



9 January 2026

Dear Resident,

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Budget and Council Tax Consultation 2026/27

At Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, we are very conscious of the financial demands everyone across our communities is facing. Therefore, it is important for you to know that the Fire Authority is committed to providing excellent services as efficiently as possible and continues to work tirelessly to keep the people of Berkshire safe.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's annual budget for 2025/26 is £48 million. About two thirds of our funding comes from council tax, the rest from Government grants and business rates.

Unfortunately, the three-year Local Government Finance Settlement shows that funding excluding council tax is flat for 2026/27 compared to the current year and then declines in 2027/28 and 2028/29. The Settlement provided by the Government therefore places a significant budgetary pressure on the Service.

We are committed to delivering value for money to our residents. Therefore, as part of the plan to balance the budget for 2026/27, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority will deliver a significant programme of savings next year, amounting to £941,000.

Despite these savings, there will still be a shortfall in the budget for 2026/27, so I am recommending that we raise the Band D precept by £5 per annum to £91.31.

This will most likely mean that the Authority is still within the lowest 25% of precepting fire authorities in the country. Importantly, the money raised through this £5 annual increase will be used to make sure we have highly trained and dedicated firefighters, excellent firefighting equipment with over £5.5m being invested in the coming years, as well as IT systems that are modern and effective and backed up by exceptional support staff.

The latest inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services assessed that overall, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing a good service to the public. In particular, it states that the Service continues to provide an effective prevention, protection and response for the public and that its use of technology is supporting the Service to improve its ways of working and provide a more efficient service to the public.

I would be grateful if you could take part in our [online survey](#) or visit rbfrs.co.uk/haveyoursay to let us know your views. The consultation closes at 9am on 2 February 2026.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Jeff Brooks
Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority