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AGENDA ITEM 2: MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON MONDAY 3 APRIL 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.45PM AND CONCLUDED AT 7.20PM

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), A B V P Hickley, B J S Patman

Apologies: Mrs C Bateson, Ms K Peak

2.01/00 MINUTES: 17 JANUARY 2000

The Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 17 January 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2.02/00 A THEMATIC REVIEW BY HM FIRE SERVICE INSPECTORATE OF SICKNESS AND ILL-HEALTH RETIREMENTS IN THE FIRE SERVICE

The Committee was advised (Agenda item 3 - not reproduced) of the recommendations set out in the HMI Thematic Review of Sickness and Ill-Health Retirements in the Fire Service together with the Brigade's current position and future plans for their implementation.

The recommendations from Part 4 of the Thematic Review Report were presented in Appendix A (not reproduced). Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 1-5 of the report (not reproduced) which set out various observations relating to the 32 recommendations.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions on and seek clarification of the recommendations set out in the Appendix. In response to a request from the Chairman, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a report focusing on how the Brigade were addressing the recommendations which further work by the Brigade was required would be presented to a future Fire Authority meeting.

NOTED

2.03/00 TARGETS FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND CAREER PROGRESSION OF WOMEN

The Committee was advised (Agenda item 4 - not reproduced) of the Home Secretary's announcement of targets for the recruitment, retention and career progression of women in the Fire Service and were requested to approve the adoption

of the proposed targets as set out in Fire Service Circular 1/2000.

It is recognised that the baseline for the employment of women in the operational service cannot reflect the percentage of women in the working population because it is generally accepted that fewer women than men could achieve the levels of fitness and strength, to meet the job requirements of a Fire-Fighter. In addition there is no known research to show what percentage of men and women can meet current requirements.

Taking the above into account the Home Secretary has set the following targets which are considered to be ambitious but achievable and relate to the recruitment of women, both Wholetime and Retained operational staff, excluding control:

4% by 1 April 2002
 9% by 1 April 2004
 15% by 1 April 2009

The targets for the retention and career progression of women (Wholetime, Retained and Control) were set out in paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced). No targets have been set for women in the non-uniformed sector.

In acknowledging that the targets would challenge the Brigade's ability to attract and retain women in operational roles outside Control Rooms it was:

RESOLVED: That on the instruction of the Home Secretary, the proposed targets be approved and adopted, but in so doing, and given the existing percentage of women in the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the short time-scale involved, it is considered that the targets cannot be realistically applied and/or achieved. Nevertheless Officers be asked to use their best endeavours in attempting to achieve the targets as set out in the report.

2.04/00 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 I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated:

	Agenda item	Paragraph
5	Part II Minutes - Monday 17 January 2000	1
6	Request for Unpaid leave of Absence - Fire-Fighter S P Clark	1
7	Annual Review of Local Pay Ranges	1

Note: The following is a summary of the Agenda items dealt with under Part II of the Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 3 April 2000.

2.05/00 PART II MINUTES: 17 JANUARY 2000

The Committee received and approved the Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 17 January 2000.

**2.06/00 REQUEST FOR UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE -
FIRE-FIGHTER S P CLARK**

The Committee determined an application from Fire-Fighter S P Clark for unpaid leave of absence for a period of eighteen months.

2.07/00 ANNUAL REVIEW OF LOCAL PAY RANGES

The Committee considered and approved the revised pay ranges for local pay groups to take effect from 1 April 2000.

Signed: 
Chairman

Date: 15 August 2000

