

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Summary of the Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04



This document is intended to supplement the Best Value Performance Plan by providing a summary of the full plan, which is published annually under the Local Government Act 1999. The full plan will be available on the Brigade's website at www.rbfrs.co.uk by the end of June. A hard copy of this summary is also available from Brigade Headquarters, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4FS.

Aims

Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service has developed 6 strategic aims to deliver its vision of "A Safer Berkshire":

- Minimise loss of life, injury and damage from fire.
- Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and damage caused by hazards other than fire.
- Deliver community safety education.
- Apply fire safety legislation without bias.
- Demonstrate continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Be a good employer and recognised as such.

Our Funding

The service is funded partly by Government grant, with each unitary authority receiving a financial allocation according to the size of its tax paying population and an assessment of fire service costs in its area. The remainder of the funding comes from council tax, paid by Berkshire householders to their unitary authorities. The budget for 2003/04 is set at £26.16 million. This equates to just £32 per head of the county population per year.

The Fire Authority comprises 25 elected members appointed from the six unitary authorities in the County. For details of your local member, please contact David Weller, the Fire Authority's committee administrator, on 0118 932 2288.

How have we performed?

Under Best Value requirements, the Brigade must demonstrate its performance against 31 nationally set performance indicators (BVPIs).

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Chief Fire Officer, Mike Clement-Green, reports:

"I am delighted that we continue to do well in what are probably the most important performance indicators any fire service should focus upon. Those are the number of house fires (BVPI 142ii) which are down, casualties from fires in the home (BVPI 143ii) which continue to fall and response times for our fire crews when attending incidents (BVPI 145c) which remain extremely impressive.

Two key areas on which the service will need to focus greater attention to improve performance, are in its efforts to reduce the total number of fire calls (BVPI 142i) and, in particular, to reduce the number of fire calls due to automatic fire alarms (BVPI 149)."

Chairman of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, Councillor Jeff Brooks, said: *"This is good news and the reduction in numbers of house fires and associated casualties is particularly encouraging. These figures show that our community based approach to fire safety education is bearing fruit. We will also continue to*

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work closely with businesses to reduce the number of automatic fire alarm activations and with our community partners in general to reduce the overall number of fire calls.”

The Service will continue to set challenging new targets for each of the 31 performance indicators to improve performance across the Brigade. The full range of results for 2002/03, compared against our previous years' performance, and that of similar brigades, will be in the full Best Value Performance Plan available by the end of June.

Performance Links to Community Safety

Community safety continues to be the Brigade's key focus. Both operational fire crews and specialist teams liaise with communities throughout the County, explaining the dangers of fire.

The Brigade continues to monitor its resources effectively to meet the challenges posed by Best Value. We seek continuous improvement and will continue to set new targets for each of our performance indicators to demonstrate ongoing improvement over the next 12 months.

You can also 'do your bit' to help the Brigade. For example:

- Do you have a correctly-sited, functioning smoke detector at home?
- Do members of your family know what to do, should fire affect your home?
- Do you know that smoking materials in the home still contribute significantly to fires in the home?
- Consider your car security. Stolen cars often become involved in accidents and are abandoned and set on fire.

Best Value Reviews

The Brigade will review each of its functions and services over a five year period. In 2002/03 Best Value reviews of Control and Communications and Damage Control were completed. The recommendations will be contained in the full Best Value Performance Plan.

In the annual audit letter to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, the District Auditor reported: *“The Authority has made progress in developing a culture of Best Value at all levels. Best Value reviews are now focussing on wider based areas.”*

Contacting Us

If you have any queries or comments, please contact...

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