

## PART I

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>10 FEBRUARY 2026</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE TECHNOLOGY REPLACEMENT INITIAL BUSINESS CASE AND COMMERCIAL STRATEGY</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>AREA MANAGER TIM READINGS</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PETER FREWER, COUNCILLOR SIMON WERNER</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>PART I</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TO APPROVE AND NOTE</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) underpins emergency responses for 2.5 million Thames Valley residents. The current system contract ends in April 2028, and critical components will be unsupported by April 2029, risking statutory compliance and operational resilience.
- 1.2 Continuing with the existing system beyond 2029 is not viable due to hardware and software obsolescence, security non-compliance, and the inability to integrate with future technologies.
- 1.3 The TVFCS Joint Committee has considered the supporting Business Case (BC) and Commercial Strategy and is recommending to respective Authorities to proceed to a formal procurement. The Business Case calls for the replacement of NEC Vision Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and DS3000 Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) with a modular, cloud-enabled solution covering call handling, incident management, geographical information system (GIS) mapping, Emergency Services Network (ESN) integration, and securing long-term compliance.
- 1.4 A cloud-based or hybrid solution is preferred, offering scalability, resilience, and cost-effectiveness.

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- 1.5 The estimated project cost for 2026/27 is £795,897 shared between partner Services and drawn from the renewals fund plus an additional £40,000 contribution per Authority into the renewals fund. This expenditure is included within the Authority's 26/27 budget provision.
- 1.6 Following a decision at TVFCS Joint Committee Oxfordshire County Council Procurement Team are leading the procurement process on behalf of Thames Valley partner agencies.
- 1.7 Supporting the procurement and implementation is expected to ensure statutory compliance, improve resilience, support ESN transition, enhance functionality, and deliver continued value for money.
- 1.8 The Authority is being asked to support the recommendation of the Joint Committee and approve entering a procurement process of a cloud-based or hybrid command and control (C&C) system and asks for endorsement of the funding approach.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **APPROVE** officers to proceed with the procurement of a replacement command and control system, targeting a cloud-based or hybrid solution as recommended by TVFCS Joint Committee.
- 2.2 **NOTE** the anticipated project costs and potential increased revenue implications, as described in this report and detailed in the Annual Budget 26/27 and TVFCS Budget as recommended by TVFCS Joint Committee.
- 2.3 **NOTE** that Fire Authority will be asked to approve contract award, following the outcome of the tender process, in Q2/3 2026 as recommended by TVFCS Joint Committee.

## **3. REPORT**

### **3.1 The Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) – C&C System Replacement: Initial Business Case Summary**

#### **3.2 Purpose**

This business case seeks approval to proceed with the procurement of a replacement C&C system for TVFCS. The current system, implemented in 2015, is approaching end-of-life. Key infrastructure components will become unsupported by 2029, creating significant operational, legal, and compliance risks. Replacement is essential to maintain statutory obligations under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and ensure resilience for emergency response across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services.

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### **3.3 Strategic context**

TVFCS serves approximately 2.5 million residents and underpins the ability to receive 999 calls, mobilise resources, and manage incidents. The existing system contract expires in April 2028, with a final extension option to 2030. However, critical components, including Windows Server infrastructure, will be unsupported by April 2029. Risks include operational degradation, security non-compliance (notably Airwave Annex A), loss of resilience, and potential challenges in integrating with the future Emergency Services Network (ESN) enhancements. A failure to implement a replacement C&C system would breach statutory obligations and expose the authorities to reputational and legal risk.

3.4 The project aligns with strategic objectives to improve resilience, support digital transformation, and provide value for money.

3.5 Following agreement at TVFCS Joint Committee OCC are leading the procurement process on behalf of the partnership with Executive Project Sponsorship provided by RBFRS.

### **3.6 Problem statement**

Continuing with the current system beyond 2029 is not viable. Hardware and software obsolescence will compromise operational integrity and legal compliance. Without replacement, TVFCS would operate an unsupported legacy system incapable of delivering technological improvements or meeting statutory duties.

### **3.7 Scope**

The project will replace the current C&C system (NEC Vision CAD and DS3000 ICCS) with a modular, cloud-enabled solution. Scope includes:

3.7.1 Emergency call handling, incident management, and resource mobilisation.

3.7.2 Integration with Airwave, ESN, and other communication technologies

3.7.3 GIS mapping and operational dashboards.

3.7.4 Data migration, reporting, and training.

3.7.5 Security and compliance with UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and recognised cybersecurity standards.

3.8 Excluded from scope: HR, payroll, finance systems, and broader ICT upgrades not directly required for C&C operation.

### **3.9 Options appraisal**

3.10 Six options were assessed:

3.10.1 **Do nothing** – High risk of failure and non-compliance. Not viable.

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3.10.2 **Extend current system** – Limited vendor support; risks remain. Not recommended.

3.10.3 **Replace with cloud-based or hybrid solution** – Lower capital outlay, scalable, aligns with cloud-first strategy. Preferred option.

3.10.4 **Replace with on-premises solution** – High upfront cost, limited scalability. Not feasible.

3.10.5 **Broader transformation** – High complexity and cost. Not feasible.

3.11 **Preferred option:** Cloud-based or hybrid solution, offering flexibility, resilience, and cost-effectiveness.

### 3.12 **Benefits**

3.13 Statutory compliance and risk mitigation.

3.14 Improved resilience and disaster recovery.

3.15 Enhanced functionality and interoperability.

3.16 Predictable annual costs and shared service efficiencies.

3.17 Supports ESN transition and future innovation.

### 3.18 **Milestones**

3.19 Key milestones for the programme are set out in table 1.

Phase	Status	Target Date
<b>Plan</b>	Phase 1 Market Engagement, Scoping, Commercial Strategy.	Sep 2025
<b>Define</b>	Phase 2 Market Engagement, Initial Business Case, Specification, Contract Drafting.	Nov 2025 to Feb 2026
<b>Procure</b>	Tender Publication, Clarification Questions, Evaluation & Moderation, Financial Evaluation, Finalised Business Case, Award Approval.	Feb 2026 to Sep 2026
<b>Implement</b>	Planning, Implementation, Testing.	Oct 2026 to Mar 2028
<b>Manage</b>	Go-Live, Lessons Learned, Handover.	Apr 2028

Table 1

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### 4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Response: We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.2 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.3 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.4 People: We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Indicative costs included in the Business Case comprise supplier implementation, technology integration, and internal project resources. Forecast for 2026/27 is up to £795,897, drawn from the TVFCS renewals fund, with an additional £40,000 per authority contribution recommended. Longer-term costs will be refined during procurement. Dual running costs during transition have been estimated at a 75% discount.

#### 5.2 Capital costs

Financial Year	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029+	Total
Implementation & double running cost	£0	£403,334	£806,667	£0	£0	£1,210,001
Procurement lead	£32,636	£38,952	£0	£0	£0	£71,588
Business Analyst	£69,336	£69,336	£78,940	£40,664	£0	£258,276
Control Lead	£0	£69,932	£72,028	£74,192	£0	£216,152
Project Manager	£0	£67,912	£69,972	£36,806	£0	£174,690
PSO	£0	£50,348	£51,880	£26,730	£0	£128,958
Other technology	£11,664	£30,656	£30,656	£15,328	£0	£88,304
<b>Technology &amp; implementation costs total</b>	<b>£113,636</b>	<b>£730,470</b>	<b>£1,110,143</b>	<b>£193,720</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,147,969</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>£22,727</b>	<b>£65,427</b>	<b>£60,695</b>	<b>£38,744</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£187,594</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£136,363</b>	<b>£795,897</b>	<b>£1,170,838</b>	<b>£232,464</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£2,335,562</b>

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### 5.3 TVFCS Renewals Fund Balance

<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>£1,438,451</b>	<b>£1,452,088</b>	<b>£926,191</b>	<b>£25,353</b>	<b>£62,889</b>
In year contributions	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
Capital expenditure – TVFCS	<b>£136,363</b>	<b>£795,897</b>	<b>£1,170,838</b>	<b>£232,464</b>	£0
Additional funding needed	£0	£120,000	£120,000	£120,000	
Total	£13,637	<b>£525,897</b>	<b>£900,838</b>	£37,536	£150,000
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>£1,452,088</b>	<b>£926,191</b>	<b>£25,353</b>	<b>£62,889</b>	<b>£212,889</b>

### 5.4 Revenue Implications – Financial Year

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029+	
<b>RBFRS</b>	£67,500	£70,335	£73,289	£403,334	£420,274	<b>37.50%</b>
<b>BFRS</b>	£60,660	£63,208	£65,862	£362,462	£377,686	<b>33.70%</b>
<b>OFRS</b>	£51,840	£54,017	£56,286	£309,760	£322,770	<b>28.80%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£180,00</b>	<b>£187,560</b>	<b>£195,438</b>	<b>£1,075,556</b>	<b>£1,120,729</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### 5.5 Revenue Pressure – Financial Year

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029+
<b>RBFRS</b>		£2,835	£2,954	£330,044	£16,940
<b>BFRS</b>		£2,548	£2,655	£296,600	£15,223
<b>OFRS</b>		£2,177	£2,269	£253,474	£13,010

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**5.6 Other Technology Cost Detail**

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Totals £</b>
Communications, Incident Management, Mobilisation	22,000
Mobile Access	1,800
Resource Availability Data Interface	20,000
Mapping and Address Data	7,500
Risk Information Data Interface	13,000
Business Reporting	5,000
General Technology Implementation	15,000
Replacement of BT EISEC hardware	4,000
	<b>88,300</b>

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1 Statutory duties and liability**

6.2 The current C&C system will become unsupported, creating operational, security and compliance risk. This engages the statutory duty of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and summoning personnel under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

6.3 Ensuring compliance supports the category 1 responder duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to maintain effective emergency plans and arrangements for responding to emergencies.

6.4 Successful implementation of a replacement C&C system strengthens the authority’s position by demonstrating proactive management of statutory duties and cyber, data protection and operational risk.

**6.5 Procurement law**

6.6 The report commits Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to a major, multi-authority replacement of a core operational system, with procurement from 2025/26 onwards. For procurements started after 24 February 2025 the main regime is the Procurement Act 2023, which replaces the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for new competitions.

6.7 Legal implications include the need to:

6.7.1 Treat one or more partners as the contracting authority running a compliant competition under the new Act.

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- 6.7.2 Follow transparency, equal treatment and publication requirements; and,
- 6.7.3 manage joint procurement within that framework.
- 6.8 **Updating the Inter Authority Agreement**
- 6.9 The business case assumes:
  - 6.9.1 Use of the renewals fund at scale for this project; and
  - 6.9.2 A new C&C contract becoming a core TVFCS asset.
- 6.10 Further to this, the Agreement does not permit Authorities to enter a contract that outlasts its expiration date.
- 6.11 That implies a need to ensure the inter-authority agreement is updated so that:
  - 6.11.1 The expiration date is extended
  - 6.11.2 The new contract is properly designated as a TVFCS contract.
  - 6.11.3 Capital and revenue flows match the contribution and renewals mechanisms; and
  - 6.11.4 Governance bodies (Joint Committee, Coordination Group, project board) are exercising only the functions that the authorities have lawfully delegated.
- 6.12 Work to review the Inter Authority Agreement has been proposed and is underway with an update expected by Joint Committee in 2026, and subsequent update to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Business Case and Commercial strategy have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment
- 7.2 The procurement and implementation phase of the programme will give due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty, with the aim of eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.3 The ongoing involvement with, and consultation of, protected groups (for example disabled staff, neurodivergent staff, pregnancy/maternity, older workers) in the control room will be a driver of compliance and improvement.
- 7.4 Equality impact assessment will support accessibility and provide a clear opportunity to specify inclusive user interface and work environment standards with the intention to limit workforce impacts.

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7.5 Customer-facing equality aspects (for example, language support, communication needs for callers with hearing or speech impairment, digital exclusion) will be developed and understood during the procurement process.

**7.6 Potential and implied benefits**

7.7 A modernised system creates a strong opportunity to improve accessibility and usability for a diverse control workforce and for callers with additional needs.

7.8 Enhanced data and reporting could support better monitoring of service access and outcomes by protected characteristic, if specified in requirements.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 If we do not procure and implement a new C&C system in a timely manner, which may become possible, given the complexity and financial demand, then we can expect challenges with compliance and mobilisation which is significant in respect to our statutory duties, community and staff safety.

8.2 Project risks that are understood and being managed:

Ref	Risk Title	Inherent Score	Residual Score
A	Lack of market engagement or competition	6	3
B	Cost overrun	12	8
C	Timeline overrun	16	8
D	Legal challenge to procurement	8	4
E	High resource impact during contract qualification	9	3
F	Supplier dependency / poor performance	8	8
G	Technology obsolescence	8	4
H	Poor quality solution	8	4
I	Governance delays (IAA dependency)	8	4
J	Technology complexity	9	6

8.3 Proposed mitigation strategies include:

8.4 Risk scoring matrix and monitoring tools in place (See Commercial Strategy for full detail).

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- 8.5 Governance boards (JCC, SLT, Project Board) to oversee risk management.
- 8.6 Lessons learned from previous contracts.
- 8.7 Supplier engagement to co-design contract terms and performance measures.

### **9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Climate impact assessment has been completed and forms part of the OCC procurement process.
- 9.2 Cloud-based solution expected to reduce infrastructure footprint.
- 9.3 Disposal of legacy hardware to follow OCC sustainability protocols.

### **10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 10.1 The continuation of the TVFCS partnership through technology replacement to ensure the ongoing viability of the service supports the duty to collaborate as set out in Part 1 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

### **11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 Chief Fire Officer Wayne Bocock
- 11.2 Section 151 Officer Conor Byrne
- 11.3 Monitoring Officer Graham Britten

### **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 Awaiting minutes of December 2025 TVFCS Joint Committee meeting.
- 12.2 [Minutes of Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting Thursday, 12th December, 2024 at 2.00 pm](#)
- 12.3 [Minutes of Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee Meeting Monday 22 September 2025 at 2.00 pm](#)

### **13. APPENDICES**

- 13.1 Appendix 1: Business Case (Initial), Thames Valley Fire Control Service: Command and Control (Exempt from publication)
- 13.2 Appendix 2: Commercial Strategy, Thames Valley Fire Control Service: Command and Control (Exempt from publication)

### **14. CONTACT DETAILS**

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