

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING: ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE AND TIME: MONDAY 16 MARCH 1998, 6.30 PM
VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHIRE HALL, SHINFIELD
PARK, READING

COMMITTEE SECRETARY: COLIN PRESTON
DIRECT DIAL: (0118) 923 3102

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, J J Connolly, R J Day, T P Dredge,
P J Edwards, J M B Egan, C J Goodall, B W Gardner, A Gregory,
A B V P Hickey, D W Liddiard, T Mills, J Morris, Mrs K Newbound,
W J E Onions, H Parker, Dr L Silverman, A W Spratling,
T N Stephens, D Thomas, R G Vernon-Jackson

BRIEFING MEETINGS

The Party Rooms in Shire Hall will be available for pre-meetings from 5.45 pm.

PART 1 ITEMS

1 Minutes : 3 February 1998	1
2 Petitions and Questions from the Public under Standing Orders 8 and 9 (if any)	-
3 Chairman's Communications (if any)	-
4 Questions from Members under Standing Order 10 (if any)	-
5 Notices of Motion under Standing Order 12 (if any)	-
6 Political Groups	8
7 Political Balance on Committees	9
8 Appointment of Personnel Committee	12
9 Venue of Authority Meetings	14
10 Dates of Meetings, 1998/99	16
11 Local Government Association	18
12 Members' Allowances	20
13 Continuity of Policies and Practices	22
14 Scheme of Delegation to Officers	24
15 Financial Regulations	36
16 Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 1998/99	51
17 Borrowing Limits for 1998/99	64
18 Supplementary Credit Approval	66
19 Charging for Services	67
20 Pay and Reward Strategy and Officer Car User Policies	69
21 Home Office Comprehensive Spending Review	71
22 Whitley Wood Fire Station: Willow Wall	91
23 Minutes of Sub-bodies	93
24 Exclusion of the Public	95

PART 2 ITEMS

25 Part 2 Minutes : 3 February 1998	96
-------------------------------------	----

AGENDA

Page
No.

26 Banking Arrangements	97
27 Insurances	102
28 Treasury Management Consultants	117
29 Paid Leave of Absence	119
30 Part 2 Minutes of Sub-bodies	120

AGENDA ITEM : 1 MINUTES

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
HELD AT THE SHIRE HALL, SHINFIELD PARK, READING, ON TUESDAY 3
FEBRUARY 1998, COMMENCING AT 6.30 PM AND CONCLUDED AT 7.45 PM**

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice Chairman), D Ball, P A Barnett, Mrs C Bateson, J J Connolly, T P Dredge, J M B Egan, C J Goodall, B W Gardner, A Gregory, A B V P Hickley, D W Liddiard, T Mills, J Morris, W J E Onions, H Parker, Dr L Silverman, A W Spratling, T N Stephens, D Thomas, R G Vernon-Jackson

1.01/98 MINUTES : 9 AND 18 DECEMBER 1997

The Minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 9 and 18 December 1997 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1.02/98 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Authority noted that no petitions or questions from the public had been received under Standing Orders 8 and 9.

1.03/98 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman reported on two communications he had received, one from Councillor D Ball and the other from the Fire Brigades' Union. The following is a summary of the Chairman's responses to the issues raised in each.

Letter from Councillor D Ball

Two issues had been raised, the first related to allowing Mr R Mowatt to speak at a meeting of the Authority. The Chairman indicated that over the last 18 months it would be the case that any Leader of a political group would have been extended the privilege to speak to Members. He could not foresee any such situation arising in the future.

The second issue raised related to the question of briefing of the Vice-Chairman of the Authority. The Chairman responded by affirming that arrangements were in place to provide a briefing meeting for the leaders of the Political Groups as part of the normal agenda preparation process.

Letter submitted on behalf of the Fire Brigades' Union

The Chairman explained that whilst the letter had not been received in time to be considered as a question, from the public, he proposed to make a statement at this point in the meeting. The letter referred to the concerns of the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU) on budget decisions and in particular the loss of 12 posts.

The following is a summary of the statement made by the Chairman to the Authority in response to the issues the letter had raised:

- a It was not possible now to make adjustment to the budget for 1998/99 which the Authority had agreed. Members of the Authority had lobbied hard within their own District and Borough Councils to achieve a budget for the Authority which they considered to be acceptable in terms of service and impact upon their own District and Borough Councils' budgets. It was pointed out that many of the District and Borough Councils were under considerable financial pressure and some of the authorities were up to their capping limit.
- b Members of the Authority had examined thoroughly all areas of the budget to accommodate the needs of the service and to establish a sustainable management structure.
- c The decisions taken by the Authority would not result in any redundancies and there was no freeze on recruitment to the full establishment for the service of 422 whole-time posts.
- d Whilst the Authority was unable to reopen discussion on the budget for 1998/99, it was agreed that immediate steps should be taken for the leading members of the Authority to meet with representatives of the FBU. It was intended for discussion to include the following issues:
 - i crewing levels
 - ii the Government Spending Review
 - iii funding in future years
 - iv consultation mechanisms to take account of the FBU's views.
 - v arrangements for discussion with the FBU in preparing for the next year's budget.

The Chairman asked the Chief Fire Officer to arrange the necessary meeting as soon as practicable.

1.04/98 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

1.05/98 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Authority noted that no notices of motions had been received under Standing Order 12.

1.06/98 POLITICAL GROUPS

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 6 - not reproduced) containing advice on the formation of political groups amongst its membership.

Notice had been received advising of the creation of a Conservative Group and it was understood that notices creating Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups would be forthcoming shortly.

NOTED

1.07/98 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 7 - not reproduced) containing advice for Members on the position regarding the payment of their allowances and proposals for local arrangements for those payments. The Authority was asked to determine approved duties for the payment of travelling and subsistence expenses and to agree the rates for reimbursement of those expenses.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- 1 That, subject to the concurrence of the constituent councils, allowances payable to Members in connection with the activities of the Authority be administered by an individual Members' own constituent council.
- 2 That the events listed in the report to the Authority be adopted as the list of events for which travelling and subsistence expenses may be reimbursed.
- 3 That travelling and subsistence expenses be reimbursed in accordance with the rates adopted from time to time by the constituent council for the particular Member concerned.

1.08/98 DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING 1998

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 8 - not reproduced) and were asked to agree the date of the Annual General Meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 1998 be held on 9 June 1998 at 6.30 pm at a venue to be agreed.

1.09/98 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 9 - not reproduced) and were asked to confirm that it would take membership of the Local Government Association and determine the appointment of delegates to the Association's first Annual Fire Conference.

Arising from discussion the following points were noted:

- a That the Authority would have one seat on the Fire Committee of the Local Government Association.

- b That "home" constituent councils would be approached to pay for Members to attend although there was (until 31 March 1998) a fallback position.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Authority take membership of the Local Government Association in the financial year 1998/99.
- 2 That the following delegates/nominations be made on behalf of the Authority to the Local Government Association's Fire Conference to be held at Birmingham on 10 and 11 March 1998:

A B V P Hickley
 J J Connolly
 Nomination to be made by B J S Patman

1.10/98 FIRE SAFETY LEGISLATION FOR THE FUTURE : A CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 10 - not reproduced) advising the Authority of the Government's public consultation on outline proposals for new fire safety legislation.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That Members of the Authority liaise direct with the Chief Fire Officer on issues/views which they may wish to make, having had opportunity to consider the document containing officer considerations, which would be circulated.
- 2 That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to respond on behalf of the Authority to the Home Offices' invitation to comment by 28 February 1998, taking account of those comments and views made by Members of the Authority in the interim.

1.11/98 ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE : BRIGADE BADGE AND LOGO

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 11 - not reproduced) seeking approval for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to continue to use the Brigade's present badge and logo.

RESOLVED: That the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service continue to use the present badge and logo.

1.12/98 STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO CONTRACTS

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 12 - not reproduced) proposing the adoption of Standing Orders relating to contracts.

Following discussion on the wording of the proposed Standing Orders, some minor amendments were suggested and the following points were noted:

- a The need for officers to consider carefully, when placing contracts, the use of sub contracts in view of potential difficulties.
- b That the Berkshire County Council's Financial Regulations would continue to apply until the Authority could agree its own, at its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the following amendments, the Standing Orders relating to contracts, as submitted, be adopted:

- a the addition of the words "this list is not exhaustive" to Standing Order 10.
- b the addition of Treasurer to the list of officers reporting to the Authority under Standing Order 10, 16 and 20.

1.13/98 1998/99 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COMBINED FIRE SERVICE FUND

The Authority considered a report (Agenda item 13 - not reproduced) with proposals to fix the contributions to be made by each constituent authority to the combined Fire Service fund for 1998/99.

A number of clarifications and explanations were given on the question of exceptional circumstances that could arise and how these might impact on agreed budgets. The Authority was conscious of the serious implications for other services provided by District and Borough Councils and the existing financial pressures affecting other services.

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the provisions of Part IV of the Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order notice be given to each constituent council of the amount of its contribution to the combined fire service fund, and the intervals for payments in the financial year 1998/99, as set out in Appendix A of the report submitted to the Authority.

1.14/98 1998/99 BUDGET

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 14 - not reproduced) providing for Members details of the Budget for 1998/99, consequent on the approval on the overall revenue budget of £18.9 million at the meeting of the Authority held on 9 and 18 December 1997.

NOTED

1.15/98 BRIGADE ESTABLISHMENT

The Authority received a report and updated schedule which was tabled (Agenda item 15 - not reproduced) advising the Authority of the Brigade's establishment scheme after taking into account the changes arising out of the approved 1998/99 budget.

Arising from its consideration, it was agreed that a glossary of posts/terminology be circulated for use by members of the Authority.

NOTED

1.16/98 THE FIRE PRECAUTIONS (WORKPLACE) REGULATIONS 1997

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 16 - not reproduced) advising it of the introduction of the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997.

In noting the report, the Chief Fire Officer was asked to report further if this became necessary.

NOTED

1.17/98 THE REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY TASKFORCE

The Authority received a report (Agenda item 17 - not reproduced) containing information on the report of the Community Fire Safety Taskforce - "Safe as Houses".

In noting the report, Members noted the value of the initiative currently underway via the Community Fire Safety Management and the scope for partnership development with unitary authorities, which was seen as having great potential.

NOTED

1.18/98 MINUTES OF SUB-BODIES

The Authority received a report on meetings of sub-bodies since the last meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED: That, so as to keep Members of the Authority, not on such bodies, informed on issues under consideration, the minutes of sub-body meetings be included with the agenda papers of the Authority.

1.19/98 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves 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
20 Insurance Arrangements	8

The following is a summary of the item considered in Part II of the Authority's agenda.

1.20/98 INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Authority agreed to suspend Standing Orders relating to contracts and to authorise its officers, in conjunction with the Authority's insurance brokers, to seek to negotiate improved premiums.

AGENDA ITEM 6 : POLITICAL GROUPS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Authority of the formation of political groups amongst its membership.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to NOTE the report.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Notices, pursuant to Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, have been received advising of the creation of Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups. Details are set out below.

Labour Group

J J Connolly	J Morris	Dr L Silverman
C J Goodall	W J E Onions	D Thomas

Leader: J J Connolly Deputy Leader: C J Goodall

Liberal Democrat Group

P A Barnett	B W Gardner	H Parker
J C G Brooks	A B V P Hickley	A W Spratling
R J Day	Mrs K Newbound	R G Vernon-Jackson
T P Dredge		

Leader: J C G Brooks Deputy Leader: A B V P Hickley

- 2 The Authority was advised at its last meeting of the formation of a Conservative Group.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990
- 2 Notice received from Liberal Democrat Group on 3 February 1998
- 3 Notice received from Labour Group on 4 February 1998

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 7 : POLITICAL BALANCE ON COMMITTEES

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To allocate seats on committees between the Party Groups in accordance with the rules on political balance.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE** that the allocation of seats on committees be as follows:

Sub Body	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Labour
Urgency Committee	1	1	1
Personnel Committee	x	x	x
Budget Working Party	x	x	x
<i>Total</i>	6	5	4

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Political Balance on Committees

1 The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (and Regulations made thereunder) requires that the political balance on each committee must be proportionate to the political balance on the Authority and that the total number of seats must also be proportionate (the basket principle). The only exception to this requirement is where a different composition is agreed, without any Member of the Authority voting against it.

2 The representation on political groups on committees must be reviewed as soon as practicable after any such division into groups occurs, at the annual meeting of the Authority and following a change in the membership of political groups.

Membership of Groups

3 Notices have now been received under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 that all 25 Members of the Authority are members of the 3 political groups.

Entitlements to Committee Seats

- 4 The percentage entitlement of each group to committee places is as follows:

Group	Members	Percentage of Total Seats
Liberal Democrat	10	40
Conservative	9	36
Labour	6	24

- 5 On individual sub-bodies, of either 3 or 6 seats (see below), Group entitlements are:

Total Seats	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Labour
3	1	1	1
6	2	2	2

Basket of Committee Seats

- 6 The Authority has created 3 sub-bodies - the Urgency Committee (3 Members - the Group Leaders), the Personnel Committee (6 Members) and the Budget Working Party (6 Members, already appointed, 2 from each Group). At its first meeting, the Authority also established an Appointments Panel, of 3 Members, to make the appointments of Clerk and Treasurer. As these appointments have now been made, that Panel's work is completed.
- 7 The Urgency Committee and the Personnel Committee are bodies exercising executive powers. The Budget Working Party, on the other hand, is deliberative, and it could be excluded from the basket of committee seats. If it is included, the basket of seats is 15; if it is excluded the basket is 9. The Authority should decide whether to include the Budget Working Party in the basket of seats.

Allocation of Seats on Committees

- 8 Based upon either model, the entitlements to seats are as follows:

Group	Seats on Basket of 9		Seats on Basket of 15	
Liberal Democrat	3.6	= 4	6	= 6
Conservative	3.24	= 3	5.4	= 5
Labour	2.16	= 2	3.6	= 4

9 A possible allocation of seats is as follows:

Sub Body	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Labour
Urgency Committee	1	1	1
Personnel Committee	3	2	1
Budget Working Party	2	2	2
<i>Total</i>	6	5	4

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 2 Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990
- 3 Agenda & Minutes: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - 25 November 1997

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 8 : APPOINTMENT OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appoint the members of the Personnel Committee, for the period until the Annual Meeting in June 1998.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE that [insert names] be appointed to serve as members of the Personnel Committee, for the period until the Annual Meeting in June 1998.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its first meeting, on 25 November 1997, the Authority decided to establish, by 31 March 1998 a Personnel Committee, of 6 Members, with the following terms of reference:
 - a To determine matters, including staff appeals, relating to uniformed employees of the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.
 - b To determine appeals submitted by employees of the Authority in accordance with the Authority's local disciplinary, grievance and capability procedures.
 - c To make recommendations to the Authority in the case of appeals involving individual grievances, whenever its decision would have resource implications for the Authority.
 - d To invite the Authority to review the effects of the policy relating to an individual grievance whenever it believes that to be the appropriate course of action.
- 2 In the light of the decisions made in respect of the allocation of committee places to political groups, the Authority is requested to appoint Members to serve on the Personnel Committee, for the period ending at the annual meeting in June 1998.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda & Minutes: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - 25 November 1998

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 9 : VENUE OF AUTHORITY MEETINGS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To arrange the venues of meetings of the Authority and its sub-bodies.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE where its full meetings will be held and that meetings of its sub-bodies will generally be held on premises owned by the Authority.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The constituent councils have indicated that there will be no charges for the use of their accommodation for meetings of the Authority. However, if refreshments are required, charges will need to be negotiated with the local suppliers. Any expenditure so incurred will be set against the budgetary provision for Members' subsistence expenses.

If meetings are held on Authority premises, the cost of hiring tables and chairs, and any heaters in Winter, will be approximately £100 per each meeting, for which budgetary provision exists.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Hitherto, meetings of the Authority have been held at Shire Hall, Shinfield Park, Reading, the headquarters of the County Council. Members will appreciate that this will be the last meeting of the Authority held at Shire Hall, because the premises have been sold.
- 2 For full Authority meetings, a meeting room which can accommodate 25 members, attendant officers, the press and the public is required, together with rooms where the political groups may hold pre-meetings.
- 3 The Authority does not own any premises which provide purpose-built accommodation, suitable for full Authority meetings. This situation is common amongst other recently created combined fire authorities. However, a number of them hold their meetings on operational premises, making use of, for instance, appliance bays. Indeed, Members of the Authority who serve on the County Council's Public Protection Committee will know that that Committee held its last meeting at Fire & Rescue Headquarters.
- 4 The Chief Fire Officer believes it would be possible to make suitable arrangements to accommodate meetings of the Authority at certain fire stations.
- 5 Approaches have been made to the constituent councils about the use of their premises for Authority meetings. The appropriate officers have

indicated that the constituent councils will have no objection to accommodating the Authority's meetings at their premises, on a rotational basis, free of charge.

- 6 In this connection, Wokingham District Council has offered to accommodate the Authority's annual meeting on 9 June 1998.
- 7 As to the meetings of sub-bodies, in most instances there should be no problem in accommodating them in premises owned by the Authority.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Notes of meeting of Berkshire Administrators' Group - 5 February 1998

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 10 : DATES OF MEETINGS, 1998/99

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To fix the calendar of meetings of the Authority for 1998/99.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE

1 That meetings be held on

[insert day] September 1998
 [insert day] December 1998
 [insert day] February 1999.

2 That the Annual Meeting in 1999 be held on [insert day] June.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 Standing Order 1 provides that the Authority shall meet at least once per quarter, in accordance with a timetable agreed at the Annual Meeting. Although this is not the Annual Meeting, it is suggested that the Authority now fix the calendar of its meetings for 1998/99, as similar exercises are presently being undertaken by the constituent councils, and fix the calendar for 1999/2000 at the Annual Meeting in June this year.

2 At its first meeting, the Authority endorsed the following pattern of meetings:

May/June (annual meeting)
 September (final accounts)
 December (budget)
 January/February (notice of contributions to constituent councils).

3 Accordingly, the Clerk is canvassing Borough and District Council colleagues as to suitable dates in the second full weeks of September and December 1998 and June 1999 and the first full week of February 1999. He will report the outcome orally at the meeting.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Standing Orders
- 2 Agenda & Minutes - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority: 25 November 1997

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 11 : LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appoint representatives to serve on the Fire Committee of the Local Government Association and to attend the Association's General Assembly.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE

- 1 That [insert name] be appointed as the Authority's representative on the Fire Committee of the Local Government Association, for the period until the Annual Meeting in 1998.
- 2 That the appointment of representatives to the Annual Assembly of the Conference be deferred to the next meeting.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Provision has been included in the Authority's budget for 1998/99 to meet the travelling and subsistence expenses of Members.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its meeting on 3 February 1998, the Authority agreed to take membership of the Local Government Association in the financial year 1998/99. Membership entitles the Authority to representation on the Association's Fire Committee and at its General Assembly.

Fire Committee

- 2 All fire authorities are entitled to a place and a vote on the Association's Fire Committee, which will meet on the following dates:

2 June 1998
 17 November 1998
 2 March 1999.

- 3 The Authority is requested to appoint a representative to serve on the Fire Committee, for the period until its Annual Meeting in June: the next meeting of the Fire Committee will occur before the Authority's Annual Meeting.

General Assembly

- 4 Member authorities are also entitled to votes and representation on the Association's general assembly. Combined fire authorities may appoint up to 4 representatives to the General Assembly. Their votes (on issues of direct relevance to their statutory duties and responsibilities) are on a

population basis: this Authority would exercise 15 votes. Combined fire authorities are also entitled to 1 "corporate vote" at the General Assembly, which may be used on eg Election of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Association, and on issues relating to estimated expenditure and subscriptions.

- 5 As the next meeting of the General Assembly will take place on 7 July 1998, as part of the Association's Annual Conference in Bournemouth, the appointment of up to 4 representatives to attend the Assembly may be deferred to the Annual Meeting of the Authority.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda & Minutes - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority: 3 February 1998
- 2 Letter dated 21 January 1998 from Local Government Association

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 12 : MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the position regarding the payment of allowances for attending conferences, and, as a result, to suggest a revision of the list of approved duties

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE that the following be added to Part B of the list of events for which travelling and subsistence expenses may be reimbursed:

"5 Attendance at an external non-political, non-trade, conference/seminar/meeting in the United Kingdom discussing matters of direct interest to the Authority, where this has previously been approved by the Authority, a committee or the Clerk, under his delegated powers."

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Provision has been included in the Authority's budget for 1998/99 to meet the travelling and subsistence expenses of Members.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its last meeting, the Authority agreed arrangements for the administration of Members' allowances and adopted a list of events for which travelling and subsistence expenses might be re-imbursed.
- 2 At that meeting, the Authority was advised that combined fire authorities (CFAs) could not pay for Members to attend conferences, because CFAs were not local authorities for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972. Officers have undertaken further investigation on this point. Whilst the path through the legislation is tortuous, it appears that, under an 1989 amendment to the 1972 Act, CFAs may meet the conference expenses for Members attending fire related conferences. Indeed, although the Authority cannot pay attendance allowances per se, it could pay an allowance "in the nature of an attendance allowance" to Members attending such conferences.
- 3 In the circumstances, the Authority is requested to add the following to the list, adopted at the last meeting, of events for which travelling and subsistence expenses may be reimbursed, in part B:

"5 Attendance at an external non-political, non-trade, conference/seminar/meeting in the United Kingdom discussing matters of direct interest to the Authority, where this has previously been approved by the Authority, a committee or the Clerk, under his delegated powers."

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda & Minutes: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - 3 February 1998
- 2 Local Government Act 1972, as amended

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 13 : CONTINUITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk, Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To secure confirmation that the existing policies and practices of Berkshire County Council will continue in effect, until reviewed.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE** that the existing policies and practices of Berkshire County Council, as applicable to the Authority and as implemented within the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, continue to apply.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 As the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is presently a department of the County Council, the policies and practices of the County Council have been implemented by the Service as appropriate. These largely apply in the personnel field embracing, for instance,
 - Statement of Safety Policy
 - Equal Opportunities Statement and Code of Practice
 - Framework Alcohol Strategy
 - Employee Harassment and Bullying: Code of Practice
 - Code of Employee Conduct
 - Smoking Policy
 - Grievance Procedure.
- 2 There are policies of wider application, for example environmental awareness, data protection and policies relating to Brigade operations, eg the despatch of 2 appliances to incidents in risk class C and D areas.
- 3 Regulation 4(2) of the Local Government Changes for England Regulations 1994, as amended, provide that anything done by, or in relation to, a transferor authority in the exercise of, or in connection with, any functions in relation to a transferred area shall, so far as is required for continuing its effect on or after the reorganisation date, have effect as if done by, or in relation to the transferee authority. Thus, the policies and practices of the County Council, are continued in effect by this Authority, until they are reviewed, and amended as appropriate.
- 4 However, for the avoidance of doubt, the Authority is requested formally to resolve that existing policies and practices shall continue in force.
- 5 Members will appreciate that policies and procedures, particularly in the personnel field, need to be the subject of dynamic review, and responsive to

changes in legislation, best practice and experience. Reports will be submitted to the Authority when policies require review.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Various policies and codes of practice adopted by Berkshire County Council
- 2 Local Government Changes for England Regulations 1994, as amended

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

AGENDA ITEM 14 : SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Clerk, Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To propose a scheme of delegation of powers to officers.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE** that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers set out in the Appendix be adopted.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 Members will appreciate that the Authority needs to settle the powers to be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer and its other Officers, as is universal practice amongst local authorities today. For instance, it is inappropriate for all payments of revenue expenditure to be subject to specific Member approval or for the submission of objections to the grant or renewal of justices' liquor licences to be a matter for Member consideration. Such considerations also apply to the management of the Fire Brigade, where regard needs to be given, amongst other things, to the extent of delegation to the Chief Fire Officer on the power of appointment, promotion and transfer of personnel.
- 2 Against this background, Officers have drafted a scheme of delegation, set out in the **Appendix** hereto, which draws largely upon the powers presently delegated to the County Fire and Emergency Planning Officer, the Director of Finance, the County Solicitor and the Head of Secretariat, by the County Council. The advantage of adopting such a scheme is that there will be continuity when the Authority becomes responsible for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on 1 April 1998.
- 3 Accordingly, Officers commend the scheme to the Authority and would observe that it needs to be in place by 31 March.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Berkshire County Council Handbook

Contact Officer: Roger Penfold (0118) 923 3103

SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO OFFICERS

OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

- 1 General authority to arrange the discharge of functions by officers is provided by section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 2 The Scheme is made without prejudice to the general authority of Committees and Sub-Committees to delegate to officers, by virtue of the Local Government Acts, and the Powers and Duties of Committees and Sub-Committees, subject however as follows:
 - a Except in those cases where it is legally necessary to name particular officers, or categories of officers, all the delegations are made to Chief Officers and, except where it is indicated that powers shall be exercised personally, each Officer must make clear and efficient arrangements so that powers delegated to him/her may be exercised by another responsible officer, for whom he shall always be ultimately accountable.
 - b The powers of Chief Officers shall be exercised in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Authority, Contract Regulations, and in particular the approved policies and budgets of the Authority and Financial Regulations.
 - c The powers of Chief Officers shall be exercised always subject to:
 - i Estimate provision, and no commitment to additional expenditure in future financial years;
 - ii Approval to structures of the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service being reserved to the Authority;
 - iii The policies and practices adopted by the Authority from time to time;
 - iv Observance of contracts of employment and conditions of service including any discretions incorporated within them;
 - v Rights of appeal;
 - vi Having due regard to the professional advice pertinent to the particular matter; and
 - vii The contractual arrangements for provision of financial services together with related service level agreements (in appropriate cases).
 - d Every Chief Officer shall make suitable arrangements for the recording of action taken pursuant to these powers.
 - e Where any matter involves professional or technical considerations not within the sphere of competence of the Chief Officer

concerned, he/she shall obtain appropriate professional or technical advice before authorising action.

- f Where any application or request is refused by a Chief Officer in pursuance of the authority given to him/her, unless there is a statutory procedure for appeal, he shall notify the applicant or person making the request that he may have the matter referred to the appropriate committee or sub-committee.
 - g Where there is a dispute between Chief Officers, either Officer may refer the matter to the Authority for appropriate action.
 - h The initiation of civil legal action against any local authority and the issuing of public statements on matters of dispute between the Authority and other local authorities shall be reserved to Members and not delegated to officers.
- 3 References in the scheme to any statute, statutory instrument, regulation, rule, circular, agency or other agreement or any such matter in respect of which a power is delegated shall be deemed to include any modification or re-enactment of the same as may be made from time to time.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Employment

- 1 The Chief Fire Officer shall be fully empowered in the following matters of personnel management as regards the Service, other than those specifically subject to Member appointment and/or placed under the direction and control of the Clerk or Treasurer, who, in the case of such latter staff, may also exercise the following delegated powers:
 - i To add new posts, regrade existing posts, delete existing vacant posts.
 - ii To appoint to vacancies, excluding the posts of Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
 - iii To alter the designation of posts.
 - iv To suspend or dismiss staff.
 - v To accelerate or withhold increments and to award Merit payments.
 - vi To authorise standby duty payments.
 - vii To extend service for up to 12 months beyond compulsory retirement.
 - viii To extend sick leave on half pay after the expiry of contractual entitlement.
 - ix To grant or withdraw essential car user status.
 - x To approve training and course attendance.
 - xi To grant leave of absence without pay for a period not exceeding 12 months.
 - xii To grant compassionate leave.
 - xiii To operate the Authority's scheme for relocation of staff and to extend the time limit where special circumstances apply.
 - xiv To increase temporarily the salary of employees acting up in the absence of more senior colleagues in accordance with paragraph 1.3 of Part 3 of the Conditions of Services of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
 - xv Where the Authority has, by way of resolution or recommendation, formulated a proposal to dismiss employees by way of redundancy, to conduct the statutory consultation prescribed by S99 of the Employment Protection Act 1975, to determine issues raised therein and to take the necessary steps to terminate the employment of individuals by application of the terms and conditions of the appropriate severance scheme adopted by the county council: subject always to a full report on the result of

consultation and the action taken to the next appropriate meeting of the Authority.

- xvi To grant paid leave of absence (additional to annual leave entitlement) for a period of up to three months or three separate periods not exceeding one month to officers who have been invited to act as tutors or organisers on courses sponsored by a government department or a nationally recognised organisation, subject always to such work not breaching confidentiality or creating a conflict of interest. All fees received should be retained by the Authority.
- 2 When the Deputy Chief Fire Officer is not available, to nominate an officer to deputise in the Chief Officer's absence.
- 3 Following the entitlement to twelve months continuous sick leave granted in accordance with Section IV(1) of the Scheme of Conditions of Service for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades, to grant a member of the Brigade whose duties include a liability to engage in fire-fighting, a further period of sick leave on full or half-pay provided that there is a reasonable possibility that the employee will be able to return to work at the end of the extension.
- 4 To approve the repayment of household removal expenses including necessary incidental expenses at the following rates subject to the submission of three estimates and to the lowest being accepted:
 - a all internal removals arising from the promotion or transfer of existing Brigade personnel - 100%
 - b all newly appointed personnel transferring into the Brigade - 100%
 - c members of the Brigade who, living in provided accommodation, are required to vacate that accommodation on retirement or within early reach of retirement, subject to the limitations contained in Section VI, paragraph 9(6) of the Scheme of Conditions of Service for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades.
- 5 To sanction payment up to the National Health Service equivalent under paragraph 10(2) of Section IX of the Scheme of Conditions of Service (applicable to Brigade personnel whose duties include a liability to engage in fire-fighting and incur expenditure for treatment other than under the National Health Service).
- 6 To authorise Brigade members to undertake other employment, when off duty, as appropriate.
- 7 To determine applications for reimbursement of fines and costs, at his discretion, in accordance with the scheme of conditions of service of members of the Fire Brigade.
- 8 To approve the counting of broken service for incremental salary purposes, provided that the applicant undertakes to pay any arrears of pension contributions calculated in accordance with the current Firemen's Pension Scheme Order.
- 9 To act on behalf of the Fire Authority in taking decisions under Article 97 of the Firemen's Pension Scheme Order 1973 when, in the opinion of the

Brigade Medical Adviser, it becomes necessary for an operational member of the Brigade to be retired.

- 10 To exercise the powers of the ~~County Council~~ ^{Authority} under the Firemen's Pension Scheme 1973.
- 11 Subject to the concurrence of the Treasurer and a subsequent report to the relevant committee on the exercise of this power, to undertake the annual review of departmental salary structures subject to local pay arrangements.

Property

- 12 To formulate the requirements for property use and occupation of the Service.
- 13 To authorise the granting, taking or early surrendering of leases, tenancies or licences in relation to land or premises for a period not exceeding 7 years and the purchase of land for projects included in the approved Capital Programme and to otherwise exercise all powers, rights and duties in respect of such land and premises, subject to be satisfied that any income payable to the Authority is the best that is reasonably obtainable.
- 14 To determine to seek planning permission for the purposes of Regulations 3 and 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 and to pursue any appropriate appeals in respect thereof.
- 15 To enter into and manage corporate property contracts for the supply of professional and contract services on behalf of the Authority.

Finance

- 16 To write off debts:
- a up to the sum of £10,000 for a particular debtor;
 - b for a particular debtor, between the sums of £1,000 and £10,000, subject to legal advice and the consent of the Treasurer; and,
 - c of £10,000 and above, subject to the approval of the appropriate Committee which should receive both legal and financial advice.

Financial powers exercisable with the consent of the Treasurer

- 17 To approve, in accordance with schemes approved from time to time, applications for
- a Car loans; and,
 - b Lease cars.
- 18 To approve contracts for "leasing" of equipment subject to consultation with the Clerk.
- 19 To exercise the discretionary power under the Superannuation Regulations 1982 to grant pensions to contributors who retire before reaching the normal retirement age.

General

- 20 On behalf of the Authority, to take the action necessary to respond to wartime, civil or other emergency where it is not practicable to obtain the necessary urgency approvals from the Authority.
- 21 To take such action as he/she considers necessary in emergency situations to protect the interests of the Authority, having consulted with the Chairman of the Authority and the Group Leaders where appropriate. Such action is to be reported to the next meeting of the Authority or its Urgency Committee.
- 22 Subject always to estimate provision to appoint and instruct when necessary outside agents or consultants to carry out specific work within the normal terms of reference of the Service.
- 23 To incur expenditure on the normal maintenance of any approved services provided by the Authority, subject to any limitations stated elsewhere in these powers.
- 24 Always subject to contract regulations, estimate provision, statutory requirements, to enter into contracts for the supply of goods and services necessary for the functions for which he is responsible.
- 25 To authorise the payment of subscriptions and annual grants to any voluntary or other body or person for which provision has been identified in the approved estimates of the Authority.
- 26 To authorise the provision of equipment at Authority premises.
- 27 To accept on behalf of the Authority contributions by individuals or bodies towards approved capital or revenue projects subject to the concurrence of the Clerk and Treasurer as appropriate and report to the next succeeding meeting of the Authority.
- 28 To grant ex gratia payments not exceeding £1,000, subject to the guidelines issued by the Treasurer from time to time;
- a to employees of the Authority, or to workers whilst carrying out voluntary duties on behalf of the Authority who have in the normal course of their duties suffered accidental loss or damage; or
 - b to clients of the Authority who have suffered accidental loss or damage to their persons or their possessions which may arise from the actions of the Authority or its employees in the normal course of their duties;
- provided that the nature of the damage or loss is such that the Treasurer advises that it cannot be dealt with under the ~~Council's~~ ^{Authority's} insurance.
- 29 To exercise the powers of the Authority relating to offences in connection with the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and any subsequent acts amending or extending the same:-
- a To serve statutory notices as may be required for the purposes of the Authority's powers and duties.

- b To sign and issue fire certificates in respect of premises requiring them and to grant or revoke statutory exemptions from the requirements.
 - c To nominate members of the Fire and Rescue Service to be authorised in writing by the Clerk on behalf of the Authority to enter and inspect premises and to be appointed as inspectors under Section 18(1) of the Fire Precautions Act 1971.
- 30 To approve schemes for the provision of fire hydrants.
 - 31 To submit objections to the grant or renewal of registration certificates or the grant or renewal of Justices' licences within the provisions of the Licensing Act 1964 as amended.
 - 32 To authorise the installation, replacement or renewal of all necessary telecommunications equipment either at Authority establishments or Brigade personnel's premises.
 - 33 Pursuant to the Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990, to require an occupier of any part of a building in the Authority's area to affix standard uniform signs or symbols or warning notices indicating a substance likely to involve a special hazard to persons extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in case of fire.
 - 34 To use Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service transport for both on and off duty personnel, dependent upon service exigencies, for the purpose of attending locations associated with their duties.
 - 35 To undertake training for outside organisations and charge participants of such organisations for attendance.
 - 36 In consultation with the Clerk and the Treasurer, to negotiate with neighbouring fire authorities and conclude agreements under Sections 2 and 12 of the Fire Services Act 1947.
 - 37 To release from duty any suitable Fire Service Officer, as and when required, to participate in the examination work of the Fire Services Central Examination Board.
 - 38 To authorise any secondment to the Fire Service College and the Home Office.
 - 39 In respect of retained personnel, to approve extensions of service beyond the age of 55 years in exceptional circumstances and for a period not exceeding 6 months.
 - 40 To refer personnel, where appropriate, for private consultations with their specialists, in order to alleviate the delay in receiving notification to resume operational duties, subject to the cost being contained within the revenue budget.
 - 41 To approve the making of contributions towards the cost of telephones installed in the private residences of members of staff within the purview of the Authority

CLERK AND MONITORING OFFICER

General Legal Matters

- 1 In consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, to institute, defend, appeal from, settle or abandon legal proceedings whether administrative, civil or criminal in any matter in which the Authority or its officers may institute or defend proceedings in any court or arbitration or administrative tribunal.
- 2 To take all such steps as are in his/her opinion necessary, including the affixing of the Common Seal of the Authority and the bringing of legal proceedings and the making of orders to give effect to any decision or action taken properly by the Authority, or any duly authorised body or officer acting on its behalf, or to protect the interests of the Authority or any person or property to whom or for which the Authority has responsibility and to sign on behalf of the Authority contracts, agreements or other documents conferring benefits or imposing obligations upon the Authority whether financial or otherwise, and to terminate the same.
- 3 To be responsible for:-
 - a the execution of legal agreements pursuant to Standing Orders and Contract Regulations
 - b the issue of Public Notices.
- 4 To determine, pursuant to Standing Order 24, that an inspection of a document in the possession of the Authority be not allowed on the grounds that it is, or in the event of legal proceedings would be, protected by privilege arising from the relationship of solicitor and client.
- 5 To certify or authenticate any matter requiring certification or authentication on behalf of the Authority.
- 6 On behalf of the Authority to determine applications for formal registration or certification made in pursuance of any legislation imposing such a function upon the Authority, in any cases where the power to register has not been formally delegated to the Chief Fire Officer.
- 7 To maintain the register required to be kept by the Authority pursuant to the Environment and Safety Information Act 1988.
- 8 To authorise an officer of the Authority or other specified person to enter upon land or premises in accordance with any statutory provision providing for such authorisation.

As Monitoring Officer

- 9 To receive notices of pecuniary interest under Section 96(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 10 To keep a record of disclosures of pecuniary interest under Section 94 and of notices under Section 96(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 11 To be responsible for decisions regarding Members' right to papers under Section 100F of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 12 To be responsible for the receipt of documents deposited under Section 225(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 13 To ensure that the Authority's policy on Data Protection is complied with.

Administration

- 14 To be responsible for the supply of papers to the Press under Section 100B(7) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 15 To be responsible for circulating reports and agenda under Section 100B(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 16 To be responsible for the supply of summaries of minutes under Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 17 To be responsible for the preparation of lists of background papers relating to committee reports and arrangements for inspection by the public under section 100D(1) and section 100D(3) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 18 To receive notices regarding addresses to which summons to the meeting is to be sent under Paragraph 4(3) of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- 19 To sign the summons to attend meetings of the Authority under paragraph 4(2)(b) of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- 20 To approve applications for the supply of Authority and committee agenda papers and minutes.
- 21 To maintain the Authority Handbook and obtain necessary formal approval to any amendments thereto.
- 22 To authorise the attendance of Members of the Authority at conferences and seminars, of direct relevance to the Authority, and in the United Kingdom, subject to a quarterly monitoring report to the Authority.

TREASURER OF THE COMBINED FIRE SERVICE FUND

- 1 To act as the statutory officer of the Authority under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988
- 2 To act as Head of Profession for Qualified Accountants employed by the Authority.
- 3 To ensure that the financial affairs of the Authority are properly administered and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996, including the maintenance of an effective internal audit function.
- 4 To act as chief accountant and financial adviser to the Authority.
- 5 To ensure all payments to which the Authority is committed are made as they become due, and to open for the purpose of such bank accounts as he deems necessary.
- 6 To make arrangements for the collection and payment into the Authority's bank accounts of all monies due to the Authority.
- 7 To make arrangements for the maintenance of income and expenditure accounts of the Authority.
- 8 To make transfers between the various bank accounts and withdrawals from those accounts and to authorise such transfers and withdrawals being made by such officers as he/she may from time to time designate.
- 9 To raise loans as required.
- 10 In consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk, to implement decisions of national and provincial negotiating bodies.
- 11 To review and, where necessary, to respond to changed financial circumstances or opportunity, amend the methods and incidence of financing approved capital expenditure, subject to annual report to the Authority for information.
- 12 In accordance with the policies of the Authority, to implement in favour of any employee or his or her dependents, the legislation, rules and regulations relating to superannuation, retirement due to ill health or disability and any payments or gratuities arising and so to exercise any options open to the Authority thereunder.
- 13 To manage the Authority's insurances.
- 14 Within approved Authority policy and estimates, to authorise diversions between estimate heads.
- 15 To prepare, maintain and revise as necessary Financial Regulations, subject to the approval of the Authority.
- 16 To issue, when necessary, financial management instructions with which officers shall comply.

- 17 To act as the designated officer representing the client within the agreement for the Financial Services contract.

AGENDA ITEM 15 : FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To propose the adoption of Financial Regulations.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE** that the Financial Regulations, set out in the Appendix hereto, be adopted.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At the first meeting on 25 November 1997, the Authority was advised that, although some exploratory work had been undertaken to devise a set of Financial Regulations, officers suggested that adoption of these should be delayed until the Authority had appointed its Treasurer and he/she had an opportunity to contribute to them.
- 2 In the circumstances the Authority accepted the recommendations of the Berkshire Authorities' Fire Joint Committee that, pending the formulation of its own Financial Regulations and in so far that any are required at this time, the Financial Regulations of Berkshire County Council be adopted.
- 3 The Treasurer has a statutory responsibility to ensure that proper procedures exist to account for all income and expenditure made on behalf of the Authority, and that proper controls exist to protect the Authority from loss, waste, fraud or other impropriety.
- 4 The purpose of the Financial Regulations is to establish the financial control framework of the Authority which is needed to meet these statutory obligations. It is the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk, the Treasurer and the four Directors to ensure that the Financial Regulations are observed and the responsibility of all staff to comply with them.
- 5 The Regulations apply to all areas of the Authority including any consultants, or external contractor carrying out any functions which would otherwise be carried out by a direct employee of the Authority.
- 6 The Treasurer has now completed work on proposed Financial Regulations for the Authority and these are set out in the **Appendix** to this report.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Agenda and Minutes - Berkshire Authorities' Fire Joint Committee: 4 November 1997
- 2 Agenda and Minutes - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority: 25 November 1997
- 3 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth, Treasurer: tel (0118) 932 2286

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

CONTENTS

- 1 General
- 2 Accounting Procedures
- 3 Internal audit
- 4 Budget planning and preparation
- 5 Power to incur expenditure within approved estimates
- 6 Budget monitoring
- 7 Banking arrangements
- 8 Imprest and petty cash accounts
- 9 Orders for goods, works and services
- 10 Contracts for Building, Construction and Engineering Works, etc
- 11 Payment of creditors
- 12 Payment of salaries, wages, pensions and other emoluments
- 13 Collection of income
- 14 Investments borrowing and Treasury management
- 15 Assets of the Combined Fire Authority
- 16 Insurance and risk management
- 17 Retention of records

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1 GENERAL

1 These financial regulations set out the procedures approved by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (hereafter referred to as “the Authority”) for the management of its financial affairs.

2 The regulations shall be read in conjunction with the Authority’s Standing Orders on Contracts and with any Financial Instructions issued by the Treasurer of the Combined Fire Service Fund.

3 All committees and officers of the Authority and any other persons acting on behalf of the Authority shall comply with the Financial Regulations and the Financial Instructions issued under them.

2 ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

1 Subject to statutory requirements the Treasurer shall determine the form of accounts, accounting procedures and all supporting accounting records of the Authority and its officers.

2 The Treasurer’s written approval shall be obtained before any new procedure or record is introduced or any existing procedure or record is amended or discontinued relating to the accounting for cash, stores or property or dealing with income or expenditure or other financial transaction.

3 The following principles shall be observed in the allocation of accounting duties:

a The duties of providing information regarding amounts to be received or paid by the Authority and of calculating, checking and recording these sums, shall be separated as completely as possible from the duty of collecting or paying them

b Officers who are responsible for examining and checking the accounts of cash transactions shall not also be involved in performing the cash transactions

4 Proper security and privacy of information contained within financial records shall be maintained at all times, including information held on computers which shall be used in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act.

5 The Treasurer shall as soon as possible after the end of each financial year, but no later than 30th September, submit to the Authority for approval the Statutory Statement of Accounts in respect of that year.

6 The Treasurer shall present the approved Statutory Statement of Accounts together with all supporting documents to the Authority’s appointed External Auditor and shall subsequently report the Management Letter received from the External Auditor at the conclusion of the annual audit to the Authority.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT

1 The Treasurer shall secure and maintain a continuous internal audit, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996, which shall comprise an examination of the accounting, financial and other operations of the Authority.

2 Internal audit shall have access to all the Authority's premises and the right to inspect all financial records and systems at any reasonable time and seek such information and explanations as they consider necessary for the purposes of their audit. Auditors shall have the right to remove records and supporting documentation for examination as required.

3 Whenever any matter arises which involves, or is thought to involve irregularities concerning cash, stores or other assets of the Authority, or in connection with the exercise of the functions of the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk or Director shall ensure that:

- a the Treasurer is notified immediately to enable advice regarding insurance claims and future system operation to be given
- b advice is obtained from the Treasurer regarding the nature of any further investigation to be considered
- c where there is the possibility of criminal action being brought, any further interviewing is conducted under the guidance of the Treasurer's appointed internal auditors to ensure that the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 are met. The Treasurer shall advise the Chief Fire Officer and Directors as appropriate
- d any decision to refer a matter to the Police will be taken by the Chief Fire Officer or Director after consultation with the Authority's Clerk, Legal Advisor and Treasurer.

4 The Treasurer will advise the Chairman of the Authority of any significant irregularities and shall report to the Authority the outcome of investigations into them.

5 The Authority's retained internal auditors shall reserve the right to report direct to the Clerk Monitoring Officer and/or the Chairman of the Authority.

4 BUDGET PLANNING AND PREPARATION

1 The Treasurer, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, shall submit to the Authority each year an appraisal of the current financial position and an assessment of the factors likely to affect the financial position in the following year, and subsequent years where appropriate, in order for the Authority to determine its overall financial and other objectives.

2 In conjunction with the above mentioned appraisal, the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Treasurer, shall prepare each year a three year capital programme, including an assessment of the likely revenue consequences, for consideration and approval by the Authority.

3 The Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Treasurer, shall prepare an estimate of the following year's income and expenditure and this estimate shall be submitted to the Authority for approval in the form of a joint report.

4 The Authority shall consider the draft revenue and capital budgets in the light of the Basic and Supplementary Credit Approvals issued by the Home Office and the Authority's overall financial position and make such amendments as necessary.

5 The Treasurer shall, before 31 December in any year, submit to each constituent authority the approved estimate of the Authority's net expenses for the following financial year, and shall subsequently, before 15 February, give notice to each constituent authority of the amount of contribution to be paid by that authority in the next financial year.

5 POWER TO INCUR EXPENDITURE WITHIN APPROVED ESTIMATES

1 Subject to 5(2) below, the inclusion of an item in the approved budget shall constitute authority to incur expenditure up to the amount approved.

2 The inclusion of an item in the Authority's approved capital programme shall not confer authority to incur expenditure until:

- i a detailed scheme and financial appraisal has been approved by the Authority; and
- ii all necessary ministerial and other approvals have been received.

6 BUDGET MONITORING

1 The Treasurer shall ensure that an effective system of budgetary control is operated throughout the Authority.

2 The Chief Fire Officer shall be responsible for monitoring actual income and expenditure against the approved budget and for ensuring that the overall revenue budget is not exceeded. The Treasurer shall ensure that the Chief Fire Officer is provided with periodical information detailing expenditure and income under each head of the approved revenue budget and in respect of each capital scheme.

3 The Treasurer may authorise virements between revenue budget heads provided such virements are in line with the agreed policies of the Authority and do not add to the Authority's financial commitments in future years.

4 The Chief Fire Officer may, after consulting the Treasurer on resource implications authorise additional expenditure on an approved capital scheme provided that the sum involved does not exceed the lesser of 10% or £25,000 of the approved budget for the scheme, or when added to previously agreed variations the cumulative variation does not exceed the lesser of 10% or £25,000. Where the additional expenditure exceeds this limit, it shall not be authorised without the approval of the Authority.

5 Subject to 6(6) below, the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer shall report to each programmed meeting of the Authority on the progress of actual income and expenditure against the approved revenue and capital budgets.

- 6 If the Chief Fire Officer identifies a potential overspend on the revenue budget that cannot be met from savings or reductions elsewhere he shall consult the Treasurer and together they shall submit a report to the Authority explaining how the situation has arisen and stating the consequences of adhering to the approved budget. The Authority shall decide whether to require additional contributions from the constituent authorities.

7 **BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 1 All arrangements with the Authority's bankers shall be made only by or under arrangements approved by the Treasurer, who shall operate such bank accounts as he may consider necessary, and in accordance with the relevant bank mandates.
- 2 All cheques, except for cheques drawn on authorised imprest accounts, shall be ordered only by the Treasurer who shall ensure that proper arrangements are in place for their safe keeping.
- 3 The Treasurer shall issue all necessary notices and instructions to the bank relating to all financial transactions, the opening and closing of accounts, their manner of operation and any overdraft arrangements thereon.
- 4 All payments by cheque made on behalf of the Combined Fire Authority shall bear the facsimile signature of the Treasurer or other appropriate authorised officer, or be signed by the Treasurer or by an officer authorised by the Treasurer. Where the value of a cheque exceeds a limit as set from time to time by the Treasurer, it shall in the case of a cheque bearing a facsimile signature be countersigned by the Treasurer or by an officer authorised by the Treasurer.
- 5 When payments are to be transmitted electronically, the Treasurer shall determine the arrangements necessary to safeguard the Authority against potential loss.

8 **IMPREST ACCOUNTS**

- 1 The Treasurer shall approve and provide such imprest accounts and petty cash accounts, or any changes to existing accounts as he/she considers appropriate.
- 2 Reimbursement of payments shall be made on receipt of supporting vouchers in a form approved by the Treasurer and VAT receipts where appropriate.
- 3 Imprest and petty cash accounts shall not be used for:
- a encashment of personal cheques
 - b travelling or other taxable benefit which should be paid through the payroll system
 - c cash advances
 - d loans to employees
- 4 No income received on behalf of the Authority may be paid into an imprest or petty cash account, but must be banked or paid into Brigade Headquarters.

Imprest Accounts

- 5 When necessary the Treasurer will open an account with the Authority's bankers, to be operated on an imprest basis. The account holder shall not allow the account to be overdrawn.
- 6 Cheques drawn on an imprest account shall be signed by at least two signatories. The Chief Fire Officer shall provide the Treasurer with names of all signatories to the account, together with specimen signatures and details of the limits of their authorisation and position within the organisation.
- 7 Cheque books relating to Imprest Accounts will be kept secure.

Petty Cash Accounts

- 8 When a petty cash advance is made for the purpose of paying expenses, the officers concerned shall maintain a record of their receipts and payments, and shall give the Treasurer a certificate of the balance of the account, annually at the 31 March.
- 9 Petty Cash Accounts must only be accessed by authorised staff. A list of staff and specimen signatures to be sent to the Treasurer.
- 10 Petty cash is not to be used for payments exceeding £25.00. Payments exceeding £25.00 but up to £50 can be made with the approval of the Brigade Management Accountant. Payments in excess of £50 to be requested by cheque.
- 11 All payments made by Petty Cash must be supported with a receipt or acknowledgement of payment that identifies the supplier's VAT registration number, any VAT paid and details of items purchased.

9 ORDERS FOR GOODS, WORKS AND SERVICES

- 1 Where expenditure is estimated to not exceed £3,000 a contract may be entered into with such a person as is considered appropriate for the purpose.
- 2 When expenditure is estimated to exceed £3,000 but is not more than £10,000, three formal quotations must be sought wherever practicable. The seeking of quotations should be accompanied by a letter setting out requirements.
- 3 Where expenditure is estimated to exceed £10,000, the procedures set out in Contract Standing Orders shall apply. *no banking down in*
- 4 The Treasurer in consultation with the Clerk shall approve the form of Official Orders for requisitioning goods, works and services.
- 5 Official Orders shall be issued for all goods, works and services except for any specific exceptions agreed by the Treasurer. Telephone or verbal orders shall be confirmed by an Official Order the same day or as soon as possible.
- 6 Official Orders shall clearly state the nature and/or quantity of goods, works or services required, the price where known and reference to any agreed tender or quotation.

- 7 Orders should conform to any directions of the Authority regarding central purchasing and the standardisation of supplies and materials.
- 8 Orders are only to be used for goods and services required by the Authority. Individuals must in no circumstances use official orders to obtain goods and services for their private use.
- 9 Official Orders shall be signed by the Chief Fire Officer, or other officers authorised in writing by the Chief Fire Officer. The Treasurer shall be notified of all authorised officers and supplied with a record of specimen signatures.
- 10 Before placing an Official Order, authorising officers shall satisfy themselves and be able to demonstrate that authority to purchase and budget provision exist, that the order represents best value for money, and where appropriate that the Authority's Contract Standing Orders and the requirement of these Regulations have been complied with.

10 CONTRACTS FOR BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING WORKS

- 1 The Chief Fire Officer shall notify the Treasurer of all contracts entered into for building, construction and engineering works where payment is to be made by instalments.
- 2 The Treasurer shall ensure that a register is maintained of such contracts showing the state of account on each contract between the Authority and the contractor together with any other payments and the related professional fees.
- 3 Payments to contractors on account of contracts shall be made only on a certificate issued by the Chief Fire Officer, other officer or consultant in accordance with the conditions of the contract.
- 4 Every variation on a contract shall be authorised in writing by the Chief Fire Officer, other officer or consultant in accordance with the conditions of the contract. Where such variation exceeds the limit set out in 6(4), it shall not be authorised without the approval of the Authority.
- 5 Claims from a contractor or third parties in respect of matters not clearly within the terms of the contract shall be referred to the Clerk and Treasurer for consideration of the Authority's legal and financial liability before any acceptance of liability is given either orally or in writing,
- 6 Before a final payment certificate is issued for a contract, the Treasurer shall be given the opportunity to examine the contractor's final account and any other relevant documents he/she considers necessary.

11 PAYMENT OF CREDITORS

- 1 All payments on behalf of the Authority shall be made by the Treasurer, except where delegated powers have been given to holders of authorised bank accounts.

- 2 All work, goods and services shall be checked upon receipt to ensure that they are in accordance with the orders.
- 3 The Chief Fire Officer is responsible for authenticity, certifications and coding of invoice payments and shall provide the Treasurer with a list of staff authorised to certify invoices in this respect, together with specimen signatures and any financial or operational limits to their authority.
- 4 All accounts received over £25,000 shall be countersigned by the Chief Fire Officer or in his absence the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 5 Prior to invoices being passed for payment the certifying officer shall ensure the following checks have been made to ensure that:
 - a the order has been properly raised
 - b goods or services have been satisfactorily received
 - c the invoice has not previously been paid
 - d expenditure has been properly incurred and is within budget provision
 - e prices and arithmetic are correct and as quoted or estimated
 - f VAT has been correctly applied
 - g the voucher has been properly coded to the correct account
 - h discounts have been taken when available
 - i the copy orders, inventories and accounting records have been properly endorsed
 - j contract records have been properly updated
- 6 Payments shall only be made when an original invoice is provided as a supporting voucher other than when payment is supported by a contract certificate or internal payment voucher. Photocopy or Fax copies of an invoice will not be accepted for payment without the approval of the Treasurer or the Brigade Management Accountant. Any alteration to an invoice shall be supported by a debit or credit note.
- 7 All invoices from suppliers must have attached to them a certification slip, as approved by the Treasurer, showing that the required checks have been carried out and bearing the signatures of the examining officer and the certifying officer.
- 8 The normal method of payment will be by BACS or cheque, or when authorised by the Treasurer by direct debit or bank transfer.
- 9 All undisputed invoices shall be paid within allowed trading terms or where not specified within 30 days of receipt of the invoice. Prompt payment discounts shall be taken when applicable.
- 10 As soon as possible after 31 March in each year the Chief Fire Officer shall notify the Treasurer of all outstanding expenditure relating to the previous financial year.

12 PAYMENT OF SALARIES, WAGES, PENSIONS AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS

- 1 The Treasurer shall approve all arrangements and may issue Financial Management Instructions as considered appropriate concerning the payment of salaries, wages, pensions, compensation and other emoluments so as to be satisfied that proper systems of financial control are in place.
- 2 The Chief Fire Officer shall notify the Treasurer without delay, of all matters affecting the payment of such emoluments, including new appointments, resignations, dismissals, suspensions, secondments and transfers.
- 3 Forms of notification and other pay documents shall be in the form prescribed by the Treasurer and shall be certified by a line manager.
- 4 Appointments of all employees shall be made in accordance with the regulations of the Authority and the approved budget, grade and rates of pay and allowances.
- 5 Payroll transactions must only be processed through the payroll system. No pay may be processed through the creditors payment system, imprest accounts or petty cash.
- 6 All payments under the relocation scheme shall be in accordance with the scheme. A formal agreement must be signed by the member of staff prior to receipt of any benefit.
- 7 All employees seeking reimbursement of expenses in respect of post entry training courses shall enter into an agreement with the Authority in accordance with the appropriate conditions of its post entry training scheme before any payment is made.
- 8 The Chief Fire Officer shall ensure that adequate records are kept, detailing the total funded support for training, relocation or other purposes given to each member of staff, to enable costs to be ascertained when an employee leaves the Authority prematurely.

13 COLLECTION OF INCOME

- 1 The Treasurer shall approve all arrangements and may issue Financial Management Instructions as considered appropriate concerning the collection and recovery of all income due to the Authority.
- 2 The Chief Fire Officer shall ensure that charges are levied for all work done, services rendered, or goods supplied, in accordance with agreed charging rates, and that all charges are either paid for at the time of supply or invoiced for promptly.
- 3 The Treasurer shall ensure the maintenance of a periodical income register of all sums regularly due to the Authority and introduce procedures to ensure the prompt recording therein of all monies due to the Authority and of the associated contracts, leases, other agreements and arrangements.

Cash Collection

- 4 Where income is collected, officers shall:
 - a Issue an official receipt, or maintain other formal documentation
 - b Note the form in which it was received, eg cheque, cash
 - c Enter details of the debt on the back of the cheque
- 5 All money received by any of the Authority's establishments, on its behalf shall be paid without delay into the Authority's main bank account or into any other bank account established with the approval of the Treasurer. When practicable income may be paid into the Authority's Headquarters.
- 6 Details to be provided on any Bank Paying In slip shall include:
 - a The name of the collecting establishment
 - b The date collected
 - c The initials of two staff who have checked the payment
- 7 The Treasurer shall be notified of any serious shortage or missing income immediately.
- 8 Cash income must not be used for the encashment of personal cheques or for making any other payments.
- 9 Post opening when income may be present, the transfer of income between staff and receipting will be undertaken in accordance with arrangements approved by the Treasurer.
- 10 All fees and cheques levied for goods and services shall be reviewed annually with the Treasurer and any changes approved by the Authority.
- 11 Appropriate recovery procedures shall be undertaken in respect of debts which are not paid promptly.

Debtors and Credit Income

- 12 The Brigade Management Accountant is responsible for the collection of debts and shall be supplied with the necessary supporting documents in order to achieve recovery.
- 13 When payment for goods or services is not received at the time of supply, an invoice for the sum due shall be raised by the Brigade Management Accountant, who shall ensure suitable arrangements are in place to recover the debt.
- 14 Recovery action in respect of all unpaid debtor invoices shall be co-ordinated by the Brigade Management Accountant who will liaise with the Clerk/Legal Advisors where any court action is considered.

- 15 Requests to raise a debtors invoice shall be made by use of an official request form, signed by the budget holder, and shall include information about the cost centres to be charged and the application of VAT.
- 16 Variations to an invoice or cancellation shall only be accepted on receipt of a written request. Such alterations will be effected by the issue of debit or credit notes.
- 17 Write-off powers are covered in the scheme for Delegation to Officers. All write-offs will be entered into a book and will be certified by the Chief Fire Officer.

14 INVESTMENT, BORROWING AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 1 The Treasurer and staff involved in treasury management are required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- 2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Authority's Treasury Management Policy and shall maintain adequate controls to ensure that the aims of the policy are met and that the funds are only invested with approved institutions.
- 3 Prior to the start of the financial year the Treasurer shall report to the Authority on the strategy for Treasury Management proposed for the coming financial year.
- 4 The Authority shall approve a Treasury Policy Statement setting out its strategy and procedures for Treasury Management.
- 5 All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Treasurer, who shall be required to act in accordance with the approved Treasury Policy Statement.
- 6 All investments, save borrower securities, and all borrowings shall be made in the name of the Authority.
- 7 The Treasurer shall report annually to the Authority not later than 30 September following the end of the financial year on the activities of the Treasury Management operation and the exercise of the Treasury Management powers delegated to him.

15 ASSETS AND SECURITY

- 1 The Chief Fire Officer shall be responsible for the care and custody of all buildings, equipment and stores and for general security of assets in accordance with the Authority's risk management policies.
- 2 Safes and similar receptacles should be kept locked and their keys removed, and kept secure. The loss of any such keys must be immediately reported to the Treasurer.
- 3 Any break-ins, major deficiencies or loss shall be reported immediately to the Treasurer.

- 4 The Authority's property including vehicles, plant and equipment etc shall not be removed otherwise than in accordance with the ordinary course of the Authority's business or used otherwise than for the Authority's purpose.
- 5 The Chief Fire Officer shall keep an up to date asset register of all such property and such inventories and stores records as are necessary under arrangements approved by the Treasurer .
- 6 The Chief Fire Officer shall ensure that when a store of consumable items is maintained for future use, it is kept at an economic level, administered securely, and that a physical check is made of any inventory annually, or more frequently, if this is required by the Treasurer . Any major differences are to be reported to the Treasurer.
- 7 The Chief Fire Officer shall supply the Treasurer immediately after the end of the financial year, a statement of the value of any stocks or stores held at the 31 March each year.
- 8 Stores and other moveable property surplus to requirements shall be disposed of by competitive quotations or auction where appropriate; or otherwise under arrangements approved by the Chief Fire Officer in the best interests of the Authority.
- 9 The acquisition or disposal of real property, or interest in real property shall require the approval of the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer shall obtain appropriate professional advice on all property negotiations.
- 10 The Clerk shall hold all title deeds, under secure arrangements.

16 INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 1 Consistent with any directions issued by the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, Clerk and Treasurer shall review annually the exposure of risk in their areas of responsibility and ensure that appropriate insurance cover is maintained at all times.
- 2 The Chief Fire Officer shall ensure that risk management practices are adopted and staff are made aware of the possibility of risk and the impact of losses.
- 3 The Treasurer shall effect all insurance cover and shall manage all claims, in consultation with other officers, where necessary.

4 The Chief Fire Officer shall:

- a notify the Treasurer promptly of any matters affecting insurance cover, including additional risks and changes to existing risks.
- b notify the Treasurer of any incident involving loss, liability or damage, when insured by the Authority, and complete the appropriate claim form. This includes allegations of improper behaviour or negligence. The police should also be advised when relevant.
- c advise the Treasurer of the purchase or sale, hire or lease, of land or property prior to any contracts being signed or exchanged.
- d ensure that staff driving commercial or leased vehicles have given notification of any motoring convictions, and that any staff required to use their own, or a lease vehicle, have appropriate insurance cover and are licensed to drive the vehicle.
- e shall ensure that any plant or equipment where there is a statutory obligation to be regularly inspected, are inspected in accordance with directions from the Authority's insurers and notify the Treasurer of any required inspections not carried out.
- f ensure that no repairs relating to an insured incident to vehicles or property are carried out (other than urgent and essential repairs to make safe, for example replacement windscreens) without having obtained authorisation from the Insurers.

5 At no time should anyone give any indemnity to a third party, or admit liability as this will prejudice insurance cover. Indemnity forms must not be signed without first consulting with the Treasurer and Clerk.

6 The Clerk in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and the Treasurer shall be authorised to defend, settle or compromise any uninsured claims against the Authority.

17 RETENTION OF RECORDS

1 The Treasurer shall issue instructions on the current time limits for the storage and retention of financial records and documents supporting the accounts.

AGENDA ITEM 16 : TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 1998/99

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the adoption of the "CIPFA Code of Practice: Treasury Management in Local Authorities (1996)" and of a Treasury Policy statement and Strategy statement for 1998/99 for the Authority.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is requested to RESOLVE

- 1 To adopt formally the CIPFA Code of Practice: Treasury Management in Local Authorities (1996).
- 2 To approve the proposed Treasury Policy Statement and Strategy Statement for 1998/99.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The policy is to ensure the quality and status of treasury management of the Authority's cash flow, and its investments, the management of associated risks, and the pursuit of the optimum performance on returns consistent with those risks.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The main requirements of the Code are that the Authority formulates and approves:
 - a a Treasury Policy Statement - which sets out an agreed structure for the operation of the treasury function on an on-going basis;
 - b an Annual Treasury Strategy Statement - which sets out the expected Treasury operation within the forthcoming financial year;
 - c an annual Treasury report - which sets out the actual Treasury operations for the previous financial year.
- 2 The Treasury Policy Statement and Treasury Strategy Statement are appended.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Treasury Management in Local Authorities
- A Code of Practice
- A Guide for Chief Officers
- 2 PWLB Circular No
- 3 Credit worthiness Analysis

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth, Treasurer: tel (0118) 932 2286
Andrew Vallance, Brigade Management Accountant: tel
(0118) 932 2251

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
TREASURY POLICY STATEMENT**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Authority has adopted the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities. This Code sets out a framework of operating procedures for both elected members and officers to reduce Treasury risk and improve dialogue about the Authority's Treasury position. Treasury Management is defined as

‘The management of the local authority's cash flows, its borrowings and its investments, the management of the associated risks and the pursuit of the optimum performance or return consistent with those risks.’

1.2 The objectives of the Code are:

- to support the quality and status of Treasury Management in local authorities
- to provide guidance on the proper practices to be employed for Treasury Management.

2 APPROVED ACTIVITIES OF THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT OPERATION

2.1 The approved activities of the Treasury Management operation cover

- borrowing
- lending
- debt repayment and re-scheduling
- consideration, approval of use of new financial instruments and treasury management techniques
- managing the underlying risk associated with the Authority's capital financing activities
- managing cash flow
- the use of external fund managers

3 FORMULATION OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

3.1 Whilst this Policy document outlines the procedures and considerations for the Treasury function as a whole, requiring revision occasionally, the Treasury Management Strategy sets out the specific expected Treasury activities for the forthcoming financial year. This strategy will be submitted to the Authority for approval before the commencement of each financial year.

3.2 The formulation of the annual Treasury Management Strategy involves determining the appropriate borrowing and investment decisions. These are considered in the light of the anticipated movement in both fixed and shorter term variable investments (for instance, the Authority may decide to postpone borrowing if fixed interest rates are expected to fall, or borrow early if fixed interest rates are expected to rise).

3.3 The Treasury Management Strategy is concerned with the following elements:

- The prospects for interest rates
- The limits placed by the Authority on Treasury activities (per this policy).
- The expected borrowing strategy.
- The expected temporary investment strategy (including the appointment of fund managers).
- The expectation for debt re-scheduling

3.4 The Treasury Management Strategy will establish the expected move in interest rates against alternatives (using all available information, such as published interest rate forecasts where applicable) and highlight sensitivities to different scenarios.

4 APPROVED METHODS AND SOURCES OF RAISING CAPITAL FINANCE

4.1 Finance will only be raised in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and within these limits the Authority has a number of approved methods and sources of raising capital finance. These are:

	Fixed	Variable
On Balance Sheet		
PWLB	•	•
Market (Long Term)	•	•
Market (Temporary)	•	•
Local (Temporary)	•	•
Overdraft		•
Negotiable Bonds	•	•
Internal (Capital receipts and revenue balances)	•	•
EIB	•	•
Off Balance Sheet		
Leasing (not operating leases)	•	•
Other methods of financing		
Government and EC Grants		
Lottery Monies		
PFI		
Sponsorship		

4.2 All forms of funding will be considered dependent on the prevailing economic climate, regulations and local considerations. The Treasurer has delegated powers through this Policy and Strategy to take the most appropriate form of borrowing from the appropriate sources

5 APPROVED INSTRUMENTS AND ORGANISATIONS FOR INVESTMENT

5.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Finance) (Approved Investments) Regulations 1990 and subsequent amendments, the instruments approved for investment and used by local authorities are:

- Gilts
- Treasury Bills
- Deposits with banks, building societies or local authorities (and certain other

bodies)

- Certificates of deposits with banks or building societies

- 5.2 The Treasurer will formulate a suitable criteria for assessing and monitoring the credit risk of investment counterparties and shall construct a lending list comprising time, type, sector and specific counterparty limits. This criteria forms part of this Policy and is attached at Appendix 'A'.
- 5.3 Should any revisions occur to the criteria or to individual counterparties they will be submitted to the Authority for approval.

6 POLICY ON INTEREST RATE EXPOSURE

6.1 As required by Section 45 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Authority must approve before the beginning of each financial year the following Treasury limits:

- the overall borrowing limit £xxxxxx
- the amount of the overall borrowing limit which may be outstanding by way of short term borrowing £xxxxxx
- the maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable rate interest xx%

6.2 The Treasurer is responsible for incorporating these limits into the Annual Treasury Management Strategy, and for ensuring compliance with the limits. Should it prove necessary to amend these limits the Treasurer shall submit the changes for approval by the Authority.

7 POLICY ON EXTERNAL MANAGERS

- 7.1 The Authority's policy is not to appoint external investment fund managers. The reasons for this are:
- The Authority has no reserves or capital receipts unapplied
 - The only investments to be made will be from time to time in respect of advantageous cash flow position
 - The likely sums available would not justify external management

8 POLICY ON DELEGATION, REVIEW REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 The Authority
- 8.1.1 It is the Authority's responsibility to approve a Treasury Policy Statement (this document), on a periodic basis (ie in the event of a major change in policy or every three years). The approval of the limits in Section 6 above, are also the responsibility of the Authority.
- 8.1.2 Will review and consider as a minimum
- an annual Treasury Management Strategy before the commencement of the new financial year (which sets out the likely options for the forthcoming year)
 - an annual report on the Treasury Management activity before 30 September after the end of the year to which it relates.

8.2 The Treasurer will

- implement and monitor the Treasury Management Policy, revising and re-submitting the Policy for consideration to the Authority, periodically if changes are required.
- draft and submit a Treasury Management Strategy to the Authority, in advance of each financial year
- draft and submit an annual report on Treasury Management activity to the Authority by 30 September of the following year
- implement and monitor the Strategy, reporting to the Authority any material divergence and recommending revisions as and when required.

8.3 The Treasurer has delegated powers through this policy to take the most appropriate form of borrowing from the approved sources, and to make the most appropriate form of investments in approved instruments.

Appendix B sets out in more detail approved activities of the Treasury Management Operations.

8.4 The Treasurer may delegate his powers to borrow and invest to appropriate staff of the Central Services Directorate. All dealing transactions must be conducted by either the Treasurer, or the Brigade Management Accountant or staff authorised by the Treasurer to act. All transactions must be authorised by at least two of the above named officers.

8.5 The Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer will ensure that the Policy is adhered to, and if not will bring the matter to the attention of elected members as soon as possible.

APPROVED ORGANISATIONS FOR INVESTMENT

The list of institutions to whom lending is approved is as follows:

- 1 English and Scottish Clearing Banks and their wholly owned subsidiaries
- 2 The top 20 Building Societies with approval to extend into top 30 if necessary to place funds
- 3 Other local authorities
- 4 Any further Building Societies converting to PLC status

The maximum lending period is likely to be of the order of 30 days.

The main sum to be invested will be of the order of £1.2M received on the first working day of each month for payment of salaries on the last working day of each month. It is proposed to lend this to two borrowers each month to spread the risk. A further smaller sum is likely to be available for lending for shorter periods, eg on 2 or 7 day notice.

Should it be necessary to lend in a larger parcel than £600,000, using creditworthiness advice, lending will be made to Clearing Banks with an A1 + or P1 short term rating backed up by AAA or AA long term credit rating. The Treasurer and in his absence on leave the Brigade Management Accountant are the only people who can approve investments in excess of these criteria or to make use of the Building Societies extension above the top 20 Societies.

It will be necessary to see how this framework works in practice and if amendment is found to be required a further report will be made to the Authority.

DEFINITION OF THE APPROVED ACTIVITIES OF THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT OPERATION

1 Treasury Organisation

1.1 The Treasurer shall ensure that

- a A clear statement of the role of staff in the Treasury function is produced
- b Staff are adequately trained
- c Staff cover is available and known to the Authority's bank and brokers
- d There is due regard to separation of duties
- e Adequate reviews of the Treasury organisation are undertaken

2 Treasury Systems

2.1 The Treasurer shall ensure that

- a Dealing staff operate under principles set out in 'The London Code of Conduct' published by the Bank of England
- b At least two brokers are used in dealing
- c Adequate documentation of transactions is maintained
- d Proper authorisation procedures have been followed prior to transmission of payments
- e He receives weekly reports on Treasury transactions
- f Adequate reviews of the Treasury systems are undertaken

3 Treasury Techniques

3.1 The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- a The temporary investment of surplus funds
- b Financing of cash deficits by approved borrowing instruments
- c Applying a policy on interest rate exposure
- d Dealing procedures
- e Using external advice and information
- f The most effective cash transmission techniques

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
TREASURY STRATEGY STATEMENT 1998/99**

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Treasury Management Strategy details the expected activities of the Treasury function in the financial year 1998/99. Its production and submission to the Authority is a requirement of the approved Treasury Management Policy. Its format and structure is in the format required by the approved Policy. The suggested strategy for 1998/99 in respect of the following aspects of the Treasury Management funding is based upon the Treasurer 's views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts. The strategy covers:

- the current Treasury position
- prospects for interest rates
- treasury limits in force which will limit the activity of the Authority
- Capital borrowing required and the portfolio strategy
- investment strategy
- any extraordinary treasury issues

2 TREASURY LIMITS FOR 1998/99

In accordance with Section 45 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Treasury limits set by the Fire Authority as part of its Treasury policy are:

• the Aggregate Credit Limit	£	
- Home Office Basic Credit Approval		353
- Temporary Revenue Borrowing Limit		500
- Total		£853
• the overall borrowing limit		853
• the amount of the overall borrowing limit which may be outstanding by way of short term borrowing		853
• the maximum proportion of interest on borrowing which is subject to variable rate investment		100%

3 PROSPECTS FOR INTEREST RATES

3.1 The market view on the prospects for UK interest rates are becoming increasingly dominated by two areas: EMU, and the Far East.

3.2 The prospect of Economic Monetary Union (EMU) within Europe, whether or not the United Kingdom joins will be the key domestic consideration for interest with the German economy being the main economy within Europe, the key influences will be:

- the convergence of European interest rates (including the UK) to German interest rate levels
- the state of the German economy and the likely move in German rates

3.3 In addition the global economy has seen a shock for the Far East, causing further downward pressure on interest rates. This is likely to compound the view of benign long and short term interest rates.

3.4 The HM Treasury January 1998 forecasters survey results are shown below:

% Base Rate Forecast	End 1998	End 1999	End 2000	End 2001
Independent Forecasters				
Average	7.33	6.90	6.50	6.10
Highest	8.75	8.80	7.40	7.30
Lowest	6.25	6.60	5.50	4.70

3.5 Whilst there remains considerable risk over timing and impact of EMU, and the recovery after the Far East crisis, the effect on interest rate prospects in the UK is

3.6 Short term investments - The 'average' city view anticipates that accelerating inflationary pressures will see the base rate rising to about 7.5% by the end of 1998/99. As EMU considerations grow during 1998/99 and the UK economy shows signs of economic slow down, it is anticipated that there will be some easing in the base rate throughout the latter part of the year into following years.

3.7 Longer term interest rates - the longer term fixed interest rates are expected to fluctuate within a narrow range throughout the remainder of 1997/98 and 1998/99 with the December 1998 level at around 6.00% falling to around 5.75% by December 1999.

4 CAPITAL BORROWINGS REQUIRED AND THE BORROWING PORTFOLIO STRATEGY

4.1 The Basic Credit Approval allocated by the Home Office to the Authority is £353,000 and the approved capital programme envisages a spend of £246,000 in 1998/99.

4.2 The anticipation is that short term rates will continue to be more expansive than longer term fixed rate borrowing throughout 1998/99, albeit with base rates likely to fall steadily if not dramatically, this will therefore see the yield curve to remain inverted. This expectation provides the following options:

- that the expectation for falling base rates in the future is so strong that the drawing of cheaper, longer term funding in the near term could eventually entail longer term costs and the Authority's view is that maintaining a short term position will lead to a cheaper, low risk long term portfolio.
- that the risks intrinsic in the shorter term variable rates are such when compared to historically low long term funding, that the Authority will maintain a stable, longer term portfolio by drawing longer term fixed rate funding.

4.3 The main sensitivities of the forecast are likely to be two scenarios: a breakdown in EMU or rise in general European fixed interest rates (which many see higher than anticipated UK fixed interest rates); and a smooth transition of EMU with lower interest rates and a quicker than anticipated fall. The Treasurer in conjunction with external advice will continually monitor both the prevailing interest rates and the market forecasts adopting the following responses to a change of view.

- an unexpected sharp rise in long term and short term rates - In the event of a sharp rise in interest rates the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are relatively cheap.
- an expected sharp fall in long and short term rates - In the event of falling interest rates the borrowing will be postponed (waiting for borrowings to get cheaper).

4.4 Quota loans are made available from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) at one of two sets of interest rates 'lower' rates currently determined close to the cost of Government borrowing and 'higher' rates currently determined close to but just below market rates.

4.5 The Fire Authority will qualify for 'low' rate borrowing and this is likely to be the source of funding the Authority's capital programme.

5 TEMPORARY INVESTMENTS STRATEGY

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

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

5.3 The money market is currently anticipating slight increases in the base rate (to 7.50% in early 1998 before beginning to fall in late 1998). The maximum period for investment is not likely to exceed four weeks and therefore the manoeuvrability of achieving benefits from choosing longer/shorter periods for investing is constrained.

5.4 Investments will be made in accordance with the Approved Investment Regulations (1990) and with the institutions identified in Authority's investment list approved as part of the Treasury Policy Statement.

6 OTHER ISSUES

6.1 The Authority's capital programme for 1998/99 totals £246,900 compared with a basic credit approval of £353,000. To the extent that credit approval is not utilised negotiations will be undertaken with other Fire Authorities to 'lend' basic credit approval to them with the aim of its return to the Authority to cover a higher level of capital programme in the next or a future year.

- 6.2 In future years the Authority's debt portfolio will be kept under review. Advantage would be taken of any opportunities for improving the debt maturity profile or making revenue savings through either lower interest rates or discounts from the PWLB.

AGENDA ITEM 17 : BORROWING LIMITS FOR 1998/99

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To determine the 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 1998/99:

- a an overall borrowing limit of £853,000;
- b a short term borrowing limit of £853,000;
- c a maximum limit of 100% of total interest paid, being on variable rate loans.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The limits suggested give flexibility in the early stages of the life of the new Authority. The Authority can amend the limits at any time during the year.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Authority has a statutory duty to determine the borrowing limits identified in part B above.
- 2 Borrowing for capital purposes is limited to the Authority's basic credit approval of £353,000, plus any supplementary credit approval which may be granted by the Home Office during the year.
- 3 Whilst the Capital Programme for 1998/99 currently stands at £246,000, it would be prudent at this stage to fix the borrowing limit for capital purposes at the level of the available basic credit approval.
- 4 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 provides that contributions from the constituent councils 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 councils 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.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- 2 The Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997
- 3 Home Office letter dated 8 December 1997 giving notice of Basic Credit Approval

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth, Treasurer: tel (0118) 932 2286

AGENDA ITEM 18 : SUPPLEMENTARY CREDIT APPROVAL

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of the issue of Supplementary Credit Approval of £50,000 for 1998/99 in respect of transitional costs arising in connection with the establishment of the Combined Fire Authority for Royal Berkshire.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to **RESOLVE** that any eligible costs arising from the transition be charged against the Supplementary Credit Approval.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

The amortisation period for transition costs met by loan is 7 years. If the whole £50,000 were used to meet transition costs, annual debt charges of about £10,000 would result for the next 7 years.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Secretary of State (Home Office) has issued a Supplementary Credit Approval for 1998/99 in respect of capital expenditure on transition costs arising in connection with the establishment of the Combined Fire Authority for Royal Berkshire.
- 2 The direction provided that the Authority may treat as expenditure for capital purposes revenue expenditure of a specified description or purpose up to the sum of £50,000.
- 3 An example of the type of expenditure which could be charged against the Supplementary Credit Approval is the purchase and implementation of financial management systems to replace those which were previously provided by Berkshire County Council.
- 4 The Home Office will be monitoring the use made of the Supplementary Credit Approvals as the year progresses. Should it become clear at any stage that a particular brigade does not intend to use the Credit Approvals which it has been allocated in full, consideration will be given to the re-allocation of any surplus to other brigades in local government organisations.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Home Office Letter dated 10 February 1998 and Direction under Section 40 (6) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Contact Officer: Donald Illingworth, Treasurer: tel (0118) 932 2286

AGENDA ITEM 19 : CHARGING FOR SERVICES

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to the charging policies and proposed charges for services in 1998/99.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE:

- 1 to adopt the fees set out in Appendix 'A' to the report, and
- 2 to authorise the Chief Fire Officer to increase charges annually in line with the firefighters' annual pay award.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

It is estimated that the increases will result in additional income of £17,000, which was incorporated in the 1998/99 Budget.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 The Fire and Rescue Service provides a range of services for which charges are made. In previous years, these charges have been increased in line with inflation. County Council policy has allowed chief officers to increase charges in line with inflation, without seeking Member approval. It is suggested that this policy be continued but, as all of the services are personnel based, that the prices should be linked to the firefighters' pay award, rather than the rate of inflation (the former normally being the higher).
- 2 A recent report into charges for Fire Safety Training courses highlighted that these charges did not adequately cover all costs and it is, therefore, proposed initially to increase course fees by 10%. Similarly, the fee for direct connection systems has not been increased for a number of years and it is suggested that there be an initial increase of 10% for this category also.
- 3 With regard to all the services a 5% increase for 1998/99 is recommended and Appendix 'A' reflects all of the suggested charges.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact Officer: Andrew Vallance, Brigade Management Accountant, tel: (0118) 932 2251

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FEES & CHARGES 1998/99

Special Services	1997/98	1998/9	
Appliance & crew (per hour or part thereof)	£185 + VAT	£195 + VAT	
Gaining entry	£80 + VAT	£85 + VAT	
Interview with Fire Officer (per hour or part thereof)	£80 + VAT	£85 + VAT	
Instructors (per hour or part thereof)	£80 + VAT	£85 + VAT	
Other Special Services will be costed accordingly to the particular circumstances and only undertaken after written acceptance of the estimate.			
Other Charges	1997/98	1998/99	
Fire Report	£35 + VAT	£37 + VAT	
Fire Investigation Reports	to be costed by Chief Fire Officer, based on time and materials + VAT		
Fire Certificates	Determined by Local Government Association		
Duplicate Fire Certificates	Charge to be determined by Chief Fire Officer based on costs incurred + VAT		
Log Book	£15 + VAT	£16 + VAT	
Servicing Breathing Apparatus Equipment	to be costed by Chief Fire Officer based on costs incurred + VAT		
Direct Access to Control Connection Fee	£250 + VAT	£275 + VAT	
Fire Safety Training Courses			
(all charges subject to VAT)			
Fire Extinguisher Use	3 hours	£65	£72
General Responsibility	1 day	£110	£121
Management Responsibility	1 day	£110	£121
Residential Nursing Care (General)	1 day	£110	£121
Hotels & Boarding Houses	1 day	£110	£121
Fire Awareness Talk	3 hours	£110	£121
Breathing Apparatus (Initial)	2 day	£2,200	£2,420
Breathing Apparatus	1 day	£1,100	£1,210
Breathing Apparatus (Refresher)	1 day	£1,100	£1,210
Industrial Fire Fighting	2-3 days	Price on application	Price on application
General Responsibility (on site)	1 day	£1,100	£1,210
Management Responsibility (on site)	1 day	£1,100	£1,210
Fire Extinguisher Use (on site)	3 hour	£650	£715
Team Building & Leadership	1 day	£1,100	£1,210

AGENDA ITEM 20 : PAY AND REWARD STRATEGY AND OFFICER CAR USER POLICIES

To: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
Date: 16 March 1998
Officers Contributing: Treasurer, Chief Fire Officer

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

To to refer the Pay and Reward Strategy and Officers' Car User Policies to the Personnel Committee for determination.

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to RESOLVE that the Personnel Committee be authorised to determine, by 1 April 1998, the Authority's Pay and Reward Strategy and Officers' Car User Policies.

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROPOSED ACTION

There are no financial implications at this stage.

D SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1 At its meeting on 17 September 1997, the Berkshire Authorities' Fire Joint Committee considered a report on the future pay and reward strategy for the Authority and requested the Chief Fire Officer to consult with the constituent councils' Chief Executives on this issue, prior to reporting back to either the Joint Committee or the Authority. Due to competing work pressures by all parties, it was not possible to undertake the consultation and, now that the Authority is a separate authority, it would no longer be appropriate for the consultation to take place.
- 2 The vast majority of the Authority's personnel are employed on national conditions of service, but a number of groups of personnel, eg senior management and professional staff, are employed on local pay arrangements. The arrangements will require to be reviewed prior to 1 April 1998. Though the Chief Fire Officer and the County Council's Director of Personnel have been considering the options, it will not be possible for a detailed report to be presented to this meeting. It is, therefore, suggested that, although it does not fall fully within the Committee's terms of reference, this issue be referred to the Personnel Committee for determination, prior to 1 April 1998.
- 3 Officers of the Fire and Rescue Service lease cars through the County Council's scheme. This scheme terminates on 31 March 1998, although personnel currently availing themselves of a leased car may continue to do so until the lease period expires. However, new arrangements need to be considered and determined, for implementation on 1 April 1998.
- 4 The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer have been investigating the options but are not in a position to present a detailed report to the Authority. It is, therefore, suggested that this issue be also referred to the Personnel Committee, for determination prior to 1 April 1998.

E BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and Minutes - Berkshire Authorities' Joint Fire Committee: 17 September 1997.

Contact Officer: David Noonan, Fire and Rescue, tel: 0118 932 2250