



Dear Resident,

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Budget and Council Tax Consultation 2021/22

The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service revenue budget for 2020/21 is £35.3 million. Two thirds of our funding is received from council tax. The other main sources of income are Government grants and business rates.

Like all public services we are committed to delivering value for money across the services we provide. £4.96 million of savings were delivered between 2010/11 and 2015/16 and a further £2.4 million will have been delivered by March 2023. Whilst we have been able to use some of these savings to invest in the vital services that we provide to the public, we have also had to reduce expenditure in certain areas to balance our budget. Taking 2015/16 as the base year, central Government funding has fallen by 23%.

Additional cost pressures have also materialised since 2015. Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy additional resources have been put in place to work closely with local authorities and landlords as part of our Protection Policy. A review of our capital assets has also been completed and our fifteen-year Strategic Asset Investment Framework outlines how we will maintain and renew our fire appliances, fire stations and lifesaving IT systems.

We remain in the lowest quartile of precepting Fire Authorities in the country, delivering value for money to the people we serve as evidenced by HMICFRS's inspection of our Fire Service in 2019. Current Government proposals would allow Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to increase Council tax by up to 1.99% for 2021/22 without holding a referendum, which is an increase of £1.35 per year.

Given the current and medium-term financial pressures that the Fire Authority faces, we continue to lobby Government to provide increased flexibility to Fire Authorities in setting precepts as well as seeking Government support to renew our capital assets which are essential to providing a modern and efficient fire and rescue service.

We would be delighted if you could take part in [our online survey](#) or visit rbfrs.co.uk/consultation. The consultation closes on 1 February 2021.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Colin Dudley'.

Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority