

AGENDA ITEM 2 MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.00PM AND CONCLUDED AT 6.50HRS.

Present: **B J S Patman (Chairman), T D McCann (Vice-Chairman),
O E Jeffery**

Apologies: **Mrs C Bateson, Ms K Peak**

4.01/00 MINUTES: 15 AUGUST 2000

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 15 August 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4.02/00 BRIGADE COMPETENCE BASED TRAINING STRATEGY

The Committee was advised (Agenda item 3 - not reproduced) of the Brigade's Strategy for the implementation of a competency based approach to training together with the achievements to date and were requested to approve the Brigade's plans for future action.

Members were advised that Fire Circulars 15/97 and 8/99 provided Brigades with a detailed template for the introduction of Training for Competence into the Fire Service. To illustrate how this would be achieved in Royal Berkshire the Committee received a brief presentation giving an overview of the systems now in place across the Brigade. The recent publication of Role Maps for all Station based roles had constituted a key milestone in the development of Competence Based Training and its subsequent implementation.

The publication of HM Fire Service Inspectorate Expectations Document and the recent inspection of the Brigade highlighted the priority attached to this matter by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The Brigade had made significant progress and commitment to Competence Based Training and with Phase 1 fundamentally completed as detailed in Appendix 1 (not reproduced) a solid basis for implementation had been achieved. One of the major objectives, as indicated in Appendix 1, was to achieve Approved Centre Status by April 2000 and a copy of the Certificate of Approved Status was presented in Appendix 3 (not reproduced).

A further requirement of Phase 1 was to appoint a Centre Co-ordinator/Internal Verifier and to achieve this a revenue growth bid of £19,000 has been submitted for the appointment of a temporary Assessment Centre Co-ordinator for a two year period.

The cost of the current initiatives had been met from within the approved Brigade Training Plan budget for 2000/2001.

Details of the activities involved and progress achieved to date with regard to Phase 2 was set out in Appendix 2 (not reproduced). This would involve the implementation and establishment of systems within the Training Centre and the workplace.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The Brigade's progress to date as set out in Appendix 1 (not reproduced) be noted.
- 2 The Brigade's plans for future action as set out in Appendix 2 (not reproduced) be approved and adopted accordingly.

4.03/00 MANAGEMENT OF SICK PAY FOR UNIFORMED EMPLOYEES

The Committee's approval was sought (Agenda item 4 - not reproduced) to the introduction of a new Brigade Policy to formalise the management of sick pay entitlements for uniformed staff.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 1 of the report (not reproduced) which set out Section IV of the NJC for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades Scheme of Conditions of Service in respect of the paid sick leave entitlements.

The proposed Policy, a copy of which was presented in Appendix 1 (not reproduced), pulls together the existing Conditions of Service, the Chief Fire Officer's delegated powers and the Health, Welfare and Sickness Policy. Its aim was to provide a structure to manage the sick pay for uniformed employees.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that since the Agenda for the meeting had been published the following information had now been received and agreed nationally regarding the settlement of differences of opinion:

"If there is a difference of opinion between the advice given by the Brigade's Medical Advisor and that given by the employees' Medical Advisor then it will be determined by a independent Medical Panel arranged through BUPA."

The new Policy has been the subject of consultation with Representative Bodies and having been adopted was now contained in the Employee Handbook.

RESOLVED: That the Brigade's Policy for the management of sick pay entitlements of uniformed staff as set out in Appendix 1 (not reproduced) be approved and adopted.

4.04/00 RACE EQUALITY GRANT

The Committee was advised (Agenda item 5 - not reproduced) of the success of Reading Council for Race Equality's bid for Race Equality Grant in partnership with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to the Home Secretary's Connecting Communities programme.

In noting details of the grant application and activities to be undertaken as set out in Appendix 1, Members were advised that the £243, 000 ring-fenced grant over a two and half year period would fund positive action measures to encourage recruitment from the ethnic communities. In addition it would also assist with the promotion of community links and community fire safety for the minority ethnic communities across the whole of Berkshire to a degree that would not have been possible within the existing Fire Authority's budget.

The fact that a very tight time-scale would operate had been recognised and to ensure a smooth management of the project a Steering Group had been established. The Steering Group had met for its inaugural meeting on 31 October 2000 and a key early task is to recruit staff, which should then enable the project to make positive progress. In addition other early actions had been identified and initiated.

In welcoming and fully supporting this initiative, Members were advised that the Brigade was the only Fire Service to be involved in a successful stand-alone bid application.

NOTED**4.05/00 THE GOVERNMENT STRATEGY FOR REVITALISING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS ON REFORMING THE LAW ON INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER**

The Committee was informed (Agenda item 6 - not reproduced) of the Government's Strategy for Revitalising Health and Safety together with proposals for reforming the law on Involuntary Manslaughter, and the identification of any implications for the Brigade.

The Government had unveiled a package of measures intended to give new impetus to occupational safety and health (OSH). The package included a ten point strategy and a forty four point Action Plan, details of which were set out in paragraphs 2 and 6 of the report (not reproduced). Members attention was also drawn to the proposed penalties together with the main implications of the proposals as summarised in paragraphs 7 and 10 respectively of the report (not reproduced). It was likely to become law by the end of next year.

With the approval of the Chairman the Chief Fire Officer referred to a LGA Health and Safety Seminar, supported by CACFOA and HSE, entitled "The Buck Stops With You". The Seminar was to be held on Wednesday 17 January 2001 in Birmingham at venue still to be determined. Members were asked to appoint a representative to attend the Seminar accompanied by a Principal Officer. It was therefore **RESOLVED:** That Councillor T D McCann be appointed as the Fire Authority's representative to attend the LGA Health and Safety Seminar on Wednesday 17 January 2001 in Birmingham.

4.06/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That the next Personnel Committee meeting be held on Monday 12 March 2001 at Brigade Headquarters commencing at 6.00pm.

4.07/00 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated:

	Agenda item	Paragraph
9	Part II Minutes - Tuesday 15 August 2000	1

Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Fire Authority's Personnel Committee meeting held on Wednesday 1 November 2000.

4.07/00 PART II MINUTES: 15 AUGUST 2000

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Tuesday 15 August 2000, having been previously circulated, were received and approved as a correct record.

Signed:  Date: 8 January 2001
Chairman

