

AGENDA ITEM 2: MINUTES

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY'S URGENCY COMMITTEE HELD AT BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS ON MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2000 COMMENCING AT 6.15PM AND CONCLUDED AT 6.40PM.

Present: J C G Brooks (Chairman), Ms K Peak

Apologies: B J S Patman

6.01/00 ADDITIONAL PART II AGENDA ITEM

In response to a request from the Chairman, Members agreed to include the following additional Part II Agenda item for consideration at the meeting:

Agenda item 5A: Request for Unpaid Leave of Absence

6.02/00 MINUTES 9 OCTOBER 2000

The Part I Minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 9 October 2000, having been previously circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6.03/00 MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE - A GREEN PAPER

The Urgency Committee's approval was sought (Agenda item 4 - not reproduced) to the Fire Authority's response to the Green Paper on Modernising Local Government Finance launched by the Government on 19 September 2000. An urgent decision was required to enable the response to be submitted to the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) before the expiry of the deadline date on 8 December.

In introducing the report the Authority Treasurer reminded the Committee that a copy of the report presented had been sent to all Fire Authority Members inviting them to comment. Two responses had been received and a summary of the comments made was tabled at the meeting (not reproduced).

Having considered the responses received the Urgency Committee supported the comments made on membership and the need for more than one Elected Member representative to be appointed from each Unitary Authority (retaining the Status Quo), but could not support those relating to the introduction of direct elections to the Fire Authority.

In considering the contents of the report which dealt with those Section of the Green Paper applicable to Fire Authorities, Members attention was drawn to Appendix A - not reproduced) which set out a comparison of the current financial regime applicable to Combined Fire Authorities compared with that which would apply should Fire Authorities become Independent Precepting Authorities.

In thanking the Treasurer for all his hard work on preparing the report the Chairman proposed that the Fire Authority's response to the DETR as set out in Section B of the report be approved. This proposal was agreed.

RESOLVED: That, on the grounds of urgency, the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions be advised that the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority considers that:

- 1 The Local Government Finance System be customised for Combined Fire Authorities by:
 - (a) Giving them Independent Precepting Powers;
 - (b) The allocation of their own Standard Spending Assessments and Revenue Support Grant;
 - (c) Remedying legal deficiencies in the Combination Scheme Orders and Members Allowance regulations to give Combined Fire Authorities Principal Authority Status.
- 2 The proposed new regime for Capital investment and borrowing is welcomed.
- 3 In the event of the Government giving Combined Fire Authorities independent Precepting Powers together with Revenue Support Grant allocation, the Authority supports the view of favouring a simplified and understandable allocation formulae combined with an appropriate safety net rather than the introduction of a plan based system.
- 4 In respect of the membership of the Fire Authority, the current number of Members and their method of appointment is supported and there is no desire for change.

6.03/00 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
4 Part II Minutes - Monday 9 October 2000	1, 7 and 8

- 5 Chief Fire Officer's Release Date and Implementation of Process to Appoint a New Chief Fire Officer 1
- 6 Request for Leave of Absence 1

Note: The following is a summary of the items considered in the Part II Agenda of the Urgency Committee meeting held on Monday 31 January 2000.

6.04/00 PART II MINUTES: 9 OCTOBER 2000

The Part II Minutes were received and approved as a correct record.

6.05/00 REQUEST FOR UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In the light of additional information received the Urgency Committee, having reconsidered the request, agreed to grant the request from Fire-Fighter M.S.M. for unpaid leave of absence.

(Note: The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and Strategic Staff Officer withdrew from the meeting before consideration of the following item)

6.06/00 CHIEF FIRE OFFICER'S RELEASE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCESS TO APPOINT A NEW CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

The Urgency Committee agreed on the release date for the Chief Fire Officer together with the process for the appointment of his successor.

Signed

1-2-2001



