

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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Telephone Reading (0118) 945 2888 Facsimile (0118) 959 0510

MEETING: Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal
Berkshire Fire Authority

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday 17 April 2001 at 6.30pm

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

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

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

D C H Williams
Clerk to the Authority

To: MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

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

Briefing Meetings:

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

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

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



AGENDA

PART I AGENDA

PAGE NO.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for Absence | - |
| 2 | Date of Next Fire Authority Meeting | - |

To note that the Annual Fire Authority meeting will now take place on Tuesday 10 July 2001, in the Council Chamber, at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, commencing at 6.30pm. The meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday 13 June 2001 has therefore been cancelled.

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| 3 | Exclusion of the Public | 1 |
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PART II AGENDA - CONFIDENTIAL

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

AGENDA ITEM 3: EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To: Extraordinary Meeting of the Royal Berkshire
Fire Authority
Date: 17 April 2001
Officer Contributing: Clerk & Monitoring Officer

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

	Agenda Item	Paragraph
4	Proposal to Resolve Current Trades' Dispute	1

Note:

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

AGENDA ITEM 4: PROPOSAL TO RESOLVE CURRENT TRADES' DISPUTE

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

A PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

B PROPOSED ACTION

The Authority is invited to consider the report and RESOLVE:

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

C FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

D CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

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

E SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

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

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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

APPENDIX A

PROPOSAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX B

VIREMENTS REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PROPOSALS

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

Explanatory Notes

The proposal requires 8 additional wholetime firefighter posts at station level. £160,000

This will be met by:-

Non-appointment of 2 non-uniformed technicians at Whitley Wood £38,000
(Note: Funding contained within same budget as Station posts:
Operations – Employees)

Non-appointment of 2 uniformed firefighter posts in Community Safety £40,000
(Community Safety - Employees)

Reduction in funding for Community Safety campaigns. £60,000
(Community Safety – Supplies and Services)

Non up-grading of Slough's Water Tender £20,000
(Engineering – Transport)

Balance transferred from deferred appointment of non-uniformed £2,000
Officer to Best Value Team.
(Audit and Best Value – Employees)

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



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

Your reference:

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

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

Date: 7 March 2001

Dear Councillor

AGENDA FOR MEETING OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

I have pleasure in attaching your Agenda for the Meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to be held on Wednesday 14 March 2001 in the Council Chamber at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead commencing at 6.30pm.

The Town Hall is situated between Park Street and St Ives Road and the car park adjacent to the Town Hall, which is available after 5.00pm, is accessed via Park Street. A map showing the venue is attached.

Members are advised that they should approach Maidenhead via the M4 Motorway and leave at Junction 8/9. At the top of the slip road take the second exit (A308(M)) and at the next roundabout turn left into the A308 Braywick Road. Continue on the Braywick Road and at the roundabout whilst remaining on the A308 move over to the right hand lane as you pass under the Railway Bridge. Stay in the right hand lane turning left at the traffic lights into the one way system (Grenfell Road). After approximately 50 yards turn right, moving into the middle lane and at the traffic lights turn right into Broadway. Keeping to the left hand lane continue down Broadway turning right at the T-junction into Park Street. (The Town Hall should be opposite you at this point). The entrance to the Car Park will be on your left approximately 50 yards from the Park Street/Broadway junction.

Entrance to the Town Hall is via the Desborough Suite in Park Street where a Security Officer will be on duty to assist Members. The Council Chamber is located on the first floor and the Briefing Rooms can be found at the following locations:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Members Room | Turn left out of the Council Chamber, through the double doors and the room is the first door on the right hand side |
| Meeting Room A | From the Council Chamber go down the stairs directly in front of you. At the bottom of the stairs turn right. Meeting Room A is the first door on the left. |
| Meeting Room B | From the Council Chamber go down the stairs directly in front of you. At the bottom of the stairs turn left. Meeting Room B is the first door on the right. |

If any Member is travelling by train the Town Hall is a short walk from the Station via King Street, Queens Street and York Road, taking the second left into Park Street. (Please refer to map). Alternatively please let me know and I will arrange for you to be collected from the Station forecourt.

Yours sincerely



David R Weller
Committee Administrator

To: All Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

