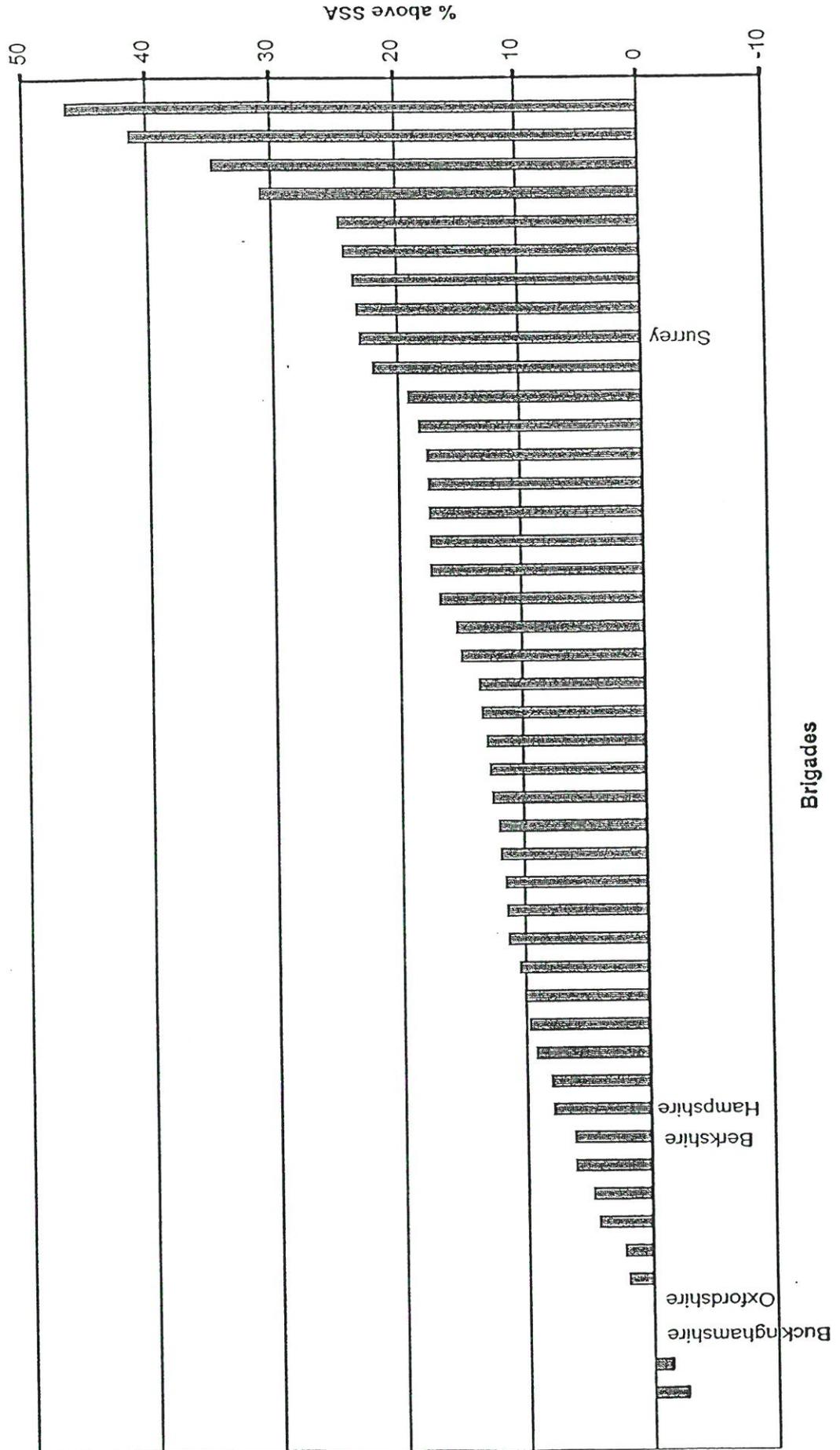
Major tenders due in the latter part of the financial year which could have effects on the budget are Transport Workshop, Insurance, Building Maintenance and Cleaning.
- 4 A revaluation of the Local Government Pension Scheme is due to take place as at 31 March 2002.
- 5 The Directors are currently in the course of reviewing the Revenue Bids list for 2001/02 and 2002/03 projected during the 2000/01 Budget process.
- 6 On the assumption that the Fire Authority's basic credit approval for 2000/01 will be increased by the national increase of 67% to give the 2001/02 figure and on the basis of the current approved capital programme, operational leasing of replacement fire appliances in 2001/02 should not be necessary. Nor should the need for a revenue contribution to capital be required. 2002/03 is likely to produce the need for an element of operational leasing.

STANDARD SPENDING ASSESSMENTS AND BUDGETS 2000/01

Authority	Standard Spending Assessment		Budget	
	Total £000	Fire Authority Component £000	Total £000	Fire Authority Component £000
Bracknell Forest	82335	2650	86852	2856
Reading	110791	3109	141981	3351
Slough	116354	2436	120436	2626
West Berkshire	111459	3606	127318	3886
Windsor & Maidenhead	102748	3961	109294	4270
Wokingham	101214	3898	116856	4201
TOTAL	624901	19660	702737	21190
Fire Authority as % of total		3.15%		
Constituent Authorities				
Budget Spend as % of SSA			112.46	
Fire Authority spend as % of Fire Service SSA				107.78%

Source: Standard Spending and Budget Information - CIPFA Finance and General Statistics 2000/01.

Fire Service spending compared with SSA 1999/2000



BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

2000

September 6	Meeting of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to consider Budget Strategy.
November 2	Performance Review and Audit Panel . Matters considered may impact on 2001/02 Budget.
6 or 7	Budget Working Party initial meeting to consider submission to Fire Authority meeting of 13 December.
November/December	Provision for consultations with Leaders and Chief Executives of the six constituent Authorities. This will occur during the period prior to the setting in December of the approved estimate of the Fire Authority's net expenses for 2001/02.
Late November	Government announcement of 2001/02 finance settlement and Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs.) Note: last year the announcement was on 25 November 1999.
November 30	Performance Review and Audit Panel. Matters considered, may impact on 2001/02 Budget.
December 4 or 5	Budget Working Party to finalise submission to Fire Authority meeting of 13 December.
13	Meeting of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to approve estimate of Authority's net expenses for 2001/02.
Before 31	Treasurer to submit to each constituent authority, the approved estimate of the Authority's net expenses for 2001/02.

2001

February	
Before 15	Contributions of the constituent Authorities to be fixed and the Treasurer to give notice to each Authority of the amount of contributions to be paid by that Authority for 2001/02.

AGENDA ITEM 14: FIRE AUTHORITY'S ANNUAL REPORT 1999/2000

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 6 September 2000
Officers Contributing: Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek formal Member endorsement of the Annual Report for 1999/2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE that the Annual Report for 1999/2000 be approved.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The costs of the preparation and distribution of the annual report have been met from within current budgetary provisions.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Annual Report compliments the Brigade's Strategic Plan

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 In accordance with established practice, the Chief Fire Officer has prepared a report (distributed separately from the agenda papers) on the activities and significant aspects of the Brigade covering the twelve month period from the 1 April 1999 through to the 31 March 2000.
- 2 The format of the Annual Report reflects that successfully introduced for last year and which received favourable comment from a cross section of recipients. It aims to not only reflect upon the achievements and challenges of the past year but to also provide an insight into the changing culture of the Service and how the Chief Fire Officer intends to address the many significant national and locally initiated issues that lay ahead.
- 3 As with the previous year, the Annual report is accompanied by the Strategic Plan 2000 – 2005 which identifies targets and objectives that span beyond the current financial year.
- 4 At it's meeting on 14 June 2000 the Authority approved the Strategic Plan 2000 - 2005 and noted the intention to bring a refined document to the next meeting.

- 5 It is the Chief Fire Officers intention to provide copies of both the Annual Report and Strategic Plan to each member of the Authority's staff, to selected Members and officers of the constituent Unitary Authorities, Berkshire's MP's and dignitaries, HM Fire Service Inspectorate, other Emergency Services and to prospective partners in the local commercial/industrial community.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and Minutes - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, 14 June 2000

Contact Officer: David Harper (0118) 932 2225

