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: 4 September 2002

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 11 September 2002 in the Council Chamber at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell commencing at 6.30pm.**

Easthampstead House is situated on The Ring and access to the car park is from The Ring. Maps showing the venue are reproduced overleaf.

For Members travelling from the west of the County it is advisable to use the M4 Motorway, leave at Junction 10 and take the A329(M) sign posted Wokingham/Bracknell. The A329(M) then becomes the A329 which Members should follow passing over the first roundabout and continuing on the A329. As you approach the next roundabout (traffic lights) move over to the left hand lane and turn left under the railway bridge, taking the third exit (Skimped Hill Lane) at the next roundabout. Continue down this road until the next roundabout and take the second exit (Skimped Hill Lane) which them becomes High Street. At the end of the High Street turn left onto The Ring and follow the road round keeping to the right hand lane until you come to the Easthampstead House Car Park. From the Car Park walk up the steps and turn right. The entrance to Easthampstead House will then be on your right.

For Members travelling from the east of the County it is suggested that you also use the M4 Motorway, leaving at Junction 10 and following the above instructions.

Yours sincerely

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**
DATE AND TIME:	**Wednesday 11 September 2002 at 6.30pm**
VENUE:	**Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, 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.

D C H Williams
Clerk to the Authority

To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman),
E L Glasson (Leader of the Labour Group), Mrs C Bateson, Mrs P Bray,
T Bucknell, Ms C Borgars C Clacey, R A Flood, John P Green, J S Grewal,
P Hingley, Mrs V Howes, Owen E Jeffery, D W Liddiard, P Love, C Maskell,
D McCarthy, T Mills, J E R Mole, D Morgan, A J Ross, D J Smith,
D J Wilson (one vacancy)

Briefing Meetings:

Conservative Group:	5.30pm – Marriage Room – Fourth Floor
Labour Group:	5.30pm – Council Chamber – Fourth Floor
Liberal Democrat Group:	5.30pm – Function Room – Fifth Floor

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For Further Information regarding this meeting, please contact:
David R Weller: (0118) 932 2288
E-Mail: wellerd@rbfrs.co.uk

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2002

AGENDA

PART I AGENDA

PAGE NO.

CONSTITUTIONAL ITEMS

ITEMS FOR RESOLUTION

PART II AGENDA – CONFIDENTIAL

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

To: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date: **11 September 2002**
Officer Contributing: **Clerk & Monitoring Officer**

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of a forthcoming change 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

1. The Fire Authority has been advised that subject to Cabinet approval being given on 12 September 2002 the following change in the Member representation for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will take place:

   Councillor M Scott replacing Councillor M Pritchett (Liberal/Democrat)

2. It was hoped that Councillor Scott would be attending the Fire Authority meeting as an observer but unfortunately he is now unable to do so.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Notification of change from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 3: MINUTES: 19 JUNE 2002

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD, TOWN HALL, ST IVES ROAD, MAIDENHEAD ON WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2002 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED AT 9.57PM.

Present: **Miss C Borgars, Mrs P Bray, J C G Brooks, T Bucknell, C Clacey, R A Flood, E L Glasson, J S Grewal, Mrs V Howes, P Hingley, Owen E Jeffery, D McCarthy, J E R Mole, D Morgan, B J S Patman, M Pritchett, A J Ross, D J Smith, D J Wilson**

Apologies: **Mrs C Bateson, John P Green, D W Liddiard, P Love, T Mills**

2.01/02 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In response to a request from the Clerk and Monitoring Officer two nominations for the position of Chairman of the Fire Authority were received. Both nominations having been seconded were put to the vote with Councillor J C G Brooks receiving twelve votes against four for Councillor B J S Patman.

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

2.02/02 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

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

2.03/02 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Members were advised (Agenda item 4 –not reproduced) of the District/Borough Council appointments to the Fire Authority following the Elections held in May 2002. The Chairman extended a very warm welcome to the following new Fire Authority Members:

Ms C Borgars (Lab)	Reading Borough Council
J S Grewal (Lab), D J Smith (Con)	Slough Borough Council
Mrs P Bray, Mr C Clacey (LibDem)	Wokingham District Council

NOTED

2.04/02 PART I MINUTES: 13 MARCH 2002

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2002, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2.05/02 PART I MINUTES OF SUB GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 6 – not reproduced) of the Performance Review and Audit Panel, Personnel Committee, Community Safety Panel, Urgency Committee and Fire Liaison Group meetings that had taken place since the last meeting in March 2002. Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available on request from the Committee Administrator (0118) 932 2288.

NOTED

2.06/02 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman had nothing further to report.

2.07/02 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.

2.08/02 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

2.09/02 NOTICES OF MOTION

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

2.10/02 CHANGE OF GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 11 – not reproduced) that following the recent division of the DTLR to form a Department of Transport and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Directorate responsible for fire and building regulations,

together with HM Fire Services Inspectorate, has been transferred to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

NOTED

2.11/02 CHANGE IN THE DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 12 – not reproduced) to a change in the Delegated Powers of the Chief Fire Officer following the decision to transfer the responsibility for the Fire Service to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as reported under Minute 2.10/02.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Fire Officers Delegated Power Number 38 be amended to read:

> **"To authorise secondment to the Fire Service College and/or the appropriate Government Department with responsibility for the Fire Service."**

2.12/02 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, PANELS AND WORKING PARTIES

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 13 – not reproduced) to re-appoint its Committees, Working Parties and Panels for the ensuing year. The Chairman advised that with the exception of the Personnel Committee and Urgency Committee he would be confirming his Group's other nominations at a later date

RESOLVED: That the:

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

Councillors P Hingley, O E Jeffery, C Maskell, D Morgan B J S Patman, D J Wilson

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

Councillors J C G Brooks, E L Glasson, B J S Patman

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

Councillors Miss C Borgars, E L Glasson, John P Green, D McCarthy, T Mills, D J Wilson (Three vacancies)

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

Councillors E L Glasson, D McCarthy, A J Ross, D J Smith (Two vacancies)

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

Councillors J S Grewal, P Hingley, T Mills, B J S Patman (Two vacancies)

6 Joint Member Steering Group on Future of Control Rooms be re-appointed for the ensuing year with the following membership:

Councillors John P Green, D McCarthy (One vacancy)

7 Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Leader of the Labour Group be appointed as Ex-Officio Members of the Performance Review and Audit Panel for the ensuing year.

8 Leader of the Liberal/Democrat Group to present the Group's nominations for membership of the remaining Sub-Groups, as identified above, to the Clerk in due course.

2.13/02 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY'S REPRESENTATIVE - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 14 – not reproduced) to appoint its representative to the Local Government Association for the ensuing year.

RESOLVED: That Councillor B J S Patman be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative on the Local Government Association for the ensuing year.

2.14/02 APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY'S REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS FOR THE THAMES VALLEY REGION (ACTVAR)

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 14 – not reproduced) to appoint its Representative and Standing Deputy to the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR).

RESOLVED: That Councillors B J S Patman and J C G Brooks be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative and Standing Deputy respectively on the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVaR) for the ensuing year.

2.15/02 AMBULANCE CO-RESPONDERS SCHEMES

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 16 – not reproduced) of the Service's participation in Ambulance Co-responder schemes.

In speaking to the report the Chief Fire Officer advised that he would be seeking Members' approval in principle to the Service's participation in the Ambulance Co-responder schemes at Retained Stations where the Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service (NHS) Trust has requested that such a scheme be implemented, and where the Brigade's staff at those Stations are willing to participate on a voluntary basis. This would of course be subject to any contrary determination resulting from the Fire Brigades' Union's 'failure to agree' with the Authority's decision.

In noting the background to the proposed extension of the scheme together with details of the existing scheme in operation at Mortimer Fire Station, Members were advised, that the Annual Conference of the Fire Brigades' Union, 2001, adopted a policy to oppose the use of fire service personnel for any co-responder scheme. A copy of the Union's Policy was presented, as Appendix 1 (not reproduced). In addition the matter had been discussed with the FBU at the Authority's Fire Liaison Group held on 25 June 2001, which had resulted in the registration of a Trade Dispute. The Disputes Panel had upheld participation, in consequence of which, the Union had now registered a "failure to agree". The Chief Fire Officer felt it pertinent therefore to present this report to the Authority. Members noted that, to date, the Mortimer co-responder unit has been mobilised on 72 occasions.

In response to a question the Chief Fire Officer advised that the primary responsibility of the Service was to provide fire cover and their participation in the scheme was subject to there being available on Station a sufficient number of personnel (four) to mobilise the appliance if required. This requirement had been accepted by the NHS Trust.

In response to concerns expressed by some Members over the provision of adequate insurance cover for Station personnel the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Chief Executive of the NHS Trust had been asked to clarify the insurance arrangements and he was currently awaiting a response to this question. In view of this it was agreed that whilst supporting the proposed action set out in Section B of the report it should be amended by the insertion, at the beginning, of the following words:

> "That, subject to reassurances being sought that appropriate insurance cover is in place," .....

RESOLVED:

1. **That, subject to reassurances being sought that appropriate insurance cover is in place, the Service's participation in Ambulance Co-responder schemes at Retained Stations where the Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service (NHS Trust) has requested that such a scheme be implemented be approved in**

principle but only where the Brigade's staff at those Stations are willing to participate on a voluntary basis

2. **That, Resolution 1 above be subject to any contrary determination resulting from the Fire Brigades' Union's 'failure to agree' with the Authority's decision.**

2.16/02 DISPUTES PROCEDURE AT AUTHORITY LEVEL

The Authority was requested (Agenda item 17 – not reproduced) to review its existing procedures for hearing Disputes at Elected Member level, based on the recommendations of the Disputes Panel which met recently to consider a Dispute raised by the Fire Brigades' Union in relation to Discipline procedures.

The Disputes Panel having met on 25 September 2001 and 18 March 2002 had made a number of recommendations to the Authority as set out in paragraph 1 of the report (not reproduced) relating to the procedure to be used at future Hearings. The Clerk advised that the Panel's recommendations had been considered in the context of Circular NJC/3/01, which revised the NJC Disputes procedure. The revised procedure, as far as the Authority was concerned was summarised in paragraph 2 of the report (not reproduced).

Having taken into consideration the recommendations of the Disputes Panel and the comments of the Clerk as set out in the remainder of the report, Members considered and approved the following revised procedure for Dispute Panel Hearings:

1. That an agreed informal arrangement be introduced which requires a meeting of the Personnel Disputes Panel to be convened within thirty days of a failure to agree with Management being lodged. *(It is noted that this is a variation from the nationally agreed time-scale of fourteen days).*

2. Evidence from both sides involved in the Dispute needs to be produced in writing at least seven days before the Hearing.

3. The names of Witnesses, and where they appear as Expert Witnesses, their qualifications, be provided to the Panel in advance of the Hearing.

4. Training to be provided for Elected Members as appropriate.

5. Brigade Management and Fire Brigades' Union will endeavour to agree, prior to the meeting-taking place, on a protocol for the presentation of evidence for that specific meeting only.

6. The Personnel Disputes Panel to consist of three or five Elected Members and that a minority decision be permitted to be recorded.

7. The Disputes Panel to have the ability, if needs be, to defer a decision for up to seven working days.

8. That the outcome of the Disputes Panel Hearing be reported to the Fire Authority under the Part II Agenda but where deemed appropriate the decisions so made be capable of being promulgated to staff.

9. That it be noted that both Management and the Union will withdraw while the Panel deliberates but that national guidance has made it clear that Officers appointed to advise the Panel, such as the Clerk to the Panel, may remain with the Panel, in order to advise on procedure etc.

RESOLVED: That the revised procedure for Dispute Panel Hearings at Elected Member level, as set out above, be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

2.17/02 JOINT MEMBER STEERING GROUP ON THE FUTURE OF CONTROL ROOM COLLABORATION: NETWORKED FIRE CONTROL SOLUTION FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN THE THAMES VALLEY

Having been advised (Agenda item 18 – not reproduced) of the work undertaken so far by the Authority in conjunction with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and Oxfordshire County Council in respect of joint Fire Controls, the Authority's approval was sought to the exploration of a networked Fire Control solution.

In noting the background to this proposal as set out in the report (not reproduced), Members were advised that, at its meeting on 20 March 2002, the Performance Review and Audit Panel had approved the Best Value Review of Control and Communications undertaken by the Service. The primary recommendations of this Review were that the Fire Authority be recommended to retain the current facilities with a commitment to introducing new efficiency, effectiveness, and economy measures to maintain continuous improvement. It was also agreed that the future procurement of Control and Communications equipment is undertaken in collaboration with our neighbouring Fire Services within the Thames Valley, with a view to establishing a network of interoperable and supporting Control Rooms.

Although the Berkshire Secretary of the Fire Brigades' Union and all staff in the Control Rooms have either been consulted or updated on progress on a monthly basis, staff has not, as yet, been consulted more widely within the Service, which needs to be done within the spirit of the Partnership for Common Sense. Therefore if Members are minded to approve the Resolution set out in Section B of the report, the Chief Fire Officer will undertake the full consultation process.

RESOLVED: That the Authority's representatives to the Joint Member Steering Group be authorised to explore appropriate options, including a networked solution for Fire Controls, and that progress reports be presented to future Fire Authority meetings.

2.18/02 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 19 – not reproduced) to a proposed course of action in response to an invitation from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to participate in a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The invitation from the Royal Borough had been in response to a letter sent by the Chief Fire Officer in February 2001 to the Chief Executives of the six Constituent Authorities asking that the Service be considered in any partnership arrangements being formed.

The Royal Borough, together with a number of local agencies within the Borough, had recently formed such a Partnership and its aim is to draw together the community plans developed by several agencies into a single Community Strategy which will benefit the local residents through a 'joined up' approach. This strategy is intended to build upon existing work and not to replace it.

The LSP is strategic in nature, is Member led with support from Officer groups drawn from each of the partner agencies. The Royal Borough has suggested that, a single Member who is not a Member of the Borough represent the Fire Authority. Councillor T McCann, (Wokingham District Council), had represented the Authority at the inaugural meeting of the LSP on 25 March 2002 but is unable to continue being no longer a Member of the Fire Authority. A copy of the Minutes of that meeting were presented as Appendix B (not reproduced) for Members' information.

No approaches have been made to the Chief Fire Officer to participate in similar LSP's from the other five remaining Constituent Authorities, though it is believed that some of them have formed LSP's with other agencies. Should Members be minded to approve the Authority's participation ion the Royal Borough's LSP, it was suggested that Local Members seek the Fire Authority's involvement in these via an approach to the Leader of their particular Council. In response to this it was proposed and agreed that the Chairman would write to the Leaders of the other Constituent Authorities with a copy of the letter being circulated to Fire Authority Members.

RESOLVED: That:

1. **The Fire Authority participate in the Local Strategic Partnership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.**

2. **Councillor J E R Mole be nominated to represent the Fire Authority on the Partnership.**

3. **To seek, at Member level, for similar involvement in any Local Strategic Partnerships formed within any of the other five Constituent Authorities.**

4. **In support of Resolution 3 above the Chairman be authorised to write to the Leaders of the other Constituent Authorities with a copy of the letter being circulated to Fire Authority Members.**

2.19/02 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT

In accordance with the revised CIPFA Code of Practice , Treasury Management in Local Authorities 1996, the Authority received a copy (Agenda item 20: Appendix B – 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 and thanks to Mr D Illingworth (Authority Treasurer) and Mr A Vallance (Head of Financial Services) for all their hard work in producing the Report and for the successful management of the Authority's financial activities.

NOTED

2.20/02 OUTTURN 2001/2002 – PROVISIONAL INDICATION OF FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS POSITION

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 21 – not reproduced) of the likely final Revenue and Capital expenditure position for 2001/2002.

Members were advised that excluding the pension's deficit the original 2001/2002 Budget of £19,360,202 is likely to be fully spent. The Capital spend compared with the revised Budget agreed by the Urgency Committee at its meeting on 25 February 2002 was presented as Appendix B (not reproduced). A full detailed report would be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2002.

NOTED

2.21/02 PERFORMANCE REVIEW INSPECTIONS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 22 – not reproduced) of the report issued by Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate following the inspection of the Service carried out in January 2002 in accordance with Section 24 of the Fire Services Act 1947.

The Chief Fire Officer in speaking to the Inspectors' report, a copy of which was presented as Annex 1 (not reproduced), advised Members that overall it had been a very positive report and drew their attention to the Management Summary contained in pages 3 and 4 of the report (not reproduced).

One particular concern however was that the Inspectors noted the demands made upon staff by the Authority's work programme, and in particular upon those at senior and

middle management level as detailed in paragraphs 43-47 of the Inspectors report. Paragraph 47 highlighted the need to consider this matter in more detail. Accordingly work in this respect is ongoing and a report will be presented to a future Fire Authority meeting for Members consideration and determination.

The Chairman in welcoming the outcome of the HM Inspectors report wished to place on record his thanks to the Chief Fire Officer and his Officers for all their hard work in maintaining and providing an effective and efficient service in Berkshire.

NOTED

2.22/02 CONNECTING COMMUNITIES PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

The Authority received (Agenda item 23 – not reproduced) a progress report on the Connecting Communities Project in which the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is in partnership with the Reading and Slough Councils for Racial Equality. The report was supported by a brief presentation from Mansoor Hussain, an employee from the Reading Council for Racial Equality, who expanded on the contents of the report in respect of its current activities and the future work programme. Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

The key objective of the project is to make the Service more representative of the diverse ethnic minority communities in the area by enhancing their recruitment and involvement in the Service. Early indications are that the project is having a positive effect on the various ethnic communities in the County. The Project is managed by a Steering Committee, which meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Members welcomed the report with enthusiasm and encouragement and were looking forward to positive outcomes for the Service in the future.

In response to a request from the Chairman the Chief Fire Officer reported on the very successful Cadet Unit established in Crowthorne and supported by the Bracknell Forest Borough Council. He welcomed the suggestion by Members that similar Units should be established in Reading and Slough but emphasised the fact that the successful outcome does depend on Fire-Fighters volunteering to organise and run the Cadet scheme. If additional Cadet Units are established it may be necessary for the Authority to consider making some financial award to the volunteers. In view of this it was therefore his intention to raise this subject with the Budget Working Party during their consideration of the 2003/2004 Budget.

In an attempt to make the ethnic minorities more aware of what the Brigade can offer it was suggested that in addition to a Press Release consideration be given to producing an explanatory leaflet of an appropriate standard for circulation to appropriate areas and organisations within the County. It was also suggested that the possibility of sponsorship for the production of the leaflet be explored.

In thanking Masoor for his presentation the Chairman sought Members approval to the suspension of Standing Orders to allow the FBU Representatives to comment of the Project. In confirming their support for the Project the FBU suggested that the Authority focus on the crews on Stations and the links already in place.

NOTED

2.23/02 REPORT ON SONNING FIRE STATION

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 24 – not reproduced) of progress regarding the re-negotiation of the lease of Sonning Fire Station which is operated on land owned by the Sonning Volunteer Fire Brigade Trust. One of the reasons for the suggested long-term extension of the lease is to allow remedial works to be undertaken, mostly concerning the appliance bay floor at an estimated cost of £25,000.

The outcome of a meeting between Brigade Officers and the Trustees was summarised in paragraph 2 of the report (not reproduced). As the negotiations were continuing there was nothing further to report at this stage in the process.

As the matter must be finalised by August it was the Chief Fire Officer's intention to present a report to the Authority's Urgency Committee for consideration and determination.

NOTED

2.24/02 DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 25 – not reproduced) of the disposal of equipment which has been determined to be surplus to requirements.

In accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulation 15.8 the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Authority Treasurer, may consider donating equipment to other bodies and to advise the Authority accordingly.

As the equipment listed in Appendix 2 (not reproduced) is considered not to be suitable for use by the Cadet Unit the Chief Fire Officer has decided to donate it to Operation Florian, a registered Charity established to collate and transport equipment which might be useful to the Fire Services in the former Yugoslav states.

In response to a question concerning the condition of some of the equipment and its practical use the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that whilst the Charity is restrained by certain standards it does have the resources available to undertake the necessary repair work and therefore welcome the offer of equipment in any condition, be it obsolete or damaged. The estimated value of the equipment identified for disposal was £1,000.

NOTED

2.25/02 CHANGE IN THE FIRE SERVICE NATIONAL RADIO STRATEGY

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 26 – not reproduced) of a recent change to the Fire Service National Radio Replacement Strategy. In noting the background to the strategy Members were advised that in recognition of the significant events of September 11 2001 and as part of a series of national reviews, the Fire Service Replacement Strategy had been re-evaluated by Her Majesty's Government. As a result a new strategy had been drawn up and is to be outlined in a Fire Service Circular currently awaiting issue.

In the absence of any detail of the new strategy, it is not possible to seek Authority approval to abandon the current strategy in favour of adopting the new strategy. Therefore it will be necessary, once the Circular has been received, to present a report and recommendations to the Urgency Committee for consideration and approval. In order to minimise unnecessary expenditure and workload all work on the current project had been suspended.

NOTED

2.26/02 PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 27 – not reproduced) of the successful bid for a grant of £50,000 over two years from the Department of Trade and Industry to support partnership at work projects.

The Chairman was delighted to announce that he, the Chief Fire Officer and the Chairman of the Berkshire Fire Brigades' Union had, on behalf of the Brigade, received the winner Award which, is a positive recognition to the way that the Brigade has worked together in the Partnership for Common Sense initiative. He therefore wished to place on record his thanks and congratulations to all those Officer Members of the Partnership Steering Group and Design Team. He also expressed his pleasure at being involved in the production of the Brigade Charter and requested the Chief Fire Officer to arrange for a copy of the Charter to be sent to all new Fire Authority Members.

The full conditions of the successful bid have not yet been received and it is the Chief Fire Officers intention to present a full and comprehensive report to the Authority meeting in September 2002.

In answer to a question the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that although the Bid was subject to matched funding from the Authority it is possible to charge the resources used against that account over a period of two years so the funding can therefore be found from within existing approved Budgets.

NOTED

2.27/02 CHANGES TO HYDRANT TESTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 28 – not reproduced) of changes in the manner in which hydrants are inspected and tested by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Previously fire hydrants were tested by operational fire crews but this practice ceased on 1 May 2002 and the reasoning behind this decision was summarised in paragraphs 2-4 of the report (not reproduced).

A review was therefore undertaken which produced three alternative options as described in paragraphs 7-9 of the report. Of the three Option two was adopted at an estimated cost of £25,000 to £30,000 per annum which can be met during the current financial year from negotiated reductions in the liabilities to Water Companies, for which provision in the approved Budget had been made. In return the Authority will gain a team of two Hydrant Inspectors who can inspect and maintain the hydrants that the Brigade requires to meet its statutory requirements of the new legislation.

NOTED

2.28/02 CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2002/2003

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 29 – not reproduced) of the Authority's Corporate Plan for 2002/2003 (formally known as the Best Value Performance Plan) comprising the Strategic Plan, Best Value Performance Plan and Community Safety Plan.

The various elements of the Plan had been approved by the Authority's Community Safety Panel and Performance Review and Audit Panel at meetings held on 29 April and 30 May 2002 respectively.

The final plan is currently at the printers and will be published in accordance with legislation on 30 June 2002. The Plan will be widely advertised and copies circulated to all Authority Members and other interested parties. It will also be available in Berkshire Libraries and published on the Service's Web-Site.

NOTED

2.29/02 HALF YEARLY REPORT FOR MEDICAL RETIREMENTS, WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCES

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 30 – not reproduced) of the number of medical retirements, workplace accidents and sickness absences for the period 1 October 2001 to 31 March 2002.

NOTED

2.30/02 CHANGE OF NOMENCLATURE FOR UNIFORMED POSTS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 31 – not reproduced) of a change in the nomenclature used for Uniformed posts within the Service. A copy of the revised nomenclature was presented in Appendix C (not reproduced) to assist Members when making contact with specific Officers.

NOTED

2.31/02 MEMBERS' BRIEFING DAY

The Authority received details (Agenda item 32 – not reproduced) of a Members' Briefing Day being arranged for Friday 12 July 2002 at Whitley Wood Fire Station (Station 20). In addition to Authority Members, invitations have also been sent to Members/Chief Executives of the Constituent Authorities and local Members of Parliament. The purpose of the Day will be to provide an update on the current and emerging issues facing the Service.

NOTED

2.32/02 FIRES, INCIDENTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 33 – not reproduced) which summarised some of the notable incidents attended, together with letters of appreciation received, by the Brigade during the period 2 March to 30 May 2002.

NOTED

2.33/02 PRESENTATION ON BRIGADE PARTICIPATION IN 18TH INTERNATIONAL EXTRICATION COMPETITION AND SYMPOSIUM – SEPTEMBER 2001

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 34 – not reproduced) supported by a brief presentation from Station Officer Ian Cox, Station Commander of Caversham Road (Reading) Fire Station on the Brigade's attendance at the 18th International Extrication Competition and Symposium held in Burlington, Ontario, Canada in September 2001.

Station Officer Cox reflected on the somewhat interesting journey to the venue and the experience of participating in last year's event which has resulted in the Team being placed 12th in the world overall. The Team had also taken the opportunity to visit Ground Zero in New York and presented a plaque on behalf of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Fire Authority.

Members were advised that each year, teams from this Brigade have competed in the British National Extrication Challenge (BNEC) with the team from Slough competing every year since 1990. The best position achieved was second, when the team finished just one point behind the UK champions. This year's national competition is scheduled to take place between 8-10 August, hosted by Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

This year Station Officer Cox had organised a Southern Counties Extrication Challenge which was held at Whitley Wood Fire Station on 1 June 2002 and a summary of the Team's performance was presented in paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced).

The Team from Slough has also received an invitation to take part in the 19th International Extrication Competition that is to be held in Bloomington, Minnesota, USA between 19-24 August 2002, and is currently seeking sponsorship to cover their anticipated costs of £6,000. In congratulating the Team on their tremendous success the Chairman proposed that the Fire Authority contribute the sum of £3,000 towards the Team's fund raising efforts for the 2002 competition. The proposal having been seconded was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That the Fire Authority contribute the sum of £3,000 towards the Team's fund raising efforts for the 2002 competition in Bloomington, Minnesota, USA in August 2002.

2.34/02 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next Fire Authority meeting was scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 11 September 2002 in the Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell commencing at 6.30pm.** Members were reminded that the December Fire Authority Meeting (Budget) will take place on Wednesday 18 December 2002 in the Council Chamber, West Berkshire Council, Market Place, Newbury commencing at 6.30pm.

2.35/02 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	Paragraph
37	Part II Minutes: Wednesday 13 March 2002	1,7 & 8

38	Part II Minutes of Sub-Groups	1, 7 & 8
39	Fire Brigades' Union Pay Claim 2002	1
40	Veteran (Fire Appliance) Society	7 & 8
41	Development of Commercial Partnerships	7 & 8

(Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority meeting held on Wednesday 19 June 2002)

2.36/02 PART II MINUTES: 13 MARCH 2002

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2002 were received and approved as a correct record.

2.37/02 PART II MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Part II Minutes of the Sub-Groups were received and Noted.

2.38/02 FIRE BRIGADES' UNION PAY CLAIM 2002

The Authority established its policy in relation to the Fire Brigades' Union Pay Claim 2002.

2.39/02 VETERAN (FIRE APPLIANCE) SOCIETY

Having been advised of the assets belonging to the Fire Authority and held in trust by the Veteran Society, Members approved a course of action relating to their future.

2.40/02 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Having been advised of the Partnership Advisor's Plan to seek additional income for the Brigade from Commercial Partnerships the Authority approved his continued appointment until March 2003 to implement the Plan.

AGENDA ITEM 4: **PART I MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS**

To: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date: **11 September 2002**
Officer Contributing: **Clerk & Monitoring Officer**

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members on meetings of the Performance Review and Audit Panel, Personnel Committee, Community Safety Panel and the Fire Liaison Group that have taken place since the last meeting of the Fire Authority in June 2002.

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 2002:

Personnel Committee	Wednesday 24 July 2002
Community Safety Panel	Tuesday 23 July 2002
Fire Liaison Group	Tuesday 27 August 2002
Urgency Committee	Tuesday 16 July and Tuesday 6 August 2002

2 Copies of the Part I Minutes (if available) can be obtained from David Weller on (0118) 932 2288) – E-Mail address: wellerd@rbfrs.co.uk

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda's and Minutes for the above mentioned meetings

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 9: **CHIEF OFFICERS DELEGATED POWERS CELLNET AGREEMENTS**

To: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date: **11 September 2002**
Officer Contributing: **Clerk and Monitoring Officer**
Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to amend the Chief Fire Ofiicer's Delegated Power in relation to Cellnet Agreements.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to enter into Cellnet Agreements for a period not exceeding 10 years (at present the limit is 7 years) and that the Chief Fire Officer's Delegated Powers be amended accordingly.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There in no contribution to the Strategic Plan.

E ASSESSMENT AGAINST PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

Not Applicable

F SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 The Brigade has recently started using Vail Williams as property agents. The firm have advised that in the case of Cellnet Agreements, the Authority would have better protection if the provision of the Landlord, Tenant Act were excluded from the present agreement. To compensate, however, they feel Companies should be granted a 10-year term.

2 At present Companies are given a 5-year term but there is a right to review for a further period of five years and in practice they can remain on site as long as they wish.

3 Under Chief Officers Delegated Powers, the Chief Fire Officer has the power to enter into leases, licenses etc or agreements in relation to land for up to 7 years. In view of the suggested change in policy, permission is sought to permit the Chief Fire Officer to enter in Cellnet Agreements for a period not exceeding 10 years.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

Correspondence with Vail-Williams.

Contact Officer: Clive Williams (0118) 932 2284

AGENDA ITEM 11: **ANNUAL REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AND NEW HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE OBJECTIVES**

To: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date: **11 September 2002**
Officer Contributing: **Chief Fire Officer**

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with an update of the Brigades Health and Safety performance against objectives set for the period 2000 – 2002, and to seek approval to the proposed health and safety objectives for the period 2002 – 2004.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the progress against objectives set for 2000 – 2002 and RESOLVE: That the proposed health and safety objectives for the period 2002 – 2004 be approved.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications of seeking to meet the proposed objectives will be contained within existing budgets.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The objectives and actions identified in this document, support the Brigade's Strategic Plan.

E ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

To ensure the success of meeting these objectives, a partnership approach will continue to be used in the promotion of health and safety within the Brigade.

F SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 The Brigade set health and safety objectives for the period 2000 – 2002, and an update of the progress made is presented in Appendix A attached. Since these objectives were set, the Government with the Health and Safety Commission has introduced a strategy for "Revitalising Health and Safety". This strategy sets national targets and is intended to give new impetus to occupational safety and health. The package includes a 10 point strategy

and a 44 point action plan, offering employers a combination of incentives, practical support and enforcement criteria.
There are three specific national targets which are to be met by 2010, with half of the improvement secured by 2004, these are;

a) A 30% reduction in the number of working days lost from work – related injury and ill health, ie a decrease of 7.5 million working days;
b) A 20% reduction in the incidence of people suffering from work related ill health , 80,000 fewer new cases, based on the Occupational Health Strategy released by the HSE.
c) A 10% reduction of fatal and major injury rate, ie 3,000 fewer.

2 The attached Appendix B identifies the Brigades Health and Safety Objectives for the period 2002 – 2004, as approved by the Brigade Management Team at its meeting in August 2002.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

1 Agenda and Mnutes: Fire Authority Meeting - July 1999.
2 Agenda and Minutes: Personnel Committee - November 2000:- Revitalising Health and Safety.
3 Agenda and Minutes: Brigade Management Team – May and August 2002:- Health and Safety Statistics and Health, Safety and Welfare Objectives..
4 Health and Safety Manual, Health and Safety Objectives 2000 – 2002.

Contact Officers: David Wallace (0118) 932 2275
Tracey Mitchell (0118) 932 2130

APPENDIX A

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES 2000-2002. Progress is recorded in *italics*

HEALTH & SAFETY OBJECTIVES FOR 2000/2002

OBJECTIVE 1

To reduce the number of accidents, including reportable accidents, by 10% during year one, and on achievement, setting a further target for reduction. A specific focus of this objective is to reduce the number of manual handling accidents.

This objective supports the HMFSI Expectations document H&S 5.1.

A target has also been set to reduce levels of sickness absence in the Brigade, which includes absence as a result of accidents at work. This is published in the Best Value Performance Plan - Objective 12.

PLANNED ACTIONS:

During 1999 the Brigade had 199 accidents of which 33 were reportable to the HSE. The single largest cause of these accidents is attributed to manual handling. The majority of the manual handling accidents occurred during operational activities.

Actions include:-

- developing a programme of manual handling training for all Physical Training Instructors
- CD ROM training package produced and to be viewed by all personnel
- review of the Brigade policy for manual handling and subsequent guidance
- developing a programme to mark weights on equipment
- adopting the aims and objectives of the National Training model for manual handling

OUTCOMES:

- ***Accident Statistics: During 2000 – 2002, the accident rate was reduced by 12%. Manual handling type accidents were reduced by nearly 40% for this period.***
- ***Physical Training Instructors have received manual handling training.***
- ***CD ROM Packages for manual handling of loads have been produced.***
- ***Weights of loads have been marked on items of equipment.***
- ***Outstanding action: Manual Handling Policy to be reviewed with guidance from the HMFSI/CACFOA Working Party during 2002.***
- ***Outstanding action: A National Training Model for manual handling will also be developed during 2002.***

OBJECTIVE 2

Develop an Occupational Health and Welfare Strategy for the Brigade.

This objective supports the Brigade's Strategic Plan item ID200.

A target has been set to reduce the number of Ill health early retirements from the Brigade. This is published in the Best Value Performance Plan - Objective 15.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The Brigade currently has policies and procedures in place to ensure the occupational health and welfare of its employees. In developing a strategy for occupational health and welfare, will enable the Brigade to identify and focus upon areas for further development and review.

Actions include:-

- developing a programme to review, and amend where required, Brigade occupational health, and welfare standards i.e. health surveillance, standards of eyesight etc.
- develop and implement a policy for the management of stress in the Brigade
- review levels of service provided by the occupational health consultancy and identify areas where further assistance is required

OUTCOMES

- ***The Brigade has secured finances for improving occupational health within the Brigade. This will enable the Brigade to develop proactive strategies for managing occupational health and safety including health promotion.***
- ***The number of ill health retirements due to accidents at work has risen from two during 1999 – 2001, to five during 2001 – 2002.***
- ***A "Working life" survey has been carried out for the Brigade to encompass every member of staff and to consider all the information received. An action plan has been developed to take into account the recommendations of the report.***
- ***A policy for Stress in the workplace has been written and published in the Health and Safety Manual.***

OBJECTIVE 3

Develop a General Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy for the Brigade.

This supports the Brigade's Strategic Plan items ID195 & 203 and the Home Office Expectations document H&S section 6.

PLANNED ACTIONS

Currently, there are health and safety policies and procedures in place to fulfill the legal and moral duties of the Brigade. In developing this strategy, the health and safety team will use the principles of the HSE guidance document "Successful health and safety management" – HSG65. By developing the strategy using this format, will focus on the review of current Brigade health and safety policies and procedures to ensure they are current, adequate and effective in terms of ownership, implementation and that they effectively monitored.

Actions include:

- review of current Brigade Health and Safety manual
- review and amend the organisation section of the health and safety policy, to reflect recent Brigade changes
- review of the risk assessment policy to incorporate all aspects of risk assessment including dynamic risks and operational generic activities
- develop a planned programme for all risk assessments and put in place mechanisms to monitor the implementation and outcomes of these assessment

OUTCOMES

- ***A review of the Brigade's Health and Safety Manual has taken place. A number of sections have been revised.***
- ***The Policy and Organisation sections of the Health and Safety Manual have been reviewed to reflect the changes within the Brigade over the previous 18 months.***
- ***A strategy to encompass all types of risk is currently being developed. This will include the recently purchased GMC risk assessment package. Risk Assessments have continued to be developed, especially for areas such as Drill Venues.***
- ***A planned programme for the formulation and review of risk assessments will be developed as part of the risk assessment strategy.***

OBJECTIVE 4

Development and Implementation of a Strategy for the Management of Contractors.

This supports the Brigade's Strategic Plan item ID192.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The Brigade currently employs contractors either directly or via a managing agent. Further systems are required to ensure the safe use of contract labour when working for the Brigade.
Actions include:

- development and implementation of a contractors health and safety policy for the Brigade
- development and issue of a Brigade safety information booklet for all contractors
- development of monitoring criteria to ensure the effectiveness of contractors and sub contractors safety performance, prior to and during their working for the Brigade
- health and safety team to conduct a safety audit of the managing agent to ensure their policies and procedures are adequate when employing contractors on behalf of the Brigade

OUTCOMES

- ***A contractors policy has been written and published in the Health and Safety Manual, along with a booklet which is given to all contractors to inform them of the Brigade's health and safety arrangements.***
- ***The Health and Safety section have set up a system to review contractor documentation and safety performance on an ongoing basis.***
- ***Outstanding action: An audit on the managing agent by the department has not yet taken place and will be incorporated in the audit to be carried out in 2002 – 2004.***

OBJECTIVE 5

Implement the Recommendations of the Noise Survey Conducted in February 2000.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The Brigade recently commissioned consultants to undertake noise measurements of equipment used for training and operational incidents. Results of the survey indicate that the Brigade need to reduce the levels of noise in some areas i.e. by removal, enclosure, use of hearing protection etc.
Actions include:

- developing an action plan to meet the recommendations of the survey
- marking of equipment and zones
- removal of items of equipment no longer used, which exceed acceptable noise levels
- ensuring noise levels are considered when risk assessments are conducted for all new and existing items of equipment
- research and purchase of hearing protection
- where ear defenders/plugs are supplied, provide instruction in their use, maintenance and fitting
- making formal observations of hearing protection usage i.e. unannounced spot checks etc

OUTCOMES

- ***An action plan was developed taking into account the outcomes of the survey.***
- ***All relevant equipment has been labelled.***
- ***Items of equipment which are noisy but are no longer used have been removed from service.***
- ***Noise levels are taken into account when new equipment is risk assessed. This would normally be conducted by REO or ESM in conjunction with the Health and Safety Department.***
- ***A survey to look at hearing protection has taken place and personal protective equipment has been selected and implemented ie earplugs etc.***

OBJECTIVE 6

Ensure the Effectiveness of the Brigade's Current Health and Safety Monitoring Arrangements, and Develop Workplace Specific Monitoring Criteria.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The Brigade currently has some monitoring arrangements in place i.e. workplace inspections, accident reporting systems etc. The purpose of this objective is to focus on particular areas of monitoring in the workplace by the responsible manager. This supports the Home Office Expectations document H&S section 5.
Actions include:

- review of the workplace inspections procedure by the health and safety team
- developing and setting annual health and safety objectives for line managers by their managers, i.e. for conducting specific workplace assessments, setting accident reduction targets for the workplace, establishing a regular health and safety item at management meetings etc.
- ensuring recommendations from accident investigations have been progressed and implemented in the workplace
- developing performance indicators to monitor safety performance

OUTCOMES

- ***A review of the Workplace Inspection has been conducted and a system of workplace risk assessment has been introduced.***
- ***Health, safety and welfare related annual objectives have been developed in some areas ie Service Delivery, but not specifically at Performance Development sessions.***
- ***The Health and Safety Department have developed a system for the monitoring of Accident Investigation outcomes, and follow up meetings are held with the appropriate officers within each Directorate.***

APPENDIX B

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE OBJECTIVES, 2002 – 2004

OBJECTIVE 1

To reduce the number of accidents, including reportable accidents by 10%. The focus will remain on manual handling type accidents and slips, trips and falls, which continue to be the Brigade's highest cause of injury.

PLANNED ACTIONS
The Government with the Health and Safety Commission have published targets for "Revitalising Health and Safety", which include; reducing working days lost from work related injury and ill health, reducing the numbers of ill health cases and reducing the number of major injuries at work. To reduce the number of accidents, ill health and days lost due to accidents, we will continue to focus on:

- Reviewing accidents and near misses to identify and address any shortfalls in systems
- Ensure that pro active workplace inspections take place, identifying areas where improvements can be made
- Continue to risk assess any new processes and equipment prior to implementation

OBJECTIVE 2

To act upon the recommendations of the "Working Life Survey" carried out in January 2002, with the aim to reduce and avoid the number of days lost due to stress related illness.

PLANNED ACTIONS
In support of the recommendations of the Working Life Survey, a number of objectives have been set which include:

- Communicating the results of the survey to all personnel in the Brigade
- Setting up Stress Workshops, to ensure managers are aware of the signs and symptoms of stress and can recognise them in themselves and others
- Supporting the European Week for Occupational Safety and Health during 2002, which focuses on Stress
- Implementing the Working Time and Workloads Policy
- Seeking approval for a repeat survey during 2003
- Monitoring sickness absence due to stress related illnesses

OBJECTIVE 3

To develop and implement a strategy for proactive risk assessment and current risk assessment reviews.

PLANNED ACTIONS
The Brigade has a risk assessment procedure, which during 2002 has undergone a review. As a result, a strategy is being developed to ensure that those assessments currently in place are regularly reviewed for adequacy, and that proactive risk assessments take place,

as well as those which have come about due to changes in processes, equipment or accidents in the workplace. Areas of action include:

- Setting up a review system for existing risk assessments
- Identifying who will carry out assessments
- Identifying a priority order for those outstanding assessments
- Delivering risk assessment training to Junior Officers

OBJECTIVE 4

To review the Brigade's Accident Investigation procedure.

PLANNED ACTIONS
The Brigade has an Accident and Near Miss reporting system which has been in place since 1997. To ensure the system is meeting the Brigade's needs, a review will be initiated during 2002. This will include:

- Review of training needs
- Review and amendment of current policy, procedure and associated forms
- Briefing Strategy for revised system

OBJECTIVE 5

A health and safety collaboration project has been set up across the Thames Valley Brigades.
This is to assist in improving health and safety performance by the implementation of effective policies and practices which have been agreed as best practice.

PLANNED ACTIONS
This Brigade, along with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescues have developed a plan identifying seven subject areas which can be worked upon collaboratively. The areas include;

- Asbestos, Risk Assessment, Confined Spaces, Working at Heights, Health and Safety Training, Health Promotion and Manual Handling.

OBJECTIVE 6

To carry out an audit of Health and Safety in the Brigade, and develop an action plan to implement recommendations for improvement.

PLANNED ACTION
To ensure the Brigade has a robust system in place for the management of safety, audits and reviews should regularly take place.
An audit is programmed to take place during 2002. This will focus on Policy, Organising for safety, Planning and implementing, Measuring Performance and Review and Audit. The ROSPA Quality Safety Audit system will be the audit tool used.