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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 TUESDAY 15 AUGUST 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.00PM AND CONCLUDED AT 7.47PM

Present: O E Jeffery, T D McCann, B J S Patman, Ms K Peak

Apologies: Mrs C Bateson

3.01/00 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor B J S Patman be elected Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Personnel Committee for the ensuing year.

3.02/00 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor T D McCann be elected Vice-Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Personnel Committee for the ensuing year.

3.03/00 MINUTES: APRIL 2000

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 3 April 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3.04/00 FIRE SERVICE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report (Agenda item 7 - not reproduced) on the Home Office's Fire Service Equal Opportunities Action Plan entitled "Toward Diversity - Promoting Cultural Change" together with details of the Brigade's response and approval was sought to the Brigade's plans for future action.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to the Home Office's document referred to above and drew Members attention to the key aspects of the report together with Appendix 1 (not reproduced) which detailed the progress made to date by the Brigade in complying with the Plan. Special reference was made to Section 17 regarding the need for each Brigade to appoint an Equality and Fairness Special Advisor and the opportunity was taken to introduce Ms Sonia Gandhi, the Brigade's Equal Opportunities Officer appointed in June 1999.

Reference was also made to the Brigade's Dignity and Respect Policy presented in Appendix 2 (not reproduced). In drawing Members attention to the key aspects of the

Policy, the Chief Fire Officer reported that prior to its introduction into the Brigade the Policy would be subject to formal consultation with the Representative Bodies. In addition the ground Rules set out on pages 22/21 of the report (not reproduced) would be displayed on Notice Boards throughout the Brigade. Credit was also due to the Fire Brigade's Union for supporting this initiative. Members referred to Section 27 of Appendix 1 relating to the exit interviews and the fact that the practicalities of undertaking follow-up interviews with third parties was being considered. They suggested that consideration be given to using the resources available at the Unitary Authorities to undertake such interviews. The Chief Fire Officer in welcoming this suggestion reported that although a lack of resources had been identified as a problem in this area the question of additional funding being allocated was to be raised as an issue during the forthcoming budget process.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1 Home Office's Fire Service Equal Opportunities Action Plan for the period 1 June 2000 to 31 May 2001 be noted.
- 2 Brigade's progress made to date in complying with the Plan as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.
- 3 Brigade's plans for future action as set out in Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.

3.05/00 RETAINED FIRE-FIGHTERS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Committee was advised (Agenda item 5 - not reproduced) of recent developments which, if implemented, would have an important impact on the future of the Retained element of the Fire Service and approval was sought to a future course of action.

Members were reminded that the Brigade's Retained section plays a key part in providing primary fire cover for 'D' risk areas and back-up to the Wholetime crews in certain 'C' Risk areas of the County. Retained Fire-Fighters provided agreed fire-fighting cover whilst pursuing another, usually full-time, occupation.

Members attention was drawn to paragraph 3 of the report (not reproduced) which summarised a number of recent developments which potentially have significant impacts on the traditional role of the Retained Fire-Fighter. The Chief Fire Officer in taking Members through the issues raised in paragraph 3 advised that the implications for the Brigade could be quite significant and have a major impact on the way in which the Fire Service operates in respect of its Retained Fire-Fighters Section.

The Brigade had accepted the need to undertake a Review of the Retained Section and this was included in the Strategic Plan for Service Delivery in 2000/2001 with a scheduled completion date of March 2001. The issues identified in the report would therefore be covered by the Review.

In noting the contents of the report and the potential implications for the Brigade it was **RECOMMENDED:** That the issues identified be referred to future Fire Authority and/or Budget Working Party meetings.

3.06/00 PAYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL FEES - NON-UNIFORM STAFF

The Committee's approval was sought (Agenda item 6 - not reproduced) to the extension of the existing Brigade Policy of reimbursing professional fees for Directors, Chief Officers and Uniformed staff to all Non-Uniformed staff.

The estimated cost of implementing this Policy, based on the current establishment of non-uniformed personnel would be £500 which could be found from within the approved staffing budget for 2000/2001. Members were advised that in the context of equality, differential of conditions of service on the basis of seniority of post without objective justification was not appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the reimbursement of professional Institute/Association membership fees where such membership is an essential requirement of the job profile to all non-uniform posts be approved with effect from 1 April 2000.

3.07/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That a further meeting of the Personnel Committee be arranged for Wednesday 1 November 2000 in the Strategic Command Centre commencing at 6.00pm.

3.07/00 ADDITIONAL PART II AGENDA ITEM

In response to a request from the Clerk and Monitoring Officer it was **Agreed** that the following additional Part II Agenda item be included for consideration at the meeting on the grounds of Urgency:

Agenda item 14: Employment Tribunal Application - Leading Fire-Fighter Julie Holcroft

3.08/00 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
9	Part II Minutes - Monday 3 April 2000	1
10	Workshops Pay Review 2000	1
11	Employment Tribunal Application - Mr P Dormer	1
12	Grievance Panel - Ms Penny Southall	1
14	Employment Tribunal Application - Leading Fire-Fighter Julie Holcroft	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 Tuesday 15 August 2000

3.09/00 PART II MINUTES: MONDAY 3 APRIL 2000

The Committee received and approved the Part II Minutes of the last meeting.

3.10/00 WORKSHOPS PAY REVIEW 2000

The Committee was advised of the outcome of the 1999 Pay Review for the Brigade's Workshops staff.

3.11/00 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL APPLICATION - MR P DORMER

The Committee was advised of the outcome of former employee Mr P Dormer's application to the Employment Tribunal.

3.12/00 GRIEVANCE PANEL - MS PENNY SOUTHALL

The Committee was informed of the Grievance Panel's decision in respect of the Grievance by Leading Fire Control Operator Ms Penny Southall together with details of the procedural issues, raised by Members of the Grievance Panel, that are to be presented to the Fire Authority at its meeting in September for consideration and determination.

3.13/00 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL APPLICATION - LEADING FIRE-FIGHTER JULIE HOLCROFT

The Committee considered the possible settlement of an Industrial Tribunal case and authorised the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to negotiate a settlement based on the terms approved at the meeting.

Signed: 
Chairman

Date: 1 November 2000

