

# 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  
When calling ask for: David R Weller  
Direct Line: (0118) 932 2288  
E-Mail: [wellerd@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:wellerd@rbfrs.co.uk)  
Date: 4 February 2004

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 February 2004 in the Council Chamber, Slough Borough Council, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough commencing at 6.30pm.

The Town Hall is situated on the main A4 (Bath Road) in Slough as shown on the location plan reproduced overleaf. I have been advised that for security reasons the car parking and gaining entrance to the building has been changed. Parking will be available in the Council's car park which is accessed from Ledgers Road.

For those Members travelling to Slough on the M4 you should leave the motorway at Junction 6 and proceed down the A355 towards Slough. At the next roundabout turn right into Church Street which then becomes Chalvey Road at the first set of traffic lights. Continue along Chalvey Road and at the next set of traffic lights turn left into Ledgers Road. Proceed along Ledgers Road, passing Montem Lane on your left, and the entrance to the car park should then be on your left with the barrier up.

An alternative route is when leaving the motorway proceed down the A355 towards Slough passing over the first roundabout and as you approach the set of traffic lights move over to the far right hand lane. Turn right at the traffic lights onto the A4 (Bath Road). Follow the A4 and as you pass the Town Hall on your right move over to the right hand lane as you approach the traffic lights. Turn right at the traffic lights into Ledgers Road and the entrance to the car park will then be on your right.

**From the car park you will have to walk round to the front of the Town Hall (Bath Road) and enter the building through the large wooden doors. On entering please collect your Security Pass.** The Bus and Train Station is approximately one mile from the Town Hall. Refreshments will be served in the Council Chamber.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David R Weller'.

David R Weller  
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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Telephone Reading (0118) 945 2888 Facsimile (0118) 959 0510

**MEETING:** **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

**DATE AND TIME:** **Wednesday 11 February 2004 at 6.30pm**

**VENUE:** **Council Chamber, Slough Borough Council,  
Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough, 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.

Rosemary J Lansdowne  
Clerk to the Authority

**To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**

T Mills (Chairman), J C G Brooks (Vice-Chairman),  
Christine Borgars (Leader of the Labour Group), M Adams, Mrs C Bateson,  
Mrs P Bray, Dr P Bryant, Tom Crisp, G S Findlay, John P Green, J S Grewal,  
D Howes, Mrs V Howes, Owen E Jeffery, C Maskell, J E R Mole, Peter North,  
B J S Patman, A J Ross, D J Smith, D Swindells, R Webb, Simon Werner,  
P Weston, D J Wilson

**Briefing Meetings:**

Conservative Group: 5.30pm – Committee Room 1 – First Floor  
Labour Group: 5.15pm – Mayor's Conference Room – Ground Floor  
Liberal Democrat Group: 5.30pm – Committee Room 4 – First Floor

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



ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2004



## AGENDA

### PART I AGENDA

PAGE NOS

#### CONSTITUTIONAL ITEMS

1	Apologies for Absence	-
2	Part I Minutes: Wednesday 17 December 2003 (Copy attached)	1-10
3	Part I Minutes of Committees (For Information)	11
4	Chairman's Communications (if any)	-
5	Petitions and Questions from the Public Under Standing Orders 8 & 9	-
6	Questions from Members under Standing Order 10 (if any)	-
7	Notices of Motion under Standing Order 12 (if any)	-

#### ITEMS FOR RESOLUTION/INFORMATION

8	2004/2005 Budget	12-89
	<i>(An index of the Appendices is to be found between pages 16 and 17)</i>	
9	Regional Management Board Constitution	<b>To Follow</b>
10	Government Proposals for Regional Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms <i>(Note: This report will be supported by a short visual presentation)</i>	90-91
11	Date of Next Meeting	-

***To note that the next Fire Authority Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 17 March 2004 in the Council Chamber, Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Easthampstead House, Town Square, Bracknell, commencing at 6.30pm***



**AGENDA ITEM 2:**

**MINUTES: 17 DECEMBER 2003**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, READING BOROUGH COUNCIL, CIVIC OFFICES, READING BERKSHIRE ON WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2003 COMMENCING AT 6.45PM AND CONCLUDED AT 8.37PM**

**Present:** J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman)  
Christine Borgars (Leader of the Labour Group)  
M Adams, Mrs P Bray, Dr P Bryant, Tom Crisp,  
G S Findlay, John P Green, D Howes, Mrs V Howes,  
Owen E Jeffery, C Maskell, T Mills, Peter North,  
A J Ross, D J Smith, R Webb, Simon Werner, D J Wilson

**Apologies:** Mrs C Bateson, J S Grewal, J E R Mole, D Swindells

**4.01/03 PART I MINUTES: 21 OCTOBER 2003**

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 21 October 2003, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**4.02/03 PART I MINUTES OF SUB GROUPS**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 3 – not reproduced) of the Fire Liaison Group, Integrated Risk Management Plan Working Party and Structure Review Working Party meetings that had taken place since the last meeting in October 2003. Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available on request from the Committee Administrator (0118) 932 2288.

**NOTED**

**4.03/03 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Councillor Brooks advised that having been Fire Authority Chairman for eight years the time was now right for a change and he had therefore decided to stand down as Chairman with effect from 31 December 2003. He reflected on his involvement with the Brigade since 1994 as part of the Public Protection Committee in the former Berkshire County Council and then the Combined Fire Authority since April 1 1998. Referring to his time as Chairman when he has been extremely well supported by both Members of all Parties and Officers but especially by Councillor Barrie Patman as Vice-Chairman, Mr Brookes went on to mention the many changes he has seen in both the brigade and the Fire Authority. It is important that we look for a model by which to run the Authority in the future especially in the event that we may be



adopting a changed structure and equally important is the need for both Members and Officers to work together to achieve the best for both the Brigade and the people of Royal Berkshire. He is extremely proud of what has been achieved by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and its stakeholders and it has been a privilege as Chairman to be involved in the Brigade Charter and Partnership for Common Sense.

In conclusion the Chairman wished to place on record his sincere and personal thanks to Elected Members, Brigade Management and all staff for their support, dedication and professionalism over the past eight years.

#### **4.04/03            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.

#### **4.05/03            QUESTIONS FROM FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS**

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

#### **4.06/03            NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

#### **4.07/03            ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY FROM 1 JANUARY 2004**

The Authority was invited (Agenda item 8 – not reproduced) to elect a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the period 1 January to 29 June 2004 in accordance with the decision made by the Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 25 June 2003.

**RESOLVED: That Councillors T Mills and J C G Brooks be elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the period 1 January to 29 June 2004.**

#### **4.08/03            AUDIT COMMISSION – ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER TO MEMBERS**

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 9 – not reproduced) of the receipt of the District Auditor's Management Letter to Members in respect of the Audit for the financial year 2002/2003. Members were reminded that the District Auditor had



completed the Audit of the Accounts for 2003/2003, as approved by the Urgency Committee in August 2003.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Stephen Taylor, District Auditor and Mr Hassan Rohimun, Audit Manager, presented the Annual Audit Letter to Members, a copy of which was submitted, as Appendix 1 (not reproduced). Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or seek points of clarification on the contents of the letter. It was noted that an unqualified Audit opinion on the 2002/2003 Accounts would be issued by the District Auditor.

Mr Taylor wished to place on record his thanks for all the help and support that he had received from Officers. In thanking Mr Taylor and Mr Rohimun for their attendance at the meeting and for a very full and informative presentation the Chairman expressed his pleasure at the contents of the letter, which reflected well on both the Members and Officers of the Brigade. He therefore wished to place on record his thanks to the Chief Fire Officer, his Senior Management, Mr Andrew Vallance (Authority Treasurer), and the staff in the Authority's Accounts Office for all their hard work in achieving a very positive outcome.

## **NOTED**

### **4.09/03            REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRUCTURE REVIEW WORKING PARTY**

The Authority received an update (Agenda item 10 – not reproduced) on the deliberations of the Structure Review Working Party and were requested to consider and approve the Working Party's recommendations regarding the abolition of the existing Committee Structure and its replacement with an Executive Committee system commencing on 1 January 2004.

Members were reminded that the Working Party, having been established by the Fire Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 25 June 2003, had met on four occasions during the period September to December to consider possible changes to the Authority's Committee structure. Copies of the Minutes of the four meetings together with the reports considered by both the Working Party and the Authority was presented in Appendix A (not reproduced) for Members information.

The Working Party had also considered the Rules on Political Proportionality and the duty of the Authority to allocate places on its Committees in accordance with the Overriding Principles of the Local Government and Housing Act 1999 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

Having considered the remainder of the report Members supported the recommendations of the Working Party subject to some minor amendments and the inclusion of three new Resolutions relating to the Chairman of the Executive Committee, review of the Committee Structure and the reconsideration of Members responsibility allowances by the Standards Committee.



**RESOLVED: That:**

1. Subject to the Fire Authority approving the alternative Committee Structure the following Committee's and associated Sub-Groups be abolished with effect from 31 December 2003:

Urgency Committee, Budget Working Party, Performance Review and Audit Panel and Community Safety Panel.

2. The following Executive Committee Structure be adopted with effect from 1 January 2004:

- ❖ Executive Committee but not having the ability to appoint substitutes;
- ❖ Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the proviso that substitutes may be used who are not Members of the Executive Committee;
- ❖ Disciplinary, Appeals and Grievance Committee (DAG) with the proviso that substitutes may be used who are not Members of the Executive Committee.

3. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be based on the principle of after-event scrutiny as set out in the Terms of Reference.
4. The total number of Committee places be 15 based on the principle of six Conservatives, five Liberal/Democrats and four Labour.
5. The size of each Committee be based on the non-proportional principle as set out in Table 1 reproduced below:

	Conservative	Liberal/Democrat	Labour
Executive	2	2	2
Overview and Scrutiny	2	2	2
DAG	1	1	1
Total	5	5	5

6. The timetable for meetings of the Fire Authority, Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period January 2004 to June 2005, as set out in Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.
7. With the exception of the Fire Authority Meeting, which commence at 6.30pm, the times of the Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee be determined by the respective Committee's.
8. The Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation for each Committee as set out in Appendix B be approved and adopted.
9. With the exception of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups who will advise the Committee Administrator of their nominations by 31 December 2003 the following Members be appointed to:



<b>Executive</b>	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>Christine Borgars, M Adams</b>
	<b>Conservative:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Comm</b>	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>Tom Crisp, R Webb</b>
	<b>Conservative:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
<b>DAG:</b>	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>Tom Crisp</b>
	<b>Conservative:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>
	<b>Labour:</b>	<b>To be advised</b>

10. **The Fire Authority favours the appointment of the Fire Authority Chairman as Chairman of the Executive Committee but acknowledges the fact that this is a decision to be made by the Executive Committee at its inaugural meeting.**
11. **The new Committee Structure be reviewed by the Fire Authority on an annual basis at its December meetings and that in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, Chairman, Vice-Chairman of the Authority and Leader of the Labour Group, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer present any changes considered necessary to the Authority for consideration and determination.**
12. **The Standards Committee be requested to consider the new Committee Structure in terms of Members responsibility allowances and present any recommendations for change to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2004 for consideration and determination.**

#### **4.10/03 REGIONAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS UPDATE**

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 11 – not reproduced) on the current position regarding the work undertaken into the issue of Regional Management Boards and approval was sought to a future course of action.

Members were reminded that at its meeting on Tuesday 21 October 2003 the Authority agreed that work at Member and Officer level be commenced to ascertain the implications, both financial and otherwise, of establishing a Regional Management Board for the Thames Valley area, with recommendations for progressing this issue being presented to the Authority in December 2003.

Consultative meetings have been held at Member and Officer level with all nine Authorities in the South-East Region and in particular between the three Thames Valley Authorities. Developments and proposed constitutions in other Regions have also been considered together with an LGA Guidance document entitled “Developing Regional Management Boards for Fire Authorities” published on 10 November 2003. The CACFOA South East Fire Services Group which comprises the Chiefs and Chairman of the nine Authorities in the South East have decided to support the establishment of a Regional Management Board for the South East with a membership



of nine (one Member per Authority) and a quorum of six. Their remit will be to consider the six key themes, derived from Section 4.17 of the White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service as summarised in paragraph 4 of the report (not reproduced).

Councillor Patman expressed some concern over the flexibility issue in that Brigades located in Sussex and Kent etc would be making decisions about issues affecting the Thames Valley such as Control Rooms. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the OPDM had recently published a consultation document of the future of Control Rooms, which is proposing the establishment of nine regional control rooms in England and Wales. It is likely that central guidance will be forthcoming to indicate which areas should be covered on a regional basis and which are to be left to individual Authorities discretion.

The funding to be allocated by each Authority in terms of meetings is an estimated £2000 per annum. The hidden costs however are Members and Officers time. In recognising that in reality a Thames Valley Regional Management Board may not be a feasible option Members were nevertheless of the opinion that the establishment of an informal Thames Valley Sub-Regional Management Board as an operational necessity be supported. A new resolution on these lines was therefore proposed and having been seconded was put to the vote and carried by 12 votes for to 2 against with one abstention.

In response to a further request from Members the Chief Fire Officer agreed to seek comments from the FBU and include them in the future report.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- 1. The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority fully support the establishment of a Thames Valley Sub-Regional Management Board as an operational necessity within the Strategic Regional structure.**
- 2. Notwithstanding the decision set out in Resolution 1 above work continue to establish a Regional Management Board in the South East by 1 April 2004, and that the views of the Berkshire Branch of the FBU be sought and included in the report outlining the proposed constitution and agreement and presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 11 February 2004 for consideration and determination.**

**4.11/03            REVIEW AND UPDATE OF DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 12 – not reproduced) of progress made against the Diversity and Equality Action Plan and were requested to approve the revised Diversity and Equality Strategy and associated Action Plan for 2004/2005.

Members were reminded that the first Diversity and Equality Strategy and supporting Action Plan was approved in March 2002, supplemented by the publication of a specific Race Equality Scheme in September 2002. It is now appropriate to review



progress against the Action Plan and amend the Strategy accordingly. The outcome of that review was presented in Appendix 1 (not reproduced).

Having noted the progress made as summarised in the report Members were advised that the Strategy has now been revised and updated, together with the supporting Action Plan. The emphasis in the revised Action Plan is on the delivery in terms of support for existing members of the under-represented groups and increases in workforce from their numbers. The Fire Authority was therefore invited to endorse both documents, copies of which were presented as Appendices 2 and 3 (not reproduced) and renew its commitment to the achievement of diversity and equality in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In response to a question the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the Brigade are trying to achieve an increase in the number of ethnic minority and female fire-fighters to 7% and 15% of the total operational workforce by 2009.

The Chairman expressed some concern over the lack of ethnic minority involvement in the Brigade and asked whether it would be possible to develop some form of co-ordination with other Brigades. The Chief Fire Officer reported that there had been a significant amount of work and effort taking place within the Brigade to move this forward but as reported the results in terms of increased numbers in the work-force have been disappointing. Whilst there has been a lot of interest shown this has not been the same in terms of actual people applying and it is hoped that the new Action Plan will provide sufficient support to people from the ethnic minority groups expressing an interest in joining the Fire Service.

In acknowledging the Chief Fire Officer's comments Members asked that a progress report be presented to the Fire Authority meeting in June 2004 including the statistics relating to the number of applications received from ethnic minorities and the success rate.

**RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Diversity and Equality Strategy and supporting Action Plan for 2004/2005 be approved and adopted and that the Chief Fire Officer be requested to present a progress report to the Fire Authority meeting in June 2004 to include the statistics relating to the number of applications received from ethnic minorities and the success rate.**

#### **4.12/03            ISSUE OF FIRE CERTIFICATES UNDER THE FIRE PRECAUTIONS ACT 1971**

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 13 – not reproduced) to the transitional arrangements for the introduction of new Fire Safety Legislation in 2004/2005.

Members were advised that under the Fire Precautions Act 1971, Fire Certificates are issued to certain categories of premises. There are new proposals to radically change all Fire Safety legislation with the introduction of The Regulatory Reform (Fire



Safety) Order 2004 (RRO), which will have the effect of consolidating all Fire Safety legislation into one Order.

As the new Order is not expected to become effective until Autumn 2004 or Spring 2005 it will be necessary to introduce transitional arrangements between the Fire Precautions Act and the new RRO. Such arrangements have been developed and ratified by the CACFOA National Fire Safety Committee on 25 September 2003. Therefore to ensure fairness to business the transitional arrangements as set out in paragraph 6 of the report (not reproduced) will be implemented and Members approval to these arrangements was requested.

**RESOLVED: That the transitional arrangements as set out in the report be approved and adopted.**

#### **4.13/03            TRANSITIONAL PAY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 14 – not reproduced) of issues arising from the assimilation from rank to role as part of the Stage 2 National Pay Award for Uniformed personnel and were requested to approve the transitional arrangements to address these issues as set out in the report.

The financial impact of the Stage 2 National Pay Award has been calculated on a national basis to be an additional 7% on the pay bill for Wholetime personnel. It is estimated that the proposed transitional arrangements will increase the cost of the Stage 2 award for RBFRS by an estimated £24,800 per annum, which will reduce on a progressive basis with staff turnover.

**RESOLVED: That the proposed transitional arrangements for the former ranks of Assistant Divisional Fire Officer and Station Officer to facilitate the transfer of existing staff to the new role based pay structure be approved and implemented with effect from 7 November 2003.**

#### **4.14/03            2003/2004 BUDGET MONITORING**

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 15 – not reproduced) of the Revenue and Capital Expenditure against Budgets up to 31 October 2003 as presented in Appendices A and B respectively (not reproduced).

**NOTED**

#### **4.15/03            HALF YEARLY REPORT FOR MEDICAL RETIREMENTS, WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCES**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 16 – not reproduced) of the number of medical retirements, workplace accidents and sickness absences for the period April to September 2003.



In noting the figures set out in the report the Chairman expressed his disappointment that the sickness levels appear to have risen dramatically when compared with previous reports. He therefore asked the Chief Fire Officer to present a report showing recent trends compared with previous years to the Executive Committee in March 2004.

**NOTED**

**4.16/03 INTEGRATED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM –  
BRIGADE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY PHASE 1:  
OCTOBER 2002 TO MARCH 2004 UPDATE**

The Authority received (Agenda item 17 – not reproduced) a progress report on the Brigade's Strategy for implementation of the Integrated Personal Development System together with a summary of the achievements to date presented in Appendices A and B (not reproduced).

**NOTED**

**4.17/03 FIRES, INCIDENTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST**

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 18 – not reproduced) which summarised some of the notable incidents attended, together with letters of appreciation received, by the Brigade during the period 16 September to 28 November 2003.

**NOTED**

**4.18/03 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next Fire Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 11 February 2004 in the Council Chamber, Slough Borough Council, Bath Road, Slough commencing at 6.30pm for the purpose of approving the Fire Authority Budget and setting the Precept for the 2004/2004 financial year.

**NOTED**

**4.19/03 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 as indicated:



	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
21	Part II Minutes: Tuesday 21 October 2003	1, 7 & 8
22	Part II Minutes of Sub-Groups	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 17 December 2003)*

**4.20/03          PART II MINUTES:          21 OCTOBER 2003**

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 21 October 2003, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**4.21/03          PART II MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 22 – not reproduced) of the Budget Working Party meetings that have taken place since the last meeting in October 2003.

**NOTED**



**AGENDA ITEM 3: PART I MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

**To:** Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
**Date:** 11 February 2004  
**Officer Contributing:** Committee Administrator

**A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members on meetings of the Executive Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standards Committee that have taken place since the last meeting of the Fire Authority in December 2003.

**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 October 2003:

<b>Executive Committee:</b>	Thursday 22 January 2004
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	Thursday 5 February 2004
<b>Standards Committee</b>	Thursday 5 February 2004
<b>Fire Liaison Group</b>	Meeting scheduled for Monday 26 January 2004 was cancelled

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](mailto:wellerd@rbfrs.co.uk)

**E BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Agenda's and/or Minutes for the above mentioned meetings

**Contact Officer:** David R Weller (0118) 932 2288



**AGENDA ITEM 8 :**                      **BUDGET 2004/05**  
**To:**                                      **Fire Authority**  
**Date:**                                    **11 February 2004**  
**Officer Contributing:**              **Authority Treasurer**  
   **Chief Fire Officer**

**A      PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To enable the Fire Authority to finalise the Budget requirements and set the precept for 2004/05.

**B      PROPOSED ACTION**

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, that the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2004/05:

- 1      **The aggregate council taxbase of the six Berkshire unitary authorities has been notified as 311,704.06**
- 2a     **£30,902,129 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(2)(a) to (d) of the Act**
- 2b     **£ 2,307,250 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Authority estimates for the items set out in Section 43(3)(a) to (b) of the Act**
- 2c     **£28,594,879 being the amount by which the aggregate at (2a) above exceeds the aggregate at (2b) above, calculated by the Authority in accordance with Section 43(4) of the Act as its budget requirement for the year**
- 2d     **£14,889,251 being the aggregate of the sums which the Authority estimates will be payable for the year in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant and additional grant for transitional funding**
- 2e     **£43.97 being the amount at (2c) above less the amount at (2d) above, all divided by the aggregate council taxbase at (1) above, calculated by the Authority, in accordance with Section 44(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.**
- 2f     **The Authority, in accordance with Section 40(2)(a) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts of Council Tax for the year 2004/05 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:**



reserves when setting the budget, finance directors should take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority.

Note 1 to Appendix 2 sets out the most significant risks facing the Authority next year and the size and likelihood of each risk.

### **Robustness of Estimates and Reserves**

**Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority Treasurer is obliged to report on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. I believe that the estimates laid out in this report are robust and that the proposed reserve of £500,000 is sufficient to ensure the Authority's wellbeing in the next financial year.**

### **3 Revenue Bids**

These are set out in Appendix 3 and have been analysed as follows:-

#### Category

1	Essential
2	Highly Desirable
3	Desirable

### **4 Savings**

Directors have now drawn up a list of potential savings, as shown in Appendix 4. They have also reviewed past lists of potential savings. Those savings that can be achieved are shown in the first section of the appendix.

The Authority has recently published its Integrated Risk Management Plan which will review the brigade's activities to improve efficiency and service to the public. Certain potential savings will be subject to review and consultation under the IRMP before they can be achieved.

The final section of the appendix lists savings that the Directors feel cannot be achieved, for the reasons shown.

### **5 Years 2005/06 and 2006/07**

Appendix 3 setting out Revenue Growth bids also gives an indicative projection of needs for 2005/06 and 2006/07.



When approving Capital bids, it should be borne in mind that the full annual revenue costs will not be incurred until 2005/06 bringing further pressure for compensatory savings/increased contributions in that year.

Appendix 5 sets out the medium term effects of the proposed budget. **A revised Appendix 5 is attached.**

## **6 Capital Bids**

The capital programme approved by the Executive Committee is set out in Appendix 6. Credit approvals have now been abolished and a new prudential capital finance system will be introduced from 1 April 2004.

The authority is free to borrow as much as it believes prudent, unless a national limit is imposed, but the government will only provide Revenue Support Grant for financing £730,000 of capital expenditure in 2004/05. Any expenditure above this amount will have to be met from the Council Tax.

New regulations are likely to make leasing more expensive, as they will reduce the period over which an operating lease can be taken out.

Appendix 7 sets out the prudential indicators under the new capital financing regime.

## **7 Council Tax Leaflet and Consultation**

Arrangements are under way to design and print 550,000 leaflets for distribution to the six billing authorities by the end of February.

It has also been necessary to consult the public and the business community on the council tax precept.

## **8 Potential Capping**

The Authority has received a letter and Fire Service Circular 2/2004 since the Executive Committee meeting which contain the possible threat of capping if a budget is set above a low single figure increase. Appendices 8 to 10 detail other budget options if the Authority wishes to reduce the Council Tax in accordance with the ODPM correspondence.

## **G BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Executive Committee, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2004 and 6<sup>th</sup> February 2004  
ODPM Letter to Fire Authority Chairmen  
Fire Service Circular 2/2004



## Appendix 8

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
BUDGET PROSPECTS 2004/05**

<b>9.8% increase</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>Council Tax Band D</b>
<b>Budget 2003/04</b>	26,164	
Less one off costs	<u>539</u>	
	25,625	34.45
 <b>Inescapable additions to budget</b>		
Set up a General Reserve (Note 1)	500	1.60
Pensions deficit – increase (Note 2)	<u>626</u>	<u>2.01</u>
	26,751	38.06
 Capital/Leasing Costs	128	
LG Pension Scheme – Increase in employers contributions	0	
Regulatory Reform Order – loss of certification Income (Note 3)	20	
Insurance	30	
Members Allowances	25	
Potential Rank to Role Assimilation costs	25	0.73
 <b>Inflation</b>		
Pay Awards	75	0.24
Non-uniformed (Note 4)		
Firefighters (Note 5)	1,295	4.15
General inflation (2½%)	<u>218</u>	<u>0.70</u>
	28,567	43.88
 <b>Other Pressures</b>		
Revenue Bids List (Note 6):		
Essential	110	0.35
Highly Desirable	0	0.00
Desirable	0	0.00
	<u>28,677</u>	<u>44.23</u>
 <b>Savings</b>	<u>(83)</u>	<u>(0.26)</u>
<b>Budget</b>	<b>28,594,879</b>	<b>43.97</b>
 Transitional Funding loan	413,000	
Grant	14,476,251	
Fund from Council Tax	13,705,628	
 <b>Band D Council Tax</b>	<b>£43.97</b>	
Increase	9.8%	



**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**  
**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2004/05 TO 2006/07**

	2004/05 £000	2005/06 £000	2006/07 £000
<b>Budget 2003/04</b>	26,164	28,594	29,667
Less one off costs	539	110	0
	25,625	28,484	29,667
<b>Inescapable additions to budget</b>			
Set up a General Reserve (Note 1)	500	0	0
Pensions deficit – increase (Note 2)	626	0	300
	26,751	28,484	29,967
Capital/Leasing Costs	128	151	155
LG Pension Scheme – Increase in employers contributions	0	50	50
Regulatory Reform Order – loss of certification Income (Note 3)	20		
Insurance	30	30	30
Members Allowances	25		
Potential Rank to Role Assimilation costs	25		
<b>Inflation</b>			
Pay Awards			
Non-uniformed (Note 4)	75	80	85
Firefighters (Note 5)	1,295	672	700
General inflation (2½%)	218	225	230
	28,567	29,692	31,217
<b>Other Pressures</b>			
Revenue Bids List (Note 6):			
Essential	110	0	0
Highly Desirable	0	0	0
Desirable	0	0	0
	28,677	29,692	31,217
<b>Savings</b>	(83)	(25)	0
<b>Budget</b>	28,594	29,667	31,217

