

Part I

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	10 FEBRUARY 2026
SUBJECT	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION – CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/ CHIEF EXECUTIVE
LEAD OFFICER	BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HR & L&D
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS, FIRE AUTHORITY CHAIR
EXEMPT INFORMATION	PART I
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 With the retirement of the Service's current Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock on 27 March 2026, an extensive candidate search and robust selection process has been delivered, to find the Service's next Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive.
- 1.2 The Appointment Panel has made an offer of appointment for the position of Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive with effect from 28 March 2026. Subject to Management Committee recommending the appointment and salary package of the new Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive, this report is seeking Fire Authority approval.
- 1.3 The recommendation, if ratified by the Fire Authority, will see Mark Arkwell appointed to the role of Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the appointment of Mark Arkwell, to the role of Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive commencing on 28 March 2026, on the salary package outlined in 3.5. and 3.6.

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3. REPORT

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock will retire on 27 March 2026.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 7 October 2025, Management Committee agreed to establish a Member Task and Finish Group to support the development of a robust, open and transparent selection process to attract and select the best candidates for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive position.
- 3.3 Led by the Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor Brooks, the Task and Finish Group was established and included Councillors Gittings and McKenzie-Boyle (minute reference 26) this in accordance with the Management Committee Terms of Reference (CO15.) to “select on behalf of the Authority the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, or equivalent, taking advice from suitable advisers and to make recommendations to the Authority as to the terms of appointment or dismissal.”
- 3.4 Supported by Officers, external professionals and a Member Engagement Panel, constituting Cllrs Jeffery, Shepherd-Dubey, Griffith and Satti, an extensive candidate search and robust selection process has been delivered by the Member Task and Finish Group and a conditional offer made for the role of Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, to Mark Arkwell. This to take effect from 28 March 2026 following the retirement of the current Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock on 27 March 2026.
- 3.5 The salary scale for the Chief Fire Officer is from £155,526 – £177,258. In line with the Pay Policy, the exact point within the salary range will be determined by the Chair and reviewed annually or at other times as the Chair, in consultation with the Vice Chair believes to be appropriate, based upon on year-end performance appraisals.
- 3.6 In addition to the salary, the post attracts an operational allowance of £12,538 and a car allowance of £3,500 per annum, which is in line with the contributions towards a lease car for other eligible staff.
- 3.7 In line with the Fire Authority Terms of Reference CO3 (L), the Fire Authority are required *‘To approve the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive, Deputy to the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer’*.

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4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Prevention: We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention education activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.2 Protection: We will support those with responsibility for premises to understand their duties in ensuring the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Building Safety Act 2022 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, whilst ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.5 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.6 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 The salary range for this role are set out in 3.5 and 3.6 above.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Paragraph 6.10 of the current Fire and Rescue National Framework for England states that: 'To ensure greater fairness and the exchange of talent and ideas, all principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and fire and rescue authorities must take account of this in their workforce planning'.
- 6.2 The Management Committee's Terms of Reference include the responsibility to (CO15.) "select on behalf of the Authority the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, or equivalent, taking advice from suitable advisers and to make recommendations to the Authority as to the terms of appointment or dismissal."

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- 6.3 To mirror the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee, the Terms of Reference of the Authority confirms its role in approving the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer.
- 6.4 Moreover, the Authority is required by its Terms of Reference to approve any proposed remuneration for any post in excess of £100,000 per year. This is in accordance with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in February 2012: '*Openness and accountability in local pay: guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act*'.
- 6.5 Section 41 of the Localism Act 2011 requires that the Authority must comply with its Pay Policy Principles and Statement for the relevant financial year when making a determination that relates to the remuneration, or other terms and conditions of a 'chief officer' (defined elsewhere in the Act).
- 6.6 Section 38 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 requires that the Pay Policy Principles and Statement include, i.e., the following (a) the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer, (b) remuneration of chief officers on recruitment, (c) increases and additions to remuneration for each chief officer, and (d) the use of performance-related pay for chief officers.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 N/A

10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 10.1 N/A

11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 11.1 Monitoring Officer
- 11.2 Head of Finance and Procurement
- 11.3 Chief Fire Officer
- 11.4 Management Committee's Appointment Panel

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12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Management Committee 7 October 2025 Minutes
- 12.2 [Pay Policy Statement 2025/26](#)
- 12.3 [Management Committee Terms of Reference](#)
- 12.4 [Fire Authority Terms of Reference](#)
- 12.5 [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)
- 12.6 [Openness and Accountability in local pay](#)

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1 None.

14. CONTACT DETAILS

- 14.1 Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development
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