



# R B F & R S

## news release

12/02/2009

No: 09/F&R

### **ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY SETS 2009-2010 BUDGET**

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has agreed a budget of £33.493 million for the financial year 2009-2010, an increase of 3.23% over last year's budget.

This equates to a council tax of £55.11 for a Band D property, compared with last year's figure of £52.54 (an increase of 4.89%).

Funding for the Fire Authority comes from council tax (£18.119 million) with the remaining £15.346 million in a central Government grant. A collection fund surplus of £28,000 is also included in the budget figure\*. The Government announced last year that grant funding for Royal Berkshire Fire Service would be set at just 0.5% in both 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, the lowest in the country.

Iain Cox, Chief Fire Officer of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) said after the Fire Authority's meeting on Wednesday (11 February): "Members of the Fire Authority rightly expect to see that taxpayers are getting the maximum possible value from every penny that we are awarded in our budget settlement. Indeed, RBFRS is below the average cost per head compared with other fire and rescue services.

"We have identified savings of £410,000 for the coming year. Pressures on public sector budgets have always been tough – but they're getting tougher. Times are hard and we know that we have to work harder and smarter.

"Not only must we ensure that we continue to deliver a high quality service to the public but also that we continue to improve. I would like to thank Members of the Fire Authority for their support in voting for a budget that will enable us to carry out this work."

**ENDS.**

**NB**

#### **Notes for Editors:**

- The six Berkshire unitary authorities are each required by law to set up and maintain a Collection Fund. The Collection Fund records the transactions relating to both the Council Tax and the National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR).

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An initial forecast is made in January each year of the expected balance on the Fund at the end of that financial year. This estimated balance is then shared out or made good during the following year in proportion to the respective annual demands made on the Fund. Any difference between the estimated year end balance on the Fund and the actual year end balance for that year is taken into account as part of the estimate of the balance to be made for the following financial year.