

AGENDA ITEM 2: MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S URGENCY COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2002 COMMENCING AT 11.05HRS AND CONCLUDED AT 11.22HRS

**Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), B J S Patman (Vice-Chairman),
E L Glasson (Leader of the Labour Group)**

5.01/02 MINUTES 14 OCTOBER 2002

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 14 October 2002, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 4.02/01: Implementing Electronic Government Statement

In third sentence of second paragraph delete "2003" and insert "2002"

5.02/02 CONSULTATION ON ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS

The Urgency Committee was requested (Agenda item 3 – not reproduced) to formulate and approve the Fire Authority's views on the Draft Accounts and Audit Regulations issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). An urgent decision is required as the Local Government Association will be considering its response on 28 November and require member Authorities views by 11 November 2002.

The Secretary of State is minded to amend the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996, which relate to the accounting arrangements of Local Authorities and will take the opportunity to issue new consolidated Regulations. Whilst it is proposed that the Regulations will be effective from 1 April 2003, some proposals will apply to the accounts for year 2002/2003.

In noting the background to the proposed Regulation changes as set out in paragraph 4 of the report (not reproduced), Members attention was drawn to paragraph 5 of the report (not reproduced) which summarised some of the more significant changes. A copy of the Draft Statutory Instrument that will implement the proposals together with a commentary on the proposed regulations provided by the ODPM was presented in Appendices A and B respectively (not reproduced).

The Authority Treasurer has appraised the Draft Regulations and is of the opinion that the majority of changes reflect good practice and to a large extent is already followed by the Fire Authority. There are however three matters, detailed in paragraph 8 of the

report (not reproduced), where the Authority may wish to submit comments. Consideration was therefore given to the Treasurers comments on the three matters highlighted together with his suggested response and the following is a summary of the comments made and where necessary decisions reached:

Regulation 7: Salaries of Senior Staff

The Treasurer had suggested that the current banded approach should continue and that disclosure of detailed information in respect of remuneration of some individual senior staff be not supported. Members were of the opinion however that as the salaries of senior staff within the private sector were already in the public domain the proposed Draft Regulation 7(a) should be supported.

Regulations 10, 11 and 12: Approval of Accounts and Publication of Statement of Accounts

In supporting the suggested response that three months between approval of the accounts by the Authority and the publication of the Audited Accounts is practical, Members were of the opinion that, based on past experience, this should be extended to four months.

The Authority's proposed views in respect of Regulation 7(b) and Regulation 14 (Public Inspection of Accounts) were supported.

RESOLVED: That, on the grounds of urgency, the Local Government Association be informed that whilst being generally supportive of the contents of the draft regulations the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has the following views:

1 Regulation 7: Salaries of Senior Staff

The Authority favour a statement in the published Accounts that information on Councillors allowances is available separately.

2 Regulations 10. 11 and 12: Approval of Accounts and Publication of Statement of Accounts

On the basis of past experience it is considered that four months between approval of the Accounts by the Authority and publication of the Audited Accounts is the most practical period.

3 Regulation 14: Public Inspection of Accounts

An extension of the period of inspection to three months would be supported.

5.03/02 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 14 October 2002	1,7 & 8

Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Urgency Committee meeting held on Monday 4 November 2002

5.04/02 PART II MINUTES: 14 OCTOBER 2002

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 14 October 2002 were received and approved as a correct record.

5.05/02 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Urgency Committee also discussed the procedure relating to the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer and requested that a report be prepared and presented to a further Urgency Committee to be held on Monday 2 December 2002 at 6.00pm.



Signed.....

Chairman

Date: 22 November 2002

**AGENDA ITEM 4: PART II MINUTES – MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER
2002**

5.04/02 PART II MINUTES: 14 OCTOBER 2002

The Part II Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 14 October 2002, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5.05/02 ADDITIONAL PART II ITEM OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a request from the Chairman, Members approved the inclusion of the following item of Any Other Business on the grounds of urgency:

Agenda item 6: Any Other Business – Procedure for Appointment of
New Chief Fire Officer

**5.06/02 ANY OTHER BUSINESS – PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTMENT
OF NEW CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

In referring to the fact that the Chief Fire Officer would be leaving the Fire Authority on 31 March 2003, the Chairman indicated that it would be necessary for a timetable relating to the appointment of his successor to be produced for approval by Members. In response to a question the Director of Human Resources confirmed that he would anticipate the advertisement being published early in the new year.

Members therefore asked that a report outlining a proposed appointment timetable together with the outcome of an investigation into the possibility of using a Recruitment Consultant against the internal process be produced and presented to a further Urgency Committee to be held on Monday 2 December at Brigade Headquarters commencing at 6.00pm.

RESOLVED: That, on the grounds of urgency, a report outlining a proposed timetable for the appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer, together with the outcome of an investigation into the possibility of using a Recruitment Consultant against the internal process be produced and presented to a further Urgency Committee to be held on Monday 2 December at Brigade Headquarters commencing at 6.00pm.

Signed:

Chairman

Date: 22 November 2002

