

Part I

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 APRIL 2026
SUBJECT	SAIF PROPERTY PROGRAMME 2026-2030 DESIGN PLANNING AND DELIVERY
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BROOKS, HEAD OF ASSETS (ESTATES, FLEET & EQUIPMENT)
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR RACHELLE SHEPHERD-DUBEY
EXEMPT INFORMATION	PART I
ACTION	TO AGREE

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from the Management Committee for the release of funds to appoint a professional services team to design, plan and deliver the RBFRS fire station refurbishment programme as provided for in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) 2026. This approach will see a single professional consultancy working strategically with RBFRS to plan and deliver a coordinated programme based on site needs and condition. Besides establishing a strategic relationship to align principles, culture and understanding, this is expected to realise other benefits, including removing excess transaction, significantly reducing procurement effort, and increasing our market attraction (i.e. buying power). This in turn should improve value for money and quality. Further, affordability for all sites can be considered rather than taking a concurrent, iterative investment approach.
- 1.2 There are two broad phases, with Phase 1 facilitating early design and planning / feasibility work along with delivery of some urgent improvements at Ascot and Newbury during 2026/27. Phase 2 covers more detailed design, planning and delivery activities over a further two years (2027-2029). Phase 1 requires the release of £370,000 in accordance with the approved SAIF 2026. The following stations are in scope for Phase 1:

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- Newbury (£120,000), which includes critical security improvements and a strategic basing study.
- Caversham Road (£20,000).
- Wokingham Road (£20,000).
- Wokingham (£20,000).
- Mortimer (£20,000).
- Ascot (£170,000), which has a pressing need for dignified workplace upgrades, that planning, design and delivery commenced in February 2026.

1.3 The upgrades will incorporate the following key considerations:

- Provision of dignified and functional workspaces (in line with the RBFRS Dignified Workplace Standards).
- Effective contamination management.
- Integration of sustainability objectives.
- Enhancement of building fabric (extending the life of existing assets), security and resilience.

1.4 Subject to approval, the procurement process will commence immediately to appoint a professional multi-disciplinary consultancy to support the Estates team with design, planning, quantity surveying and project management services. To comply with the Authority's contract rules and financial and procurement diligence, additional papers will be presented to Management Committee to approve the further release of funds when required.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Management Committee is requested to:

- 2.1 **AGREE** to the strategic approach to the design, planning and delivery of the key estate SAIF projects as a programme over the next three years.
- 2.2 **APPROVE** the release of SAIF funds totalling £370,000.
- 2.3 **NOTE** that there will be checks and balances in the programme to ensure there is no commitment without appropriate authority approval being in place, to include further papers when required.

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3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) has been refreshed for 2026. Noting the need to balance out affordability and risk, the refresh includes adopting a more strategic approach to designing, planning and delivering the RBFRS fire station refurbishment programme. This approach will see a single professional consultancy working strategically with RBFRS to deliver a coordinated and integrated programme based on site needs and condition. Although on a relatively small scale, such a strategic relationship reflects industry best practice. This is expected to realise many benefits including removing excess transaction, significantly reducing procurement effort and increasing our market attraction (i.e. buying power) that should improve value for money and quality. Further, requirements and affordability for all sites can be considered rather than taking an iterative investment approach.
- 3.2 An extract from the Estate SAIF 2026 refresh is at **Table 1** with the 2026-2029 programme estimated provision for the six sites in scope totalling £3.32M and notable aspects as follows:
- 3.2.1 Newbury Fire Station has been brought forward, with an estimated overall cost of £1.2M and a year 1 allocated value of £120,000 to support urgent security works, a site refurbishment feasibility study and a strategic basing study (including joint ventures and collaborative opportunities).
- 3.2.2 Mortimer Fire Station has now been included as the only site that has not had any recent refurbishment activity, with an estimated overall cost of £100,000 and a year 1 allocated value of up to £20,000 to survey, design and plan improvement works.
- 3.2.3 Caversham Rd, Wokingham Rd, and Wokingham Fire Stations have been brought forward for early progression to RIBA Stage 1. As indicated earlier, this will ensure that early design and feasibility work is undertaken in parallel, supporting consistency of standards, potential delivery efficiencies and alignment with strategic objectives. This work will provide vital information to inform longer term strategic decisions at these key sites.
- 3.2.4 Ascot Fire Station has been added as it has a pressing need for dignified workplace improvements with an estimated cost of £170,000 for design, planning and delivery in 2026/27.

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3.3. In accordance with the SAIF objectives, the upgrades will focus on our four priority investment areas:

3.3.1 **Improving equality, diversity and inclusion** – creating safe, dignified facilities that support, encourage and promote a more diverse workforce now and into the future.

3.3.2 **Improving contamination control** – addressing the risk of contaminants by providing better facilities for decontamination and contamination control.

3.3.3 **Sustainability** – making the estate more environmentally friendly by carrying out upgrades and initiatives to reduce our carbon output and realise potential revenue savings by doing so.

3.3.4 **Improving building fabric** – investing in the fabric of the buildings to ensure longevity of our current estate and to provide fit-for-purpose workplaces for our staff.

£'000	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31 to 2035/36	Total
Major Redevelopment						
Langley	650	700				1,350
Newbury	120	500	580			1,200
Caversham Rd	20	480	500			1,000
Wokingham	20	130	200			350
Mortimer	20	80				100
Ascot	170					170
Wokingham Rd	20		480			500
Whitley Wood				400		400
HQ				500		500
Sub-Total	1,020	1,890	1,760	900	0	5,570
Sustainability	426	400	200	200	1,200	2,426
Lifecycle Costs		100	250	500	3,000	3,850
Reactive Capital Works	80	100	100	100	600	980
Total	1,526	2,490	2,310	1,700	4,800	12,826

Table 1 – SAIF 2026 Estates provisions.

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- 3.4 **Procurement strategy.** The broad procurement strategy is to use a traditional single professional consultancy design, planning and project management service on a 3+2-years commission basis to support and facilitate the procurement, appointment and management of delivery contractors using competitive tendering. Notwithstanding this, should the early planning activity identify that a single umbrella principal contractor or a mini framework would be better value for delivery, then that will be considered. Subject to approval, the procurement process will commence immediately to appoint a consultancy to support the Estates team with professional design, planning and project management services.
- 3.5 Looking ahead, the intention is to present further papers to Management Committee when required to approve the release of funds and to agree progression to subsequent RIBA stages with structured approvals at key decision points. The future need for papers will be contingent on compliance with the Authority's contract rules, along with financial and procurement diligence, coupled with ensuring that affordability for all sites is considered.

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 In accordance with Section 3.5.iv of the RBFA financial regulations, financial provision in the SAIF does not give authority to spend on capital projects. Provision is only converted into capital once approved by the Management Committee, hence the need for this paper. The capital expenditure budget, which Members are being asked to approve, is in line with the provision in the SAIF for this project, with a breakdown of anticipated costs in **Table 2**.

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Station	Allocation	Scope/Stage
Newbury	£120,000	Feasibility up to RIBA Stage 1 and strategic basing study.
Caversham Road	£20,000	Up to and including RIBA Stage 1
Wokingham Road	£20,000	Up to and including RIBA Stage 1
Wokingham	£20,000	Up to and including RIBA Stage 1
Mortimer	£20,000	Up to and including RIBA Stage 1
Ascot	£170,000	All RIBA Stages.
Total	£370,000	

Table 2 – SAIF Estate Programme 2026 – 2029 Phase 1 Provision.

- 5.2 The full cost of the activities can be funded from internal resources that have been set aside to fund capital projects. The Authority will therefore not need to increase its debt levels or call on reserves to fund this project.
- 5.3 In all case, good value for money will be sought and due diligence applied when considering or committing Authority funds.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no known related legal implications with the proposed works, but appropriate legal advice will be sought on procurement, planning and construction aspects if required.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 One of the key SAIF estates project objectives is to improve the equality of facilities for current and future staff groups. An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been drafted which identifies neutral or positive impacts to a range of groups affected by the programme. Any negative impacts identified will be mitigated.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The key risks to the Service relate to compliance with myriad regulations, not least Building Regulations and the Equality Act. More widely there is a potential risk to recruitment and retention by not providing quality dignified

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facilities for our staff, along with public alienation by not meeting community needs and expectation with major fire station refurbishments.

- 8.2 There is always a possibility that risks could mature leading to increased costs when considering the age and condition of our buildings. To try and mitigate this, relevant detailed surveys will be undertaken to establish the condition of the building and infrastructure. This will give the Service a clearer idea of risks and costs (and therefore contingency) before progressing to further project stages.

9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Sustainability will be embedded as a key objective in the programme, ensuring that environmental, social and economic impacts are considered in all phases of planning and delivery.

10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 10.1 As part of the feasibility stage, Local Authority Local Plans will be consulted to ensure alignment with wider planning objectives and to identify any opportunities that can be incorporated into the programme.
- 10.2 As part of the feasibility stage, opportunities will be investigated to collaborate with blue light partners (police, ambulance) and to explore potential joint ventures.

11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Head of Finance & Procurement were consulted during the preparation of this report.
- 11.2 The Member for Strategic Assets and the Monitoring Officer were consulted during the preparation of this report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Strategic Asset Investment Framework 2026 – [SAIF 2026](#)

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1 EIA Dignified Workplace Standards.
[EIA-162 Dignified Workplace Standards](#)
- 13.2 EIA – SAIF 2026 – Capital Improvement Programme.
[EIA - DRAFT SAIF 2026 Capital Improvements Programme V.1.docx](#)

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14. CONTACT DETAILS

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