

ANNUAL REPORT

2016/17





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Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) mission is to enable the people of Berkshire to live safe and fulfilling lives.

There are 18 fire stations across Royal Berkshire, serving diverse communities of 863,000 residents in six Unitary Authorities, which are:

West Berkshire Council

Reading Borough Council

Wokingham Borough Council

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Bracknell Forest Council

Slough Borough Council

There is a network of major roads in the County, including the M4 and A34, as well as being home to one of Europe's largest industrial estates in Slough.





RESOURCE MAP FOR ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE





» INTRODUCTION

The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service [Annual Plan for 2016/17](#) gave clear objectives for the year and it proved to be a very busy year, with great strides being taken towards our [2015/19 Corporate Plan and vision](#).

Ongoing analysis against corporate performance measures continued to support decision making within the organisation. Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board and then scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

Continued working alongside partners in Social Services, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and Public Health, contributed to the overall safety of the communities we serve across Royal Berkshire.





» HEADLINES



Introduction of the new 'Response Standard' – 'The first frontline fire appliance to arrive at all emergency incidents in 10 minutes, with a current expected performance of 75%'



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have been working in closer collaboration with neighbouring fire and rescue services, particularly in the areas of transport and procurement.



The time taken for Thames Valley Fire Control Service to handle emergency calls and mobilise a fire engine in less than 60 seconds improved. 51% of calls are now handled in less than 60 seconds, and 86% in less than 120 seconds.



Public Access Automatic External Defibrillators are now accessible at every fire station in Royal Berkshire.



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority funded the first tri-service community fire station, with Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service, in Hungerford.



There has been a significant improvement in the percentage of working time lost to sickness which now stands at 3.3%, compared to 4.5% in 2015/16.



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service undertook two large public consultations as part of Integrated Risk Management Planning, which received over 1,376 responses.



Contracted spend as a percentage of overall spend increased to 80%, compared to 71% in 2015/16, helping ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing value for money.



Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service recruited and trained 20 wholetime firefighters.



Wholetime frontline fire appliances achieved 100% of planned availability.



» STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS 2015 -2019

Our mission is to enable the people of Royal Berkshire to lead safe and fulfilling lives. The six commitments below describe how we aim to achieve our mission.

- We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
- We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
- We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings.
- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda.
- We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- We will work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

» THE 2016/17 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The 2016/17 annual plan sets out a series of strategic objectives, which broadly outlines how we will put the strategic commitments into practice.

SERVICE DELIVERY - FIRE STATIONS AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES

Educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen by:

- Effective information sharing with other organisations, to ensure that our resources are targeted effectively to those most at risk.
- Joining-up prevention activity with other organisations, so that every professional contact with vulnerable people addresses as many risk factors as possible.
- Increasing capacity for volunteers to deliver prevention services.

Ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies by:

- Increasing the resilience of the Retained Duty System (RDS).
- Employing flexible crewing arrangements.
- Increasing the fitness and health of firefighters.
- Sharing emergency response resources with other fire and rescue services.
- Using new technology to make firefighting and other emergency response activity safer and/or more effective.



Ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings by:

- Focusing on increasing the installation of sprinklers and other fire suppression systems in buildings.
- Effective information sharing with other organisations, to ensure that the Service's risk-based inspection programme is as well-targeted and effective as possible.

Seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda by:

- Working with colleagues from South Central Ambulance Service to support improvements in arrangements for responding to medical emergencies in Royal Berkshire.
- Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, to maximise the contribution that RBFRS is able to make in delivering elements of the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.

SERVICE SUPPORT - CAPABILITY, CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE

Ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money by:

- Developing shared service arrangements with partner organisations, to deliver effective frontline services at a lower cost.
- Developing arrangements for sharing buildings with partner organisations, with a particular emphasis on sharing with other blue-light services.
- Exploring opportunities to exploit advances in technology (such as the rollout of Super-Fast Broadband across Royal Berkshire) to support flexible working arrangements and improve service delivery.
- Increasing the profitability of our trading company.
- Seeking opportunities to charge for services and facilities where appropriate.
- Securing sponsorship.

Work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire by:

- Proactively and reactively lobbying Central Government – both directly and through the Local Government Association – to influence fire policy decisions that will affect people in Royal Berkshire.
- Engage effectively in the debate on future governance arrangements for fire and rescue services.
- Engage with and influence the approach to delivering the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project (ESMCP) – a project which will provide a new communication system to the three emergency services and other public safety users.



Value and invest in our staff to build a capable, resilient and customer focused workforce by:

- Investing in a programme of development which ensures our workforce is equipped to deliver excellent services.
- Build a leadership culture that has workforce wellbeing at its heart.
- Facilitating and encouraging collaborative working with our partners and communities.

CULTURE - ONE TEAM WORKING COLLABORATIVELY FOR THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

Manage RBFRS in accordance with appropriate legal requirements, financial standards and associated guidance by:

- Introducing robust buying and procurement practices across the whole organisation.
- Increasing our understanding, controls and standards around Information Assurance.
- Integrating budget monitoring and management into the services, programmes and projects within RBFRS.
- Developing our business and information systems to deliver an enabling and resilient IT infrastructure.

Balance trust with accountability in the way we manage RBFRS by:

- Embedding systems and behaviours which ensure clear performance standards are set and managed.
- Maximising workforce engagement through best practice people management.
- Valuing and rewarding behaviours that engender trust and consistently challenge those that don't.
- Embedding a positive Health and Safety culture by developing and supporting our staff.

Explore and maximise new ways of working to deliver service excellence by:

- Facilitating and encouraging collaborative working with our partners and communities.
- Explore and advance flexibility within working practices, employment opportunities and technology.
- Encouraging and rewarding innovation and providing a supportive environment where new ideas are encouraged and respected.



» PREVENTION

BLOOD DONATION SESSIONS

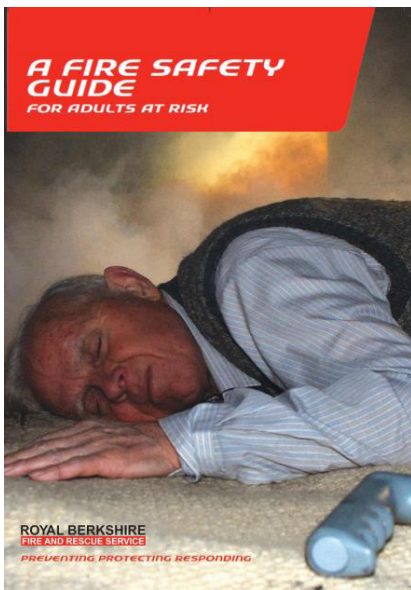


Wokingham and Caversham Road Fire Stations regularly hosted blood donation sessions on behalf of the NHS Blood and Transplant Service (NHSBT) and at least a further 4 stations are expected to join them in 2017/18.

On 6 March 2017, the 1,000th blood donation was taken at a fire station in Berkshire. Station Manager, Luke Coleman, said “We are opening up our stations to help local people make

potentially life-saving donations. At the same time, we’re moving closer to our goal of placing fire stations at the heart of the communities they serve. We have received fantastic feedback from donors and NHS staff alike, and are now looking at which of our other fire stations might make suitable venues for blood donation.”

ADULTS AT RISK PROGRAMME



In 2016/17, RBFRS completed over 7,600 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and almost 84% of these were to those most vulnerable of being injured or killed in a fire. This improvement in performance was achieved in part by the introduction of the Adults at Risk Programme. This programme sees the Prevention team develop links and relationships with managers of key agencies that provide care for the most vulnerable in our communities. A programme for the carers employed by these agencies has been developed and delivered to individuals in 83 different organisations and includes a training session, information guide and a referral system for their clients. In the year 2016/17, RBFRS received 1,200 vulnerable adult referrals from these organisations and completed a Home Fire Safety Check.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In July 2016, 46 children completed a RBFRS Young Firefighters course and in September 2016, four Young Firefighter units were started with a total of 45 children involved across the Pangbourne, Whitley Wood, Maidenhead and Crowthorne Fire Stations.

RBFRS ran three FireFit courses which were funded by West Berkshire Public Health team. The 10-week courses aimed to improve the wellbeing of young people aged 11-16 by providing them and their families with a better understanding of healthy eating and physical activity. Each week they took part in different activities designed to provide them with the support and guidance they needed to increase their activity levels and maintain a healthy lifestyle, including circuit training, a mixture of fire service activities, such as running hose reels and hydrants, and learning about the sugar content in food, swapping unhealthy snacks for more nutritious ones.

Along with FireFit, FireBreak is one of a suite of new courses aimed at young people in Berkshire. During the year, 16 young people completed a FireBreak course, which is a personal development programme specifically aimed at pupils who may be struggling with issues such as low self-esteem or confidence. FireBreak combines a mix of practical drill sessions and classroom activities to help young people develop, not only physical, but also other useful skills such as self confidence, communication, team working and leadership.

Each of the courses run for young people culminated in a 'passing out' parade, at which the young people demonstrated to family and teachers the skills that they learnt and were presented with a certificate.





WATER SAFETY WEEK

The Service played a very active part in Water Safety Week 2016, with the aim of reducing the number of deaths from drowning that occur nationally every year. Throughout the week, our water rescue crews and prevention team visited venues across the County to raise awareness of how people can stay safe around water. They also demonstrated the 'drown tank' - an innovative visual aid created by the crews at Caversham Road Fire Station - which brings to life the dangers of swimming near weirs.

The week culminated in a dramatic exercise near Mapledurham Lock involving a large passenger boat and smaller boat. The scenario was that following a collision with the small boat, the larger boat caught fire and 15 people had fallen or jumped into the water and were now in difficulty, drifting dangerously close to the weir. This was a challenge for crews, who were assisted during the exercise by the National Police Air Service helicopter, colleagues from the Hazardous Area Response Team and Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue.

Two very special guests also supported our crews during the week, sharing their own personal experiences of the potential dangers of open water.

Mark Scaife, whose son, Michael, 20, tragically drowned in the Jubilee River in Datchet in August 2015, after attempting to assist his friend who had got into difficulty.

Rebecca Ramsay also joined the crews following the death of her son Dylan, aged 13, who sadly drowned while swimming in a quarry in 2011. Ms Ramsay's campaign 'Doing it for Dylan' has attracted significant awareness and she is petitioning to have water safety taught in schools as part of the National Curriculum.





WILDFIRE PREVENTION - NEW MASCOT UNVEILED

A new mascot was unveiled to help deliver key safety messaging to communities in an effort to prevent wildfires breaking out. The mascot was named following a competition with local school children in Bracknell Forest. 'Ranger the Badger' is likely to be adopted as a national wildfire mascot through the National Fire Chiefs Council Wildfire Group and was shared with other agencies such as the Crown Estate and Forestry Commission.



FIRE STATION OPEN DAYS

There were big crowds at a number of our fire stations during 2016, as they opened their doors to their local communities. Crews carried out a number of activities and demonstrations for the public, including a Road Traffic Collision (RTC), working at height and hot oil fire display.

The Prevention team were also on hand to provide support, education and advice to those attending.

These events were supported and attended by our partners at Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, local authority departments and other health partners.





» PROTECTION

FIRE SAFETY

The Service has a statutory duty to enforce fire safety legislation and a statutory function to provide fire safety advice on request.

In 2016/17, the Service completed 1,693 full fire safety audits with 1,588 of these audits being closed as the premises satisfactorily met the Regulatory Reform Order. Following these fire safety audits, the number of formal notices issued within the performance year was 22 (consisting of one alterations notice, 18 enforcement notices and three prohibition notices). Only 17% of the premises dealt with in 2016/17 (270 premises) required any kind of informal or formal activity by RBFRS.

The Grenfell Tower fire has had, and will continue to present very significant implications for all in the fire and rescue service and the wider fire sector. It has drawn into sharp focus the remit and potential limitations of current statutory functions of a fire and rescue authority and application of building control measures. As a learning organisation reflecting on the incident and the work that has followed it is clear that the level of technical competence required of the organisation and its employees is greater than ever before and the rigour with which the statutory functions need to be fulfilled to manage risk effectively. It is against this harder test and with regard for current and emerging information that we will assess our arrangements for the future. A great deal of work is being undertaken in this financial year with local authority partners in response to the Grenfell Tower incident.

During 2016/17, the Protection team also responded to 157 fire safety concerns raised by members of the public relating to premises in Berkshire. They also completed 3,343 other types of consultations which RBFRS is legally required to complete. These included building regulation consultations for proposals to develop or modify buildings in Berkshire and licensing applications. Whilst carrying out all of the above, the team also promoted fire sprinklers and other forms of fire suppression systems within buildings.

Whilst there have been no prosecutions during 2016/17, there are some ongoing cases, which it is anticipated will go to court during 2017/18.





» RESPONSE

NEW RECRUITS

During 2016/17, RBFRS welcomed 20 new wholetime recruits who successfully completed an intensive 15-week course, with all the training delivered in-house for the first time.

During the two courses the recruits learned all of the skills they need to begin their careers as firefighters, including: core skills, technical rescue and breathing apparatus training. Previously, parts of the course were outsourced to other fire and rescue services but now RBFRS Training Centre is in a position to deliver the entire course.

The main benefit of this is that all of the recruits can be posted to fire stations straightaway, without the delay of conversion courses or specific equipment familiarisation. Another benefit of the modular designed course is that it enabled two retained recruits to complete their basic training at the same time as their wholetime colleagues.

The courses ended with a passing out parade where the new recruits could show off their new skills to proud families, friends and special guests in a variety of drills.



OFFICER CO-RESPONDING TRIALS



A new trial scheme was launched in May 2016 in partnership with South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS), which involves some officers responding to medical emergency calls.

Officers are mobilised as single responders directly by SCAS to life threatening incidents (such as cardiac arrests and strokes) when they are closer than the nearest ambulance.

The scheme is running as part of national trials in partnership with the Fire Brigades

Union and will be reviewed during 2017/18, alongside the existing trial at Wokingham Fire Station. All of the schemes are intended to test the extent to which services to the public can be improved by emergency responders in the fire and rescue service.



FITNESS LEVELS INCREASE

In April 2016, a new fitness test for operational staff was introduced, along with mandatory physical training sessions for stations. During the year, fitness levels of operational crews increased.

Functional fitness equipment has been on stations since March 2016. This equipment enables fitness training to better mimic activities carried out on the fire ground. The benefits are; improved fitness, reduced risk of injury and more effective firefighters.

Any staff not meeting the required standard are supported to help improve their fitness with tailored lifestyle advice and are retested every four weeks.

NEXT GENERATION OF FIRE APPLIANCES

The next generation of fire appliances will be arriving in Berkshire in 2017 after an extensive tender and design process during 2016, in partnership with the other fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley.

The new appliances were developed in collaboration with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service, as part of the collaboration agenda set out in Vision 2020.

The collaborative project allowed the development of an appliance which supported the needs of the three counties and examples of best practice from around the UK. One of the key design principles was to make the appliance as universal as possible, so that crews across the three services can operate each others appliances seamlessly, if needed. The appliances will have a common inventory and common stowage for equipment.





SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION

A man received a 36-month prison sentence after admitting arson and attempted arson. This followed an investigation in conjunction with Thames Valley Police (TVP) following a fire at a Reading property in July 2016.

The court heard how the man set fire to his partners flat, before dousing a police car with petrol and trying to set it alight. No one was in the property at the time of the fire, but there was another flat underneath the property, which could have become involved in the fire.

Firefighters were called to extinguish the blaze in the early hours of the morning. After the fire, Fire Investigator and Station Manager, Jess James, discovered evidence to support a deliberate ignition conclusion, including a toaster placed on the bed and an oven door left wide open. Evidence was submitted to TVP who brought the prosecution against the man.

PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS

Public Access Defibrillators (PAD) were purchased and fitted to each fire station across the County. The PAD boxes were funded through the recharge fund for the Wokingham and Officer co-responding schemes.

The Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) provides access to members of the public and our own staff if someone suffers a cardiac arrest. A defibrillator can deliver an electrical current through the chest, which aims to shock the heart back into a normal rhythm, allowing it to pump again. The AED detects the hearts rhythm and will not deliver a shock unless one is needed. The device is clearly labelled with activated voice instructions to guide the user whilst they wait for an ambulance to arrive. Early defibrillation can triple a person's chance of survival.





» SERVICE SUPPORT

HUNGERFORD COMMUNITY FIRE STATION

Plans were agreed in 2016 for Hungerford Fire Station to become the first tri-service station in Berkshire. West Berkshire Council approved plans for a modern, fit-for-purpose fire station that will also offer a shared location for Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service, along with a community room.

A ground-breaking event took place on 8 November and work commenced on 28 November 2016.

CORE SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR EMPLOYEES

In the ongoing development of the organisation, there are a number of core skills workshops offered to employees. These are operated throughout the year and during 2016, the following courses were offered:

- Appraisal Training
- Managing Sickness and Absence
- Crucial Conversations
- Mindfulness
- Emotional Resilience
- Mentoring
- Coaching as a Management Tool
- Time Management
- Project Management
- Working with Members
- Procurement Framework Overview
- Requisitioner Training

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REVIEW

During the Fire Authority meeting in June 2016, Members re-elected Councillor Colin Dudley as Chairman and Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons as Vice-Chairman for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. During the meetings it was agreed to reduce the size of the Fire Authority to 20 Members to allow for the streamlining of governance. All Member nominations, Member role descriptions and appointment to committees of the Fire Authority were decided at this meeting. 11 Fire Authority Members now sit on the Management Committee and nine sit on the Audit and Governance Committee. Lead Members were also appointed for Community Safety, Strategic Assets, Income Generation, Organisational Development, Thames Valley Fire Control Service, Collaboration and IRMP.



PROCUREMENT

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) made a range of changes to improve the procurement function during 2016/17.

The RBFA Contract Regulations were reviewed and agreed by the Fire Authority in August 2016. They set out the responsibility of key officers and a new governance arrangement to ensure compliance with the UK Public Contract Regulations. All contracts were reviewed and a new procurement process created so that all relevant categories of spend are subject to competition to ensure value for money is maintained.

In 2016/17 62 new contracts were put in place increasing the percentage of expenditure within contract to over 79%. Many of the new contracts were carried out in collaboration with other fire services and partner organisations. The RBFA contract register is now updated monthly and made available on the website as part of the transparency requirements.

A new procurement toolkit was created and training on the Contract Regulations provided for Officers who carry out low value quotes and have responsibility for managing contracts.

FLEET MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP

RBFRS and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) have been in partnership for fleet maintenance since 2014, which has continued to deliver savings for both organisations for 2016/17. This well established partnership has seen expansion in 2016/17 and now delivers a joint fleet management function for both HFRS and RBFRS.

In addition, efficiencies were identified with current practices, which are now in the process of implementation. These changes will see time efficiency benefits across the whole of RBFRS. Partnership growth, delivering operational equipment management and maintenance is expected to continue into 2018.



» INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING (IRMP)

National requirements mean that every fire and rescue authority in the country should ensure that local plans are tailored to meet local needs. Our [Corporate Plan 2015- 19](#) identified the measures that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority proposed to improve the safety and wellbeing of Berkshire's communities and visitors. The aim of the plan is to deliver the right resources at the right time, in the right place and within our available budget.

OUR ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2016/17 SAID THE IRMP BOARD WOULD CONSULT ON THE FOLLOWING:

Project 1: Managing risk through response initiatives (response standards, station locations and crewing arrangements)

- Develop a range of options for public consultation on a simplified response standard for RBFRS.
- Develop a new risk modelling methodology, which integrates prevention, protection and response.
- Develop a range of options for public consultation to align the simplified response standard with station locations, crewing arrangements and the Fire Authority's medium term financial plan.

Project 2: Managing risk through response initiatives (use of technology)

- Complete a review of existing research into utilising new and emerging technology to develop safe systems of work for dwelling fires and road traffic collisions (RTC).
- Develop options for consultation on the feasibility of this technology being implemented across Berkshire.
- Complete a public consultation on the proposals and options developed.

Project 3: Managing risk through prevention initiatives

- Review our current prevention initiatives delivered with partner agencies and better integrate them with protection and response initiatives - delivering a broad range of new initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
- Carry out risk mapping to deal with the risks associated with:
 - The vulnerable (elderly, deprived, hard-to-reach)
 - Schools and education (young, unemployed, particular risk)
 - Health (drink and/or smoking related, heart and/ or lung disease, obesity)
 - Crime and disorder (arson, driving related, drug risk)
- Introduce co-responding pilot schemes to gather information on the feasibility and long-term sustainability of the various delivery models.
- Carry out a public consultation on the proposals developed.



Project 4: Managing risk through protection initiatives

- Review our risk-based inspection model and develop a range of options for consultation on the profile of the future programme.
- Complete a public consultation on the proposals and options developed.
- Implement a new risk based inspection programme following consideration of the consultation outcomes.
- Develop our protection software systems to support the delivery on the new risk based inspection programme.

WHAT WE DID

Project 1: Response Standard

Public consultation on the first part of Project 1 took place between May and July 2016, and in August 2016 Fire Authority Members conscientiously considered the response standard feedback report and unanimously agreed the following:

1. To change the published standards from an attendance time (i.e. measured from the time a Control Room Operator alerts the crew until the arrival of a fire engine) to a response time (i.e. measured from the time the call is received by a Control room operator to the time a fire engine arrives at the incident).
2. To change the published standard from measuring only attendances at dwelling fires and road traffic collisions to measuring all emergency incidents.
3. To change to publishing a measure for the fire appliance to arrive at an incident, in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government response time definition.
4. To change to publishing the performance standard as a target with a time and percentage.

Members then agreed that the target above should be as follows:

‘The first pump to all emergency incidents in 10 minutes, with a current expected performance of 75%’

Project 2:

Following a review of existing equipment carried on all frontline appliances, RBFRS undertook a robust scoping exercise with other fire and rescue services from within the UK. A decision was made that a public consultation was not required; however there was a significant amount of consultation with staff and representative bodies (e.g. Fire Brigades Union). As a result of this, a report was completed recommending equipment that should be purchased to assist RBFRS in the future. Working with other fire and rescue services in Thames Valley, a rolling programme will be introduced to incorporate new technologies onto frontline fire appliances.



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- 22mm hose reels and branches.
 - Upgraded battery operated RTC extrication equipment.
 - Crash recovery software system on all frontline appliances.
 - High pressure fog spike firefighting equipment for dwelling fires.

Projects 1, 3 & 4:

A further public consultation was carried out from December 2016 to March 2017 and it received a record number of responses. The consultation focused around eight prevention and two protection proposals, along with seven options of combined scenarios around crewing arrangements and removal of fire engines. The consultation focused on the changes RBFRS needs to make to help save £2.4million by April 2020.

A report of the findings will be presented to the Fire Authority in April 2017. Following the outcome, Officers will work with staff to begin the process of developing plans which will be implemented in a phased approach over the next three years. This will embed new ways of working and ensure savings are made by April 2020.

OUTCOMES OF PREVIOUS PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2016/17

Dee Road Fire Station Replacement Project

The project to replace Dee Road Fire Station with a new site in Theale has progressed well and is on schedule. A very knowledgeable and experienced professional services team has been appointed as part of a larger Property Capital Projects procurement exercise. This will provide consistency through future projects as well as the opportunity for relationship building. The procurement process to appoint the contractor is progressing. As with all capital build projects, this new station has been designed with input and collaboration with blue light partners, as well as wider local community stakeholder involvement. The station is set to commence construction in spring 2018, with completion expected by late summer 2019.

Hungerford Fire Station Replacement Project

The refurbishment of Hungerford Fire Station, to provide Berkshire's first tri-service community fire station. The build commenced in November 2016, with an estimated completion date of June 2017. This includes dedicated office space for Thames Valley Police and shared facilities for South Central Ambulance Service.



» ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The purpose of the Organisational Development (OD) programme is to deliver a range of cross-cutting projects that support the achievement of RBFRS key themes:

- **Service delivery** – fire stations at the heart of their communities.
- **Service support** – capability, capacity and resilience.
- **Culture** – one team working collaboratively for the people we serve.

The OD programme is made up of four work streams:

Employer excellence - to improve advocacy and commitment among the workforce by ensuring that the employment 'deal' provides challenge, recognition and reward and that our processes and practices reflect best practice in people management.

New ways of working - to develop and embed the skills and attitudes required, taking advantage of new opportunities and ensuring processes and procedures are efficient and deliver value for money.

Leadership and learning - to develop, commission and embed a programme of learning and development that maximises capability and capacity, in order to maximise future organisational performance and enhance employee engagement.

Engagement - this underpins the entire programme and aims to ensure that workforce engagement levels are maximised through excellent communication and consultation and positive change management processes.

Significant work was undertaken during 2016/17 to shape and deliver the programme.

Listed below are examples of successful projects against each of the core work streams:

Employer excellence

- A rewards and recognition strategy was developed to formalise RBFRS approach to recognising staff.
- New branding guidelines and a toolkit consisting of off-the-shelf templates for staff to use were developed and issued.
- New blue shirts were designed for firefighters which introduced RBFRS branding onto them. Corporate work wear for Customer Service Officers was also introduced.
- In preparation towards the Investors in People accreditation, self-assessment work was completed with the Corporate Management Team. Organisational Development champions were created both the service's Headquarters and on fire stations enabling RBFRS to map the current position against the Investors in People standard and understand the areas where focus was needed which could then start to form an action plan.



Engagement

- A Communications and Engagement Strategy was created in consultation with staff and implementation started. As part of this strategy, a bi-weekly cascade was introduced for the quick circulation of key business information.
- RBFRS internal magazine - The Shout, was re-branded and a new design introduced. The frequency was changed to monthly and contains recognition of achievements and stories of interest.
- A programme of station visits and departmental visits were undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team with the aim of scheduling these on an ongoing basis. The objective was to provide an opportunity for a two-way feedback process with information from these visits used to inform communication plans and areas of focus.
- A new content management system was purchased to replace the existing intranet. This new platform enabled RBFRS to update the look and feel and gain improved functionality to help improve the engagement with staff.

Leadership and learning

- A leadership development programme was created with the aim of working to embed a one team approach across all services.
- New core skills courses were introduced into the service to support the achievement of Vision 2019.

New ways of working

- Improved contract rules were approved at the management committee during 2016 and structured procurement templates introduced with associated training.
- Internal efficiency was reviewed and highlighted areas to focus on. This resulted in the introduction of a new room booking process, an improved supplier remittance process and review of the facilities management tenders completed. This resulted in savings in time and costs.
- The progress of the programme was monitored through the Organisation Development Programme Board which met quarterly and written updates were included in the quarterly strategic performance reports to Audit and Governance Committee.



» CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Ongoing analysis of performance data supports decision-making throughout the organisation. As well as this, key information from across the organisation is collected and collated into a report on a quarterly basis and is monitored by the Strategic Performance Board. This report then goes to Senior Leadership Team and is then scrutinised by Audit and Governance Committee. More detailed information on performance is available in the [Q4 2016/17 Strategic Performance Report](#).

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND FIRE PEER CHALLENGE

In February 2017, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service welcomed the Operational Peer Challenge team. The team was made up of eight individuals from other fire and rescue services and the Local Government Association. During their time the team conducted a review of progress against several key objectives:

1. To provide an assessment of the progress made since the last Operational Assessment Peer review.
2. To assess the extent to which delivering the Corporate Plan 2015-19 will improve outcomes for communities across Royal Berkshire.
3. To assess the extent to which delivering the Corporate Plan will meet the requirements of the Home Office Fire Reform programme.

The process was run in line with the Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge Guidelines set out by the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire Officers Association.

Final reports from the review will be published during 2017.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

The RBFRS annual [Statement of Assurance](#) is available on the RBFRS website. The Statement of Assurance is produced to formally confirm to government, stakeholders and the communities we serve the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Furthermore, the statement confirms the extent to which the requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (July 2012) have been met. This includes information about our assurance arrangements regarding prevention, protection and response; how we ensure local and national resilience; as well as an introduction to our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).



AUDITS

During 2016/17, six audits were carried out in the following areas:

- Emergency Services Mobile Communication Plan.
- Firefighter Pension Administration.
- Sickness Absence Management.
- Integrated Risk Management Planning Consultation.
- Governance and Risk Management.
- Key Financial Controls.

Actions from these audits are monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board, Senior Leadership Team and the Audit and Governance Committee.



» CONTACT US

IN AN EMERGENCY

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the fire service.


If you are inside a building when a fire starts, remember to get out, stay out and call us out.

Never try and put out a fire unless you have received sufficient training.

CONTACTING US WHEN IT'S NOT AN EMERGENCY

 Visit our website: www.rbfrs.co.uk

 Email us at: performance@rbfrs.co.uk

 Call us on: 0118 945 2888

 Write to us at: Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



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