



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Welcomes Pitt Review Findings**

A year on from the devastating floods of July 2007, Iain Cox, Chief Fire Officer of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) said the Pitt Review provided much-needed clarification of the role of the fire and rescue service in dealing with severe flooding.

“Last year’s events showed just how much the public relies on its fire and rescue service. Areas of Berkshire were badly affected and some are still feeling the impact of the floods. In addition to the situation in Berkshire, our crews and equipment were called upon to assist in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and East Anglia. Yet there is currently no statutory duty – and, consequently, no funding – for the fire and rescue service to deal with flooding and to pay for training, equipment and resources to enable an effective and integrated response.

“One of the key recommendations in Sir Michael’s report is that the Government should put in place a fully funded national capability for flood rescue, with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a lead role, underpinned by a statutory duty where necessary.

“Royal Berkshire Fire Authority monitored our involvement in the 2007 floods closely and the Authority’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received detailed reports of the RBFRS response to the flooding, including planning and business continuity arrangements and links with our partner agencies. The committee continues to monitor ongoing flood response capability.

“We now have to await the Government’s response, but I believe that the Pitt Review sets out a clear direction for the future role of the fire and rescue service nationally in meeting such large-scale challenges.”

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Area Manager Andy Mancey, who chairs the RBFRS Water Safety Working Group, also welcomed the Review. He said: "Following last year's floods, we have been looking at the lessons identified and how best to deal with flooding in Berkshire in the future.

"This includes for example, issues such as appropriate personal protective equipment for fire crews working in flood water, movement of equipment and resources and how we work with our neighbouring fire and rescue services and other partner agencies. The Pitt Review is clear that organisations must work together to ensure the most effective means of dealing with significant flooding."

**ENDS.**

**Notes for Editors:**

- The full report of Sir Michael Pitt's Independent Review into the floods of 2007 can be found at [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview)