

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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**MEETING:** **Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal  
Berkshire Fire Authority**

**DATE AND TIME:** **Wednesday 13 June 2001 at 6.30pm**

**VENUE:** **Council Chamber, West Berkshire Council,  
Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury,  
Berkshire**

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## NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY 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.

D C H Williams  
Clerk to the Authority

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

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

**Briefing Meetings:**

Conservative Group:	5.45pm	Committee Room 1A
Labour Group:	5.45pm	Committee Room 1B
Liberal/Democrat Group:	5.45pm	Chairman's Office

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



**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE  
ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**

**WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2001**



**AGENDA**

**PART I AGENDA**

**PAGE NO.**

- |   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence   | -  |
|   | <i>(To date apologies have been received from Councillors J P Green and D McCarthy)</i>   |    |
| 2 | Agreement Between the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and the Fire Brigades' Union   | 1  |
| 3 | Cost of Contingency Arrangements  | 9  |
| 4 | Strategic Plan 2001 - 2006  | 12 |
| 5 | Date of Next Fire Authority Meeting   | -  |
|   | <i>To note that the Annual Fire Authority meeting will now take place on Tuesday 10 July 2001, in the Council Chamber, at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, commencing at 6.30pm.</i> |    |
| 6 | Exclusion of the Public   | 14 |

**PART II AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL**

- |   |                                      |    |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|
| 7 | Trades' Dispute - Sequence of Events | 15 |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|







- 3 It had also become clear from informal discussions between the Brigade and the FBU that some of the recommendations in the Review were acceptable. But there were some sticking points, coupled with the FBU's view that there should be a full fire cover review of the whole of Berkshire before any recommendations of the Review were implemented.
- 4 The eventual agreement represented a compromise on previously stated positions but it is now necessary for the Authority to appoint its representatives to the proposed Working Party. It is also felt extremely important that the Working Party should commence work as soon as possible and not wait until the constituents have made their appointments to the new Authority, which will be at least a week after the Authority meeting on 13 June.

In that connection the Authority should be aware that a start to this process was made at a Special Meeting of the Liaison Group held on 31 May 2001. A copy of the Minutes of that is attached as Appendix 2.

It is envisaged that Officers of the Brigade will undertake the detailed work in conjunction with FBU Executive Members, and that the role of the Members of the Authority will be to monitor progress, and to determine any proposed amendments to the implementation of the outcomes of the special appliance review which might be recommended.

- 5 It is however recognised that the elections of 7 June could well lead to some changes in membership, so that any appointments on 13 June may have to be subsequently changed or replaced.

## **F BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Correspondence relating to Dispute
- 2 Urgency Committee Meeting – 26 April 2001

**Contact Officer:** Clive Williams (0118) 932 2284

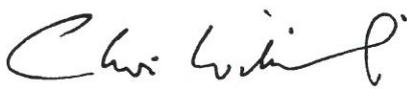


**AGREEMENT BETWEEN ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY AND THE  
FIRE BRIGADES' UNION**

- 1 The Section 19 Application relating to the implementation of the Special Appliance Review will be withdrawn.
- 2 The Authority will suspend implementation of the Special Appliance Review pending the setting up of a joint working party comprising Elected Members, Officers and the Fire Brigades' Union. Any subsequent implementation will be phased in on an agreed basis.
- 3 A prioritised Fire Cover Review against existing standards of the areas identified by the FBU (namely Slough, Bracknell, Thatcham, Reading Central and North Reading/Caversham, plus any others agreed by mutual consent) will be undertaken at the same time. The outcomes of the Special Appliance Review will be validated against the results of the Fire Cover Review in the appropriate areas.
- 4 The Authority gives a commitment to recruit personnel to the approved establishment level.
- 5 The Berkshire Executive of the Fire Brigades' Union will form a partnership with the Chief Fire Officer and his Directors to drive forward the strategic direction of the Brigade, and in particular the Authority's commitment to Best Value. To this end, an empowered member or members of the Executive will form part of all Best Value review teams and will contribute fully to the reviews.
- 6 The Fire Brigades' Union will participate fully in the change management process, 'Partners in Common Sense', being undertaken during 2001/02.
- 7 The proposal forms a binding collective agreement between the Fire Authority and the Fire Brigades' Union.

Signed on behalf of the Authority

  
 .....  
 M. Clement-Green Chief Fire Officer

  
 .....  
 C. Williams Clerk of the Authority

Signed on behalf of the Fire Brigades' Union

.....  
 A Gilchrist, General Secretary

26 April 2001



**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE LIAISON GROUP HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON THURSDAY 31 MAY 2001 COMMENCING AT 1830 HOURS AND CONCLUDED AT 2030 HOURS.**

**PRESENT:**

Fire Authority	J C G Brooks (Chairman) B J S Patman (Vice Chairman)
Fire Brigades' Union	D Dymond (Chair) L Ball (Secretary) P Clarke A Irlam C McFadden G D'Silva
UNISON	Not represented
Authority Officers	Chief Fire Officer Deputy Chief Fire Officer Assistant Chief Fire Officer Director of Human Resources Clerk and Monitoring Officer Treasurer Strategic Staff Officer
Apologies for Absence	Ms K Peak

**1.06/01 MINUTES – 26 FEBRUARY 2001**

The minutes of the previous meeting having been circulated were received and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**1.07/01 CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

The Chairman, speaking personally, stated that he looked to the Authority, Brigade and workforce, as represented by the FBU, working together in an open way. There needed to be an effort on all sides to win hearts and minds to changes. He wished to see better lines of communication and more trust between the Authority, Brigade and workforce. It was the Chief Fire Officer's job to manage the Brigade and it had to be accepted that there would be occasions when there were differences of view but he hoped all parties would always try to reach accommodation.



On behalf of the FBU, Mr Ball responded and confirmed that the FBU wished to look forward and the FBU hoped that all parties would learn from recent experiences.

#### **1.08/01 JOINT PRESS STATEMENTS**

It had proved impossible to agree a joint press statement after settlement of the dispute, not through disagreement but on account of the unavailability of FBU personnel due to Union commitments.

- RESOLVED:**
- i That a Joint Press Statement should be issued after the election on 7 June with regard to future working.
  - ii That Mr Paul Clarke on behalf of FBU and Mr D Phillips on behalf of the Brigade should be asked to prepare a draft for consideration

#### **1.09/01 PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE PROGRAMME**

The FBU representatives stated that they had met the Consultants earlier in the day and in spite of some initial reservations they had found the experience useful.

They had talked about the concerns facing their members, such as trust, honesty, fear, budget savings and communication routes. There was a fear that if members spoke out and expressed views, which were considered contrary to management's expectations, they perceived there could be victimisation. The FBU representatives gave an example:

The FBU representatives stated that there was also a feeling among members that if ideas were put forward, they would be ignored and again gave an example.

There was an issue also over the role of the Chief Fire Officer, as perceived by the firefighters. They regarded the Chief as their man and responsible for putting their case to the Authority. They regarded the role of the Chair as to argue the case for the Fire Service with the Unitaries. They felt that their views on the Special Appliance Review had received only cursory consideration by the Authority. They requested the opportunity to put their views orally at Authority meetings.

The FBU representatives also commented that the Branch Committee had been very active on the Special Appliance Review and in view of the result of the Ballot, there would be occasions when the Executive



would have to go back to full membership before agreement could be given.

The Chairman and Chief Fire Officer responded briefly to some of these points. The Chief Fire Officer stated that he and his officers were stepping up visits to Stations, to meet watches informally and listen to their comments. He wanted Brigade Managers to be more sensitive and encourage new ideas and would welcome hearing from the FBU outside the meeting on the details of particular concerns. The Chairman commented that he would welcome greater FBU involvement in policy formulation and budget setting. He would be happy to discuss all service policy matters with the FBU and to permit the FBU to append their written views to submitted reports.

- RESOLVED:**
- i That the FBU would be consulted appropriately on all service policy matters
  - ii That the FBU be permitted to append their written views to Service Policy Reports.

**1.10/01 PARTNERSHIP WORKING ; MONITORING  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR CREWING LEVELS AND  
ESTABLISHMENTS**

The Chief Fire Officer stated that he proposed there should be a standing item on each PRAP Panel meeting. The ridership levels were recorded daily, so that it was possible to see a trend over a month and then it would be a question of reporting to each Panel meeting.

Training places were at a premium and based on past trends and future projections 33 places had been booked for this year, more than the previous year.

- RESOLVED:**
- i That the Director of Human Resources prepare a paper for discussion with the FBU and Authority setting down the basis on which staff recruitment was approached: to cover retirements, and transfers in and out.
  - ii That the Chief Fire Officer prepare a report for the Authority over the position as regards retained firefighter strengths and what steps are being taken to attract new recruits.

**1.11/01 JOINT WORKING PARTY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chief Fire Officer proposed that the Brigade and the FBU should set up a Working Party to look in detail at the Special Appliance Review and implementation, having regard to the accord between the Authority outcomes and the FBU.



The findings of the Working Party and any differences of view would then be brought forward for consideration by members.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer would lead for the Brigade and Mr Ball stated that Mr Paul Clarke would lead for the FBU.

Mr D'Silva stated that the FBU were looking to establish 2 pools of officers in the FBU, who could be drawn on to provide the necessary expertise. It was possible that in some cases the same officer would be nominated by both the Brigade and FBU.

The Deputy Chief Fire officer stated that as the accord superseded the earlier Authority approval of the Review, recommendations from the Working Party would require Authority approval.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed Joint Working Party arrangements be agreed.

#### 1.12/01 **SUGGESTED PARTNERSHIP**

The Director of Human Resources circulated a draft discussion document setting down a framework for partnership working.

**RESOLVED:** That the document be discussed at the next meeting of the Group.

#### 1.13/01 **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Chief Fire Officer stated that he would be reporting to the Authority on 13 June on the need to revise the Plan in the light of the dispute. A separate report would be submitted on the costs of the dispute (£0.80k) and how this money would be found from within existing budgets.

The FBU representatives stated that they had had only had a peripheral involvement in the drawing up of the Strategic Plan. They felt that the Strategic Plan would only be credible if it faced up to realities, however unpleasant. For example, the employees' satisfaction survey had revealed many negatives as well as positives but the only related target refers just to employee satisfaction, which was a positive. There was nothing in the Plan about setting targets to overcome the negatives.

The Chief Fire Officer and Director of Human Resources explained the measures which are in hand to link Personal Development Plans with the Authority's vision, and the role of EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) with this. It was agreed that further, more detailed explanations will be given outside the meeting



- RESOLVED:** i That the above views be taken on board in preparation of the next Strategic Plan  
ii That the FBU be given a fuller brief on EFQM

**1.14/01 STRATEGIC ADVISORY GROUP OR ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The Chief Fire Officer had proposed a Strategic Advisory Group as a way of bringing all key players together informally in order to discuss strategy.

The Chairman stated that many organisations arranged for Strategic Away Days, at which key individuals discussed policy away from the normal work place.

**NOTED.**

**1.15/01 MEMBERSHIP OF LIAISON GROUP**

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Clerk be asked to review the Constitution of the Liaison Group and to report but pending that report the FBU representation on the Liaison Group be increased to include the full Executive of 8 members, in the knowledge that actual attendance would likely to be of the order of 5.

**1.16/01 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 25 June 2001 at 1630 hours in the Strategic Command Centre.

4 June 2001



**AGENDA ITEM 3: COST OF CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS**

**To:** Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
**Date:** 13 June 2001  
**Officers Contributing:** Authority Treasurer  
 Chief Fire Officer

**A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of the estimated costs incurred through the contingency plans developed to enable a limited service to be delivered to the public in the event of strike action, and to recommend how these costs might be contained.

**B PROPOSED ACTION**

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

- (i) the estimated costs of the contingency plans be **NOTED**; and
- (ii) these costs be contained within existing budgets by the measures recommended by the Chief Fire Officer.

**C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated total cost of the contingency plans is £80,000.

These costs can be contained within existing budgets by the measures identified in Section E of this report.

**D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

This report does not directly affect the Strategic Plan.

**E SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 1 During the recent trades dispute with the Fire Brigades' Union, the Clerk was notified of a series of dates upon which strike action would take place. To ensure that a limited service could continue to be delivered to the public on those dates, the Chief Fire Officer directed that contingency plans should be put in place. The dispute was settled without strike action occurring. However, some costs were directly incurred through the contingency planning.
- 2 Members are advised that costs were incurred as detailed below. The costs in respect of military assistance are as yet only estimates. It is likely to be several months before confirmed costs are presented by the Home Office.



**Military Assistance** **£45,000**

This covers the cost of drawing the 'Green Goddess' appliances from Home Office stores and preparing them for service, and the cost of training military personnel to drive and operate them

**Postage** **£15,000**

This covers the cost of a mailshot to over 3,000 businesses in Berkshire to ensure that they were aware that there would be no response on strike days should their automatic fire alarm actuate (due to limited resources), and that it would be necessary to confirm any genuine fire via the 999 system.

This also covers the cost of letters sent directly to all staff at their home addresses by both the Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer to ensure that staff were kept appropriately informed throughout the dispute.

**Advertising** **£13,000**

This covers the purchase of advertising space in local newspapers to ensure that the public were aware of the need for extra vigilance in preventing fires, and to give appropriate advice.

**Public Information** **£4,000**

This covers the ancillary costs in ensuring that the public was appropriately informed

**Contingency costs** **£3,000**

This covers additional costs, such as those incurred by Thames Valley Police in making arrangements to receive 999 calls at the emergency fire control room set up at the Sulhampstead Training Centre.

**Total estimated costs** **£80,000**

- 3 The Chief Fire Officer recommends that these costs be contained within the 2001/02 budget by the following measures.

**Cancellation of Water Bowser** **£40,000**

Although the case made for inclusion of this appliance within the capital programme was sound, the Brigade has managed without this vehicle for many years. The Chief Fire officer considers that the measure, which will meet half of the cost requirements, though not ideal, is sustainable.



As the water bowser is a capital scheme and only £13,500 of the capital programme is funded from revenue this year, it will be necessary to transfer £26,500 of premises extended maintenance expenditure from revenue to capital (using released basic credit approval) in order to achieve the overall revenue saving.

**Reduction in light vehicle replacement Programme For 2001/02** **£20,000**

The revenue budget for light vehicle replacement for 2001/02 is £40,000. Reduction of the programme by half in one year will affect the Brigade's ability to support staff, but is sustainable for 2001/02,

**Removal of 'extra travel' budget** **£10,000**

The Authority granted an additional £10,000 budget for 2001/02 to meet the extra travel costs of staff due to enforced transfers between stations as a result of the implementation of the special appliance review. As the implementation of the review is deferred, pending the work of the Joint Working Party, and a commitment has been given to avoid enforced transfers, this budget will not be required for this year.

**Removal of 'white goods' budget** **£10,000**

Members will recall that the revenue budget for 2001/02 included £10,000 allocated for the routine replacement of white goods (refrigerators, freezers etc) on stations. This recognised that previously, the Chief Fire Officer had had to 'find' the necessary funds from elsewhere and vire accordingly, and that this was no longer sustainable. Although replacement of white goods will be a problem if this budget is removed, the Chief Fire Officer considers that this could be contained for one year further.

**Total Provision** **£80,000**

**F BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Agenda and Minutes: 13 December 2000 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

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



**AGENDA ITEM 4: STRATEGIC PLAN 2001 – 2006**

**To: Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

**Date: 13 June 2001**

**Officer Contributing: Chief Fire Officer**

**A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members that following the resolution of the recent trades dispute with the Fire Brigades' Union, the Strategic Plan for 2001-2006 as approved by the 14 March 2001 Authority, is no longer relevant.

**B PROPOSED ACTION**

The Authority is invited to consider the report and **RESOLVE:** That the Performance Review and Audit Panel be authorised to approve an amended Strategic Plan at its next meeting.

**C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Production of the Strategic Plan cost approximately £2,000. These costs will be repeated for the production of an amended plan and will be contained within existing budgets.

**D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

This report refers to the Authority's Strategic Plan for 2001-2006.

**E SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 1 On the recommendation of the Performance Review and Audit Panel, the Authority approved the production of the Strategic Plan for 2001-2006 on 13 March 2001. The Plan was therefore produced at an approved cost of £2,000.
- 2 Subsequent to the production of the Plan, but prior to its distribution, the trades dispute with the Fire Brigades' Union was resolved. The terms of the resolution, reported elsewhere in this agenda, will significantly alter the contents of the Strategic Plan for 2001-2002, with knock-on effects for subsequent years caused by the need to reschedule projects displaced from this year. Accordingly, the Chief Fire Officer determined not to distribute the Plan.
- 3 Subject to Members' approval, the Chief Fire Officer will now amend the Strategic Plan to reflect these changes, and present a draft of the revised Plan to the Performance Review and Audit Panel on 3 July 2001.



- 4 Members should note that the principles behind the Plan remain unaltered. Only the content of the Plan will change to reflect the changes to the work programme resulting from the dispute resolution. This being the case, Members might be minded to authorise the Performance Review and Audit Panel to approve the amended Plan, so that its production and distribution might be expedited.

**F BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 1 Agenda and Minutes, Performance Review and Audit Panel: 1 March 2001
- 2 Agenda and Minutes, Fire Authority: 13 March 2001.

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



**AGENDA ITEM 6:****EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**To:** Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire  
Fire Authority  
**Date:** 13 June 2001  
**Officer Contributing:** Clerk & Monitoring Officer

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE:** 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:

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
7 Trade Dispute - Sequence of Events	1

**Note:**

- 1 The Authority is committed to open government and, whenever possible, meetings are open to the press and public. However, on occasions, it is necessary for the consideration of some reports to be undertaken in private. This is called "Part II" of the meeting.
- 2 The item above on the agenda has, therefore, been put into Part II. Information on why this issue has been placed in Part II is available from David R Weller on (0118) 932 2288, A Part I summary of the action taken will be available in the minutes of the meeting.



**AGENDA ITEM 7:****TRADES' DISPUTE – SEQUENCE OF  
EVENTS****To:****Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal  
Berkshire Fire Authority****Date:****13 June 2001****Officer Contributing:****Chief Fire Officer****A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of the full sequence of events which occurred during the recent trades dispute.

**B PROPOSED ACTION**

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

**C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.  
The financial implications of the dispute are advised elsewhere in this agenda.

**D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

This report does not contribute to the Strategic Plan.

**E SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 1 The full sequence of events relating to the recent trades dispute with the Fire Brigades' Union is attached as Appendix 3. This updates the advice given to Members at the 17 April 2001 Extraordinary Fire Authority.

**F BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Agenda and Minutes: 17 April 2001 Extraordinary Fire Authority

**Contact Officer:** Mike Clement-Green 0118 932 2225



## Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Special Appliance Best Value Review

### Review and Current Position

- The Special Appliance Review formed part of the five year programme of Best Value Reviews published in both the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2000 / 2005 and Best Value Performance Plan 2000 / 2001 which were circulated to all members of staff
- 15 December 1999 - the terms of reference of the Special Appliance review were agreed by the Fire Authority
- January 2000 - the Special Appliance Review commenced
- The review team included the Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Branch of the Fire Brigades' Union who had access to all of the evidence produced, and had the opportunity to contribute to this, challenge it or otherwise comment
- The outcome of the Special Appliance Review was subjected to an internal challenge led by the Chief Fire Officer
- Formal face-to-face consultation took place with the Fire Brigades' Union
- 1 November 2000 - the Authority's Performance Review and Audit Panel scrutinised the review and concluded that the process followed was robust
- 3 November 2000 HMI Currie was invited and attended Brigade Headquarters to discuss the recommendations of the Special Appliance Review
- 18 November and 4 December 2000 - the Authority's Budget Working Party considered the recommendations of the Special Appliance review providing further recommendations to be considered by the Fire Authority
- 27 November 2000 - the Fire Brigades' Union gave a presentation at the Fire Liaison meeting highlighting concerns of the Special Appliance review
- 13 December 2000 - the Fire Brigades Union staged a demonstration at the Fire Authority meeting
- 13 December 2000 - the Fire Authority approved the recommendations of the Special Appliance Review for implementation in January 2001
- Following the Fire Authority meeting of 13 December 2000 the Fire Brigades Union announce the intention to stage a mass meeting of its membership which would be addressed by its National General Secretary



- The Chief Fire Officer wrote to the National General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union with an invitation to meet face-to-face in order to provide a briefing of the Fire Authority's case for the Special Appliance Review
- The National General Secretary of the Fire Brigades' Union declined the invitation to meet the Chief Fire Officer at this stage
- 24 January 2001– A mass meeting was held by the Fire Brigades Union at Whitley Wood Fire Station attended by the National General Secretary
- 6 February 2001– The Vice Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer attended a meeting of Slough Borough Council's Scrutiny and Overview committee by request to present the findings of the Special Appliance Review.
- 6 February 2001 - The Scrutiny and Overview committee also received a presentation from the Fire Brigades Union expressing their concerns
- 7 February – permission of the Home Secretary was sought under section 19 of the Fire Service's Act 1947 for amendments to be made to the authorised establishment scheme. (The Fire Brigades' Union evidence to support their concerns were included in the submission. Members may wish to note that the permission to amend the authorised establishment will only be given by the Home Secretary when all evidence has been examined and any changes would not constitute a risk to public or firefighter safety).
- 7 February 2001 - A special Fire Liaison meeting was held (attended by the Fire Brigades' Union Branch Chairman and Secretary and the Union's Regional Executive Member), where :
  - a presentation was given by the Fire Brigades Union highlighting their concerns
  - the Fire Brigades Union concerns were expressed as crewing levels, switch crewing and fire cover
  - although not apparently quoted as a prime concern within the FBU presentation the Authority members were advised by the regional executive member that the concerns were related to the loss of posts
  - the Authority made an offer to undertake a full fire cover review in 2001/2002
  - the Authority Chairman directed the Chief Fire Officer to examine the concerns expressed by the FBU in their presentation and report at the next Fire liaison meeting
- 22 February – a further Fire Liaison meeting was held where:
  - Brigade officers made a presentation which addressed the FBU concerns
  - the Fire Brigades Union representatives were still not satisfied with the response to their concerns
  - Authority Members again offered a full fire cover review along with an offer to form a tripartite working group composed of Authority Members, Brigade Officers and Fire Brigades Union representatives ; the working group would meet monthly to monitor crewing levels and attendance times, directing immediate action to rectify any evident deficiencies



- Following the Fire Liaison meeting of 22 February 2001 the Authority offers were apparently rejected by the Fire Brigades Union, although the rejection was not communicated to the Authority Chairman or the Chief Fire Officer but passed directly to the press
- 1 March 2001 – a notice of a trade dispute was faxed to the Authority Clerk and Monitoring Officer at Brigade Headquarters
- 2 March 2001 - the Clerk and Monitoring Officer replied to the notice of a trade dispute inviting further discussion
- 6 March 2001 – a letter was received from the Slough Borough Council outlining the resolutions of the full council
- The three party spokespersons gave a commitment to continue to meet with the fire Brigades' Union as necessary to resolve the dispute
- Officers of the Brigade continued to reassure staff of the facts behind issues being debated
- The Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union has indicated to the Chairman that strike action would employ "guerilla tactics"; i.e. short periods of strike (30 minutes) during the busiest time of the day. This would minimise financial loss to the union members, whereas the Authority would have to contract alternative cover continuously from before the start of any strike action (to allow for training) until the dispute is settled by a normal return to work.
- The costs to the Authority of providing alternative fire cover during a period of industrial action was estimated at approximately £100,000 per week or £5M per year
- The Chairman and the Chief Fire Officer conducted a series of "without prejudice meetings" with members of the Berkshire Executive of the Fire Brigades' Union resulting in a proposal which it was agreed would end the dispute.
- 17 April 2001 – the Fire Authority agreed the proposal at an extraordinary Authority meeting.( Appendix 1)
- 18 April 2001– Fire Brigades Union rejected the offer. The Clerk was advised of the first two strike dates as 1 and 4 May, 7 hour withdrawal of labour on each.
- 23 April 2001– Fire Authority agree a fourth offer. Two further strike dates notified
- 24 April 2001– Fire Brigades Union reject the offer (referred to elsewhere in this agenda)
- 26 April 2001– Fire Authority Urgency committee agree a fifth offer
- 27 April 2001 – the FBU advise informally that the offer is acceptable
- 30 April 2001 – the FBU withdraw trade dispute



# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

## COSTS OF AN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE

NOTE FOR RBFA CHAIRMAN

13 JUNE 2001

- 1 Best guide to costs of a dispute is still that of the Essex Fire Authority 15 week dispute in 1998.

	£
Gross Costs	3.673m
Less Pay Deductions	<u>0.939m</u>
	£ <u>2.734m</u>

Essex have just received the final bill from the Home Office including:

	£
• Troop change every 3 to 4 weeks (Approx £30000 each change)	100000
• Equipment loss	50000
• Engine replacement	15000
• Course booking fees – cancellations	10000
• Green Goddesses for training in different parts of the country 56 extra at £2500	140000

**RBFA being half the size of Essex could have expected a 15-week dispute to cost of the order of £1.5m.**

- 2 Page 18 of the Agenda states cost of providing alternative fire cover during a period of industrial action estimated at £100000 per week or £5m a year
- 3 The Statement attached sets out the estimated progression of costs of strike action and basis of the calculations. In summary on the assumption of a lock out from week 9.

• Contingency Planning	80000	Dr
• Weeks 1 to 8 assuming action 1 shift out for 2 days a week	768000	Dr

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<b>Cumulative Cost to Week 8</b>	848000	Dr
• Weeks 9 to 13 assuming lockout from week 9	1020000	Cr
<b>Cumulative Cost to Week 13</b>	<u>172000</u>	Cr
• Weeks 14 to 26 assuming continued lock out (Full Cost of military included)	2600000	Dr
<b>Cumulative to week 26</b>	<u>2428000</u>	Dr
• Weeks 27 to 52 assuming continued lockout	5200000	Dr
<b>Cumulative to Week 52</b>	<u>7628000</u>	Dr

**NOTE:** These figures should be treated with the greatest degree of caution. RBFA would have been handing a blank cheque to the military and the police.

D H Illingworth  
 Authority Treasurer  
 13 June 2001

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**

**COSTS OF AN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE      YEAR 2001**

	£		£
Without lockout from Week 9			
<b>Contingency Planning</b>			80000    Dr
Costs per report to RBFA 12 June 2001	80000		
	Per week	With lockout from week 9	
	£		
<b>Costs to Week 8</b>			
Military (Green Goddesses/RAF/RN Vehicles)	44000		
Other extra costs	16000		
Police	50000		
Other (say)	6000		
	<u>116000</u>		
Less Pay Deductions (1 shift 2 days a week)	20000		
	<u>96000</u>		
	x 8		
<b>TOTAL TO WEEK 8</b>			<u>768000    Dr</u>
			<u>848000    Dr</u>
<b>Costs Week 9 to Week 13</b>			
Military (Green Goddesses RAF/RN Vehicles)	44000		
Other Extra Costs	16000		
Police	50000		
Other	6000		
	<u>116000</u>	116000	
Less Pay deductions (1 shift 2 days a week)	20000		
	<u>96000</u>		
	X 5		
<b>TOTAL TO WEEK 13</b>			<u>320000</u>
			<u>204000</u>
		X 5	
			<u>1,020,000    Cr</u>
			<u>172000    Cr</u>
			<u>480000</u>
			<u>1,328,000</u>



Without lockout from Week 9 Costs Week 14 to Week 26	Per Week £	£	With lockout £
Military (Green Goddesses/RAF/RN Vehicles	48000		
Other extra costs	16000		
Capitation charge	400000		
100 personnel @ £400	50000		
Police	6000		
Other	<u>520000</u>		520000
Less Pay Deductions (1 shift 2 days a week)	20000		320000
	500000	x 13 weeks	<u>200000</u> X 13
TOTAL TO WEEK 26		6,500,000	<u>2,600,000</u> Dr
Costs weeks 27 to week 52	£50000	x 26 weeks	£200000
TOTAL TO WEEK 52		<u>20,828,000</u>	<u>2,428,000</u> <u>5,200,000</u> <u>7628000</u>

D H Illingworth  
Authority Treasurer  
13 June 2001



# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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

**MEETING:** Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal  
Berkshire Fire Authority

**DATE AND TIME:** Tuesday 17 April 2001 at 6.30pm

**VENUE:** Council Chamber, Wokingham District  
Council, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire

## NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY 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.

D C H Williams  
Clerk to the Authority

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

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

**Briefing Meetings:**

Conservative Group:	5.45pm	Committee Room 5
Labour Group:	5.45pm	Council Chamber
Liberal/Democrat Group:	5.45pm	Committee Room 3

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

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**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE  
ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2001**



**AGENDA**

**PART I AGENDA**

**PAGE NO.**

- |   |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1   | Apologies for Absence               | - |
| 2   | Date of Next Fire Authority Meeting | - |
| <i>To note that the Annual Fire Authority meeting will now take place on Tuesday 10 July 2001, in the Council Chamber, at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, commencing at 6.30pm. The meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13 June 2001 has therefore been cancelled.</i> |                                     |   |
| 3   | Exclusion of the Public             | 1 |

**PART II AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Proposal to Resolve Current Trades' Dispute | 2 |
|---|---|---|



**AGENDA ITEM 3:**

**EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**To:**

**Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire  
Fire Authority**

**Date:**

**17 April 2001**

**Officer Contributing:**

**Clerk & Monitoring Officer**

The Authority is Invited to **RESOLVE:** 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:

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
4 Proposal to Resolve Current Trades' Dispute	1

Note:

- 1 The Authority is committed to open government and, whenever possible, meetings are open to the press and public. However, on occasions, it is necessary for the consideration of some reports to be undertaken in private. This is called "Part II" of the meeting.
- 2 The item above on the agenda has, therefore, been put into Part II. Information on why this issue has been placed in Part II is available from David R Weller on (0118) 932 2288, A Part I summary of the action taken will be available in the minutes of the meeting.



**AGENDA ITEM 4: PROPOSAL TO RESOLVE CURRENT TRADES' DISPUTE**

**To:** Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority  
**Date:** 17 April 2001  
**Officer Contributing:** Chief Fire Officer

**A PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek the Authority's approval to a formal offer to be made to the Fire Brigades' Union to seek resolution to the current trades dispute.

**B PROPOSED ACTION**

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

- 1 That the proposal outlined in Appendix A be approved and put formally to the Fire Brigades' Union on 18 April 2001; and
- 2 That subject to its acceptance by the Fire Brigades' Union, the virements to the 2001/2002 budget identified in Appendix B be approved.

**C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs incurred by the proposal can be contained within the existing revenue budget, subject to the virements identified in Appendix B.

**D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Industrial action will jeopardise delivery of the Strategic Plan for 2001/02. This report therefore contributes directly to the Strategic Plan.

**E SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 1 The Authority debated the current trades dispute with the Fire Brigades' Union in Part II of the 14 March 2001 Fire Authority.
- 2 Since that meeting, the Chairman of the Authority and Chief Fire Officer have conducted a series of 'without prejudice' meetings with members of the Berkshire Executive of the Fire Brigades' Union in an effort to find a resolution to this dispute. The Chairman considers that the proposal detailed in Appendix A attached will enable the dispute to be settled without strike action, assuming that the union's current ballot gives their executive the mandate to pursue such action.



- 3 The effects of the proposal will be to achieve many of the outcomes recommended by the best value review, such as the relocation of a number of the special appliances and the removal of the aerial appliances from pre-determined attendances. It addresses the concerns of the Fire Brigades' Union by maintaining wholetime firefighter establishment levels (thus precluding the requirement for the application to the Secretary of State in accordance with Section 19 of the Fire Services Act, 1947), by giving an undertaking to use best endeavours to maintain that establishment and by agreement to a limited review of fire cover against existing standards. The proposal also addresses the concerns expressed by Slough Borough Council reported previously. To compensate for the additional cost of maintaining the current establishment without detriment to the Authority's commitment to community safety, the proposal includes the requirement for wholetime staff at Newbury and Slough fire stations to be used for community safety duties across the breadth of the Brigade's area. The Fire Brigades' Union commitment to partnership working and full involvement in subsequent best value reviews is also sought.
- 4 Members are advised that the union's ballot closes at 1400 hours on 18 April. The number of votes to be counted is so small that the appointed scrutineer, the Electoral Reform Society, estimates that it will be able to announce the result by 1430 hours on that day. Members may be minded therefore to propose a formal offer to the Fire Brigades' Union prior to the closure of the ballot, so that the result of the ballot (if in favour of strike action) cannot be deemed to have placed any pressure upon the Authority to have made the proposal.
- 5 As part of the preparation for potential strike action, Members are advised that the Chief Fire Officer arranged for senior officers to receive briefings from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, that brigade having experienced 2 trades disputes involving strike action, the last being in 1998. The view of those officers is that despite the passage of time since the last action, industrial relations within that brigade continue to be unhealthy, to the extent that effective management of the brigade remains difficult.
- 6 Subsequent to the 14 March Authority, the Chief Fire Officer has been advised by the Home Office that due to the military's anticipated continued involvement in the foot and mouth epidemic, HM Government will be unable to supply any staff to provide alternative fire cover in the event of strike action in Berkshire. It is likely therefore that there would be no cover for fires or other emergencies during any period of strike.
- 7 Members will be aware that before submitting the recommendations of the review to the December 2000 Authority, the Chief Fire Officer sought the informal comment of HM Fire Service Inspectorate and received tacit approval. Members are advised that as part of the Section 19 application, a formal examination of the proposals has been undertaken by HM Inspector of Fire Services, Mr Robin Currie. No formal response has yet been received. In the event of this proposal being made to and accepted by the Fire Brigades' Union, the Section 19 application would be unnecessary and could be withdrawn.

## **F BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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



## APPENDIX A

## PROPOSAL

- 1 That the appliance relocations recommended by the special appliance review will be implemented, with the exception of the Rescue Support Vehicles. Thus:
  - 1.1 The Incident Control Unit will be relocated from Station 3 Dee Road to Station 13 Windsor, to be switch-crewed with pump C131.
  - 1.2 The Chemical Incident Unit will be relocated from Station 20 Whitley Wood to Station 17 Slough, to be switch-crewed with the Aerial Ladder Platform C174.
  - 1.3 The Operations Support Unit and Hydraulic Platform will remain at Station 20 Whitley Wood, both to be switch-crewed with pump B201.
  - 1.4 The Rescue Boat will continue to be located at Station 1 Caversham Road, switch-crewed with pump A11. The equipment of the boat and the training of its crews will continue to be the subject of review, with the intention of returning the boat to operational duties as quickly as possible.
  - 1.5 The Aerial Ladder Platform will remain at Station 17 Slough, to be switch-crewed with the Chemical Incident Unit.
  - 1.6 The Emergency Feeding Unit will be removed from service and arrangements established via 24 hour food outlets to ensure that crews can be appropriately refreshed at incidents.
- 2 Six pumps will be equipped with enhanced extrication equipment as recommended by the special appliance review, and will be located as follows:
  - Station 3 Dee Road
  - Station 4 Newbury (wholetime pump)
  - Station 5 Hungerford
  - Station 16 Bracknell (wholetime pump)
  - Station 18 Langley
  - Station 19 Maidenhead (wholetime pump)
- 3 A single Rescue Support Vehicle will be retained, will be located at Station 4 Newbury and will be primary crewed. Pending commissioning of a replacement RSV, both existing RSVs will be located at Newbury and mobilised by the dedicated crew on an either/or basis.
- 4 There will be no reduction in wholetime posts at this time. Watch establishments on a station by station basis will therefore be as follows:
 

Stn 1	7	switch-crew pump with Rescue Boat
Stn 2	7	primary crew pump
Stn 3	7	primary crew pump
Stn 4	10	primary crew pump
		primary crew RSV
Stn 13	7	switch-crew pump with ICU



Stn 17	16	primary crew 2 pumps (at 5 and 4) switch-crew ALP with CIU
Stn 18	7	primary crew pump
Stn 19	7	primary crew pump
Stn 20	10	switch-crew pump with HP and OSU. 3 staff per Watch held as Operational Management and Training Reserve

- 5 The Operational Management and Training Reserve will be maintained at 12 posts (3 per Watch) and located at Station 20 Whitley Wood. Where more than 5 staff are on duty at the station, and not required to perform detached duties elsewhere, they may be used to crew the HP and OSU in preference to switch-crewing these appliances with the pump. However, such occasions will be regarded as a bonus, and it will not become an expectation to maintain a crew for the HP and OSU.
- 6 The Water Tender at Station 17 Slough will not now be upgraded to Water Tender Ladder status. Consequently, this pump will normally be expected to crew with 4 riders, not 5.
- 7 The ALP and CIU at Station 17 Slough will be switch-crewed with 2 staff. However, except for training needs, during non stand-down hours of all shifts, the crew dedicated to these vehicles will be allocated to community safety duties under the direction of the Community Safety Manager, and using one of those appliances, will perform those duties within an area of the Brigade determined by that manager. The appliance will remain on call at all times.
- 8 The CIU will normally be crewed by 2 staff. The crew will be supplemented at operational incidents, where the need is appropriate, by the mobilisation of a 'nurse' pump.
- 9 The ALP and HP will not form part of any pre-determined attendance.
- 10 The RSV at Station 4 Newbury will be primary crewed with 2 staff. However, except for training needs, during non stand-down hours of all shifts, the crew dedicated to this vehicle will undertake appropriate out-duties in the 'outer' area of the station's ground, or will otherwise be allocated to community safety duties under the direction of the Community Safety Manager, and using the RSV will perform these duties within an area of the Brigade determined by that manager. The vehicle will remain on call at all times.
- 11 In order to assist in meeting the cost of these proposals, there will be no wholtime uniformed posts established within the central Community Safety team.
- 12 In order to assist in meeting the cost of these proposals, the 2 non-uniformed support technicians previously proposed for Station 20 will not be appointed. Maintenance and testing duties will continue to be carried out by the duty crew at the station (including the Operational Management and Training Reserve).
- 13 As there will be no variation in the current wholtime establishment for the Brigade, the application made in accordance with section 19 of the Fire Services' Act, 1947 will be redundant. The application will therefore be withdrawn.
- 14 The Chief Fire Officer will use his best endeavours to maintain Watch strengths. To this end, detachments from stations will be kept to a minimum (normally only to cover short-term temporary vacancies arising at stations due to residential courses, sickness or transfer from temporary vacancies arising at stations due to residential courses, sickness or transfer



to other brigades), and to seek to maintain the establishment of the Brigade through early recruitment.

- 15 In conjunction with the Fire Brigades' Union, the Chief Fire Officer will undertake during 2001/02 a fire cover review against existing standards. However, having regard to the resource needs and the imminence of replacement standards, the Authority proposes that such reviews should be confined to areas where the Fire Brigades' Union has expressed specific concern; viz Slough, Bracknell and Thatcham. The outcomes of the reviews will be reported to and considered by the Fire Authority.
- 16 In consideration of the extensive movement from its original position which this proposal represents to the Authority, the agreement of the Fire Brigades' Union is expected in respect of the following:
  - 16.1 That the Berkshire Executive of the Union will form a partnership with the Chief Fire Officer and his Directors to drive forward the strategic direction of the Brigade, and in particular the Authority's commitment to Best Value. To this end, an empowered member or members of the Executive will form part of all Best Value review teams, will contribute fully to the reviews and will seek consensus with management in reporting the reviews to the Fire Authority.
  - 16.2 That the Fire Brigades' Union will participate fully in the change management process, 'Partnership in Common Sense', being undertaken during 2001/02.



## APPENDIX B

### VIREMENTS REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PROPOSALS

From	To	Amount
Community Safety – Employees	Operations - Employees	£40,000
Community Safety Supplies and Services	Operations – Employees	£60,000
Engineering – Transport	Operations – Employees	£20,000
Audit & Best Value Employees	Operations – Employees	£2,000

#### Explanatory Notes

The proposal requires 8 additional wholetime firefighter posts at station level.	£160,000
This will be met by:-	
Non-appointment of 2 non-uniformed technicians at Whitley Wood (Note: Funding contained within same budget as Station posts: Operations – Employees)	£38,000
Non-appointment of 2 uniformed firefighter posts in Community Safety (Community Safety - Employees)	£40,000
Reduction in funding for Community Safety campaigns. (Community Safety – Supplies and Services)	£60,000
Non up-grading of Slough's Water Tender (Engineering – Transport)	£20,000
Balance transferred from deferred appointment of non-uniformed Officer to Best Value Team. (Audit and Best Value – Employees)	£2,000



# 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: 11 April 2001

Dear Councillor

## EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Having published the Agenda for the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting I realised that some Fire Authority Members may not know the actual location of the District Council Offices in Wokingham.

A plan showing the venue is therefore reproduced overleaf and Members are advised that 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.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David R Weller".

David R Weller  
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority ( except Wokingham DC)

