

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: 5 March 2003

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 12 March 2003 in the Council Chamber at Wokingham District Council, Shute End, Wokingham commencing at 6.30pm.** A buffet will be provided in the Council Chamber.

The District Council Offices are situated in Shute End located between the A329 Reading Road and Broad Street. Access to the Offices is from Shute End and car parking is at the rear of the building as is the entrance to the Council Suite. A map showing the venue is reproduced overleaf..

For Members travelling from the west of the County it is suggested that you use the M4 Motorway and leave at Junction 10 and join the A329 (M) Motorway following signs to Wokingham and Bracknell. Leave the A329(M) at the Coppid Beech Flyover and take the third exit off the roundabout onto the A329 London Road (Signposted Wokingham). Follow the A329 London Road into Wokingham and continue into Peach Street, passing through the Market Place into Broad Street. Continue down Broad Street which then becomes Shute End and access to the District Council Offices is located on the left hand side just before the mini-roundabouts.

With the exception of those Members travelling from Bracknell who can use the A329 London Road from Bracknell to Wokingham, it is suggested that Members travelling from the east should also use the M4 Motorway and leave at Junction 10 joining the A329 (M) Motorway and then following the directions referred to in the previous paragraph. For Members travelling by train the Council Offices are situated at the top of Station Road.

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



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 12 March 2003 at 6.30pm**

VENUE: **Council Chamber, Wokingham District
Council, Shute End, Wokingham, 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,
Dr P Bryant, 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,
T Mills, J E R Mole, D Morgan, A J Ross, M Scott, D J Smith, R Webb,
D J Wilson

Briefing Meetings:

Conservative Group: 5.45pm – Committee Room 3 – Ground Floor
Labour Group: 5.45pm – Committee Room 4 – Lower Ground Floor
Liberal Democrat Group: 6.00pm – Committee Room 6 – Lower Ground 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 12 MARCH 2003



AGENDA

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To note that the Annual Fire Authority Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25 June 2003 in the Council Chamber, West Berkshire Council, Market Street, Newbury, Berkshire commencing at 6.30pm.

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

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of a 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 of the following change in the Member representation for Slough Borough Council:

Slough Borough Council

Councillor R Webb (Labour) replacing the late Councillor Dennis McCarthy

2. Unfortunately Councillor Webb is unable to attend the Fire Authority meeting.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Information received from Slough Borough Council

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 3: APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
Officer Contributing: Clerk and Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the appointment of the replacement Chief Fire Officer.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Chief Fire Officer's salary scale and emoluments have been determined by the Urgency Committee. The Chief Fire Officer's commencing salary will be set within this range.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

As Head of the Paid Service of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the Strategic Plan.

E ASSESSMENT AGAINST PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

As Head of the Paid Service of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer is instrumental in the development and implementation of the Partnership for Common Sense.

F SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The vacant position of Chief Fire Officer was advertised nationally via the Inter Networking Database Service (FINDS). In addition, the advertisement was brought to the specific attention of Deputy and Assistant Chief Fire Officers who have successfully completed the Brigade Command Course (a pre-requisite for appointment as Chief Fire Officer) within the last three years.
- 2 The selection and appointment process took place over two days, 24 and 27 February 2003. The first stage of selection was conducted by consultants appointed by the Appointments Panel and comprised a series of exercises and tests to inform the second stage. The second stage was conducted by the Members of the Appointments Panel and comprised a presentation by and interview of each shortlisted candidate.

- 3 At the conclusion of this process, the Panel appointed Mr Iain Cox MA., BSC (Hons)., MCIPD, as the Chief Fire Officer (designate). Mr Cox is currently serving as Assistant Chief Fire Officer with this Authority.
- 4 Mr Cox will take up his post as Chief Fire Officer on 1 April 2003.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda and minutes: Fire Authority - 18 December 2002
- 2 Agenda and minutes: Urgency Committee -20 and 31 January 2003
- 3 Agenda and minutes: Appointments Panel (Part II – Confidential)

Contact Officer: Clive Williams (0118) 932 2284

AGENDA ITEM 4: MINUTES: 18 DECEMBER 2002

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL, MARKET STREET, NEWBURY, BERKSHIRE ON WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2002 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED AT 9.00PM

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman), E L Glasson (Leader of the Labour Group), Miss C Borgars, Mrs P Bray, Dr P Bryant, Owen E Jeffery, D W Liddiard, T Mills, D Morgan, D J Smith, D J Wilson

Apologies: Mrs C Bateson, R A Flood, John P Green, J S Grewal, P Hingley, P Love, J E R Mole, A J Ross

5.01/01 MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

Members were advised (Agenda item 2 – not reproduced) that West Berkshire Council had appointed Councillor Dr Paul Bryant as one of their Fire Authority representatives in place of the late Councillor Tom Bucknell. The Chairman welcomed Dr Bryant to the meeting. It was noted that Slough Borough Council should have appointed their representative, in place of the late Councillor Dennis McCarthy, on Tuesday 17 December 2002 and this will therefore be reported to the Fire Authority Meeting in March 2003.

NOTED

5.02/02 PART I MINUTES: 11 SEPTEMBER AND 23 OCTOBER 2002

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 11 September and of the Extraordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2002, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5.03/02 ADDITIONAL PART II AGENDA ITEM

In response to a request from the Chairman, Members approved the inclusion of the following additional item in the Part II Agenda:

Agenda Item 27: The Bain Report – Potential Implications for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

NOTED

5.04/02 PART I MINUTES OF SUB GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 4 – not reproduced) of the Community Safety Panel, Urgency Committee and Fire Liaison Group meetings that had taken place since the last meeting in September 2002. Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available on request from the Committee Administrator (0118) 932 2288.

NOTED

5.05/02 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman had nothing further to report.

5.06/02 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.

5.07/02 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

5.08/02 NOTICES OF MOTION

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

5.09/02 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY – SEPTEMBER 2003 TO JUNE 2004

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 9 – not reproduced) to the dates for future Fire Authority meetings for the period September 2003 to June 2004. Members attention was drawn to the inclusion of an additional meeting in February 2004 which has been included on the assumption that the Local Government Bill will be enacted and the Fire Authority will become a Precepting Authority in its own right.

RESOLVED: That future Fire Authority meetings be held on the following dates in 2003/2004, commencing at 6.30pm, at the venues indicated (subject to confirmation):

Wednesday 10 September 2003 at Slough Borough Council
Wednesday 17 December 2003 at Reading Borough Council**

Wednesday 11 February 2004 – Budget and Precept Setting Meeting**
Wednesday 17 March 2004 at Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Wednesday 30 June 2004 (Annual Meeting) at Thatcham or Newbury**

**** Venues still to be confirmed**

5.10/02 DISTRICT AUDIT – MANAGEMENT LETTER TO MEMBERS

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 10 – not reproduced) of the receipt of the District Auditor's Management Letter to Members in respect of the Audit for the financial year 2001/2002. Members were reminded that the District Auditor had completed the Audit of the Accounts for 2001/2002, which had been approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting on Wednesday 19 September 2002.

On the invitation of the Chairman, Members received a presentation from Mr Stephen Taylor, District Auditor, and Mr Hassan Rohimun, Audit Manager, on the contents of the Management Letter to Members, presented as Appendix 1 (not reproduced). Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification on the Management Letter. It was noted that an unqualified Audit opinion on the Annual Accounts for 2001/2002 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, and his Senior Management, Mr D Illingworth (Authority Treasurer), Mr A Vallance (Head of Financial Services) and the staff in the Authority's Accounts Office for all their hard work in achieving a very positive outcome.

NOTED

5.11/02 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT – PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 11 – not reproduced) to a Draft Publication Scheme which meets the Fire Authority's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which is to be submitted to the Information Commissioner by 31 December 2002 for approval.

Members were reminded that Section 19 of the Act places a duty on public authorities, including the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. The Fire Lawyers Network has been co-ordinating the preparation of a model publication scheme for Fire Authorities in conjunction with the Information Commissioner's Office. The Authority's Draft Publication Scheme, a copy of which

was presented as Appendix A (not reproduced), had therefore been closely based on the model scheme and it was anticipated that it will receive approval from the Information Commissioner.

In response to a question the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that whilst the scheme would be approved for a period of four years it could be amended with the approval of the Information Commissioner. It was likely that the Commissioner would not oppose additions to the scheme. It was therefore suggested and agreed that the document should be put through the Brigade's standard Consultation procedure and that any significant or relevant amendments arising from that consultation be taken up with the Information Commissioner.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Draft Publication Scheme, produced in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, be approved for submission to the Information Commissioner.**
- 2. The document (as approved) be subject to the Brigade's standard Consultation procedure and that any significant or relevant amendments arising from that consultation be referred to the Information Commissioner.**

5.12/02 CHARGING FOR BRIGADE ATTENDANCE AT ROYAL ASCOT

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 12 – not reproduced) to commence charging on the basis of full cost recovery for the Brigade's annual attendance at Royal Ascot which has been proposed following the completion of a review of charging for Brigade attendance at major events.

In noting that currently full cost recovery for attendance at Henley Regatta, Members attention was drawn to the approximate costs and associated resources deployed over the five day period at Ascot Races as set out in paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced) which identified an approximate cost of £6,600 would be levied on a full cost recovery basis.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to commence charging to recover actual costs for the Brigade's annual attendance at Royal Ascot.

5.13/02 BUDGET 2003/2004

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 13 – not reproduced) to the 2003/2004 Budget and Capital Programme so that notice of the estimates of net expenditure for 2003/2004 could be given to the Constituent Authorities. It was reported that the Budget Working Party had met on four occasions, the last being prior to this meeting when it had been agreed to endorse the 2003/2004 Budget and Capital

Programme as set out in the report and refer it to the Fire Authority with a recommendation that it be approved.

On the invitation of the Chairman, the Authority Treasurer took Members through the report drawing attention to the following Annex/Appendices (not reproduced):

- Annex 1: Minutes of the Budget Working Party Meeting held on Wednesday 11 December 2002
- Appendix A: Budget Prospects 2003/2004, 2004/2005 and 2005/2006
- Appendix B: Budget 2003/2004 before incorporation of Growth Bids and Potential Savings compared with Budget and approximate actual figures for 2002/2003 and Budget and actual figures for 2001/2002
- Appendix C: Fire Service Spending compared with Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) 2002/2003
- Appendix D: Expenditure per Head of Population (excluding Metropolitan Brigades) 2002/2003
- Appendix E: Revenue Growth Bids
- Appendix F: Revenue Savings
- Appendix G: Capital Bids
- Appendix H: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Budget 2003/2004
- Appendix I: Additional Bids put forward at Request of Budget Working Party

With the approval of the Chairman the Authority Treasurer circulated a revised version of Appendix H which showed the allocation of the Fire Authority Budget between the Constituent Authorities.

The Government had announced the Provisional Revenue Support Grant Settlement on 5 December 2002. The new system gives a Formula Spending Share (FSS), the successor figure to the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) of £25.69m compared with the SSA in 2002/2003 of £22.02M. Members attention was drawn to Appendix H (not reproduced) which showed a 2004/2005 Budget of £26,164,000 giving a spending of 0.47m (1.85%) above FSS or £2.27m (9.52%) increase over the 2002/2003 Budget.

The additional bids referred to in Appendix I, if included in the overall Budget, would be the subject of a review and possible deferment if the Bain Report and Fire-Fighters pay settlement resulted in a further funding requirement by the Authority. Members requested the Chief Fire Officer to produce a Briefing Note on the Community Safety activities being undertaken by the Unitary Authorities for circulation to Members.

The Budget report had been circulated to the Unitary Authority Treasurers who having accepted the Fire Authority's need to spend at the proposed level had expressed some concern at the prospect of receiving supplementary Budget requests once their Council Tax had been approved and set should the Budget be insufficient to cope with the outcome of the Bain Review or the Fire-Fighters' pay settlement.

Referring to the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix G, the Treasurer advised that the ODPM had notified the Authority that the allocated Basic Credit Approval (BCSA) for 2003/2004 is £681,000 against £597,000 in 2002/2003. It would be possible for the Capital Bids to be fully funded as detailed in Appendix G.

Having given Members time to ask questions and seek points of clarification the Chairman proposed that the Capital Programme as set out in Appendix G and the net expenditure of £26,164,000 for 2003/2004 be approved. The proposal having been seconded by Councillor Glasson was put to the vote and carried by eleven votes for with one abstention.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1. Capital Programme as set out in Appendix G (not reproduced) together with its indicative method of financing be approved.**
- 2. Estimate of net expenditure of the Authority for 2003/2004 be £26,164,000 and that the Constituent Authorities be notified accordingly.**

5.14/02 FIRE-FIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 14 – not reproduced) of an update of the study to identify the future possible costs to the Authority of the Fire-Fighters' Pension scheme. In noting that the potential increase in the cost to the Authority has been highlighted during each Budget cycle, Members attention was drawn to Appendix A (not reproduced) which detailed the key factors of the Fire-Fighters' Pension scheme.

The issue is common to all Fire Authorities and potentially large increases in cost will pose Fire Authorities with serious financial problems. Due to the relative unpredictability of retirements in any one-year due to the nature of the scheme, and uncontrollable events, such as an unpredicted increase in medical retirements, the figures shown should be treated as indicative, but nevertheless prudent estimates of future contributions.

In any one-year the actual figures could vary by £500,000 plus or minus. A year by year projection of Gross and Net Pension Costs for the twenty years 2002/2003 to 2021/2022 was presented in Appendix B (not reproduced)

In noting the information set out in Appendix B, Members suggested that the Pension Scheme is closely monitored and any major fluctuations reported to a future Fire Authority meeting.

NOTED

5.15/02 HALF YEARLY REPORT FOR MEDICAL RETIREMENTS, WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND SICKNESS ABSENCES

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 15 – not reproduced) of the number of medical retirements, workplace accidents and sickness absences for the period April to September 2002.

In noting the substantial information provided in the report, Members were of the opinion however that they required the provision of a clearer overall picture. Therefore they asked the Chief Fire Officer to investigate the possibility of providing the following additional information in future reports:

- Summary of reasons for Non-Uniformed sickness
- Comparison with other specific Fire Authorities (Best Value Family Group) on an Annual Basis (Fire Authority meeting - December each year)
- Clarify the actual number of shifts that personnel are required to do

In addition the Chief Fire Officer was also asked to produce a copy of the Brigade's Accident Report Form together with a note on the process adopted for its completion and to circulate this information to Fire Authority Members. Members noted that more detailed information on accidents and sickness absence is reported to the Personnel Committee and the Performance Review and Audit Panel.

NOTED

5.16/02 2002/2003 BUDGET MONITORING

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 16 – not reproduced) of the Revenue and Capital Expenditure against Budgets up to 31 October 2002 as presented in Appendices A and B respectively (not reproduced). In response to a question the Chief Fire Officer advised that although the underspend at the end of November was £49,000 he anticipated that the Budget would be fully spent by the end of the financial year. He illustrated this by comparison with the underspend in the accounts at the same time last financial year.

NOTED

5.17/02 FIRE BRIGADES' UNION – POSITION STATEMENT ON MODERNISATION OF THE UK FIRE SERVICE

With the approval of the Chairman, a revised version of the Position Statement produced by the Fire Brigades' Union on the true modernisation of the UK Fire Service was tabled at the meeting (Agenda item 17 – not reproduced). It was therefore agreed that any debate on the contents of the document be deferred until the Fire Authority meeting in March 2003.

NOTED

5.18/02 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 1 September to 31 October 2002.

NOTED

5.19/02 RETIREMENT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 19 – not reproduced) of the intended retirement from Service of the Chief Fire Officer. The Chairman advised Members that Mr Clement-Green's last Fire Authority meeting would be Wednesday 12 March 2003.

NOTED

5.20/02 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next Fire Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 12 March 2003 in the Council Chamber, Wokingham District Council, Shute End, Wokingham, commencing at 6.30pm.**

5.21/02 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
22	Part II Minutes: Wednesday 11 September and the Extraordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2002	1,7 & 8
23	Part II Minutes of Sub-Groups	1, 7 & 8
24	Brigade Consultation Document	7 & 8
25	Development of Commercial Partnerships – Progress Report	7 & 8
26	Grievance – ADO JH	1

- 27 The Bain Report – Potential Implications for the Fire Authority 1

(Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority meeting held on Wednesday 18 December 2002).

5.22/02 PART II MINUTES: 11 SEPTEMBER AND 23 OCTOBER 2002

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 11 September and the Extraordinary meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2002 were received and approved as a correct record.

5.23/02 PART II MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

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

5.24/02 BRIGADE CONSULTATION CONTRACT

The Authority approved the award of a Contract under single tender action for a further consultation exercise to take place.

5.25/02 DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS – PROGRESS REPORT

The Authority received was informed of the progress made with the Partnership Advisor's plan to seek additional income for the Brigade from commercial partnerships.

5.26/02 GRIEVANCE – ADO JH

The Authority approved the award of an ex-gratia payment as recommended by the Grievance Panel.

5.27/02 THE BAIN REPORT – POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Authority received a presentation from the Chief Fire Officer on the potential implications for the Fire Authority following the publication of the Bain Report.

AGENDA ITEM 5: PART I MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
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, Urgency Committee and the Fire Liaison Group that have taken place since the last meeting of the Fire Authority in December 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 December 2002:

Community Safety Panel	Tuesday 25 February 2003
Fire Liaison Group	Monday 24 February 2003
Performance Review & Audit Panel	Monday 17 February 2003
Personnel Committee	Thursday 20 February 2003
Urgency Committee	Monday 20 January, Friday 31 January, Monday 24 February 2003

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

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2003**

AGENDA ITEM 6: CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Mr Brooks

Under Agenda item 6 (Chairman's Communications) would you please introduce to Members, John Daly, the Brigade/Fire Authority's Partnership for Common Sense Co-ordinator.

John will be present in the Council Chamber.

Thank you

David

3. One of the recommendations that was adopted read as follows "That the outcome of the Disputes Panel Hearing be reported to the Fire Authority under the Part 2 Agenda but where deemed appropriate the decisions so made be capable of being promulgated to staff."
4. The Fire Brigades' Union at a Fire Liaison Group meeting on 5 June 2002, prior to the Authority meeting, expressed reservations about this proposal. It was the FBU view that Disputes involving policy should be considered in Part 1, so that the public including the FBU could hear the debate. It is agreed that Disputes concerning individuals should be taken in part 2.
5. The issue has been raised at subsequent Liaison meetings and the Chairman asked that the matter be considered by the Personnel Committee, with a view to a making a recommendation to the Authority at its meeting in March 2003.
6. Members will be aware that it is always open to the Authority to move an item from Part 2 to Part 1, so that it can be debated in public. The following options which are open to the Authority were therefore considered by the Personnel Committee:
 - a to adhere to the existing policy
 - b to resolve that all disputes regarding policy matters are placed on the Part 1 Agenda
 - c to deal with this issue on an ad hoc basis, ie to continue to place Dispute items on the Part 2 Agenda but having regard to the views expressed by the FBU and if the Authority agrees to move the Part 2 item to Part 1 prior to it being debated.
7. Whilst recognising the concerns expressed by the Fire Brigades' Union, Members were of the opinion that even during a Dispute concerning policy matters there is a real possibility that reference could be made to an individual or individuals during the actual Hearing. Only two days prior to the meeting of the Personnel Committee there had been a Disputes Panel on a Policy matter when individual circumstances were referred to during the course of the Panel Hearing. It was therefore proposed, seconded and agreed that no variation be made to the existing policy and that the decision be referred to the Fire Authority with a recommendation to that effect.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Disputes Panel of 2001
- 2 Liaison Panel Meetings of 5 June 2002, 27 August 2002, 2 December 2002
- 3 Agenda and Minutes: Fire Authority Meeting - 19 June 2002
- 4 Agenda: Personnel Committee - 20 February 2003

Contact Officers: Clive Williams (0118) 932 2284
David Weller (0118) 932 2288

David Weller

To: ssmith@devfire.gov.uk
Subject: LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Importance: High
Sensitivity: Personal

Good morning Mrs Smith

I confirm that the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, at its meeting on Wednesday 12 March 2003, Resolved:

"That the proposal from the Devon Fire Authority to seek the formation of a Special Interest Group for Combined Fire Authorities within the umbrella of the Local Government Association be supported and approved."

Please acknowledge receipt of this e-mail.

Thank you

David R Weller
Committee Administrator
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

**AGENDA ITEM 11: LGA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR
COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITIES**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
Officer Contributing: Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the Authority's support for a proposal to be put to the Local Government Association to form a Special Interest Group for combined fire authorities.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and RESOLVE to support the proposal to seek the formation of a Special Interest Group for combined fire authorities within the umbrella of the Local Government Association.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost to the Authority of belonging to a Special Interest Group are not known at this stage. However, the Chief Fire Officer considers that the cost is unlikely to be significant and will therefore be contained within existing budgets.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no direct contribution to the Strategic Plan arising from this report. However, membership of a Special Interest Group may prove beneficial to the pursuit of the Authority's aims and objectives as a combined fire authority.

E ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

This report does not impact upon the Partnership for Common Sense. However, some of the perceived benefits of membership of a Special Interest Group for combined fire authorities may contribute to the Partnership later.

F SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Devon Fire Authority has proposed the formation of a Special Interest Group for combined fire authorities within the umbrella of the Local Government Association. The support of this Authority is sought for that proposal.

- 2 Members will be aware that the legal status of combined fire authorities can sometimes be detrimental to the Authority's interests in comparison to County Council fire authorities, Fire and Civil Defence authorities and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. This is particularly the case in respect of financial regulations (for example, the inability to hold reserves). The status of the Authority as a combined fire authority is also detrimental in comparison to the powers of a unitary authority.
- 3 The formation of a Special Interest Group within the umbrella of the LGA requires the development of a common proposal (terms) for members of the Group and the support of at least 10 authorities which meet the criteria of that proposal.
- 4 Attached to this report as Appendix A is a letter from the Secretary to the Devon Fire Authority seeking the Authority's support, together with the proposal drafted.
- 5 A holding response has been made to the Secretary to Devon Fire Authority to meet her requested deadline.
- 6 Devon Fire Authority has signalled its willingness to co-ordinate the Special Interest Group via the Authority's Secretary in the first instance.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter and proposal from the Secretary to Devon Fire Authority

Contact Officer: Mike Clement-Green (0118) 932 2225



APPENDIX A

DEVON

FIRE AUTHORITY

P Young OBE MPhil FIFireE
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Chairman
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
103 Dee Road
Tilehurst
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 4FS

SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
THE KNOWLE
CLYST ST GEORGE
EXETER
DEVON
EX3 0NW

Your ref :
Our ref : ACO(CS)/DB

Date : 13 February 2003
Please ask for : Mrs S Smith
Email : ssmith@devfire.gov.uk

Telephone : 01392 872200
Fax : 01392 872300
Direct Telephone : 01392 872229

Dear Chairman

At the LGA's Combined Fire Authority's Seminar on 19 September 2002 as part of my presentation on "Engaging Government" I put forward a proposal that an LGA Special Interest Group for Combined Fire Authorities should be formed. This was endorsed by all present and the Devon Fire Authority's Chairman Councillor Bernard Hughes wrote to the LGA requesting that this be put in place.

We have received a protocol which we need to adhere to to take the matter forward. The criteria which needs to be matched are:

- (1) At least ten authorities, being full member authorities of the LGA, with common features, interests and concerns need to form the basis of the group.
- (2) SIGS will need to define the nature of their common interest and to undertake that all authorities which can identify with that interest will be admitted to membership.

I have attached a brief document which I hope you agree will satisfy (2). Should you wish to add or change anything please let me know. In any case I would be grateful for written confirmation of your interest in joining the SIG to satisfy (1).

As soon as I receive this I will forward the proposal to the LGA Executive for approval.

I understand that there will be limited support (up to 3 meetings per year in London) from the LGA in the form of accommodation and secretarial services.

I would be happy to coordinate this in the first instance.

I look forward to hearing from you. A response by 28 February would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Sue Smith
Assistant Chief Officer (Corporate Support)
Secretary to the Devon Fire Authority

copy to chief fire officer

**PROPOSAL FOR THE FORMATION OF A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
OF
COMBINE FIRE AUTHORITIES**

Combined Fire Authorities of which there are 27 are a unique group with a common interest for the following reasons:

- A unique constitution as a single purpose authority formed under a combination scheme with its own political ramifications;
- Members of a Fire Authority are not elected directly to their office but are nominated by their Principal Authority;
- As Local Government Act 2000 (Part II) “Executive Arrangements” does not apply to CFA’s may be issue over current democratic structures;
- Powers of Local Authorities are not automatic and there are some missing powers and anomalies which need to be resolved;
- Dealing with potential issues arising under the Members Code of Conduct is more complex because of ramifications for Principal Authority;
- CFA’s are levying bodies whose status is due to change to that of precepting bodies. Work has started and will need to continue to deal with the implementation of this;
- Different capital allocation distribution method to that of Metropolitan Fire Authorities. Impact of new Prudential Capital regime needs clarification;
- Issue over resourcing and funding of CFA’s input into Community Safety Partnerships needs resolving as now a statutory partner under Police Reform Act.

**AGENDA ITEM 12: TREASURY MANAGEMENT
POLICY AND STRATEGY 2003/2004**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
Officer Contributing: Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of a Treasury Policy statement and Strategy statement for 2003/2004 for the Authority and to determine the Fire Authority's overall borrowing limit and limit on the proportion of total interest payable which is payable at a variable rate.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That:

- 1 The proposed Treasury Management Policy Statement and Strategy Statement for 2003/2004 be approved.
- 2 The following determinations be made for 2003/2004
 - a An overall borrowing limit of £3,745,000
 - b A short term borrowing limit of £1,181,000
 - c A maximum limit of 50% of total interest paid, being on variable rate loans.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The policy is to ensure the quality and status of Treasury Management of the Authority's cash flow, and its investments, the management of associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance on returns consistent with those risks. The limits suggested give flexibility in managing the finances of the Fire Authority. The Authority can amend the limits at any time during the year.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This is an essential part of the Finance Strategy.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Code

- 1 The main requirements of the Code are that the Authority formulates and approves:

- i A Treasury Policy Statement.
- ii An Annual Treasury Strategy Statement – which sets out the expected Treasury operation within the forthcoming financial year.
- iii An annual Treasury report – which sets out the actual Treasury operations for the previous financial year.

The Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy Statement is attached as **Appendix 2**.

- 2 Treasury Management Practices will be drawn up to cover how treasury management activities are actually implemented.

Borrowing Limits

- 1 The Authority has a statutory duty to determine the borrowing limits identified in paragraph B.
- 2 Borrowing for capital purposes is limited to the Authority's basic credit approvals plus any supplementary credit approvals which may be granted by the Home Office during the year. The total credit approvals statement:-

	£	
Received up to 2002/03	2,564,000	
Notified for 2003/04		
Basic credit approval	681,000	
	3,245,000	

- 3 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 provides that contributions from the constituent authorities shall be of such amount as are at all times sufficient to enable the financial obligations of the Authority to be met. The 12 equal instalments of contribution to be made by constituent authorities on the first day of each month should achieve this objective. However, monthly cash flow projections are subject to variation and there could be emergency expenditure to be met and it would be desirable to provide authority for say up to £500,000 overdraft/short term borrowing in case of need.
- 4 The overall borrowing limit therefore comprises:

	£000	
Borrowing for capital purposes	3245	
Temporary Revenue borrowing limit	500	
Overall borrowing limit	3745	Resolution B 2 (a)

5 The short term borrowing limit for 2003/04 comprises:

	£000	
Capital spend pending raising loan finances from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	681	
Temporary Revenue borrowing (if necessary)	500	
	<u>1181</u>	Resolution B2 (b)

6 The maximum variable rate interest payable:

Fixed interest finance from the PWLB to meet Capital expenditure covered by credit approvals, raised 1988/99 to 2001/02	1967	
Variable rate borrowing From PWLB to meet capital expenditure covered by credit approval 2002/03	597	(covered by (50% Resolution
Balance to be met by variable rate borrowing (maximum)	<u>1181</u> <u>3745</u>	(B2 (c)

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Treasury Management in the Public Services
A Code of Practice CIPFA 2001
- 2 PWLB Circulars
- 3 Credit worthiness Analysis
- 4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 5 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997
- 6 Notification of Basic and Supplementary Credit Approvals

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth (0118) 932 2294
Andrew Vallance (0118) 932 2251

APPENDIX 2

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT
AND
TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT
2003/2004**

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Authority defines the policies and objectives of its treasury management activities as follows :-

- 1 This Authority defines its treasury management activities as:
The management of the authority's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.
- 2 This Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the Authority.
- 3 This Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving best value in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2003/04

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement details the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2003/04). It's production and submission to the Fire Authority is a requirement of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management as adopted by the Fire Authority.
- 1.2 The proposed Strategy reflects Advisor's views on interest rates and leading marketing forecasts.
- 1.3 The Strategy covers:
- the current treasury position;
 - prospects for interest rates;
 - the treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Authority;
 - the borrowing strategy; and
 - the lending strategy

2 Current Portfolio Position

- 2.1 The Authority's treasury portfolio positioned at 28 February 2003 was as follows:

		Principal £000	Average Rate
Fixed Rate Funding	PWLB	1967	4.62%
Funding to be taken up in March 2003	PWLB	597	4.62% probable
Total Debt		<u>2,564</u>	
Borrowing Requirement 2003/04		<u>681</u>	
Temporary Investments		<u>1600</u>	3.95%

3 Treasury Limits For 2003/04

- 3.1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to make the following determinations on the level of borrowing for each year:
- a The maximum amount the Authority may have outstanding by way of borrowing for capital or revenue purposes (overall borrowing limit);
 - b The maximum amount of short term borrowing included in a; **and**
 - c A limit on the proportion of interest payable, which is at a variable rate.
- 3.2 The proposed limits for 2003/04 are set out below:

	£000
a	
Aggregate Credit Limit 2003/04	
- Credit Ceiling	3245
- Temporary Revenue Borrowing Limit	500
Overall Borrowing Limit	3745
b	
The amount of the overall borrowing limit which may be outstanding by way of short term borrowing	1181
c	
The maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable interest.	50

4 Prospects for Interest Rates

- 4.1 The Authority appointed Sector Treasury Services as its Treasury Advisor and part of their service is to assist the Authority to formulate a view on interest rates. The current contract expires at 31 March 2003 and quotations for services from 1 April 2003 are being sought.
- 4.2 In February the Base rate has fallen to 3.75%. There may be a further fall in rates but it is then likely the following move by the end of 2003 could be in an upward direction.
- 4.3 Long-term interest rates have fallen significantly during 2002 but remain significantly higher than short-term rates. Currently long rates are at 4.62%. It is likely that these rates will remain at around this level throughout 2003.

5 Capital Borrowings and Borrowing Portfolio Strategy

- 5.1 Based upon the prospects for interest rates, the anticipation is that short term borrowing will continue to be cheaper than long term fixed rate borrowing for most of 2003/04. In the short term rates will be good value compared to long term rates and are expected to be relatively stable for a reasonable length of time.
- 5.2 Fixed rates are however historically cheap and offer a sound low risk approach for the full period of the borrowing.
- 5.3 The Authority's financial strategy for 2003/04 includes budgeted interest costs for borrowing £112,375. Officers are of the view that this is sufficient to fund the Authority's borrowing requirements for 2003/04.

5.4 The main sensitivities to the forecast will be:

- an unexpected sharp rise in long and short term rates; for example as a result of an increase in world economic activity
- an unexpected sharp fall in long and short term rates; for example due to economic growth remaining low or weakening.

5.5 The Head of Financial Services and Authority Treasurer will monitor the interest rate market and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances.

6 Temporary Investments

6.1 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 provides that contributions from the constituent authorities shall be of such amount as are at all times sufficient to enable the financial obligations of the Authority to be met. The contributions of the constituent authorities are payable by 12 equal monthly instalments on the first working day of each month. This leads to a positive cash flow situation.

6.2 Advantage will be taken of this and any monies surplus to immediate requirement will be invested in the short-term money market.

6.3 Investments will be made in accordance with the Approved Investments Regulations SI426(1990) and subsequent amendments, and be placed with the institutions identified in the Authority's approved counterparty investment list.

6.4 The Authority's financial strategy includes interest to be earned on temporary investment of balances of £90,500.

7 Debt Rescheduling

7.1 The current and forecasted structure of interest rates do not provide a favourable scenario for debt restructuring. Any positions taken via rescheduling will be in accordance with the strategy position outlined in Section 5 above. The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:

- the generation of cash savings at minimum risk;
- in order to help fulfil the strategy outlined in Section 5 above; and
- in order to enhance the balance of the long-term portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

All rescheduling will be reported to the Authority at the meeting following its action.

AGENDA ITEM 13: THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE FIRE SERVICE – THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE BAIN REPORT

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 12 March 2003
Officer Contributing: Chief Fire Officer
 Authority Treasurer
 Clerk and Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of the key implications of the Bain report

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no contribution to the Strategic Plan at this stage

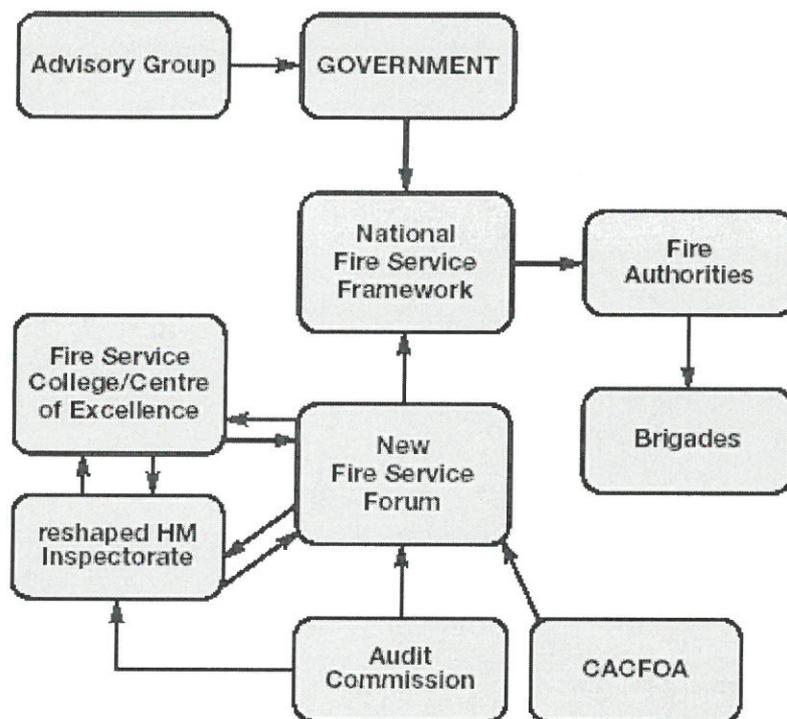
E ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMON SENSE

The Partnership for Common Sense will be critical if the changes that the Bain report is likely to engender are to be assimilated effectively into the Brigade. There is currently insufficient information to allow the PCS process to commence.

F SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The independent review of the fire service (IRFS) published its report on December 16th 2002. It was the result of a three month review carried out by Sir Anthony Young, Professor Sir Michael Lyons and Professor its chairman Sir George Bain,. It is titled “The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives”.
- 2 In all it makes 36 recommendations (see Appendix 1) covering eight areas:

- **Risk & Community Fire Safety** – advocating incremental changes in the way emergency cover levels are determined and provided
 - **The role of central & local government** – suggesting changes in national and local governance.
 - **Implementation & Management Policy** – covering the proposed roles of HM Fire Service Inspectorate, the Fire Service College and the Audit Commission.
 - **Pay** – outlining a 4% pay deal backdated to November 2002, with a further 7% on the paybill in November 2003, in return for agreement to “the total reform package”.
 - **Pensions** – here the IRFS suggests a series of short and medium term measures to address the pensions deficit.
 - **Conditions of Service** –the review recommends a simplified set of national conditions, with room to allow for local agreements to be reached, for example on co-responder initiatives. This will incorporate changes to the Appointments and Promotions and Discipline Regulations.
 - **Retained Firefighters** – the report indicates that they should, in future, be trained to the same standard “to provide a resource interchangeable with that of wholetime firefighters”.
 - **Implementing Reform** – here the sole recommendation is that a body should be charged with drawing up and delivering a business plan to implement reform.
- 3 The IRFS gives some indication of the timeframe for the implementation of the recommendations, notably the pay increments. These are summarised in Appendix 2. There has already been some slippage from the original proposals. This is a very ambitious timeframe and is closely interrelated. Without- for example – the “necessary guidance” from the ODPM for a risk based approach to fire cover local authorities will be unable to develop a ‘Risk Management Plan’ to inform the deployment of their resources. Similarly without the amendment or removal of section 19 of the Fire Services Act 1947 (as amended) an Authority would not be able to implement any such re-deployment without a prolonged approval procedure. As Appendix 2 indicates, according to the original timetable which has already slipped a large proportion of the changes would have to have been completed by November 2003, not least to be able to fund the increased paybill.
- 4 The report also makes six ‘suggestions’ which the IRFS propose “the main stakeholders may find useful in bringing about a modern fire service”. A notable suggestion is that “There should continue to be a disputes procedure but its scope should be more limited”. The report goes on to note “The corner stone to enable the reforms to be implemented is an effective disputes procedure”. Another key suggestion is that individual authorities may agree to local pay additions to address local problems – “subject to resources being available”.
- 5 The implications of the review can be summarised under three headings:
- Governance
 - Paybill
 - Retained
- 6 **Governance** – it is proposed that there will be key, as yet uncertain, changes in national and local government arrangements. A slimmed down Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, an annual report to Parliament, Comprehensive Performance Assessment for fire authorities, etc. The diagram below provides a model for these new arrangements.



It is clear that the IRFS believes that control of the fire service should remain with local authorities, as it states “local fire authorities must determine the most appropriate ways of managing the risks”; it continues “Within national policy laid down by Ministers”

- 6 **Paybill** – as mentioned earlier the report makes explicit mention of the amount that must be added to the paybill. It does not indicate how individual authorities are to meet that bill. Although it acknowledges that “metropolitan brigades will gain the biggest savings”, and it notes that “there may also be scope ... to levy charges” the report is based on a national balance. There is no apparent mechanism to transfer any accrued savings from metropolitan to other Brigades. It should be noted that some of the identified ‘savings’ may already be realised by Brigades.

	2002/ 3 £ million	2003/ 4 £ million	2004/ 5 £ million	2005/ 6 £ million
Net pay costs over and above provision already in the baseline	-	29	54	54
Additional medical training and HR management	-	5	6	4
Additional overtime	-	8	8	6
TOTAL COSTS	-	42	68	64
Allocation of resources by risk	-	(12)	(38)	(65)
HR management	-	-	(8)	(14)
Better collaboration	-	(5)	(18)	(19)
NET COST/(SAVING)	-	25	4	(34)

- 7 **Retained** - The IRFS makes a very simple, but very significant statement, that “Retained firefighters should be included in IPDS; they should be trained to the same standard so that they provide a resource interchangeable with that of whole-time firefighters.” It is apparent from the report that ‘Wholetime’ and ‘Retained’ will eventually be replaced by ‘Full time’ and ‘Part time’, however it is not clear if the implications of such changes have been acknowledged. Maintaining cover at Retained stations is growing steadily more difficult. To insist on even higher levels of training will impose much heavier costs on the Authority and is also likely to deter individuals and their employers from participating.
- 8 There are other implications from the report, notably on Control Rooms, New Dimensions, Resilience, Multi-tier Entry and Procurement. In essence the report recommends fundamental reform, suggesting that “the fire service needs to be changed from top to bottom...to bring it into line with best practice at the start of the twenty-first century”. It does acknowledge that “change is only worthwhile when the benefits exceed the costs” - this echoes the Authority’s own stance that “Modernisation must mean Improvement”.
- 9 The report of the IRFS contains much that is welcome, even overdue, but whilst the principles may be sound it is apparent that without further detailed investigation some of the areas covered, particularly in the three areas identified, may pose great difficulties to the Authority. Until the current dispute is resolved it will be impossible to implement change along the lines proposed by the report. This time can be well used to identify – in detail – the challenges involved and to produce solutions to those issues that are acceptable to the community we serve.
- 10 The Authority should be aware that, due to the very compressed time scales and the speed of movement at a national level, it may be necessary for decisions to be taken on a variety of issues before the next full Authority meeting. It may be that it would be appropriate that an Extraordinary meeting of the Fire Authority be held.

G BACKGROUND PAPERS

“The Future of the Fire Service: reducing risk, saving lives”.

ODPM 2003

[Bain, Lyons & Young]

Contact Officer:

Iain Cox

(0118) 932 2218

Our proposals are listed below, grouped by chapter. Those in bold are recommendations; others are suggestions which the main stakeholders may find useful in bringing about a modern fire service.

Risk and community fire safety

The work on risk-based fire cover should be taken forward through a series of incremental steps as follows:

- Government should give fire authorities the power to deploy resources differently from the present requirements.
- Government should instruct each fire authority to develop a Risk Management Plan that will save more lives and provide better value for money.
- Fire authorities should be required to consult their communities and key stakeholders in the preparation of their plans.
- Chief officers should be empowered to implement their authority's plan.
(paragraph 5.12)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister should issue the necessary guidance to implement a risk-based approach to fire cover as a matter of urgency.

(paragraph 5.19)

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister should amend or remove Section 19 of the 1947 Fire Services Act as soon as possible.

(paragraph 5.20)

The Government should legislate to put the Fire Service on a new statutory basis.

(paragraph 5.23)

The Government should commit itself to submit an annual report to Parliament on the Fire Service.

(paragraph 5.23)

The Government should put in hand the work necessary to produce new options for the Fire Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) linked to the role of the future Service and its restated objectives so that a new formula can be introduced for 2006/07 and earlier if possible.

(paragraph 5.25)

The Role of central and local government

A new body should replace the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council (CFBAC) for England and Wales.

(paragraph 6.8)

The existing local government performance management framework should be used to set national priorities for the Fire Service, more specifically:

- National priorities for the Fire Service should reflect what it could contribute in the context of the Shared Priorities agreed with local government.
- The national Public Service Agreement (PSA) or Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) should articulate more clearly what national government expects of all fire authorities.
- In the light of forthcoming best value and performance improvement guidance, fire authorities should consider how Best Value reviews can help to address whether existing services are the most efficient and effective means of meeting the needs of users and the wider community.
- Government should discuss with the Audit Commission and the Accounts Commission an assessment process for fire authorities, building on lessons from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process.
(paragraph 6.12)

As a matter of priority, the Government should establish a strategic-level, high capability co-ordination infrastructure to deal with New Dimension work.

(paragraph 6.16)

All fire authorities which retain separate control rooms should be required to demonstrate to the Audit Commission and the Accounts Commission that their retention is likely to be cost effective against national performance standards.

(paragraph 6.17)

Collaboration and co-operation should embrace the following topics:

- introducing common training standards and reducing training and other facilities duplicated within or across brigades;
- making more use of the facilities of local colleges of further education;
- co-ordinating procurement, including timetables, sharing and using best practice;
- developing operational policies and strategies to deal with the New Dimension;
- sharing experience in rolling out the reform agenda, particularly in human resources;
- sharing best practice in management; and

- developing local strategic partnerships. (paragraph 6.21)

Brigades should investigate the potential for developing First Responder Partnerships.
(paragraph 6.26)

The Local Government Association and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities should take steps to develop the contribution of elected members on fire authorities and to ensure that they give stronger leadership in the future.
(paragraph 6.28)

Implementation and management policy

The Fire Service College should provide the focus for developing new thinking required for the Fire Service.
(paragraph 7.11)

In future, the Fire Service Inspectorates should concentrate on two main functions. First, the new bodies should provide the resources to support implementation of the reform programme across the UK Fire Service. Second, as part of the ongoing process of reform, the Inspectorates should maintain close and detailed contact with individual brigades to identify best practice and any emerging implementation problems, and to ensure that local implementation remains consistent with the wider national vision.

(paragraph 7.16-7.17)

The Audit Commission, the Accounts Commission and the Northern Ireland Audit Office should be invited to take all inspection of the Fire Service.

(paragraph 7.18)

There should be a new collective body to act as a forum to discuss the practical implementation of policy changes and operational reforms.

(paragraph 7.19)

The reshaped Inspectorates should engage with brigades individually to produce a series of action plans to deliver the ODPM's targets of 7 per cent minority ethnic communities and 15 per cent women by 2009.

(paragraph 7.49)

A programme of improved human resources management including appropriate training, should be required from all brigades and be monitored regularly.

(paragraph 7.59)

To reinforce the concept of the fire brigade as a single service, we recommend that brigades review the roles of their support staff and ensure they are brought into the new IPDS structure.

(paragraph 7.62)

Pay

There should be a first payment of 4 per cent across the board, backdated to November 2002, once there is agreement to enter substantive negotiations on reform.

The paybill should increase from November 2003 by 7 per cent, provided that the total reform programme has been agreed by that date, and implementation is on track, as verified at a national and local level by the independent audit process. The paybill increase should be linked to the introduction of a new reward structure with the flexibility to offer payments for specialist skills within the overall paybill package.

The total pay increase, which should mean that average pay will rise by about 11 per cent, should be conditional on delivery of the full reform package. Given the interdependency of the reforms we have set out it is not possible to subdivide the reform package and take some measures, but not others.

Once the reform package has been agreed, and implementation is on track as verified at both national and local level, employers and unions may wish to agree to a formal uprating mechanism, based on a formula arrangement to provide for annual uplifts in subsequent years. This is a matter for the two parties. If a formula is agreed, the frequency of any payments under such an agreement will be for negotiation and should depend on how fast reform proceeds and how quickly it can produce savings to finance any further increase.

Subject to resources being available, we suggest there should also be scope for individual authorities to agree local additions to pay to address local problems which cannot be dealt with by the main pay system.

(paragraph 8.22)

Middle managers should have their own reward structure and terms and conditions, ones based on similar principles to those of the main pay group.

(paragraph 8.44)

A significant proportion of uniformed officers should come from outside the Service to help broaden the Service.

(paragraph 8.48)

Pensions

The Government should take action within the next six months on changes that can be accomplished within the existing scheme including broadening the definition of a 'regular' firefighter and strengthening the provisions for independent medical advice.

(paragraph 9.11)

The Government should address the longerterm future of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and take early decisions to ensure that

suitable arrangements are provided for the new, reformed Fire Service.

(paragraph 9.12)

The Government should investigate forms which pension provision for retained staff should take.

(paragraph 9.15)

We recommend that revised financing arrangements are implemented without delay. This would probably involve employers paying contributions assessed on the basis of a notional fund but without insulating employers from the costs of early/ill health retirements.

(paragraph 9.18)

Conditions of service

The Grey Book should be amended to simplify nationally determined conditions of service to four core areas: pay, total hours, overall ranks and basic leave.

(paragraph 10.10)

There should continue to be a disputes procedure but its scope should be more limited.

(paragraph 10.10)

The terms in which the core conditions of service are defined must allow managers to propose and seek to agree locally:

- shift patterns that fit with demand
- different crewing levels at different times of day
- mixed crewing of appliances by whole-time and retained firefighters
- arrangements for staff to move more easily between fire stations, different fire authorities, specialist areas and functions according to national and local requirements
- arrangements for overtime working
- diversity objectives and monitoring
- approval for taking second jobs
- up to date working environment
- family-friendly working practices

(paragraph 10.12)

Some firefighters should be trained as 'first on the scene co-responders' which would give them basic life support skills including training in the use of automated defibrillators.

(paragraph 10.16)

The Appointments and Promotion Regulations should be repealed and replaced with a set of core requirements which local procedures must meet.

(paragraph 10.19)

The Discipline Regulations should be repealed and be replaced by a system based on modern good practice.

The ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievances Procedures would be a good basis for such a system.

(paragraph 10.22)

The National Joint Council should be replaced by a smaller body, with executive authority to negotiate and the experience and skills to do so.

(paragraph 10.25)

Retained firefighters

Retained firefighters should be included in IPDS; they should be trained to the same standard so that they provide a resource interchangeable with that of whole-time firefighters.

(paragraph 11.14)

The retained firefighters need to be properly integrated into the full-time service, including direct retained input into brigade management. This means:

- retained firefighters should be remunerated at the same hourly rate as whole-time firefighters whether they continue under the present terms and conditions or not.
- they should be trained to the same standard as whole-time firefighters and have sufficient work, subject to demand, and where circumstances permit, to enable them to maintain their skills.
- the medical standards applied to the recruitment of retained firefighters should be the same as those applied to whole-time firefighters.
- they should have the opportunity to work on a more consistent part-time basis, with a fixed time commitment.
- senior managers should have the opportunity to create roles other than firefighting on a retained basis, such as community fire safety and control room operations.
- retained firefighters should be able to apply for positions above Station Officer, though we recognise that this could probably only be done on a part-time rather than traditional retained basis.
- whole-time firefighters should be able to undertake retained roles if they wish.

(paragraph 11.18)

Implementing reform

A body should be charged with drawing up a business plan showing which reforms are to be undertaken by whom and by what date; designing a process for tracking delivery; and reporting to Ministers.
(paragraph 12.12)

APPENDIX 2

Central Government Issues		BAIN Timeline		Brigade/Service Issues		BAIN Timeline			
Business Plan	Jan-03	ODPM	Pre Strand	4% Pay Rise (Back Dated)	Nov-02	Brigades			
Statement Of Purpose (Ministerial)	Jan-03	ODPM	Strand 1						
Risk Based Cover Guidance	Feb-03	ODPM							
Removal of s.19	Feb-03	ODPM			Redefine Role (CACFOA)	Feb-03	CACFOA		
Establish 'New Fire Service Forum'	Feb-03	ODPM							
Amend Grey Book	Mar-03	ODPM							
Amend Disputes Procedure	Mar-03	ODPM			Investigate Co-responders	Mar-03	Brigades		
Revise New Dimension Strategy	Apr-03	ODPM			Set up College as focus for development	Mar-03	FSC		
Publication of White Paper	Apr-03	ODPM		Strand 2					
Redefine role (HMI)	May-03	HMI							
Immediate Changes to Pension Scheme (WT & RT)	Jul-03	Government							
New Statutory basis for Fire Service	Nov-03	Government	Strand 3						
					Implement Improved HR management	Jun-03	Brigades		
					Implement new Risk Based Cover	Jun-03	Brigades		
					Agree Senior Mgrs JD's	Jul-03	Brigades		
					Justify Control Rooms	Jul-03	Brigades		
					Agree Senior Mgrs Objectives	Nov-03	Brigades		
					Improved Collaboration on procurement, etc	Nov-03	Brigades		
					7% Pay Rise	Nov-03	Brigades		
					Implement Middle Managers reward strategy	Nov-03	Brigades		
					Pay R/T equivalent rates to W/T	Nov-03	Brigades		
Changes to Discipline/App't & Promotion Regs	Dec-03	ODPM		Implement Local Pay awards?	Nov-03	Brigades			
Replacement of CFBAC	Dec-03	ODPM		Bring Support Staff and Retained into IPDS	Nov-03	Brigades			
Audit Commission assuming Inspectorate role	Feb-04	Audit							
Long Term Pension Changes	Mar-04	Commission							
Replacement of NJC	Mar-04	Government		Introduce charges for services	Mar-04	Brigades			
Revised FSS Formula	Apr-06	ODPM							
		Government							
				Achieve Diversity Targets	Apr-09	Brigades			

