

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: 6 June 2000

Dear Member

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

I have pleasure in attaching your Agenda for the Annual Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to be held on Wednesday 14 June 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Bradley Moore Square, Harts Hill Road, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm.

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

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

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

If any Member will be travelling to Thatcham by train please let me know if you will require transport from Thatcham Station.

Yours sincerely

David R Weller
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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

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

DATE AND TIME: **Wednesday 14 June 2000 at 6.30pm**

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

NOTICE OF MEETING

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

D C H Williams
Clerk to the Authority

To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

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

Briefing Meetings:

Conservative Group: 6.00pm -Hall 2
Labour Group: 6.00pm -Hall 1 (Screend Off Area)
Liberal Democrat Group: 6.00pm -Committee Room

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

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Your reference:

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

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

Date: 12 June 2000

Dear Councillor

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY - REPORTS MARKED TO FOLLOW

I refer to the Agenda for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority meeting on Wednesday 14 June 2000 and attach for your retention the following documents marked to follow:

Agenda item 21: Community Safety Plan 2000/2001

A copy of the Plan is enclosed.

Agenda item 22: Strategic Plan 2000 - 2005

Attached is a copy of a letter from the Acting Chief Fire Officer together with a copy of the Appendix referred to in paragraph 11 of the report.

Agenda item 29: Half Yearly Report for Medical Retirements, Workplace Accidents and Sickness Absences

A copy of the Appendix referred to in paragraph 11 of the report is attached.

Please remember to include the above mentioned Appendices and Community Safety Plan with your Agenda for the Fire Authority meeting.

Yours sincerely

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

David R Weller
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2000

ADDITIONAL PART II AGENDA ITEM

At the commencement of the meeting the Chairman will be seeking Members approval to include the following additional Part II Report on the Agenda for consideration at the meeting on the grounds of urgency:

Agenda item 39: Provision of Interim Estates Management Services

A copy of the report is attached.

Thank you

David R Weller
Committee Administrator
14 June 2000

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2000



AGENDA

PART I AGENDA

PAGE NO.

CONSTITUTIONAL ITEMS

1	Election of Chairman	-
	<i>To elect a Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year.</i>	
2	Election of Vice-Chairman	-
	<i>To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the ensuing year.</i>	
3	Apologies for Absence	-
3A	<i>ADDITIONAL ITEMS</i>	
4	Membership of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	1
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7	Chairman's Communications (if any)	-
8	Petitions and Questions from the Public Under Standing Orders 8 & 9	
9	Questions from Members under Standing Order 10 (if any)	-
10	Notices of Motion under Standing Order 12 (if any)	-
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21	Community Safety Plan 2000/2001	40
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32	Date of Next Fire Authority Meeting	-
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To note that the next Fire Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 6 September 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm.

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PART II AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL

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38	Brigade vehicle Maintenance - Proposals for a Best Value Exercise	114

**AGENDA ITEM 4: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise on the District/Borough Council Member appointments to 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 Following the Elections in May the District/Borough Councils in Berkshire have appointed the following Member representatives to the Fire Authority with new Members being shown in **Bold Type**:

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (3)

R A Flood (Con), E L Glasson (Lab), T Mills (Con)

Reading Borough Council (4)

R J Day (Lib/Dem), Mrs J Orton (Lab), J Morris (Lab), Ms K Peak (Lab) - No change

West Berkshire Council (5)

**J C G Brooks (Lib/Dem), O E Jeffrey (Lib/Dem), J E R Mole (Lib/Dem),
D W Liddiard (Con), T Bucknell (Con),**

Slough Borough Council (3)

E E Herbert (Lab), A Gregory (Con), **D McCarthy (Lab)**

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (5)

Mrs C Bateson (Con), Mrs V Howes (Lib/Dem), **Mrs S Lanehart (Lib/Dem),
D Parker (Con), J Tryon (Con)**

Wokingham District Council (5)

As a result of the recent Elections, Wokingham District Council is hung with 27 Conservatives and 27 Liberal/Democrats. Therefore until such time as the District Council determines its membership of the Fire Authority the following four existing Members will retain their place::

T P Dredge (Lib/Dem), T D McCann (Lib/Dem), B J S Patman (Con), R Turner (Con)

- 2 This will therefore mean that the Fire Authority will have a total membership of 24 with one vacancy (Wokingham District Council). The Political Parties representation will therefore be:

Conservative	10
Liberal/Democrat	8
Labour	6
Total	24 (one vacancy)

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letters confirming appointments received from District/Borough Councils in Berkshire

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

AGENDA ITEM 5: MINUTES: 15 MARCH 2000

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH ON WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED 8.50PM.

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman), D Ball, R J Day, T P Dredge, J M B Egan, B W Gardner, A Gregory, E E Herbert, Mrs V Howes, A B V P Hickley, D W Liddiard, T D McCann, J Morris, Mrs J Orton, Ms K Peak, T N Stephens, R J Webb, T Wheaton

Apologies: Mrs C Bateson, T Mills, T O'Flynn,

1.01/00 MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Authority was advised that Councillor T Wheaton had been appointed by Bracknell Forest Borough Council as the replacement for Councillor D A Veakins who had resigned. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Wheaton to the meeting.

NOTED**1.02/00 MINUTES: 15 DECEMBER 1999**

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 15 December 1999, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1.03/00 MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 4 - not reproduced) of the Personnel Committee, Performance Review and Audit Panel, Urgency Committee and Fire Liaison group meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting in December 1999. Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available for the Committee Administrator.

1.04/00 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman referred to a letter (not reproduced) from the Chief Fire Officer of Devon Fire and Rescue Services seeking the Fire Authority's support for a motion to be presented for debate at the LGA General Assembly in June seeking powers for

Combined Fire Authorities to be able to precept. In noting that the Authority had previously debated this issue and had concluded that on balance they would be better placed and more accountable if they could raise a precept rather than rely on contributions, Members recognised that such a change would pose a risk for most Fire Authorities who were spending above SSA. It was nevertheless **RESOLVED:** That the Motion from Devon Fire and Rescue Service be supported and the Chief Fire Officer advised accordingly.

The Chairman also reported on the Chief Fire Officer's temporary secondment to HM Fire Service Inspectorate as HM Principal Inspector leading the Home Office Brigade Efficiency Support Team. The secondment had been welcomed and approved by the Urgency Committee at its meeting on Monday 28 February 2000 and had given a number of Officers within the Brigade the opportunity to act up to different references.

1.05/00 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 8 & 9

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 6 - not reproduced) that three questions had been received from members of the public under Standing Order 9. Before responding to the questions the Chairman expressed his disappointment that all three had been received from fire-fighters and although they were members of the public, a formal mechanism had been created with the establishment of the Fire Liaison Group between the Authority and the Unions, including the FBU, where queries of this nature could be raised. He therefore asked that any future queries from Fire-Fighters be directed through the Fire Liaison Group. The following is a transcript of the questions received together with the answers given by the Chairman:

Question from Mr R McAllister

At the end of the last financial year I asked why, when we as a Fire Authority saved approximately £1m, did we lose 12 posts and again as of 1 March 2000 we lose 12 posts again. We appear to be showing an underspend of £690,000 with the prospect of losing a further 12 posts and possibly a further 24 posts in subsequent years until 2004. Can the Authority justify the continued loss of manpower which is an obvious cut to the Fire Service cover that I and other members of the public receive?

Answer by Councillor J C G Brooks

It is not possible to respond directly to the question put, as the question itself contains factual inaccuracies.

The facts are that at the end of the last financial year the Authority's budget was underspent by a total of £958,000, of which £354,000 was related to pensions, and clearly for use on pensions in the future, and £604,000 to other budgets, due mainly to the underspend on salaries in respect of temporary utilised vacancies. This underspend

was set aside to make provision for known future demands on pensions, to fund essential asbestos monitoring and removal work within the Brigade premises and the introduction of a computerised in-cab Operational Risk Information System. No posts were lost from the Brigade's establishment at that time.

The Brigade's Wholetime establishment was reduced by 12 posts at the end of the 1997/1998 financial year, as a result of introducing a more efficient method of crewing the Brigade's Chemical Incident Unit based at Whitley Wood. As we approach the end of the current financial year, the Fire Authority are predicting an underspend of £550,000, of which £400,000 is again to be set aside to fund known future demands against pensions. The remaining £150,000 is being set aside to fund a newly introduced and retrospective requirement to provide paid leave to Retained Fire-Fighters as referred to at the Fire Authority Budget Meeting in December 1999.

The Fire Authority has a statutory duty under the Government's Best Value legislation to undertake a thorough review of each of the services it provides, in recognition of this duty a programme of such reviews has been introduced into the Authority's Strategic Plan.

Supplementary Question from Mr McAllister

What other means of efficiency savings have the Authority sought other than that of cutting manpower of Wholetime Fire-Fighters?

Answer by Councillor Brooks

I will provide a written answer to your supplementary question.

Question from Mr P E Miller

The Fire Authority decided at their last meeting to finance and employ Retained Fire-Fighters to train and crew Special Fire Appliances. Previous reductions of 12 Wholetime jobs in 1998/1999 at the Whitley Wood station have reduced the fire cover and effectiveness of service the Fire Authority provide to the public of Reading and the whole of Berkshire. The last Fire Cover Review was undertaken I am led to believe 10 years ago, therefore, with the massive changes occurring in Berkshire since then and the reduced service provided, what risk assessment has been taken, what risk categorisation and Fire Cover review are proposed when the implied changes increase the effect on public safety?

Answer by Councillor J C G Brooks

As far as I am aware no decision has yet been made on whether Special Appliances are to be crewed by Retained Fire-Fighters. I can confirm however that a report on this subject is to be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 2000. In the interim period I invite the Fire Brigade's Union

to write to me and the Party Spokespersons putting their point of view on the question of operational efficiency.

Supplementary Question from Mr Miller

Can the public of Berkshire be reassured that whilst the review of special fire appliances is being conducted there will be no reduction in their attendance at emergency incidents effecting public safety?

Answer by Councillor Brooks

The answer to that question is Yes.

Question from Mr A Balfour

Can you please confirm that Senior Officers who create savings within the annual budget will be in receipt of emoluments directly relating to the savings created?

Answer by Councillor J C G Brooks

The simple answer to your question is that it is not the case.

Supplementary Question from Mr Balfour

Would the Authority describe payments, suggested to be between £400,000 - £500,000, of emoluments to senior Officers on top of their annual salaries as Best Value in the same manner that you have justified over a four year period the proposed wholesale destruction of the quality and integrity of the Brigade, by making 10% of Berkshire's Wholetime Fire-Fighter posts redundant?

Answer by Councillor Brooks

I will provide a written answer to your supplementary question.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Chairman's answer to the questions be noted and a copy of the reply be sent to the questioners.
- 2 A copy of the Chairman's written answer to the supplementary questions from Mr R McAllister and Mr A Balfour be circulated to all Fire Authority Members for information.

1.06/00 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Authority noted that no questions had been received from Members under

Standing Order 10.

1.07/00 NOTICES OF MOTION

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

**1.08/00 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE FIRE
AUTHORITY**

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 9 - not reproduced) to the proposed dates for future meetings of the Fire Authority for the period September 2000 to June 2001. In seeking Members' approval to the dates the Chairman indicated that as the District/Borough Council elections were being held on 4 May 2000 it may be necessary to review the dates at the Fire Authority's Annual meeting in June.

RESOLVED: That future meetings of the Fire Authority be held on the following dates in 2000/2001 all commencing at 6.30pm at venues yet to be determined:

Wednesday 6 September 2000
 Wednesday 13 December 2000 - Budget Meeting
 Wednesday 14 March 2001
 Wednesday 13 June 2001 - Annual Meetings

1.09/00 PRESENTATION OF IT AND STATS STRATEGY

On the invitation of the Chairman the Authority received a presentation (Agenda item 10 refers - not reproduced) from Jonathan Ball, Information Systems Manager on the Brigade's IT and Stats Strategy 2000 and were requested to approve its adoption. Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and were reminded that a copy of the Strategy was available from the Committee Administrator on (0118) 932 2288.

RESOLVED: That the IT and STATS Strategy 2000 be approved and adopted.

1.10/00 REVIEW OF BRIGADE STRUCTURE

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 11 - not reproduced) to the revised Brigade Structure following completion of the review carried out by the Chief Fire Officer.

At its meetings in July and September 1999, the Authority received reports detailing the outcome of the Chief Fire Officer's review of Brigade structure. The Chief Fire

Officer was authorised to amend the Brigade structure to reflect a reduction to three Directorates and to make other unspecified changes, subject to appropriate consultation, and to their being contained within current budgetary provisions and present a further report to the Fire Authority. The revised Brigade structure based on three Directorates together with details of the changes to individual posts were reflected in the structure charts and schedules accompanying the report (not reproduced).

In taking Members through the proposals the Chief Fire Officer reported that consultation had been opened with Representative Bodies and once their responses had been received, a Section 19 application would be made to the Home Office.

The Chief Fire Officer would review the revised structure in eighteen months time in order to assess its continued quality of service and best value aspects of the Authority's objectives. In response to a question he confirmed that the general public would not under any circumstances be put at risk as a result of this review.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The revised Brigade Structure as set out in the Appendix (not reproduced) be approved and adopted.
- 2 Any further "fine tuning" of the structure be dealt with under the Chief Fire Officer's delegated powers for employment matters.
- 3 The review structure, as approved in Resolution 1 above, be the subject of a further review in eighteen months time.

1.11/00 BORROWING LIMITS FOR 2000/2001

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 12 - not reproduced) to the overall borrowing limit together with the limit on the proportion of total interest payable which is payable at a variable rate.

The Authority has a statutory duty to determine its borrowing limit for 2000/2001. and Members' attention was drawn to the overall and short term borrowing limits, together with the maximum variable interest rate payable as set out in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report (not reproduced)

RESOLVED: That the following determinations be made for 2000/2001:

- i An overall borrowing limit of £1, 729, 000;
- ii A short term borrowing limit of £932, 000;
- iii A maximum limit of 54% of total interest paid, being on variable rate loans.

**1.12/00 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND
STRATEGY 2000/2001**

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 13 - not reproduced) to the Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy Statement presented as Appendix 1 (not reproduced).

In noting the main requirement of the Code as set out in paragraph 1 of the report (not reproduced), Members attention was drawn to paragraph 2 of the report (not reproduced) which set out the minor amendments that had been incorporated in the Treasury Policy Statement.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy Statement 2000/2001 be approved.

1.13/00 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Authority received a copy (Agenda item 14 - not reproduced) of the Audited Statement of Accounts for 1998/1999. The Statement of Accounts had been approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 1999 prior to submission to the External Auditors (District Audit).

NOTED

**1.14/00 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA)
SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2000/2001**

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 15 - not reproduced) of the LGA subscription payable for 2000/2001 together with details of an increase in the voting rights, consequent of an increase in population and approval was sought to a proposal that membership of the LGA be continued.

The Authority has been in membership of the LGA since 1998/1999 which entitles us to representation at its General Assembly and Fire Services Forum. Members Authorities are also entitled to vote at the LGA's General Assembly and for 2000/2001 this Authority will be able to exercise 17 votes compared with 15 in 1999/2000.

The subscription payable for 2000/2001 is £10,806 compared to £9,488 in 1999/2000, an increase of £1,318 which can be accommodated within the overall allowance made for inflation in the Authority's approved budget for 2000/2001

RESOLVED: That membership of the Local Government Association be continued.

1.15/00 1999/2000 BUDGET MONITORING

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 16 - not reproduced) of the Revenue and Capital expenditure against budgets up to 31 January 2000 as set out in Appendices A (Revenue) and B (Capital) - (not reproduced).

NOTED

1.16/00 2000/2001 BUDGET

The Authority received details (Appendix 1 of Agenda item 17 - not reproduced) of the Budget for 2000/2001, consequent on the approval of the overall Revenue Budget of £21,190m at the Fire Authority meeting held on 15 December 2000.

In response to a question as to whether it would be appropriate for the Authority to produce an explanatory leaflet giving details of its funding for inclusion with the Council Tax bills the Authority Treasurer replied that this could be a very expensive exercise. The figures would however be produced in the Best Value Performance Plan and if the public requests further information on Fire Authority funding then it is a matter which will have to be addressed.

NOTED

1.17/00 2000/2001 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMBINED FIRE SERVICE FUND

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 18 - not reproduced) of the action taken by the Treasurer, in exercise of his delegated powers, to fix the contributions to be made by each Constituent Authority to the Combined Fire Authority for 2000/2001 as set out in Appendix A (not reproduced).

NOTED

1.18/00 PRIOR OPTIONS REVIEW OF THE FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 19 - not reproduced) of the Brigade's response, set out in Appendix 1 - not reproduced), to the outcome of the Home Secretary's Prior Options review of the Fire Service College.

NOTED

1.21/00 FIRES, INCIDENTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 22 - not reproduced) summarising some of the incidents attended by the Brigade during the period 1 November 1999 to 31 January 2000.

NOTED**1.22/00 TRANSFER OF PART II REPORT INTO THE PART 1 AGENDA**

The Chairman sought Members' approval to the transfer of a Part II report into the Part I Agenda.

RESOLVED: That the following Part II report be transferred to the Part I Agenda:

Agenda item 26: Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

1.23/00 PUBLIC DISCLOSURE ACT 1998 - BRIGADE'S CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING POLICY

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 26 - not reproduced) to the adoption of the Brigade's Policy to comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which places an obligation on employers to make it safe for their employees to disclose any incidents of malpractice.

Following consultation with and agreement from the Representative Bodies the Brigade's own Confidential Reporting Policy had been produced, a copy of which was presented as Appendix 1 (not reproduced).

RESOLVED: That the Brigade's Confidential Reporting Policy as set out in Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

1.24/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the Annual Fire Authority meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14 June 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Thatcham commencing at 6.30pm.

**1.19/00 ATTENDANCE BY BRIGADE AT INTERNATIONAL
EXTRICATION COMPETITION AND SYMPOSIUM -
OCTOBER 2000**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 20 - not reproduced) of an invitation issued to Fire-Fighters based at Slough to participate in an international extrication competition and symposium being organised by the Jefferson County Fire Instructors' Association, to take place in Kentucky, USA during October 2000 in recognition of their consistently high placing at the British National Extrication Challenge (BNEC).

The BNEC is a highly competitive event open to all UK Fire Brigades, during which teams are marked on their technical expertise in extricating live casualties, and on their casualty care techniques. The most successful team from this Brigade has been drawn from members of White Watch at Slough Fire Station, led by Sub-Officer Ian Cox. The team would have the opportunity to travel and work with rescue technicians from US Fire Departments and a copy of the intended itinerary was presented in Appendix 1 (not reproduced).

Although there were no financial implications to the Authority the Team involved had estimated costs of approximately £8000 and this was being sought through sponsorship. To date, £2000 had been pledged by businesses in Slough.

In wishing the Team every success in the competition the Chairman advised Members that following discussions with the Chief Fire Officer the Brigade could assist the Team with the costs associated with their visit. Accordingly the Chairman sought Members approval to support each Team member in the sum of £300.

RESOLVED: That the Team from White Watch at Slough Fire Station be wished every success at the International Extrication Competition in October and that the proposal by the Chairman that the Brigade support each Team Member in the sum of £300 be approved.

**1.20/00 INQUIRY INTO FIRE SERVICE NEGOTIATING
MACHINERY - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item (21 - not reproduced) of progress with the Inquiry into Fire Service negotiating machinery. The Employers' side evidence to the Inquiry had now been submitted and a copy of the Key Points of that evidence was presented in Appendix 1 (not reproduced). Members were advised that further progress reports would be made to future Fire Authority meetings.

NOTED

**1.29/00 PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES - FINANCIAL
SERVICES AND INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Authority was informed of the award of contracts for the provision of Financial Services and Internal Audit for three years from 1 April 2000 with the option to extend for a further two years.

(Note: The Clerk and Monitoring Officer, Mr D C H Williams, withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the following item)

**1.30/00 CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER - REVIEW OF
CONTRACT**

The Authority approved the extension of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer's contract for two years on the terms set out in the report.

1.25/00 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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
24	Part II Minutes - Wednesday 15 December 1999	1,8, 9 & 11
25	Part II Minutes of Sub-Groups	1, 8 & 9
26	Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Transferred to the Part I Agenda)	-
27	Licence for the Erection of Radio Antenna	8 & 9
28	Extension of Clerk's Contract	1
29	Provision of Support Services - Financial Services and Internal Audit	8 & 9

(The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority meeting held on Wednesday 15 March 2000)

1.26/00 PART II MINUTES: 15 DECEMBER 1999

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

1.27/00 MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Authority was advised of the Sub-Group meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting.

NOTED**1.28/00 LICENCE FOR ERECTION OF RADIO ANTENNA**

The Authority approved the granting of a licence to allow the erection of radio antenna and associated equipment at a Fire Station in West Berkshire.

AGENDA ITEM 6: PART I MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **NOTE** the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The following meetings have taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting in March 2000

Personnel Committee: Monday 3 April 2000

**Performance Review
and Audit Panel** Thursday 18 May 2000

Urgency Committee Thursday 30 March 2000

Fire Liaison Group Monday 5 June 2000

Community Fire Safety Panel Thursday 20 April 2000

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

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda's and Minutes for the above mentioned meetings

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2000

CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman

Under Agenda item 7 would you please make the following announcements:

1 Fire Conference in Manchester

I am seeking approval in principal for Members to attend the Fire Conference in Manchester on 6 - 9 November 2000 and to appoint the Fire Authority's delegates. A further report seeking confirmation of the Fire Authority's delegates will be presented to the Fire Authority meeting in September.

2 Members Induction

It has been decided to hold Members' Induction days to brief new Members and update existing Members on issues such as Authority procedures, budgeting, Best Value Performance Indicators, Equality/Employment Tribunals, the basic structure of the Brigade, demonstrations and other matters of interest. The dates chosen are:

**Monday 31 July
Saturday 5 August
Monday 7 August**

All Members are invited to attend and details of times and venues will be circulated in due course. In the meantime may I invite Members to visit their local Fire Stations and for your information an Officers Contact sheet has been circulated.

3 Meetings of the Performance Review and Audit Panel and Grievance Panel

Would those Members appointed to the Performance Review and Audit Panel and Personnel Committee please join me after the meeting to arrange dates for meetings in July. It is essential that a meeting of PRAP takes place in the early part of July to enable Members to consider the Brigades response to the District Auditors comments on the Best Value Performance Plan.

Chairman's Communications continued

4 Member's Photographs

**We would like to take photos of Members, collectively and individually,
after the meeting**

Thank you

**David R Weller
Committee Administrator**

AGENDA ITEM 11: COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY PANEL - CHANGE OF NAME AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer
 Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To approve a change in the name of the Community Fire Safety Panel together with its Terms of Reference as recommended by the Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

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

- 1 The Community Fire Safety Panel be re-named the Community Safety Panel
- 2 The Panel's Terms of Reference as set out in the report be approved and adopted.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approved budget for Community Safety in the 2000/2001 financial year has been agreed as £50,000 (in addition to staffing costs) and subject to any recommendations made by the Community Safety Panel, may, in consultation with the Authority Treasurer, need to be revised.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Brigade's Strategic Plan contains targets for achieving a reduction of fire deaths and injuries. In addition, the Community Safety Policy is scheduled to be reviewed during the 2000/2001 financial year by the Community Safety Manager.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Community Fire Safety Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000 agreed to recommend to the Fire Authority that its name be changed to Community Safety Panel to reflect the fact that it would be dealing with other equally important initiatives in addition to those relating to fire safety and a reduction in fire deaths. Members are therefore asked to support the recommendation from the Panel and Resolve accordingly.
- 2 There is a clear need for Terms of Reference to be established by the Panel to support the future direction of Community Safety for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Indeed the Home Office have indicated that they wish to see a high level of elected Member support for Community Safety initiatives conducted by Brigades.

- 3 Whilst Community Safety is not a statutory responsibility at present, it is expected to become so in due course subject to sufficient parliamentary time being made available.
- 4 It was Members' intention that the Panel would work with appropriate Officers to conduct its business. The Panel therefore discussed in detail its Terms of Reference which are set out below:
- (i) The Panel shall have a membership of three Elected Members together with appropriate key Officers as determined by the Chief Fire Officer.
 - (ii) The Panel shall meet at least four times a year on dates to be determined.
 - (iii) The Panel will:
 - (a) consider the future direction and implications of Community Safety within the Brigade.
 - (b) monitor the effectiveness of Community Safety initiatives and;
 - (c) make recommendations to the Fire Authority in respect of (a) and (b) above.
 - (d) consider, in consultation with the Authority Treasurer, appropriate resources including financial resources and make recommendations to the Fire Authority.
 - (e) consider the Annual Community Safety Plan and refer the Plan to the Fire Authority for approval.
- 5 Members are therefore asked to consider the Terms of Reference as recommended by the Panel and Resolve that they be approved and adopted.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and Minutes: Community Fire Safety Panel - 20 April 2000

Contact Officer: David Weller (0118) 932 2288

**AGENDA ITEM 12: APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, PANELS
AND WORKING PARTIES**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite the Authority to re-appoint the Personnel and Urgency Committees, the Performance Review and Audit Panel, Community Safety Panel and the Budget Working Party for the ensuing year

B PROPOSED ACTION

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

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

2 Conservative, 2 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat

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

1 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat

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

2 Conservative, 2 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat

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

1 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat

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

2 Conservative, 2 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Under Standing Order 27, the Authority is required to decide by resolution at its Annual Meeting which Committees it intends to establish as "Standing Committees" and to appoint Members to each Standing Committee.
- 2 Members are therefore invited to re-appoint the Personnel and Urgency Committees, the Performance Review and Audit Panel, Community Safety Panel and the Budget Working Party and approve their membership which is currently as follows:

Personnel Committee

Mrs C Bateson, J C G Brooks, *A B V P Hickley*, J Morris, Ms K Peak, B J S Patman

Urgency Committee

J C G Brooks, J Morris B J S Patman

Performance Review and Audit Panel

B J Gardner, E E Herbert, *A B V P Hickley*, T Mills, Mrs J Orton, *T N Stephens*

Community Safety Panel

Mrs C Bateson, J C G Brooks, Ms K Peak

Budget Working Party

J C G Brooks, *A B V P Hickley*, T Mills, J Morris, Mrs J Orton B J S Patman

Those Members shown in italics are no longer members of the Fire Authority.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 13: APPOINTMENT OF FIRE AUTHORITY'S REPRESENTATIVES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appoint up to four representatives to attend the Local Government Association's General Assembly in June 2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That be appointed to represent the Fire Authority at the Local Government Association's General Assembly at Bournemouth in June 2000.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Fire Authority has been invited to appoint up to four representatives to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference of the Local Government Association's General Assembly to be held in the Bournemouth International Centre from Tuesday 27 to Friday 30 June 2000.
- 2 As reported at the meeting in March 2000 the Fire Authority, as a result of population changes, are now entitled to a Voting Entitlement of 17 for 2000/2001. As the closing date for the receipt of Registration Forms is 24 May 2000 three places have been provisionally booked.
- 3 Members are therefore asked to consider who they wish to appoint and Resolve accordingly.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Invitation from Local Government Association

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 14: MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS FOR THE THAMES VALLEY REGION (ACTVAR)

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer
 Acting Chief Fire Officer
 Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider whether the Fire Authority should become a member of the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region (ACTVAR).

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider whether the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority should become a member of the Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region and RESOLVE accordingly. If Members are minded to approve membership of ACTVAR then it will be necessary to appoint the Fire Authority's Member representative.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost to this Authority of becoming a member of ACTVAR is £1,111 per annum based on the fact that there are three Fire Authorities in the Thames Valley and the Thames Valley Police Authority pays an annual subscription of £3,333. The annual subscription could be funded by virement from the Budget for Accommodation for meetings.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no contribution to the Strategic Plan

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 In response to a request from the Local Government Association Fire Service Executive, ACTVAR's Member Steering Group at its meeting on 5 May 2000 considered the possibility of Fire Authorities liaison arrangements being brought within the framework of the Regional Association.
- 2 ACTVAR welcomed such a development and agreed to make its arrangements available to the three Fire Services operating within the Thames Valley as a means of facilitating discussion of Fire Service issues. The Regional Secretary of ACTVAR has indicated that

appropriate mechanisms could be devised to accommodate the wishes of the three Thames Valley Fire Authorities to deal with “service” issues across the three Counties covered by the LGA Regional Association.

- 3 Whilst membership of the Association would entitle one Member and one Officer to attend all meetings there would however be only one vote for all three Fire Authorities. It should be noted however that business is normally conducted on a consensus basis.
- 4 ACTVAR already has Community Safety on its Agenda’s, although it tends to revolve around crime and disorder issues for the Police and Local Authorities. Nevertheless the Regional Secretary of the Association is of the opinion that membership would enable the development of Fire Service issues into the Agenda which could then, if necessary, be referred to the Local Government Association.
- 5 Members are therefore asked to consider whether the Fire Authority should become a member of ACTVAR and Resolve accordingly. If Members are minded to approve membership then it will be necessary to appoint the Fire Authority’s Member representative.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letters from the LGA and ACTVAR dated 5 May and 18 May 2000 respectively.

Contact Officer: David Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 15: PUBLICATION OF PART I FIRE AUTHORITY MINUTES ON BRIGADE WEB SITE

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officers Contributing: Acting Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise on the ability to publish Part I Fire Authority Minutes on the Brigade's internet web site.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and RESOLVE that Part I Fire Authority Minutes, once approved, should be published on the Brigade's internet web site.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This report does not contribute directly to the Strategic Plan. However, publication of Part I Fire Authority minutes will enable the public to monitor progress in achieving the Strategic Plan.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Members are advised that the Brigade operates an information web site on the internet, accessible to the public. This service is provided as a free accessory of the Fire InterNetworking Data Service (FINDS) operated by the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association (CACFOA), to which the Brigade subscribes. The website can be accessed directly via www.rbfrs.co.uk or by associated link from the CACFOA site, www.fire-uk.org, within the 'south east brigades' section of the UK fire services page.
- 2 The Brigade web pages contain information on the Authority (its constitution, legal responsibilities, the way in which it is funded and its vision statement), the Brigade, community fire safety advice, the commercial training service and recruitment possibilities. It is also planned shortly to provide electronic access to the public reports published by the Authority (the Strategic Plan, the Best Value Performance Plan, the Annual Report and the Community Safety Plan).

- 3 In the spirit of open government, Members may wish to consider the electronic publication of Part I minutes of meetings of the Fire Authority via this forum. This will enable members of the public with access to the internet to appraise themselves of the work being undertaken by the Authority on their behalf. It would also satisfy any requirement upon the Authority to circulate minutes to interested parties, which would be time consuming and expensive to achieve in paper format. (The Committee Administrator has already received an informal request for minutes from one Berkshire Parish Council; a formal request is anticipated which may precipitate similar requests from other parish Councils.)
- 4 If approved by Members, the intention would be for the most recent set of approved minutes to be published on the web pages. For example, the minutes of the 14 June 2000 would not be published until approved at the 6 September 2000 meeting. These would then be replaced on the web pages by the 6 September minutes following the approval of these at the 13 December 2000 meeting.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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

AGENDA ITEM 16: EMERGENCY SPECIAL SERVICE CALLS - ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS OF LEVYING CHARGES: PROGRESS REPORT

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officers Contributing: Acting Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of progress nationally in respect of charging for brigades' attendances at emergency special service calls (non-fire incidents).

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and determine whether or not to apply charges for attending emergency special service incidents. Such determination can then be taken into consideration by the Budget Working Party as part of its recommendations for the 2001/02 budget.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, the possible income generated by such an initiative would have implications for future consideration during the annual budgetary reviews.

The full cost of attending emergency special services has not been calculated at this stage. In preparation for the report made to the Authority on 9 June 1998, the cost of attending road traffic accidents for the purpose of extricating casualties where no fire had occurred during 1997/98 was calculated at £146,000.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This report does not contribute directly to the Strategic Plan.

However, any determination to charge for attendances at emergency special service incidents would contribute to the Service's target to improve efficiency by 2% per year, and could impact upon the strategic review of the brigade's special appliances currently being undertaken.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Authority received a report (not reproduced) at its 9 June 1998 meeting outlining the issues and implications of levying charges in respect of the brigade's attendance at

emergency special service incidents (non-fire incidents). Such calls include extrication of casualties from road, rail and air incidents as well as those from machinery. The Authority resolved to direct the Chief Fire Officer to write to the Local Government Association, the six constituent councils of the Authority and local Members of Parliament seeking support for a recognition of the wider, non-statutory rescue role of the fire service, and therefore proper funding to carry out that role.

- 2 At the meeting of the Budget Working Party on 7 December 1999, it was resolved to reconsider charging for emergency special services, and to that end, that a report should be made to this meeting to advise what progress is being made nationally.
- 3 An aim of the Executive Committee of the Local Government Association is to contribute to the work of the Home Office Expenditure Working Party to encourage central government to address the continuing funding gap between fire SSA and fire spending and inadequate capital provision. Whilst dialogue is ongoing, no specific discussion has been entered into in respect of meeting the cost of unfunded emergency calls such as special services.
- 4 The Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association's view remains that it is a matter for each fire authority to determine whether to exercise the powers conferred by section 3(I)(e) of the Fire Services Act, 1947 to levy charges for attending emergency special services. Members are reminded that this section of the Act empowers a fire authority to employ its fire brigade for purposes other than firefighting and if they think fit, to make such charge as they may determine.
- 5 To date, only one fire authority in the United Kingdom has exercised this power to levy charges for its fire brigade's attendance at emergency special services. Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Fire Authority commenced charging for such services in September 1999. Predominantly, this policy was applied for extrication of casualties from road traffic accidents, but has also been applied for some other emergency special services, such as the release of people trapped in lifts stuck between floors.
- 6 That Authority has employed within the brigade a business manager who is responsible for income generation. Part of that officer's duties is to pursue the potential income arising from exercise of section 3(I)(e) of the Act.

In the case of road traffic accidents, this was achieved by identifying the registered keeper(s) of the vehicle(s), through the co-operation of the Police. The registered keeper was then invoiced in accordance with that Authority's standard scale of charges. Advice is issued with the invoice to pass the charge to the appropriate insurer.

- 7 Staffordshire reviewed their policy in March 2000 and the following areas were highlighted.
 - In hindsight the implications of the consultation process with the public prior to the policies implementation were not properly thought through. The public was surveyed in respect of whether it favoured a small increase in council tax

or for the Fire Service to levy a charge for RTA extrications, animal rescues etc.

The majority opted for an increase in the council tax. Council tax was increased but due to a shortfall in the Brigade's forecasted budget, the charges had to be introduced anyway.

- The result was one of general public concern with the Authority receiving much adverse publicity through the local media. It should also be noted that the 'bad press' was sustained for many weeks despite the Authority making clear that it was the insurance companies and not individuals that were being charged.
 - Although the majority of invoices were paid, two solicitors were engaged to challenge the scheme. In addition to the local communities, the majority of the Brigade's frontline staff were also opposed to the system.
 - A considerable amount of time and effort was involved in checking with local hospitals the progress of casualties following RTA's, to avoid distressing situations regarding invoicing families that had been recently bereaved.
 - Bearing in mind the rural area covered by this Brigade, and the issue of charging for animal rescues, concern was registered at the impact this scheme would have on local agriculture, whose industry was already under pressure from other issues. Claims were made that local farmers would destroy trapped/distressed animals rather than call the Brigade because of the financial implications.
- 8 Following Staffordshire's review of its Charging for Special Services policy the Authority has stopped charging for extrication at RTA's and animal rescues and has determined not to pursue any outstanding invoices.

The only special services that are now charged for (in addition to pre-arranged non emergency calls) by that Authority are:

Persons locked out of their premises
 Non emergency phase of Hazardous Materials incidents
 Domestic flooding other than spate conditions
 All flooding in industrial/commercial premises (including spate conditions).

- 9 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority already applies charges in respect of persons locked out of their premises and non emergency phase of Hazardous Materials incidents

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and minutes, Fire Authority, 9 June 1998

Agenda and minutes, Budget Working Party, 7 December 1999

Contact Officer: Des Tidbury (0118) 932 2226

**AGENDA ITEM 17: CHANGE OF SHIFT START TIMES FOR
WHOLETIME STATION BASED PERSONNEL**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officers Contributing: Acting Chief Fire Officer
 Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of the outcome of a survey conducted amongst staff who would be affected by the proposed changes to shift start times.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and **RESOLVE:** That the introduction of this measure for 2000/01 be deferred, but to reconsider it as an option for future years should budget pressures so dictate.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposed changes to shift start times would have created savings of £14,000 per annum. If the proposed changes are deferred the resultant non-achievement of savings could be funded from likely higher than anticipated interest receipts on balances in 2000/2001. However this source of funding may not be sustainable in future years.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There is no contribution to the Strategic Plan. However, this report does contribute to Service Aim No 7, to be a good employer and be recognised as such.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its meeting on 15 December 1999, the Authority approved measures recommended by the Budget Working Party meeting on 7 December to achieve a balanced revenue budget for 2000/01. These measures included an adjustment to the shift start times for station based, wholetime personnel from 09.00 hours start for day shifts, and 18.00 hours start for night shifts, to 08.00 hours and 17.00 hours respectively. It was estimated that this measure would attract savings amounting to £14,000 year on year by reducing casual overtime payments incurred by appliances returning to their stations from incidents after the scheduled end of the shift.

- 2 The current shift times form part of the Fire-Fighters contract of employment and change would therefore require a process of negotiation. After initial consultation with the Fire Brigade's Union, it was determined to survey those staff individually to glean their views, and where amendment to the shift start times was not favoured, to seek reasons for this. Of the 224 staff surveyed, 167 responded. This represents a 74% response rate.
- 3 Of the responses, 124 staff (74% of responses, 55% of all staff surveyed) expressed a preference for no amendment to the current shift start times. The principal concerns expressed by these staff were that the proposed amendment would disrupt existing childcare arrangements, incurring additional expenditure for staff at the same time as reducing their potential to incur casual overtime, and the potential increase in travelling time to and from work (the proposed amendment would increase the need for travel during the evening rush hour). Thirty four of the staff who responded travel in excess of 25 miles between their home and place of work.
- 4 Only 14 staff who responded (8% of responses, 6% of all staff surveyed) expressed a preference for the proposed amendment to shift start times to proceed. In all cases, the respondents felt that they would encounter less traffic congestion in their journeys to and from work.
- 5 29 staff responded expressing no firm view whatsoever.
- 6 In recognition of the concerns of the majority of staff who would be affected by this measure, Members may be minded to take advantage of the 'windfall' offered by increased interest accrual to defer implementation of the amended shift start times during 2000/01. This measure may need to be reconsidered in future years however, dependent upon the ability of the Authority to secure adequate savings from other areas in order to balance the budget.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and Minutes of Budget Working Party, 7 December 1999

Agenda and Minutes of Fire Authority, 15 December 1999

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

**AGENDA ITEM 18: PROVISION OF ESTATES
MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

To: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date **14 June 2000**
Officer Contributing **Acting Chief Fire Officer**
 Authority Treasurer
 Clerk and Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of the inability of the current estates management services provider, to meet the estates management needs of the Authority, and to seek the Authority's approval to an alternative strategy for the provision of these services.

B PROPOSED ACTION

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

- 1 That a further report is presented to a meeting of the Urgency Committee at the earliest opportunity, recommending an interim Estates Management Strategy.**
- 2 That the consolidated Estates and Facilities Management Services are subjected to European Tender at the earliest opportunity.**

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

It is too early to identify what, if any, financial implications will arise from exposing the Estates Management Services to competition through the European Tendering process. A further, full report will be put before the Authority once submitted tenders have been evaluated. During the interim period the Authority's Estates will be managed by prioritising work within the constraints of the existing budget.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Estates Management Services were scheduled for a full functional review under the Best Value program during the 2001/02 financial year. Current circumstances dictate that these Best Value issues are fully addressed now, as part of the process of putting these services out to tender. As such, this item contributes directly to the Strategic Plan.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Authority resolved, at the meeting held on 7 July 1999 (Agenda item 19 Provision of Support Services) to continue the existing arrangement with Reading Borough Council for the provision of Estates Management Services for a period of five years from 1 April 2000.
- 2 In an attempt to resolve some of the outstanding problems, referred to in the report to the Authority on 7 July, Officers entered negotiations with Reading Borough Council Property Services Department over the introduction of a Service Level Agreement (SLA), including Key Performance Indicators. This SLA was to take effect from April 2000, or as soon thereafter as the SLA could be agreed.
- 3 Officers were assisted in drafting the SLA by a firm of consultants. Following a series of meetings between officers of the Authority and Reading Borough Council, no agreement had been reached over the required service level or key performance indicators.
- 4 At a meeting between Officers, held on 18 May 2000, Reading Borough Council informed the Brigade that they were unable to satisfy the level of service required and did not wish to continue to provide the Estates Management Services.
- 5 Reading Borough Council has offered to continue to provide Surveyor Services for larger projects on an individual basis.
- 6 On 22 May a briefing was held for five facilities management companies, concerning the Authority's requirements for an immediate, interim Estates Management Contract for a period of eight to ten months. Three of the five companies, invited to the presentation, have expressed an interest in an interim contract and have submitted proposals that are currently being evaluated.
- 7 Work is already well advanced on the production of a single specification for the consolidated estates and facilities management needs and requirements of the Authority. Once complete, it will be necessary to undertake the full European Tendering procedure prior to the award of a new Estates Management Contract. During this process it is essential that effective interim arrangements are in place to satisfy the Estates Management Needs of the Authority.
- 8 The European Tendering Process does not preclude any of the constituent Unitary Authorities from seeking to tender for this work.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda Item 19, Provision of Support Services, and Minutes, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting, 7 July 1999.

Contact Officer: Olaf Baars (0118) 932 2228

AGENDA ITEM 19: BRIGADE VEHICLE MAINTAINANCE - PROPOSALS FOR A BEST VALUE EXERCISE

To Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing Acting Chief Fire Officer
 Authority Treasurer
 Clerk and Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite the Authority to enter into a Best Value exercise which will expose the provision of the Brigades vehicle maintenance services to external competition.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That

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

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

At this stage, it is too early to predict the level of savings that might be gained from exposing the Brigades vehicle maintenance services to external competition. However, the very recent experience of Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, who undertook a similar exercise last year, indicates it may be possible to achieve very significant levels of savings. In order to prepare an internal bid, the roles of client and provider must be split. To achieve this some internal resources can be provided in support of the internal provider but additional resources may be required to provide the proper level of expertise in preparing a commercial bid.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This exercise directly contributes to the Strategic Plan Service Targets 7, 12,13 and 14. It also satisfies the requirement to undertake a Best Value functional review of Engineering one-year ahead of schedule.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 During the latter part of 1999 the Engineering Services were subjected to a pilot Best Value Functional Review. This review was unable to examine the function in the detail that had been planned; this was due to a number of top level elements being insufficiently developed to form the basis of an in-depth review.
- 2 With a full Best Value Functional Review being due for the 2001/02 financial year it is necessary to address the high level issues now in order to facilitate the programmed review.
- 3 Analysis of the work required has revealed that this would also meet the requirements of preparing for a full competitive tendering process that would satisfy the competition requirement of Best Value.
- 4 Under the market testing requirements of the previous Compulsory Competitive Tendering Regime, significant work was done by the Brigade, some years ago, in the area of market analysis although no requirement was ever placed on Fire Authorities to expose vehicle maintenance to CCT, this Brigade was one of only six where significant commercial interest was expressed in providing these services.
- 5 More recently Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Services have undertaken a competitive tendering exercise for the provision of their vehicle maintenance services through the European Tendering Procedure. This process has led to the award of a contract to an external commercial provider. The contract promises a better level of service than was previously being obtained and a significant saving on their previous vehicle maintenance expenditure.
- 6 A project plan (Appendix 'A') has been developed in conjunction consultants, that would enable a full European Tendering process to be completed within the current financial year, with a view to the contract awarded commencing on 2 April 2001.
- 7 The Director of Human Resources has already completed an initial review and report of the staffing implications. This report confirms that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) would apply if an external contract were awarded. Additionally, although there is no automatic transfer of an employee's pension rights, external providers of Best Value services to a local authority may become admitted bodies to the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- 8 Workshop, engineering staff and UNISON have been informed of this initiative and have had sight of the project plan. Further staff and representative body consultation will be undertaken, subject to Authority approval, as the project progresses.

- 9 With the Authority's approval an internal bid will be prepared for the provision of vehicle maintenance services in accordance with the tender specification. It is recommended that the necessary work be undertaken to allow an internal bid to be developed.
- 10 Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service have offered the support of their Brigade Engineer to assist with the process; he has the benefit of the experience of having been involved in Derbyshire's process from start to finish and now manages their contract.
- 11 The European Tendering Process does not preclude other local authorities from seeking to tender for this contract.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

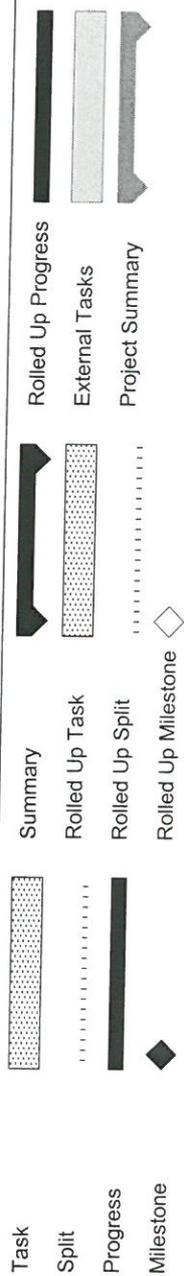
- 1 Best Value Pilot Review – Engineering Final Report, October 1999
- 2 Workshop Tendering Exercise – Employment Law Implications, report from DHR, 15/05/00
- 3 First Procurement Associates Ltd Fleet Procurement Support Proposal; Ref:B0503, 10/04/00
- 4 First Procurement Associates Ltd Fleet Procurement Support Proposal; Ref:B0503a, 17/04/00

Contact Officer: Olaf Baars (0118) 932 2228

BRIGADE VEHICLE MAINTAINENCE - BEST VALUE PROJECT

OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	2001
					Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr
1	Prepare paper and seek BMT approval for project	5 days	Fri 31/03/00	Thu 06/04/00	
2	Prepare paper seeking CFA approval for the project	18 days	Mon 24/04/00	Wed 17/05/00	
3	Chairman's agenda briefing	0 days	Mon 05/06/00	Mon 05/06/00	
4	CFA approval given	0 days	Wed 14/06/00	Wed 14/06/00	
5	Financial appraisal of engineering cost centres and cost drivers	55 days	Mon 17/04/00	Fri 30/06/00	
6	Investigate employment (TUPE) implications	18 days	Mon 17/04/00	Wed 10/05/00	
7	Understand and develop user requirement	25 days	Mon 01/05/00	Fri 02/06/00	
8	Prepare output specification	41 days	Mon 05/06/00	Mon 31/07/00	
9	Preparation of invitation to tender document	72 days	Thu 27/04/00	Fri 04/08/00	
10	Develop and agree pre-qualification criteria	3 days	Mon 12/06/00	Wed 14/06/00	
11	Prepare OJEC notice	3 days	Mon 12/06/00	Wed 14/06/00	
12	Issue OJEC notice and await responses	28 days	Thu 15/06/00	Mon 24/07/00	
13	Book supplier visits	2 days	Tue 25/07/00	Wed 26/07/00	
14	Supplier visits	10 days	Thu 27/07/00	Wed 09/08/00	
15	Clarify and evaluate responses and produce shortlist	5 days	Thu 10/08/00	Wed 16/08/00	
16	Issue invitation to tender	0 days	Wed 16/08/00	Wed 16/08/00	
17	Clarification meeting with tenderers	1 day	Fri 25/08/00	Fri 25/08/00	
18	Return of tenders	0 days	Mon 25/09/00	Mon 25/09/00	



Project: Workshops
Date: Wed 31/05/00

Wed 31/05/00

Summary
 Rolled Up Task
 Rolled Up Split
 Rolled Up Milestone

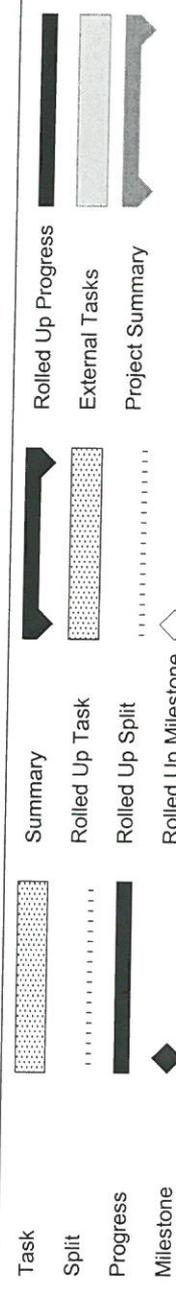
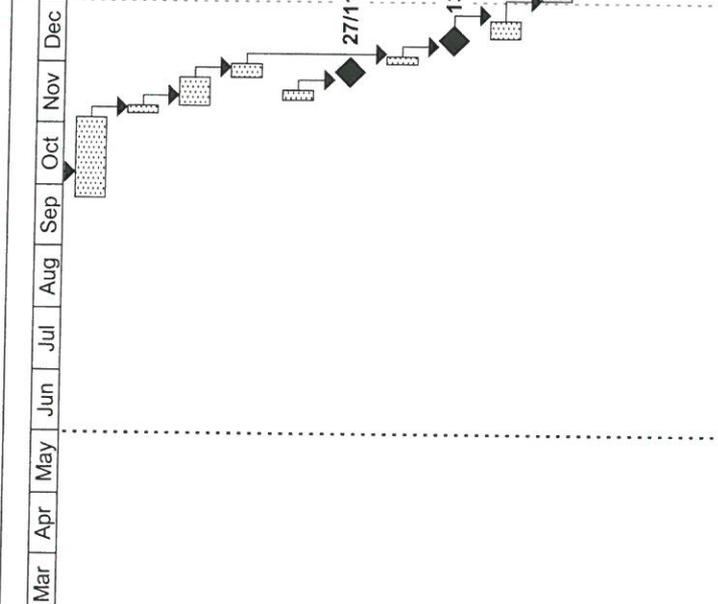
Task
 Split
 Progress
 Milestone

Rolled Up Progress
 External Tasks
 Project Summary

BRIGADE VEHICLE MAINTAINENCE - BEST VALUE PROJECT

OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
19	Evaluation of responses and further clarification with tenderers	30 days	Mon 25/09/00	Fri 03/11/00														
20	Arrange pre-contract negotiations	4 days	Mon 06/11/00	Thu 09/11/00														
21	Pre contract negotiation	10 days	Fri 10/11/00	Thu 23/11/00														
22	Report and recommendation from FPA	5 days	Fri 24/11/00	Thu 30/11/00														
23	Draft CFA report and submit to CA	5 days	Mon 13/11/00	Fri 17/11/00														
24	Chairman's agenda briefing	0 days	Mon 27/11/00	Mon 27/11/00														
25	Final paper for CFA completed and submitted to CA	2 days	Fri 01/12/00	Mon 04/12/00														
26	CFA approval to award contract	0 days	Wed 13/12/00	Wed 13/12/00														
27	Contract award	7 days	Thu 14/12/00	Fri 22/12/00														
28	Project management and implementation	65 days	Tue 02/01/01	Mon 02/04/01														
29	Contract start	0 days	Mon 02/04/01	Mon 02/04/01														
30	Prepare and place OJEC award notice	5 days	Mon 08/01/01	Fri 12/01/01														
31	De-brief unsuccessful tenderers	2 days	Mon 08/01/01	Tue 09/01/01														



Project: Workshops
Date: Wed 31/05/00

Wed 31/05/00

**AGENDA ITEM 20: MOTION FROM BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 14 June 2000
Officer Contributing: Chief Fire Officer
 Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the Authority's support to a Motion received from the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service as recommended by the Community Fire Safety Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE:** That the Motion received from Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service be supported and that the Local Government Association and Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service be advised accordingly.

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 Community Fire Safety Panel at its meeting on Thursday 20 April 2000 were advised of the receipt of a letter from the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service seeking support to the following Motion, approved by the Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority, for submission to the Local Government Association for consideration at its General Assembly meeting to be held in Bournemouth on 27 June 2000:

"While the campaign to promote the fitting of domestic smoke alarms brought about a measurable improvement in home safety, an estimated 489 fire deaths still occurred in dwellings in 1998. A case can now be successfully made that a domestic fire sprinkler system will attack and extinguish a potentially life-threatening dwelling fire, saving further lives and injury as well as maintaining damage to property and costs to the NHS and emergency services.

The Local Government Association urge the Government to support the campaign to promote and facilitate the installation of fire sprinklers in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and consider making the installation of sprinklers mandatory in new build single occupancy homes, using measures such as a planning obligation gain."

- 2 The Panel in considering the letter agreed to support the Motion, subject to approval being sought at the Fire Authority meeting in June.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Chief Fire Officer, Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service

Contact Officer: David Weller (0118) 932 2288

