

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: 8 March 2000

Dear Member

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

I have pleasure in attaching your Agenda for the meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to be held on Wednesday 15 March 2000 in the Council Chamber at Slough Borough Council, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough commencing at 6.30pm.

The Town Hall is situated on the main A4 (Bath Road) in Slough as shown on the location plan reproduced overleaf. Parking should be available at the front of the building. If not then additional parking is available at the rear of the Town Hall which is accessed from Montem Lane. For those Members approaching from the M4 motorway and turning right on to the A4 at the Tuns Lane/Bath Road traffic signals, you are unable to cross the Bath Road to gain access to the Town Hall. It is therefore necessary to continue eastbound to the Wellington Street/William Street roundabout and rejoin the A4 westbound. The entrance to the Town Hall is just after the first set of traffic signals on the left (marked with an "X" on the plan).

For those Members who are familiar with the road network in Slough there is an alternative route to the Town Hall. Leave the motorway at junction 6 and proceed down Tuns Lane (A355) towards Slough Town Centre. Turn right at the first roundabout into Church Street which becomes Chalvey Road at the first set of traffic lights. Continue along Chalvey Road and turn left into Ledgers Road at the next set of traffic lights. Proceed along Ledgers Road to the traffic lights and turn left on to the A4 Bath Road. The entrance to the Town Hall is to be found on the left (marked "X" on the plan).

The Bus and Train Station is approximately one mile from the Town Hall. Refreshments will be served in the Council Chamber prior to the meeting.

Yours sincerely

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

David R Weller
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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

MEETING: **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

DATE AND TIME: **Wednesday 15 March 2000 at 6.30pm**

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

NOTICE OF MEETING

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

D C H Williams
Clerk to the Authority

To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman), D Ball,
P A Barnett, Mrs C Bateson, R J Day, T P Dredge, J M B Egan, B W Gardner,
E E Herbert, Mrs V Howes A Gregory, A B V P Hickey, D W Liddiard,
T D McCann, T Mills, J Morris, J Orton, T O'Flynn, K Peak,
T N Stephens, R Turner, R G Vernon-Jackson, R J Webb, T Wheaton

Briefing Meetings:

Conservative Group: 6.00pm - Committee Room 4
Labour Group: 6.00pm - Mayors Conference Room
Liberal Democrat Group: 6.00pm - Committee Room 2

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

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2000



AGENDA

PART I AGENDA

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To note that the next Fire Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14 June 2000 at the Frank Hutchings Memorial Hall, Thatcham, commencing at 6.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 2:

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AUTHORITY**

To:

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Date:

15 March 2000

Officer Contributing:

Clerk & Monitoring Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of a change in the representative membership of the Fire Authority.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Fire Authority has been advised that Councillor T Wheaton has been appointed by Bracknell Forest Borough Council as the replacement for Councillor D A Veakins who resigned last November.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from Bracknell Forest Borough Council - 2 March 2000

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 3: MINUTES: 15 DECEMBER 1999

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY ON WEDNESDAY 15 DECEMBER 1999 COMMENCING AT 6.30PM AND CONCLUDED AT 8.33PM

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman), D Ball, P A Barnett, J M B Egan, A Gregory, A B V P Hickley, T D McCann, T Mills, J Morris, T O'Flynn, T N Stephens, R J Webb

Apologies: Mrs C Bateson, R J Day, T P Dredge, E E Herbert, D W Liddiard, Mrs J Orton, Ms K Peak

4.01/99 MINUTES: 15 SEPTEMBER 1999

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

4.02/99 MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 3 - not reproduced) of the Personnel Committee, Personnel (Disputes) Committee, Performance Review and Audit Panel, Urgency Committee, Budget Working Party and Fire Liaison Group meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting in September. Members were advised that copies of the Part I Minutes were available from the Committee Administrator.

NOTED

4.03/99 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the Annual Fire Conference held in Harrogate and the Members visit to the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-the-Marsh. In addition he drew Members attention to the LGA Annual Fire Conference to be held at the Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton on 7-8 March 2000. Any Member interested in attending was asked to contact the Committee Administrator who also had details of the Draft Programme.

NOTED

**4.04/99 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER
STANDING ORDERS 8 AND 9**

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 5 - not reproduced) that a question had been from a member of the public under Standing Order 9 and the following is a transcript of the question received together with the answer given by the Chairman:

Question from Mr R McAllister

How many employees have been medically retired during this past five years due to stress related or depression related illnesses and how many employees are currently on long term absence from work due to stress related or depression related illness and from these figures, how many of these individuals were primarily on non-operational (or office based) duties prior to their absence?

Answer by Councillor J C G Brooks

In the last five years a total of 25 uniformed staff have retired on the grounds of ill health and of this total, five were suffering from stress and/or depression. Of these five, one case was work-related, and the individual concerned was "office-based". Using continuous absence of one month or more as the criteria for "long-term" absence, there are currently thirteen uniformed staff on long-term absence and of this total, seven have been diagnosed as suffering from stress and/or despression or a related illness. Of these seven, five are office based.

It has to be remembered that the issue of stress should be approached with caution. It is not a medical diagnosis and usually has more than one cause with other factors mitigating the situation. The Brigade provides good support to its staff through the Employee Assistance Programme provided by an external organisation, and through Critical Incident De-Briefing which focuses on support for staff who have experienced testing operational situations.

The Fire Service faces many challenges, for example the achievement of "Best Value" and "Equality of Opportunity" and as a result the potential for work-related stress is recognised. Whilst the most effective response is effective management of workloads and staff, the Brigade is seeking to further improve its performance in these areas through the introduction of a Strategic Planning process and a review of arrangements for staff appraisal.

Mr McAllister did not ask a supplementary question.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman's answer to the question be noted and a copy of the reply be sent to the questioner.

4.05/99 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

4.06/99 NOTICES OF MOTION

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

4.07/99 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENT OF GRIEVANCE PANEL

The Authority was requested (Agenda item 8 - not reproduced) to appoint a member of the Labour Group to the Personnel Committee to replace Councillor D A Veakins who had resigned as a Fire Authority member and also to appoint a Grievance Panel of three Members from among the current Members of the Personnel Committee.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 Councillor Ms K Peak (Reading BC) be appointed as a Member of the Personnel Committee in place of Councillor D A Veakins.
- 2 Councillors Mrs C Bateson, J C G Brooks and J Morris be appointed as Members of the Personnel Committee's Grievance Panel.

4.08/99 REVIEW OF AUTHORITY BUSINESS

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 9 - not reproduced) on the workings of the Authority and were requested to consider whether there were any changes they would like to make to improve the Authority's efficiency.

Consideration was therefore given to the various options set out in the report and the following is a summary of the comments made and decisions reached:

- **To continue with the present pattern of meetings** - It was agreed no change to present pattern of meetings.
- **To see any changes to current Committee arrangements** - It was agreed that no changes be made to the existing Committee structure.

- **To seek the approval of the Secretary of State to reduce the size of the Authority** - In agreeing not to reduce the size of the Authority, Members supported a suggestion by the Chairman that he, in consultation with the Clerk, writes to the Leaders of the Unitary Authorities urging them to encourage their Members to attend Fire Authority meetings. In addition it was also agreed that the size and structure of the Fire Authority be the subject of an annual review and that Unitary Authorities be asked to publish the dates of Fire Authority meetings in their Council Diaries.
- **To amend Standing Orders to permit substitutes at Committees, Panels and Working Parties** - It was agreed that Standing Orders be amended, as suggested in Appendix 1 (not reproduced), to permit substitutes at Committee, Panel and Working Party Meetings.
- **To amend Standing Orders to introduce an Attendance Rule** - It was agreed that Standing Orders be amended, as suggested in Appendix 1 (not reproduced), to introduce an attendance rule.
- **To reduce the Quorum of the Urgency Committee from 3 to 2** - It was agreed that Standing Orders be amended, as suggested in Appendix 1 (not reproduced), to reduce the quorum of the Urgency Committee from 3 to 2.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 No change be made to the present pattern of Fire Authority meetings.
- 2 No changes be made to the current Committee structure.
- 3 No change be made to the size of the Fire Authority but that its size and structure be the subject of an annual review and that:
 - (i) the Chairman, in consultation with the Clerk, be authorised to write to the Leaders of the six Unitary Authorities urging them to encourage their Members to attend Fire Authority Meetings;
 - (ii) the Unitary Authorities be asked to include the dates of Fire Authority meetings in their Council diaries.
- 4 Standing Orders be amended as suggested in Appendix 1 (not reproduced) to:
 - (i) permit substitutes on Committees, Panels and Working Parties;
 - (ii) introduce an Attendance Rule;
 - (iii) reduce the Quorum of the Urgency Committee from 3 to 2

4.09/99 FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 10 - not reproduced) to a recommendation from the Personnel Committee, agreed at its meeting on 9 November 1999, that its Terms of Reference be extended to embrace consideration of equal opportunities matters.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Personnel Committee be extended to include "Consideration of Fairness and Equality Issues and reporting to the Fire Authority as appropriate".

4.10/99 DISTRICT AUDIT - MANAGEMENT LETTER TO MEMBERS

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 11 - not reproduced) of the receipt of the District Auditor's Management Letter to Members in respect of the Audit for the year 1998/99.

Members were reminded that the District Auditor had completed the Audit of the Accounts for 1998/99 which were approved by the Fire Authority at its meeting in September 1999. With the approval of the Chairman, Members received a presentation from Mr Stephen Taylor, District Auditor and Mr Hassan Rohimum, Audit Manager, on the Management Letter to Members. Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification on the Management Letter.

It was noted that an unqualified audit opinion would be issued by the District Auditor on the annual accounts for 1998/99 at the conclusion of the standing period of public inspection.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor and Mr Rohimum for their attendance at the meeting and for a very full and informative presentation. He also wished to place on record his thanks to Chief Fire Officer and Senior Management, Mr D Illingworth (Authority Treasurer), Mr A Vallance (Brigade Management Accountant) and staff in the Finance Department for all their hard work.

RESOLVED: That the positive comments made in the report be noted and welcomed.

4.12/99 FIXING OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMBINED FIRE SERVICE FUND

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 12 - not reproduced) to amending the Scheme of Delegation to Officers to enable the Authority Treasurer to fix the contributions to be made by each Constituent Authority to the Combined Fire Service Fund on the basis of the approved Fire Authority budget and the Council Tax Base for Revenue Support Grant.

RESOLVED: That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended by adding the following to the activities delegated to the Treasurer of the Combined Fire Service Fund:

“To fix the contributions to be made by each Constituent Authority to the Combined Fire Service Fund on the basis of the approved Fire Authority budget and the Council Tax Base for Revenue Support Grant.”

4.13/99 COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY PANEL

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 13 - not reproduced) to the establishment of a Community Fire Safety Panel as recommended by the Personnel Committee at its meeting on 9 November 1999.

Members were reminded of the significant efforts made by the Brigade towards creating a safer community through raising the awareness of the danger of fire within the general public, and in particular those groups considered to be specifically at risk. To date all such measures have relied on Officer initiatives which have been reported to previous Fire Authority meetings.

The Personnel Committee at its meeting on 9 November were of the opinion that it may now be appropriate to give strategic direction to those initiatives and to monitor their effectiveness by the establishment of a Joint Member/Officer Community Fire Safety Panel. The Panel would comprise three elected Members plus appropriate key Officers of the Brigade and should hold a minimum of two meetings each year to consider the business as set out in paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced).

In supporting this initiative it was **RESOLVED:** That a Community Fire Safety Panel be established comprising three elected Members, being one from each Political Group as nominated by the Party Leader, together with key Officers of the Brigade to meet on at least two occasions each year.

4.13/99 SERVICE GUARANTEES AND CUSTOMER CARE CARDS

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 14 - not reproduced) of the results of monitoring the Brigade's service guarantees and approval was sought to a future alternative course of action.

In accordance with the decision made by the Fire Authority at its meeting in June 1998 the returned Customer Cards had been analysed and the results for the four quarters of 1998/99 were presented in Appendix A (not reproduced). The Chief Fire Officer was however concerned at the relatively low rate of return from the public and the subsequent validity of the information contained in the analysis.

As the Authority had entered into a contract with Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake consultation on behalf of the Fire Authority as part of the Best Value initiative it was suggested that the Customer Care Cards be discontinued in their present form on 31 March 2000 and that discussions were instigated with ORS to advise on more effective alternatives. A report on the outcome of those discussions could then be presented to the Performance Review and Audit Panel for consideration and determination.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 the contents of the report be noted and the current Customer Care Cards be discontinued with effect from 31 March 2000.
- 2 ORS be asked to advise on more effective alternatives regarding the service guarantees and Customer Care Cards and that a report, based on the outcome of that advice, be presented to a future meeting of the Performance Review and Audit Panel for consideration and determination.

4.14/99 BUDGET 2000/2001

The Authority's approval was sought (Agenda item 15 - not reproduced) to the 2000/2001 Budget and Capital Programme so that notice of the estimates of net expenditure for 2000/01 could be given to the Constituent Authorities.

On the invitation of the Chairman, the Authority Treasurer took Members through the report and the following Appendices (not reproduced) highlighting and expanding on various aspects of the documents presented together with the recommendations approved by the Budget Working Party at its meeting on Tuesday 7 December 1999:

- Appendix A: Budget Indications 2000/2001
- Appendix B: Budget 1999/2000
- Appendix C: Revenue Bids
- Appendix D: Potential Income/Offsetting Savings

- Appendix E: Capital Bids
- Appendix F: Fire Service Spending Compared with Standard Spending Assessment
- Appendix G: Expenditure per head of population
- Appendix H: Local Government Finance Settlement 2000/2001

In addition the Budget Working Party had considered and approved the recommendations set out in a report by the Chief Fire Officer on "A Strategy for Appliance Crewing", presented as Appendix 2 (not reproduced). Implementation of such a strategy and other investment to save initiatives could reduce the impact of contributions required from the Constituent Authorities in future years.

The Treasurer also drew Members attention to the implications of the recently agreed Working Time Directive on paid leave for Retained Firefighters. This had not been included in the proposed budget of £21,150,000 and would therefore add an additional £40,000 to the Inescapable Revenue Bids set out in Appendix C.

With regard to the Capital Bids and their financing, the Treasurer advised that if a similar programme was approved each year the culmative revenue charges after ten years could cost £1.2m per annum. The Chief Fire Officer would be presenting a report on future capital requirements to the Fire Authority at its meeting in June 2000.

The Chief Fire Officer took Members through the report on the Strategy for Appliance Crewing and highlighted the very limited potential available to the Brigade for achieving and implementing savings year on year without undertaking a strategic rethink of existing priorities. Although the Budget Working Party had asked him to present a report on achieving a balanced budget of £21,150,000 linked to the requirements of the Strategic Plan, it would also be necessary to look at achieving a longer term strategy for investment, which would give the Brigade the opportunity to make further savings in future years.

In thanking Members of the Budget Working Party and Officers for all their hard work in producing the 2000/2001 budget the Chairman proposed the following amendment to the recommendations of the Budget Working Party as set out in Section B of the report:

In Resolution 3 delete "£21,150,000" and insert "£21,190,000"

Add new Resolution 4: "That the Mess Managers Allowance be retained and the Chief Fire Officer be requested to absorb the £13,000 cost involved in the 2000/2001 budget."

The Chairman explained that the reason for the proposed increase in the net expenditure was to cover the £40,000 required to fund the Working Time Directive.

The proposal having been seconded was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The project for a Review of Special Appliances and Strategy for appliance crewing be approved and actioned accordingly.
- 2 The Capital Programme as set out in Appendix E (not reproduced) and its indicative method of financing be approved.
- 3 The estimate of net expenditure of the Authority be set at £21,190,000 and the Constituent Authorities be notified accordingly.
- 4 The Mess Managers Allowance be retained and the Chief Fire Officer be requested to absorb the £13,000 cost involved in the 2000/2001 budget.

4.15/99 BUDGET MONITORING

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 16 - not reproduced) of the Revenue and Capital expenditure against budgets up to 31 October 1999 as set out in Appendices A (Revenue) and B (Capital) - (not reproduced).

NOTED

4.16/99 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 17 - not reproduced) of an update of the study to identify the future possible costs to the Authority of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. The scheme, at current prices, was estimated to cost the Authority £2,459m in 1999/2000 rising to £2.698m in 2000/2001 and peaking at £4.476m in 2008/2009. Members noted that the issue was common to all Fire Authorities and potentially large increases in cost would pose serious financial problems for Fire Authorities..

NOTED

4.17/99 MEDICAL RETIREMENTS HALF YEARLY REPORT

The Authority was informed (Agenda item 18 - not reproduced) of the number of medical retirements during the period 1 April to 30 September 1999.

NOTED

**4.18/99 IMPACT OF ILL HEALTH AS A RESULT OF ACCIDENTS -
SIX MONTH REPORT: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 1999**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 19 - not reproduced) of the number of days of sickness associated with accidents during the period 1 April to 30 September 1999.

NOTED

**4.19/99 AUDIT COMMISSION FIRE SERVICE PERFORMANCE
INDICATORS 1998/1999**

In noting the Fire Service's performance during 1998/99 and the proposed changes to the Performance Indicators in 2000/2001 (Agenda item 20 - not reproduced), Members were advised that the 1998/99 Performance Indicators as presented in Appendix A (not reproduced) would be published in the local press throughout the County during this week.

NOTED

**4.20/99 INQUIRY INTO FIRE SERVICE NEGOTIATING
MACHINERY**

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 21 - not reproduced) of progress with the inquiry into the Fire Service negotiating machinery. The inquiry would be undertaken by Professor Frank Burchill, professor of Industrial Relations at the University of Keele and he would shortly be writing to interested parties seeking written evidence to be presented by 31 January 2000. The Secretary of State had asked Professor Burchill to present his report and recommendations by 31 March 2000.

In view of the very short timescale Members agreed that on receipt of the further information a report be presented to the Personnel Committee to consider and determine the Fire Authority's response. It was also agreed that before the report was presented to the Personnel Committee, the FBU be invited to comment on the consultation documents.

NOTED

4.21/99 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 August to 1 November

1999 together with letters of appreciation and news from around the Brigade.

NOTED

4.22/99 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next Fire Authority meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 15 March 2000 commencing at 6.30pm at a venue still to be determined.

4.23/99 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act:

	Agenda item	Paragraph
24	Part II Minutes - Wednesday 15 September 1999	1, 8, 9 & 11
25	Part II Minutes of Personnel Committee	1
26	Extension of Clerk's Contract	1
27	Single Tender Action for the Purchase of Trove Software Licences	8 & 9

(Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority meeting held on Wednesday 15 December 1999)

4.24/99 PART II MINUTES: 15 SEPTEMBER 1999

The Part II Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 September 1999 were received and approved as a correct record.

4.25/99 PART II MINUTES OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Authority was advised (Agenda item 25 - not reproduced) of the Personnel Committee meetings that had taken place since the last Fire Authority meeting.

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

**4.26/99 CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER - REVIEW OF
CONTRACT**

The Authority agreed to seek an extension to the Clerk's contract and authorised the Authority Treasurer to negotiate terms and report back to a future Fire Authority meeting.

The Clerk returned to the meeting

**4.27/99 SINGLE TENDER ACTION FOR THE PURCHASE OF TROVE
SOFTWARE LICENCES**

The Authority approved single tender action to purchase TROVE software licences.

AGENDA ITEM 4: MINUTES OF SUB-GROUPS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 15 March 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 and the Fire Liaison Group that have taken place since the last meeting of the Fire Authority in December 1999.

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 September 1999:

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Personnel Committee: | Monday 17 January 2000 |
| 2. | Performance Review and Audit Panel | Wednesday 12 January and Thursday 2 March 2000 |
| | Urgency Committee | Monday 31 January and Monday 28 February 2000 |
| | Fire Liaison Group | Monday 6 March 2000 |

2 Copies of the Part I Minutes and the Notes of the Fire Liaison Group (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

**NOTE TO: COUNCILLOR J C G BROOKS, FIRE AUTHORITY
CHAIRMAN**

Mr Brooks

Fire Authority Meeting - Wednesday 15 March 2000

- 1 Under Agenda item 5 (Chairman's Communications) you asked me to remind you that you may wish to draw Members attention to the letter from Devon Fire and Rescue Service (Copy attached).**
- 2 Please advise Members that in respect of Agenda item 11 (Review of Brigade Structure) revised structures in respect of the Service Delivery Directorate and Support Services Directorate have been circulated.**
- 3 Would you also be kind enough to ask all Members of the Personnel Committee to stay behind for five minutes after the meeting to agree on a date for another Grievance Panel in April.**

Thank you

David

**Copy: Clive Williams Clerk and Monitoring Officer
David Harper, Chief Fire Officer**



~~DCS/AT~~ - Jini/CFA
normal?

copy BMA 2/3/00

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

THE KNOWLE
CLYST ST GEORGE
EXETER
EX3 0NW

Telephone: (01392) 872201

Fax: (01392) 872300

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE		FILE	
- 1 MAR 2000			
ATTN.	INF.	ACK.	ANS

P. Young, F.I. Fire E.
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

TO: CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS OF BRIGADES
OF COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITIES

28 February 2000

Dear Colleague

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PRECEPTING

The Devon Fire Authority has long held the view that the existing levying system used for funding CFA's should be replaced by a power to precept directly on the council tax payer. This authority will be submitting the following motion for debate at the June LGA General Assembly meeting and is hoping that it can obtain broad support from other CFA's.

- (a) That the Local Government Association press the Government for an urgent review of the funding mechanism for Combined Fire Authorities with a view to amending the relevant legislation to enable such authorities to be funded on a self-precepting basis (setting their own level of Council Tax) in line with the funding mechanism currently operating for London and Metropolitan Joint Fire and Civil Defence Authorities. Such a change would reflect the true nature of Combined Fire Authorities as large, independent statutory bodies (significantly larger than most District Councils) and would enhance direct accountability to the Council Tax payer in line with both the "Modernising Local Government" and "Best Value" philosophies;

- (b) that as part of this review, Government be urged to select several existing Combined Fire Authorities as pilots, funded on a self-precepting basis, so as to fully evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of this method of funding for such authorities.

If your authority is willing to support this motion I would be very grateful if you would confirm that in writing. If you wish to discuss this issue, do not hesitate to give me a call.

Yours sincerely



Paul Young
Chief Fire Officer

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



CA

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

Your reference:

My reference: CW/CH
(please quote on all correspondence)

When calling ask for: Mr Williams
Direct Line: 0118 932 2284

Date: 30 March 2000

Dear Mr Young

COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY PRECEPTING

I refer to your letter of 28 February which the Chairman raised with our Authority at a recent meeting.

The Authority had previously debated this issue at length 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. They were aware however, that such a change would pose a risk for most Fire Authorities who, like Berkshire, are spending above SSA and are protected by the present system, in that compensatory savings have to be found by the Contributing Authorities. However, that said, they would support your Authority's resolutions.

Yours sincerely

Mr C Williams
Clerk of the Authority

P Young Esq
Chief Fire Officer
Devon Fire & Rescue Service
Clyst St George
EXETER
EX3 0NW

Fire-fighters to train and crew Special Fire Appliances. Previous reductions of 12 Wholetime jobs in 1998/99 at the Whitely 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”?

Mr A Balfour

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

- 2 Under Standing Order 9(c) the Chairman may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member of the Authority to answer on his behalf. If the Chairman decides to answer the question at the Fire Authority meeting then under Standing Order 9(d) one supplementary question may be asked. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion.
- 3 If the Chairman is minded to answer one or all of the questions at the meeting, Members are therefore asked to note the Chairman’s response and resolve that a copy of his answer to the questions and supplementary (if required) be sent to the questioners.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Questions received from Mr R McAllistor (3 March), Mr P E Miller (6 March) and Mr A Balfour (3 March)
- 2 Fire Authority Standing Order 9

Contact Officer: David R Weller (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 9: DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY
To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 15 March 2000
Officer Contributing: Clerk and Monitoring Officer
 Committee Administrator

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To agree on dates for future meetings of the Fire Authority for the period September 2000 to June 2001.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and **RESOLVE:** That future meetings of the Fire Authority be held on the following dates in 2000/2001 all commencing at 6.30pm:

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

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 It will be necessary to agree on dates for meetings of the Fire Authority in 2000/2001 and to assist Members the following dates are suggested, all commencing at 6.30pm:

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

2 Members are therefore asked to consider the above dates and resolve accordingly. If the dates are approved arrangements will be put in hand to find suitable venues. In addition the Unitary Authorities will be asked to include the dates in their Council Diaries.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: David R Weller Committee Administrator (0118) 932 2288

AGENDA ITEM 10:**PRESENTATION OF IT STRATEGY**

To Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date 15th March 2000
Officer Contributing Chief Fire Officer
 Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to receive a presentation on the Brigade's IT Strategy

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE:** That the IT Strategy be approved and adopted

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Proposed expenditure on IT and Comms in 2000/2001 is estimated at £824,476. which is contained within the agreed Budget provisions.

	£
Employees	301,545
Premises Related Expenses	0
Supplies and Services	539,024
Transport Related Expenses	11,061
Total Expenditure	851,630
Income	(27,154)
Net Expenditure	824,476

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The development of the IT Strategy is a strategic target for 1999/2000. It is proposed that the strategy be updated annually.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Members will receive a presentation from the Information Systems Manager on the Brigade's IT Strategy.
- 2 The IT and Communications Strategy has been developed within the context of the Brigade's Strategic Plan and in common with Brigade strategy, it lays down a path along which the brigade will need to pass together with a time

frame for reviewing the route. It is not yet a complete path and a significant amount of work will be required before a decision on the final route is decided. The Strategy is defined by Best Practice and Technology Standards.

- 3 The Best Practice advocated, including formal justification of all projects to a Project Manager and Steering Group, data management procedures and training will ensure that Best Value is obtained from IT and Communications projects.
- 4 As for the technology, the strategy is conservative, making use of de-facto industry standards from Microsoft, NT, Exchange, Outlook and Office. However only one version of these operating systems and productivity tools will be operational at any time giving better integration and support. Although it will take between 9 and 12 months to achieve, once established it will be adhered to and next year's strategy will propose version upgrades if justifiable.
- 5 This year's major projects have been sanctioned by the Brigade's Information Systems Steering Group and meet, or will meet, the Best Practices advocated, for example, E-Mail, ORIS and Trove. The exception to this is FRIS. which is neither NT, web enabled or a third party product. It will therefore be necessary to decide whether to retain FRIS or seek alternatives. This decision will be made by piloting improved web data capture and reporting for parts of FRIS pilot within the new technical standards, by the second quarter of Year 2000.
- 6 The 2000/2001 projects must utilise the lessons learnt from this year to give est Value.(e.g. further exploitation of the investoiment in ORIS infrastructure or the water Officer, command support and STATS, COSHH databases ccessed via the web and depending of the FRIS pilot, inclusion of Breathing pparatus, Transport and Asset Managment modules.
- 7 Finally, considerable effort by the Communications Team will be focused on he Radio replacement project to take the Brigade into 2002 and beyond.
- 8 A copy of the full report is available on request via E-mail from ISM balljs@rbfrs.co.uk or by contacting the Committee Administrator on (0118) 932 2288 .

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

IT and Comms Strategy

Contact Officer: Jonathan Ball (0118) 932 2261

AGENDA ITEM 11 REVIEW OF BRIGADE STRUCTURE

To **Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**
Date **15 March 2000**
Officer Contributing **Chief Fire Officer**
 Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the Authority's approval for the revised Brigade structure following completion of the Chief Fire Officer's review.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE: That

- 1 The revised Brigade structure attached as an Appendix is approved.**
- 2 Any further "fine tuning" of the structure be dealt with under the Chief Fire Officer's delegated powers for employment matters.**
- 3 ~~A further review of the review structure be undertaken~~ ^{Tidek} ~~in eighteen months time.~~ ^{as agreed the content of a draft}**

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The review structure can be managed within the approved 2000/2001 budget.

D CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This report concludes for the present the Chief Fire Officer's on-going review of the Brigade structure as contained within the Authority Strategic Plan.

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its meetings on 7 July and 15 September 1999, the Authority received reports detailing the outcome of the Chief Fire Officer's review of the 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 subject to them being contained within current budgetary provisions and present a further report to the Fire Authority.**
- 2 The revised Brigade structure based on three Directorates is reflected in the structure charts attached to this report.**

- 3 Consultation has been opened with representative bodies and a Section 19 application will be made to the Home Office when this is completed.
- 4 Details of the changes to individual posts that have produced the revised structure are shown in the attached schedules.
- 5 The Chief Fire Officer proposes to 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.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda and Minutes, Fire Authority - 7 July and 15 September 1999

Contact Officer: David Wallace

(0118) 932 2227

CHANGES TO AUTHORISED ESTABLISHMENT

NON-UNIFORMED

Executive

Grade	Post	Hrs	Status
	Audit and Projects Officer	FT	Addition
2	Admin Assistant Audit Team	18.5	Addition

Service Delivery

Grade	Post	Hrs	Status
3	Secretary to SCSM	17	Addition
2	Service Delivery Technician	FT	Addition
2	Admin Assistant Reading	15	Delete

Support Services

Grade	Post	Hrs	Status
FA	Multi Media Technician	FT	Addition
4	Ops Support Risk Assessment	FT	Addition
4	Ops Support Risk Assessment	FT	Addition
	Staff Officer	FT	Addition
3	Secretary to Director	12.5	Delete
2	Admin Assistant Ops Support	FT	Delete
2	Admin Assistant Fire Safety	FT	Additional hours from 20 to FT
LP	Semi Skilled Mechanic	FT	Delete
LP	Apprentice	FT	Addition
LP	Skilled Mechanic	FT	Delete
LP	Chargehand	FT	Addition
	Support Services Staff Officer	FT	Addition
	Engineering Assistant	FT	Addition
	Assistant Handyperson	18.5	Addition

Human Resources

Grade	Post	Hrs	Status
4	Assistant Health & Safety Advisor	FT	Addition
2	Admin Assistant Health & Safety	18.5	Addition

Central Services

Grade	Post	Hrs	Status
FA	Director of Central Services	FT	Delete
FA	Information Systems Officer Already included in the authorised establishment	FT	Addition

23
UNIFORMED

Executive

Rank	Post	Status
Stn O	Audit and Project Assistant	Addition

Service Delivery

Rank	Post	Status
DO III	Community Safety Manager	Addition
Stn O	Service Delivery Central Team	Addition
Sub	Service Delivery Central Team	Addition
Sub	Fire Safety Reading West	Delete
Sub	Retained Station 10	Delete

Support Services

Rank	Post	Status
Stn O	Strategic Staff Officer	Delete
Sub	Operations Support	Delete
Sub	Operations Support	Delete
Sub	Fire Safety	Delete
Sub	Technical Resources	Delete
LF	BA Support	Delete
LF	BA Support	Delete

Human Resources

Rank	Post	Status
DO II	Health & Safety Officer	Delete
Sub	Health & Safety Officer	Addition

<p>DELETIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 DOII - 3 Sub Officers - 1 Rtd Sub Officer - 2 LFs 	<p>ADDITIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 DO III - 1 Stn Officer
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<p>KEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DO = Divisional Officer - Stn O = Station Officer - Sub = Sub Officer - LF = Leading Firefighter

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2000

REVISED INFORMATION

Agenda item 11: Review of Brigade Structure

Attached for Members information are revised versions of the Structure Charts in respect of the Support Services and Service Delivery Directorates.

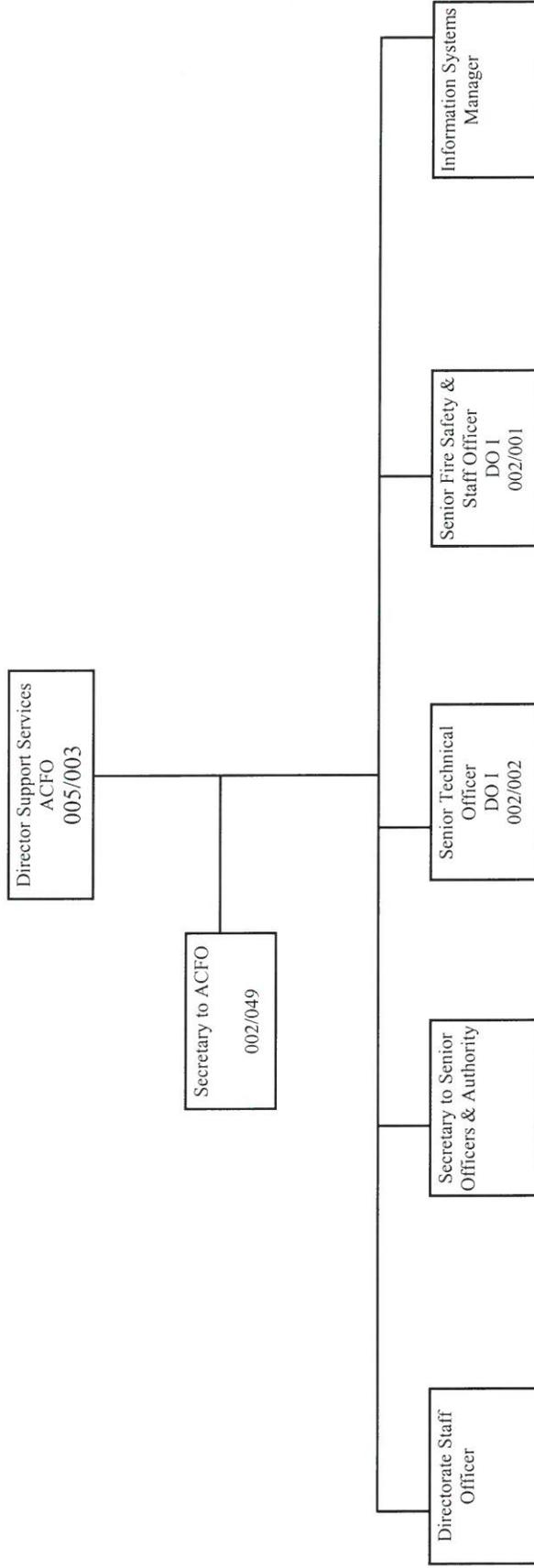
Thank you



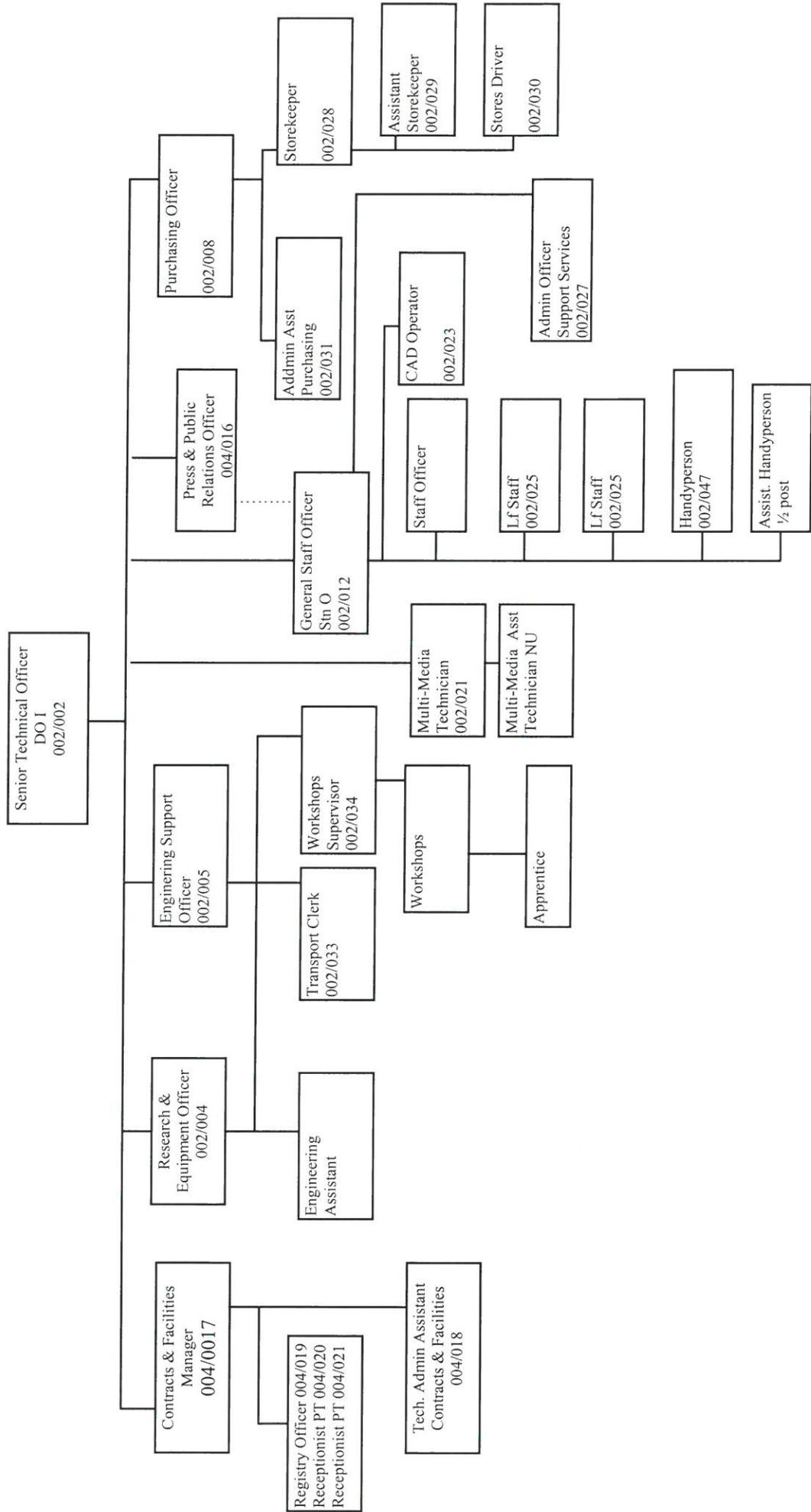
**David R Weller
Committee Administrator**

No

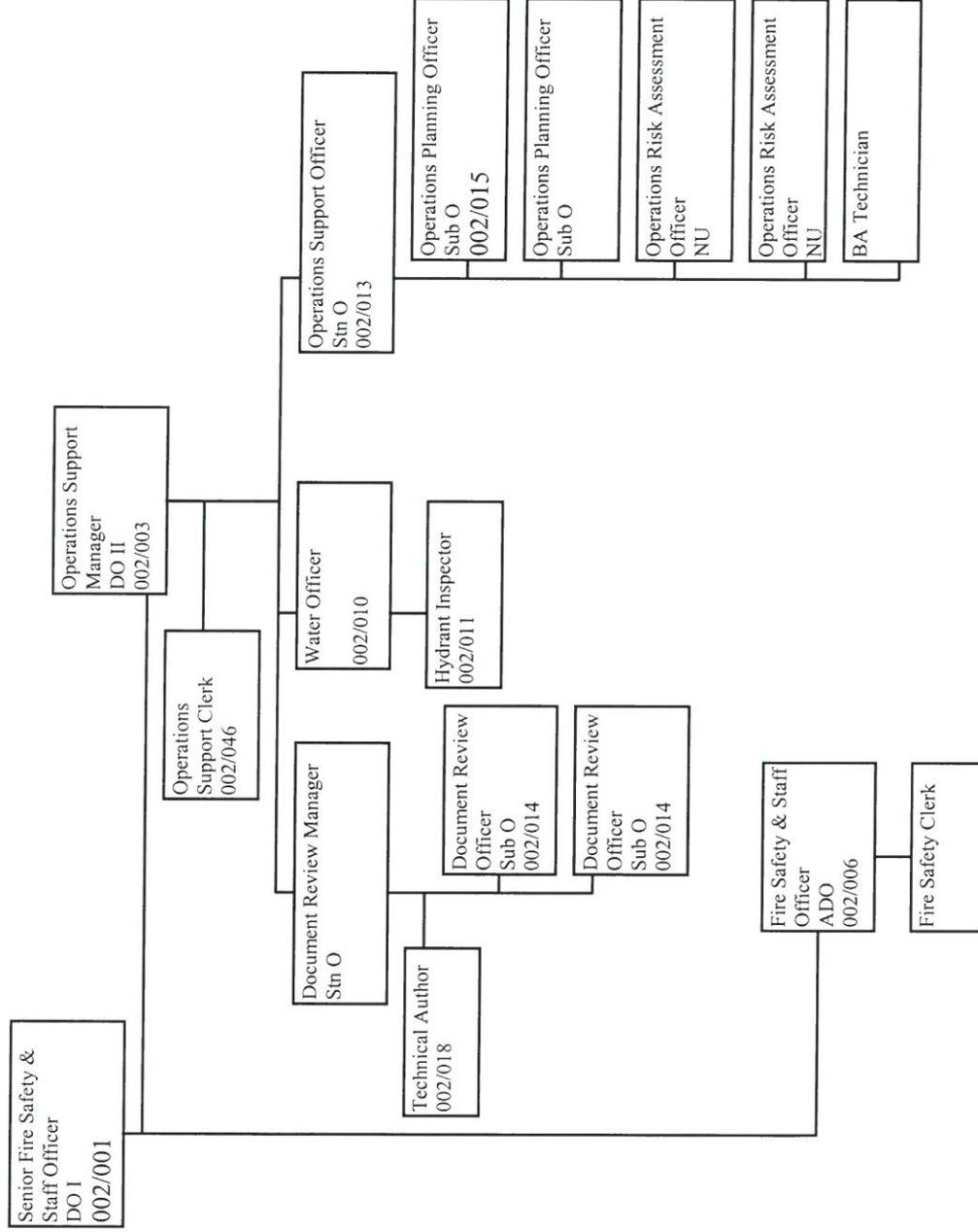
SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE



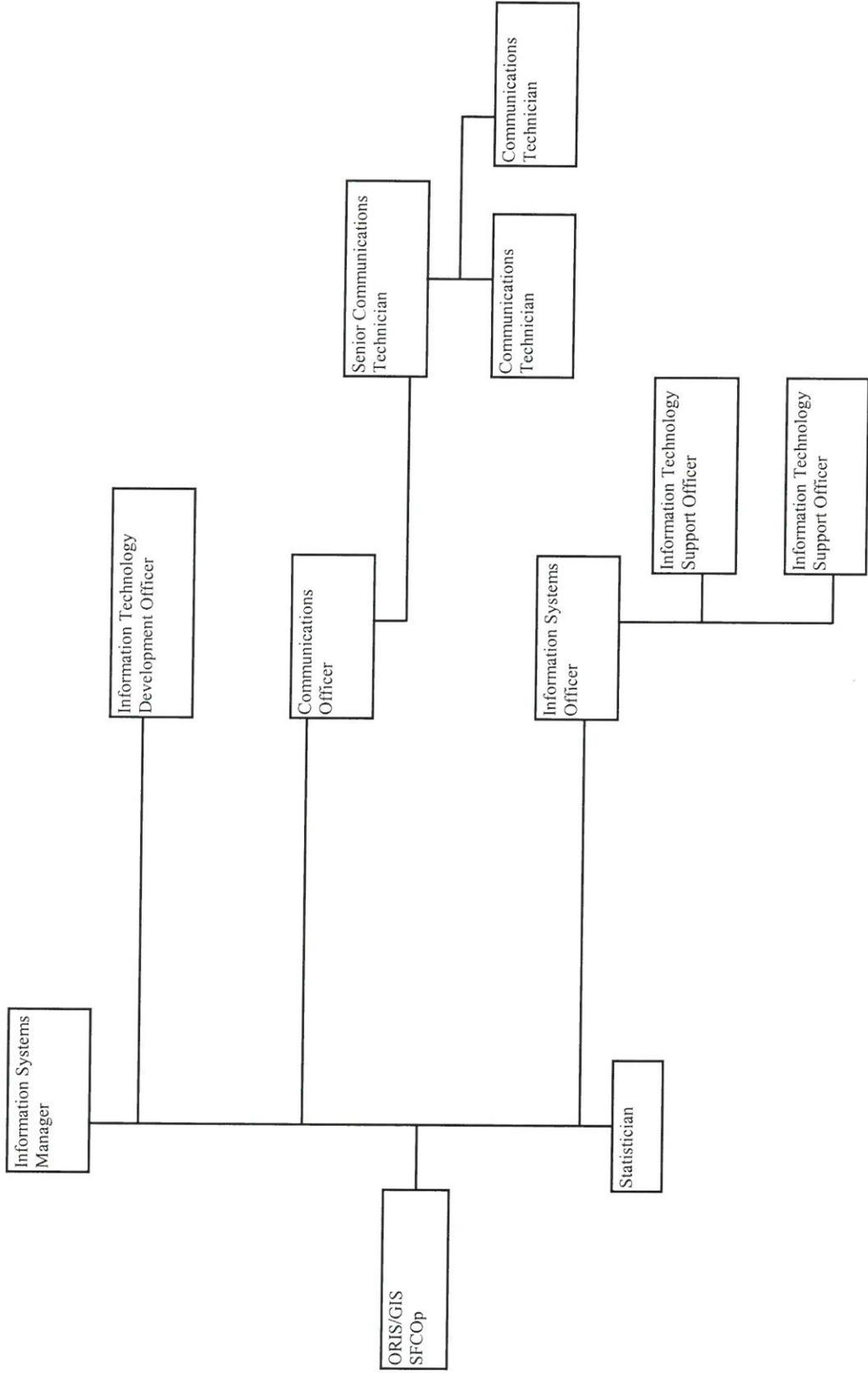
**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT**



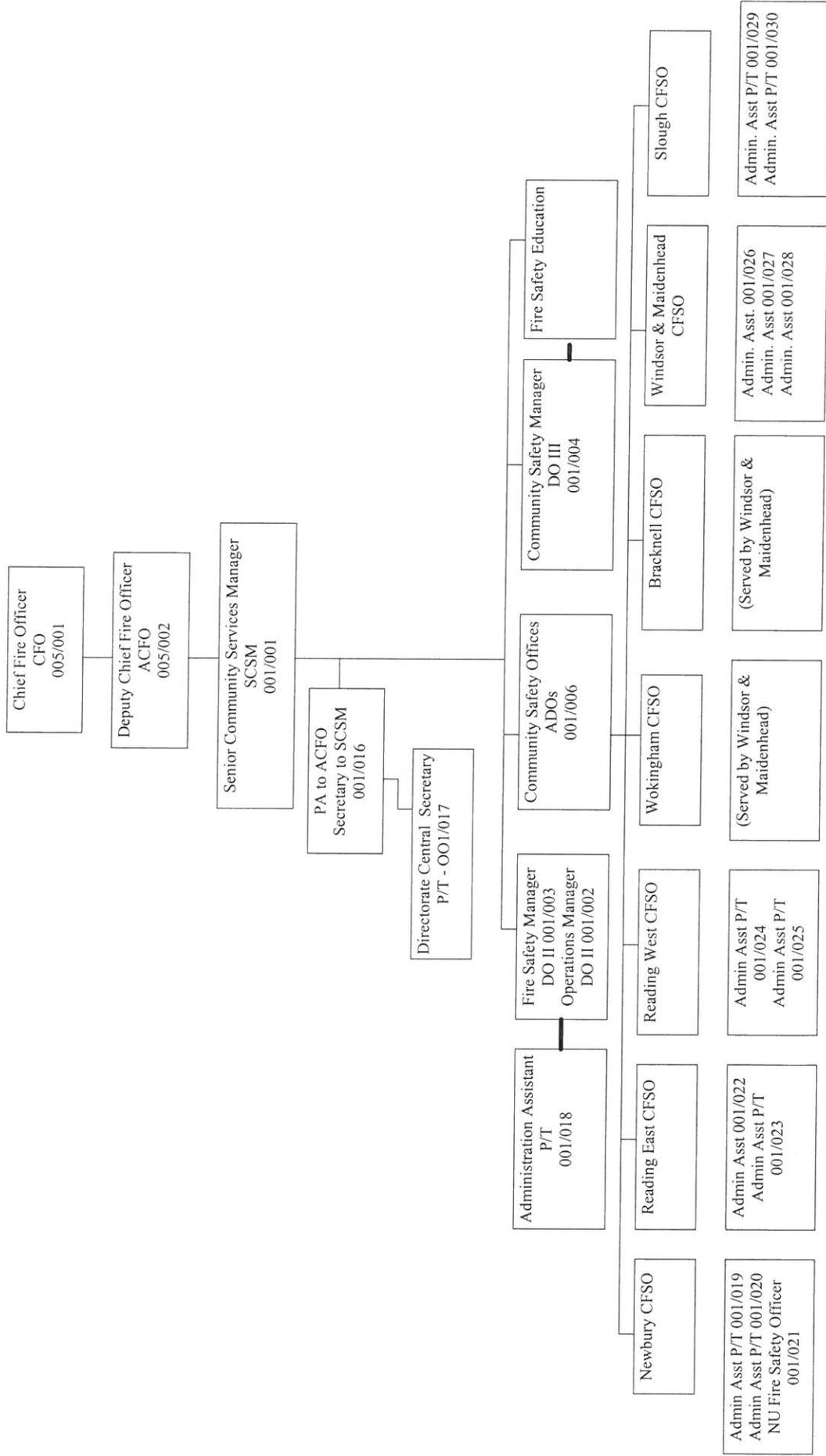
**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
OPERATIONS AND FIRE SAFETY SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**



**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT**

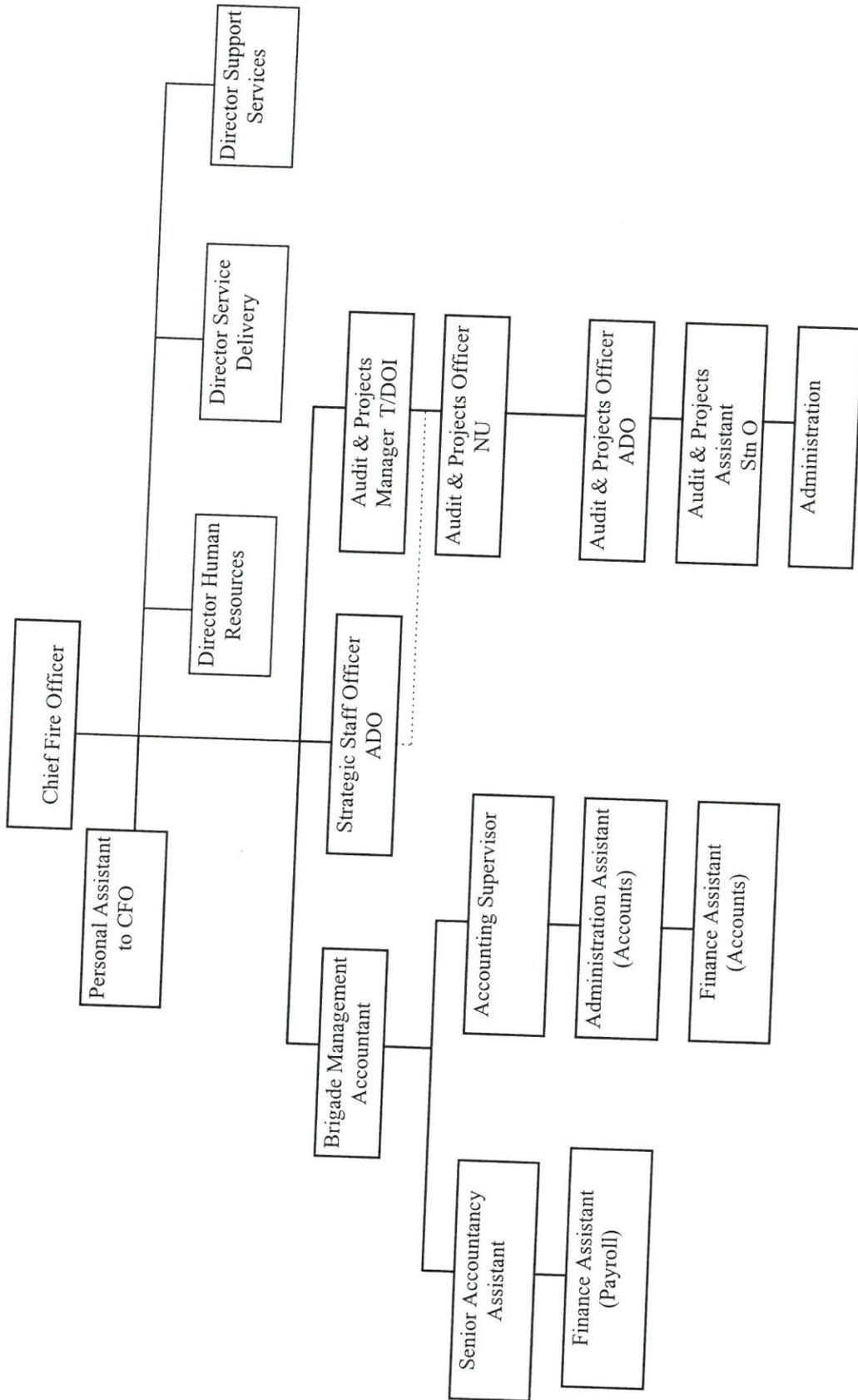


SERVICE DELIVERY DIRECTORATE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE - ADMINISTRATION

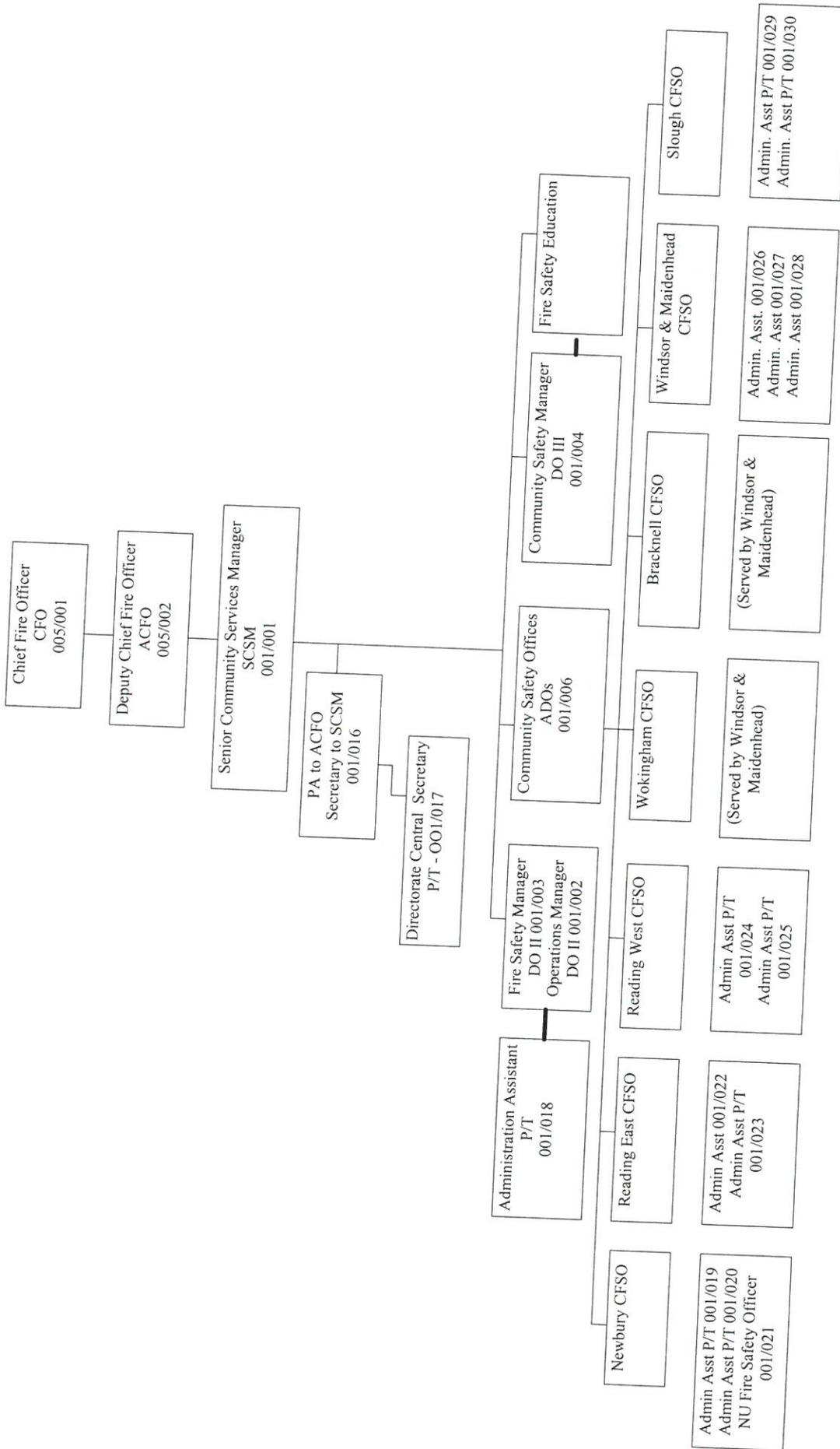


Reporting Lines
 Liaison Lines

STRATEGIC

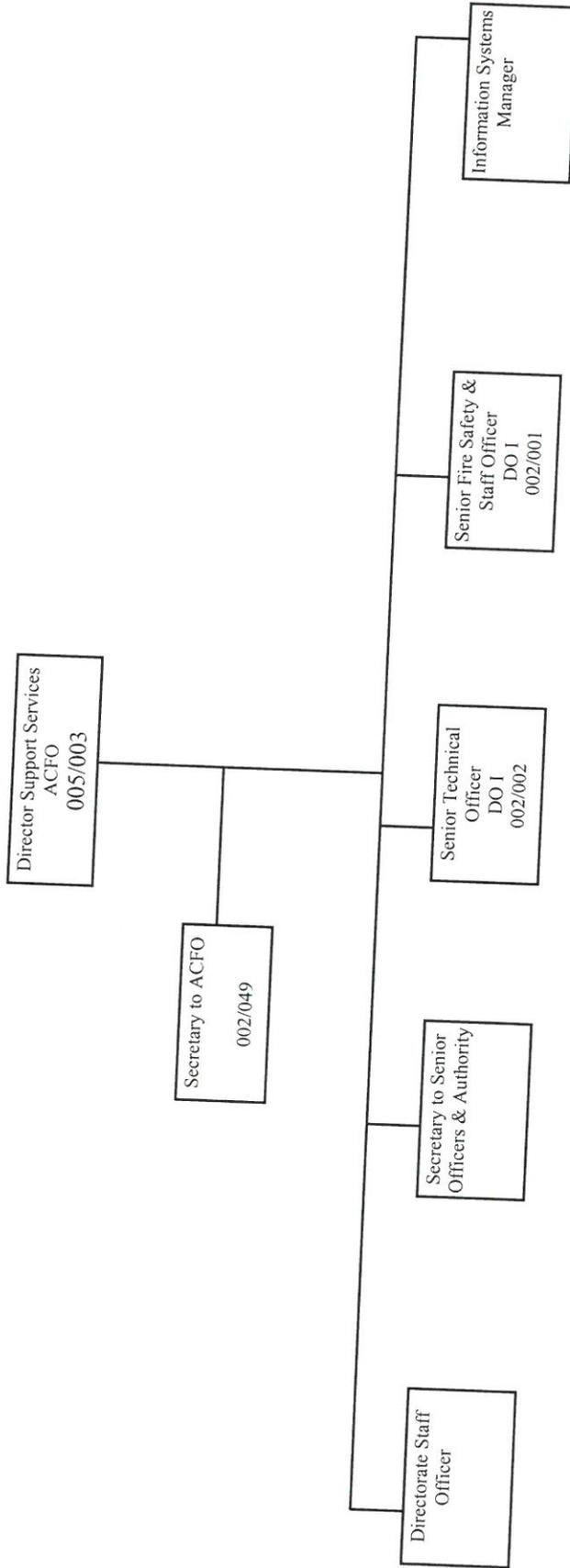


SERVICE DELIVERY DIRECTORATE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE - ADMINISTRATION

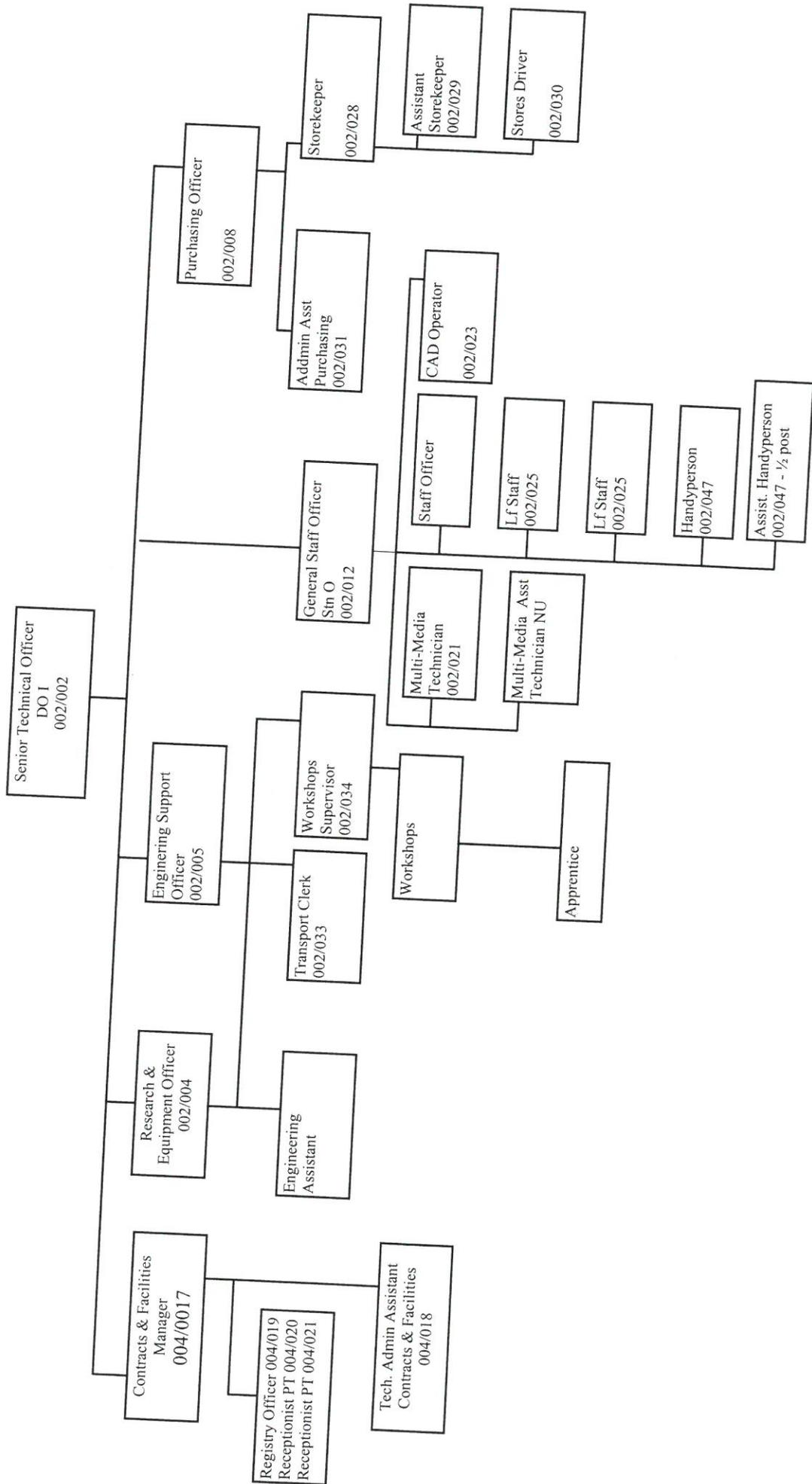


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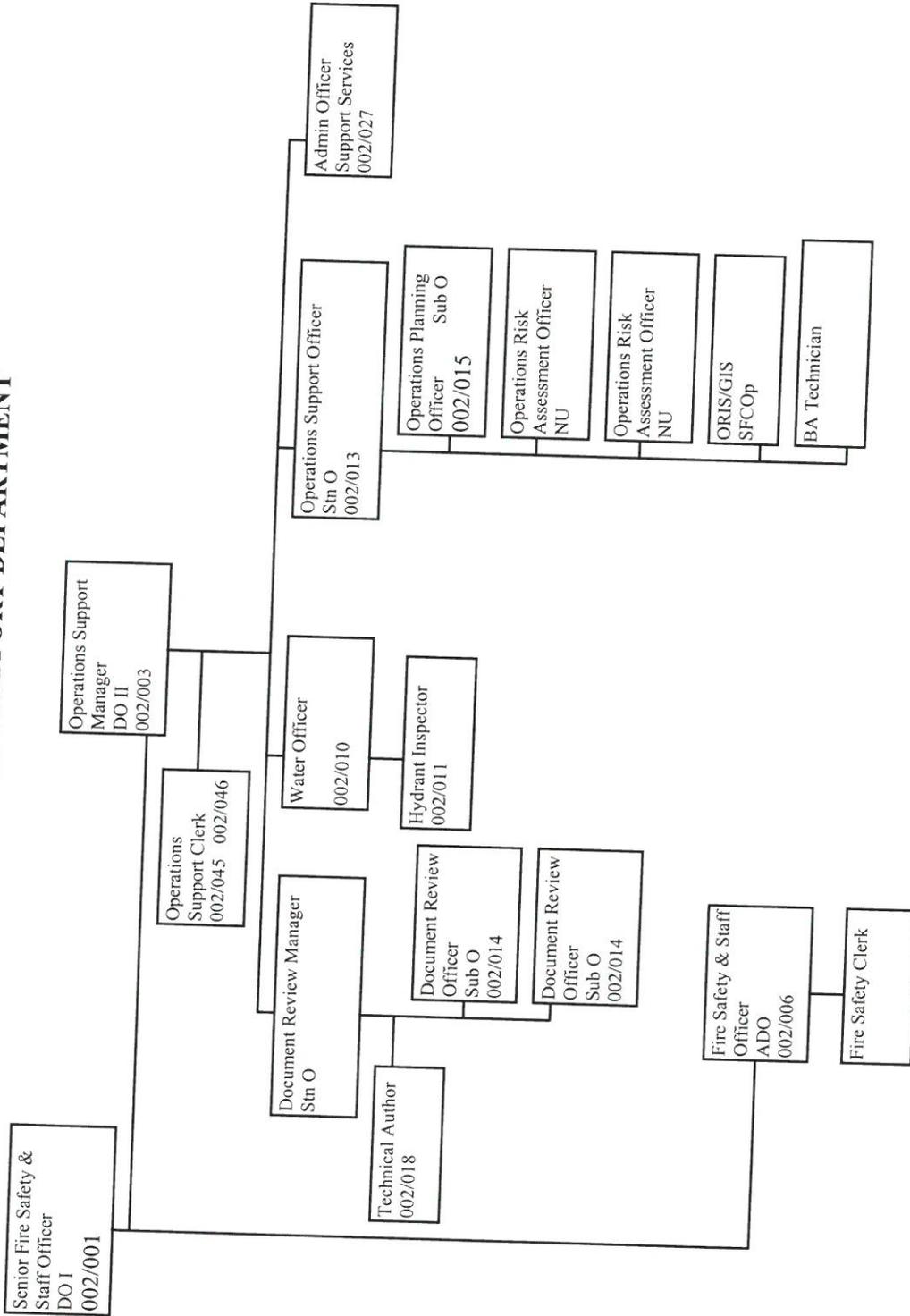
SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE



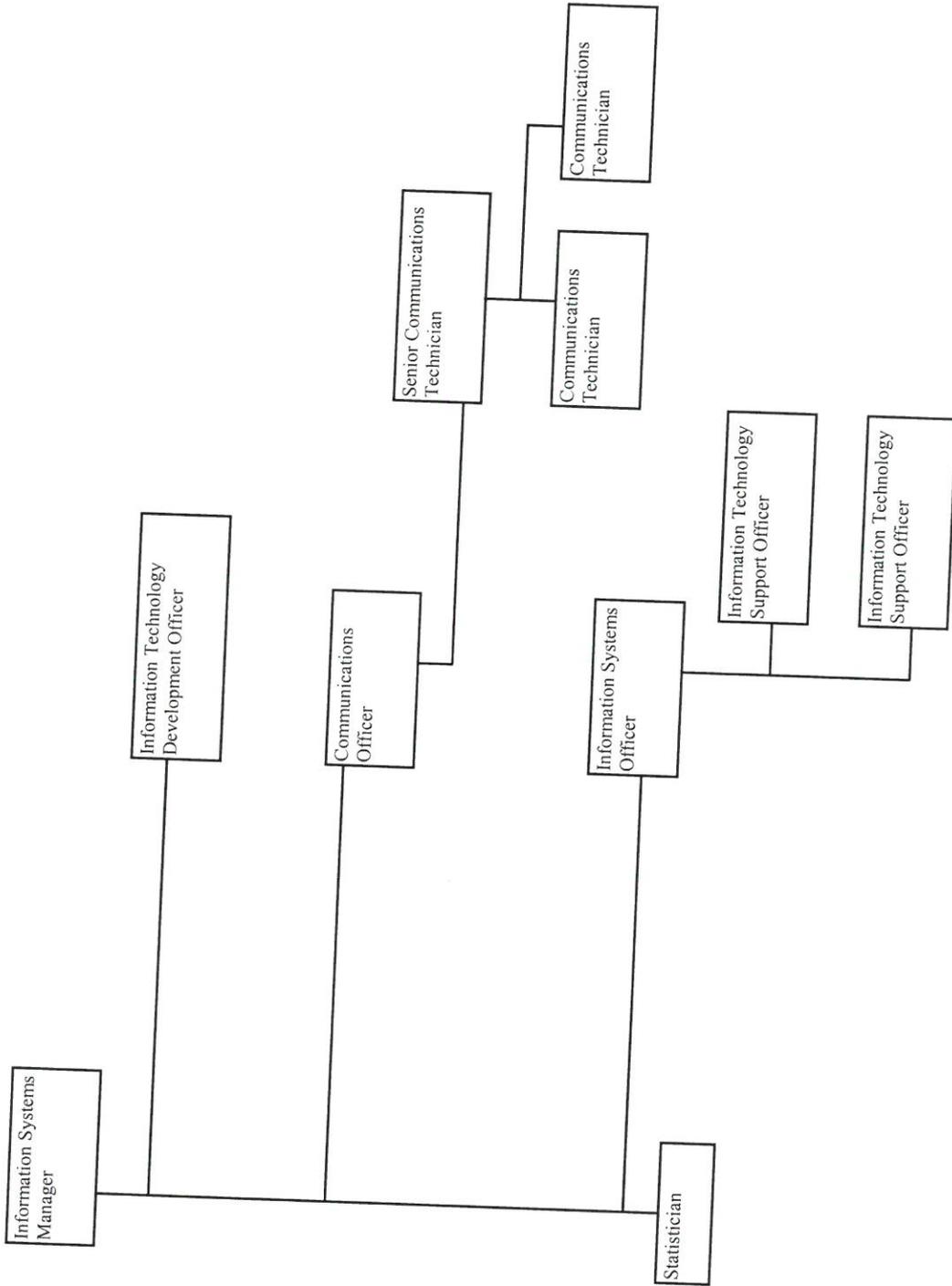
**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT**



**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
OPERATIONS AND FIRE SAFETY SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**



**SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTORATE
INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT**



AGENDA ITEM 12:**BORROWING LIMITS FOR 2000/2001****To:**

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Date:

15 March 2000

Officer Contributing:

Authority Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To determine the Fire Authority's overall borrowing limit, and limit on the proportion of total interest payable which is payable at a variable rate.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE**: That the following determinations be made for 2000/2001.

- 1 An overall borrowing limit of £1,729,000
- 2 A short term borrowing limit of £932,000
- 3 A maximum limit of 54% of total interest paid, being on variable rate loans

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The limits suggested give flexibility in managing the finances of the Fire Authority. The Authority can amend the limits at any time during the year.

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

None

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Authority has a statutory duty to determine the borrowing limits identified in paragraph B.
- 2 Borrowing for capital purposes is limited to the Authority's basic credit approvals plus any supplementary credit approvals which may be granted by the Home Office during the year. The total of credit approvals received for 1998/99, 1999/2000, and 2000/2001 stands at £1,229,000.
- 3 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 provides that contributions from the constituent authorities shall be of such amount as are at all times sufficient to enable the financial obligations of the Authority to be met. The 12 equal instalments of contribution to be made by constituent authorities on the first day of each month should achieve this objective. However, monthly cash flow projections are subject to variation and there could be emergency expenditure to be met and it would be desirable to provide authority for say up to £500,000 overdraft/short term borrowing in case of need.

4 The overall borrowing limit therefore comprises:

	£000
Borrowing for capital purposes	1229
Temporary Revenue borrowing limit	<u>500</u>
Overall borrowing limit	<u>1729</u> Resolution B1

5 The short term borrowing limit for 2000/2001 comprises:

Capital spend pending raising loan finances from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	432
Temporary Revenue borrowing (if necessary)	<u>500</u>
	<u>932</u> Resolution B2

6 The maximum variable rate interest payable:

Fixed interest finance from the PWLB to meet capital expenditure covered by credit approvals raised in 1998/99 and 1999/2000	797
Balance to be met by variable rate borrowing (maximum)	<u>932</u> (54%) Resolution B3
	<u>1729</u>

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 2 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997
- 3 Notifications of Basic and Supplementary Credit Approvals

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth (0118) 932 2284

