



**Agenda
for the Meeting
of the
Audit and Governance Committee**

Monday, 24th July, 2023

At

6.30 pm

RBFRS Headquarters
Lynda Kenyon Suite
Newsham Court
Pincents Kiln
Calcot
Reading
Berkshire
RG31 7SD

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD



MEETING: Audit and Governance Committee Meeting

DATE AND TIME: Monday, 24th July, 2023 at 6.30 pm

VENUE: Lynda Kenyon Suite
RBFRS Headquarters
Newsham Court
Pincents Kiln
Calcot
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

S U M M O N S

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority at the time, date and venue indicated above, when it is proposed to deal with the business set out in the enclosed Agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Britten'.

GRAHAM BRITTEN
Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Audit and Governance Committee:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Councillor Dennis Benneyworth | Councillor Morag Malvern |
| Councillor Tricia Brown | Councillor Owen Jeffery |
| Councillor Haqeeq Dar | Councillor Joshua Reynolds |
| Councillor Billy Drummond | Councillor Robert Stedmond |
| Councillor Dave McElroy | |

Copy to: Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

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AGENDA

- 1. Election of Chair for Municipal Year 2023/24**
- 2. Appointment of Vice-Chair for Municipal Year 2023/24**
- 3. Apologies for Absence**
- 4. Declarations of Interest**

Purpose:

To receive Declarations of Interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, and any from Officers.

- 5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 March 2023 (Pages 7 - 14)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 28 March 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

- 6. Consideration of any matters properly referred to this Committee for decision**

- 7. Internal Audit Update (Pages 15 - 48)**

Purpose:

To note the outcome of audit activity, and RSM's Annual Report for 2022/23.

8. External Audit Update (*Pages 49 - 50*)

Purpose:

To note an update from the External Auditors.

9. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Action Plan for His Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) Inspection Report 2023 (*Pages 51 - 56*)

Purpose:

To approve RBFRS action plan for HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFI).

10. Local Pension Board - Annual Report (*Pages 57 - 64*)

Purpose:

To note the annual update from the Local Pension Board.

11. Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management Code Report (*Pages 65 - 78*)

Purpose:

To note the contents of the report (Appendix A).

12. Annual Report 22/23 (*Pages 79 - 118*)

Purpose:

To note the Annual Report prior to external publication.

13. Quarterly Performance Report 2022-23 Quarter Four (January - March 2023) (*Pages 119 - 122*)

Purpose:

To note Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) fourth quarter (January – March 2023) performance for the 2022-23 financial year.

Appendix (Quarter Four Performance Report) is attached under a separate cover.

14. Forward Plan (*Pages 123 - 124*)

Purpose:

To note the Forward Plan.

15. Date of next meeting

Monday 30 October 2023, at 6.30pm, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

16. Exclusion of Public (*Pages 125 - 126*)

Recommendation:

To Resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

17. Internal Audit Update - Appendix 7c (*Pages 127 - 146*)

Purpose:

To note Item 7, Appendix C IT General Controls Audit Report.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Held on Tuesday, 28th March, 2023 at 6.30 pm

RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

- Members:** (*present)
- * Councillor Christine Bateson
 - * Councillor Tricia Brown
 - Councillor Haqeeq Dar
 - * Councillor Biyi Oloko
 - * Councillor Tony Linden
 - * Councillor Mike Smith
 - * Councillor Morag Malvern
 - Councillor Sandra Malik
 - Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle

- In Attendance:**
- Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
 - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 - Doug Buchanan (Area Manager, Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
 - Becca Chapman (Data, Performance and Risk Manager)
 - Daniel Harris (Internal Auditor, RSM)
 - Abdifatar Hassan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
 - Alison Kennett (EY, External Auditor)
 - Jess James (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
 - Andy McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment HFF&E)
 - Jim Powell (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
 - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DcHEX)
 - Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
 - Emma Scott (Senior HR Adviser)

| | Action |
|--|--------|
| <p>40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Haqeeq Dar, Sandra Malik and Tina McKenzie-Boyle.</p> | |
| <p>41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority’s Local Code of Conduct, Councillor Tony Linden declared a personal interest regarding Item 6 (External Audit Update) due to his role on the Berkshire Pension Scheme.</p> | |

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2023

The actions in the Minutes were completed.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held and recorded actions on 23 January 2023, be confirmed, as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTERS PROPERLY REFERRED TO THIS COMMITTEE FOR DECISION

There were no matters properly referred to this Committee for decision.

44. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), introduced RSM's Internal progress report and draft 2023/24 Audit Plan. Five audits were completed in the period and all but one received the highest assurance rating.

On referring to page 23 of the report, Dan Harris (Internal Auditor) explained the Final audit reports for 2022/23 (Risk Management and Cyber Essentials) will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee in July 2023. In referring to the Facilities Management Executive Summary on page 30 of the report, he explained the audit opinion was 'reasonable assurance'. He reported the audit opinion was positive and four management medium actions had been agreed on scheduling, workplace inspections and defects. From page 35 onwards, the report provided further detail on the agreed actions and implementation dates, which was towards the end of June.

In response to a number of questions from Councillor Smith, Andy McLenahan, Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment (HFFE) reported PPM Schedule was an acronym for 'Pre-planned maintenance'. A management action had been agreed to record internal contract meetings. In relation to a supplementary question from Councillor Smith, Andy McLenahan explained one of the outstanding items identified was an outbuilding at Slough Fire Station. The building had experienced damp and was subsequently repaired. The second phase of the work was to understand the cause of the problem and it would have been remiss to remove off the system.

Dan Harris reported pages 93 – 94 was the Internal Audit Strategy 2023/24 which listed the range of department audits, proposed timing and fees across the organisation. Six audits were linked to a corporate risk/ strategic commitments, and two core assurance reviews will be held. In referring to appendix B (pages 101-103), Dan Harris reported the table showed a backward look of audit opinions previously provided and was also a forward look at the 23/24 audit plan.

Councillor Smith queried the difference between advisory and risk based. Dan Harris reported 'Risk base approach' was a formal assurance opinion. Cyber

essentials audit was against government standards / self-assessment. Formal audit opinion was not required.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Smith, Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DchEx), reported the Service had not signed up to Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation to date, however, the Service was working with a third party (Cyber Essentials Plus accreditors) to achieve this accreditation in the future.

Councillor Smith queried the reason why there had been no audit on IT General Controls since 16/17. Dan Harris reported it had been replaced with Cyber Essentials, of which annual audits were held.

Dan Harris agreed to reflect in future reports that IT General Controls had been superseded by Cyber Essentials.

Internal Auditor (RSM)

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The findings as presented in RSM's Progress Report be noted; and
- 2) The draft 2023/34 Audit Plan be approved.

45. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Conor Byrne reported he had written to the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) on behalf of the Committee to express growing concerns on the delay of the signing off Statement of Accounts. He tabled a letter from PSAA Chief Executive. Conor Byrne reported there was little that could be done, for example, the main sanction was to replace the auditor, however; the current market has been unable to attract a number of auditors into the sector. He stated he had hoped that the accounts would be signed off at this meeting and stated that he will bring to the July meeting for sign off.

Alison Kennett, External Auditor reported EY were waiting for Deloitte to audit Berkshire Pension Fund accounts. She stated it was beyond her control and all audit firms were in a similar position.

In response to the PSAA letter, Councillor Linden requested A&GC Chair write to the Secretary of State, Michael Gove to inform him of the delay in the signing off of Statement of Accounts.

Conor Byrne advised Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had three sets of un-audited accounts and reported of the level of resources required. He stated he was concerned.

In response to Councillor Smith, Alison Kennett reported there were no caveats in the 19/20 Statement of Accounts and that they could have been signed off by Deloitte. She added, there was a caveat in the 20/21 Statement of Accounts.

Conor Byrne summarised the main concern around the Berkshire Pension Fund

accounts. He reiterated the contents from the PSAA letter, which stated the Committee should expect the 19/20 Statement of Accounts to be signed off in May 2023.

Councillor Linden stated due to the delay, it was unknown whether Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead were in financial difficulty and requested for the letter to the Secretary of State to be factual.

Nikki Richards reported the letter to the Secretary of State would inform him of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's position and stated it was prudent the Authority made RBWM aware of its concerns.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the update from the auditors.

46. ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Mike Smith, Member Development Champion, presented the report and stated the Fire Authority appointed six new Members in June 2022, and advised following the local elections in May 2023, could see additional new Members. There were 24 actions on the action plan, two of which were amber in the RAG rating. He highlighted a survey was conducted by Democratic Support, however, only a small number of Members responded. He also highlighted the recommendation to the Fire Authority of the new Member Development Strategy which outlined the core responsibilities of Fire Authority members.

In referring to the action plan, Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), also highlighted the other two red incomplete actions, where around Member / Officer Buddies and the number of Members completing E-learning courses were low.

The Member Development Strategy was created alongside Councillor Smith and Member Development Working Group. Paul Bremble stated the Strategy had been aligned to the draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) document and subject to approval, a new action plan will be developed and reported back to this Committee.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Member Development Annual Report be noted;
- 2) The progress of the 2022-23 Member Development Action Plan (Appendix A) be noted;
- 3) The results of the Member Development Survey (Appendix B) be noted; and
- 4) The 2023-27 Member Development Strategy be recommended to the Fire Authority for approval (Appendix C).

47. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

Paul Bremble presented the report and went through the items the Committee discussed throughout the year. He reported the appendices on Member attendance and allowances was until 28 February and it would be updated prior to the Fire Authority in June. In response to Councillor Linden, he advised the Member allowances spreadsheet will be updated to the end of May, therefore it should then capture all expenses claimed.

Paul Bremble highlighted a small typo in the last sentence of paragraph 3.6, which should be read as '*Royal County of Windsor and Maidenhead*'.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) It be recommended to the Fire Authority;
 - i) Members' Allowances received from 1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023 be noted; and
 - ii) The 2022/23 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members from 1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023 be noted.

48. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER THREE (OCTOBER - DECEMBER)

Becca Chapman, Data, Risk and Performance Manager presented the Quarter Three performance report and explained the data was a snapshot in time, which did not include the Corporate Risk Register.

Quadrant One – Service Provision

Jess James, Area Manager Prevention and Protection reported there were three fire fatalities during the quarter which had gone through Coroners Court. In response to a question from Councillor Linden on the red RAG rating identified in the *Percentage of Full Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly compliant' result*, Jess James explained the red was due to the introduction of the methodology of the Risk Based Inspection programme and should see a difference in the rating later in the year.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Linden on the red RAG rating which identified the *Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)*, Doug Buchanan, Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R), reported on-call availability affected Fire Services nationally. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) were working on recruitment, retention and changing policy around on-call. The most recent Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) had consulted on on-call corporate targets and added, on-call provided resilience to the Service. He added, he will be delivering a presentation on on-call at the next Fire Authority meeting.

Councillor Smith queried the red RAG rating for the *Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm where RBFRS did not attend*. Becca Chapman explained the rating

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Action

was due to the target to reduce attendance via call challenge.

Quadrant Two – Corporate Health

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P) reported Firelink grant had been reduced by 20% and stated that it had been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). He discussed the budget pressures highlighted in the report.

Councillor Linden stated he was pleased with the outcome of the Grey Book Pay Award and Industrial Action did not commence. In response to his question on the increase of the levels in the quarter of sickness days lost and percentage of working time lost, Emma Scott, Senior HR Adviser reported 25% was due to respiratory absence.

Councillor Smith queried the overtime forecast identified on page 193 of the report and asked whether some of those costs should not be predictable. Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DchEx), explained although some savings on training were made, there were unpredictable costs in relation to the number of leavers. Overtime was used to balance the lean structure. Doug Buchanan, Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R) reiterated the crewing model was lean and he was working with Budget and Collaboration Lead Member to manage more effectively.

Quadrant Three – Priority Programmes

Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration and Finance (AM C&P), reported there were no material change since the last meeting on Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP). Jim Powell agreed to circulate the Audit Executive report to the Committee.

AM (C&P)

Councillor Smith congratulated officers on their work on the intranet and website replacement project.

Quadrant Four – Assurance

Nikki Richards reported the Built Environment programme had closed and added it was a successful project and had now been built into business as usual.

Doug Buchanan explained the red RAG rating for risk 885, (Climate Change Operational Response) and discussed wildfire capability and review on water rescue capability.

In response to a question from Councillor Bateson, Jim Powell explained the red RAG status to risk 861 (Hydrant Inspection and Repair) will change in quarter four, due to the recruitment of a Hydrant Inspector.

Councillor Linden asked for clarification on the difference between the current score and treated score. Becca Chapman advised there were three scores and

stated the following:

- Inherent Score – was the original score
- Current Score – score as of current date in time
- Treated Score – score where you want it be get to

In response to a question from Councillor Smith, Nikki Richards reported Members received a condensed version of the Corporate Risk Register. The full report includes deadline dates for each mitigation and updates on the likelihood of impact.

Councillor Linden commented he felt the Service was open with its figures and was going in the right direction. Councillor Bateson thanked officers for attaching an abbreviation page at the back of the report.

In response to a question from Councillor Linden, Nikki Richards reported a new EDI Co-ordinator will be starting in May and as an organisation, the Service will continue with positive action, such as Summer Internship. The HMICFRS action plan will be updated.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2022-23, be noted.
- 2) The progress made on the four priority programmes, be noted.
- 3) The position of corporate risk ne noted.

49. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

50. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Post meeting note: Date of the next meeting was moved to Monday 24 July, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG30 7SD.

Post meeting note: The Chair and Councillor Linden agreed not to write to the Secretary of State regarding the delay in the signing off of Statement of Accounts.

(The meeting concluded at 20:23)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE |
| LEAD OFFICER | CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT |
| LEAD MEMBER | n/a |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | THE IT GENERAL CONTROLS AUDIT REPORT IS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION (PART II) |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Committee will receive an update on audit activity since the last Committee meeting as well as receiving RSM’s Annual Report for 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** RSM’s Annual Report.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 RSM has completed the final two audits for 2022/23. The audits were on Governance and Risk Management and IT General Controls. RSM issued a *Reasonable Assurance* rating for the Governance and Risk Management audit (**Appendix A**) and a *Partial Assurance* rating for the IT General Controls audit (exempt from publication).
- 3.2 RSM’s Annual Report is attached as **Appendix B**. The report states that the organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, RSM identified further enhancements to the framework to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.

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- 3.3 RSM's Annual Report recommendations will be fed into the Authority's Draft Annual Governance Statement before it comes to Members for approval along with the Statement of Accounts.
- 3.4 A representative from RSM will attend the meeting to provide further detail and answer any questions from Members.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – Sustainability. We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The work of the internal auditors assures Members that the Authority's finances are in good order.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion should contribute to the Authority's Annual Governance Statement.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The internal audit programme aims to identify key risks and report on the effectiveness of controls and mitigating actions.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Internal audits will consider how the Authority is meeting this requirement where applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has been consulted on the report.
- 10.2 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Governance and Risk Management Report

12.2 Appendix B - 2022/23 Annual Report

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement

Email: byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk

Tel: 07585 991602

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Governance and Risk Management

Internal audit report 7.22/23

Final

9 June 2023

This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why we completed this audit

We undertook a review of Governance and Risk Management as part of the agreed internal audit plan for 2022/23 at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS). The objective of this review was to allow the Service to take assurance regarding the adequacy and appropriateness of its governance arrangements and to ensure that the risk management framework and associated processes were embedded within operations.

The governance structure within the organisation consists of the Fire Authority and two standing committees, the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee. Ordinary meeting dates are agreed as part of the municipal calendar at the beginning of the year, with forums expected to undertake duties as outlined within the respective terms of reference. Overall responsibility for governance and risk management lies with the Director of Support Services within the organisation.

The Corporate Plan defines the strategic objectives for the period 2019-2023 and the Performance Management Framework (PMF) outlines how performance is monitored. An Annual Plan is also prepared to set out the actions and targets for the year to assist in the achievement of strategic objectives.

Current, inherent, and treated risk scores are identified based on the matrix outlined within the organisation's Organisational Risk Management Policy. Scores of six and below are rated low, between seven and 16 are medium, whilst 17 and above are high rated.

The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) comprises of strategic risks as well as those risks with current and treated scores equal to or greater than 17. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discusses the CRR monthly as a standing agenda item, while highlights from the CRR are also included within the performance reports reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee and Strategic Performance Board (SPB).

Conclusion

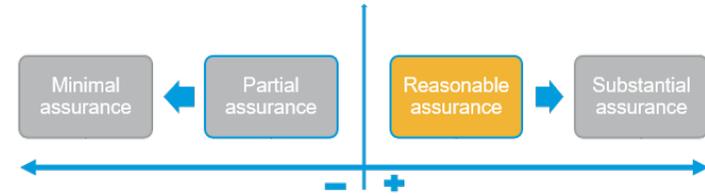
Overall, our review found that there were well-designed and consistently applied governance and risk management arrangements at the Service. Strategic plans and objectives are clearly set in the approved Corporate Plan and Annual Plan, and there was a well-documented and applied governance structure in place to monitor performance against these objectives. The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlines the Service's risk management approach and has been communicated to staff. The CRR was consistently reviewed and actioned by the SLT, with highlights of the CRR shared with the Audit and Governance Committee and SPB.

We have, however identified areas of weakness in relation to the lack of a formal risk appetite statement, and documented processes for the de-escalation of risks. We also noted weaknesses in the monitoring of risk management training completion by staff.

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take **reasonable assurance** that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified area(s).



Key findings

We identified the following weaknesses which resulted in the agreement of two medium priority management actions:



Risk Management Policy/De-escalation of Risks

Through review of the Risk Management Policy, we noted there was no risk appetite statement included in the policy. While we noted there are elements of implied risk appetite within the scoring matrix, where risk appetite has not been agreed at an appropriate level of the organisation, there is a risk that although it is being considered with individual risks, there may be a lack of clarity and the organisations overall risk tolerance levels may not be considered.

In addition, we noted there was no guidance for the de-escalation of risks and if prior approval is needed before removal of risks. Without guidance for de-escalation, risks may be inappropriately managed or removed from a risk register. **(Medium)**



Risk Training

Through review of the training completion report for the middle-level managers and (above which was generated in February 2023), we noted that 80 middle-level managers and 25 staff had completed the training. It was highlighted that 53 staff had not started the training and two staff members were stated as n/a. We confirmed through review that reminder emails were sent to remind staff of the completion timeframe however we did not receive evidence to demonstrate that non-compliance was reviewed or chased on a regular basis.

Without the completion of training by middle-managers there is a risk that staff may not be able to identify and manage risks appropriately therefore increasing the likelihood of risks materialising. **(Medium)**

We found the following controls to be adequately designed and operating effectively:



Corporate Plan

We confirmed through review that the Corporate Plan which covers the period for 2019-2023 has been made available to staff and members of the public via the Service’s website. Through review of the Corporate Plan, we noted that the Service strategic commitments have been outlined. Furthermore, we noted there was additional sections such as a vision statement, resource map for RBFRS, integrated risk management plan and mention of how to monitor performance. We confirmed through review of the meeting minutes that the Corporate Plan 2019-2023 was reviewed and approved by the Fire Authority in April 2022.



Annual Plan

We confirmed through review that the Annual Plan for 2022/23 has been made available on the Service’s website. Through review of the Annual Plan, we noted specific areas of focus which are aligned to the six strategic commitments and set out in the Corporate Plan and IRMP for 2019-2023 along with how to focus and deliver on the actions. We confirmed through review of the meeting minutes that the Annual Plan for 2022/23 was reviewed and approved by the Fire Authority in July 2018.



Performance Management

We reviewed the Performance Management Framework, effective October 2019 and last reviewed in March 2022. We confirmed that the Framework has been made available to staff via Siren (staff intranet). We noted the performance framework is well structured and defines the key areas of performance and sets out the purpose of providing structure and governance that will enable the Service to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner.

We reviewed a sample of five KPIs taken from the Q2 2022/23 performance report and confirmed accuracy with source data in all cases.



Terms of Reference

We reviewed the Terms of Reference for the following:

- Fire Authority;
- Management Committee; and
- Audit and Governance Committee.

We confirmed that the Terms of Reference for all Committees were reviewed and approved by the Fire Authority in December 2022. However, the SLT Terms of Reference was noted as V1.2 and approved on the 17 November 2021 by SLT. We confirmed each ToR contained consistent content throughout including the quorum of meetings, appointment of chair, meeting frequency, functions of committees, review of terms of reference and key responsibilities.

We reviewed the Standing Orders which we confirmed were approved by the Fire Authority in October 2022. We noted through review that the Standing Orders stated Fire Authority meetings are to be conducted at least once per quarter and the Fire Authority will hold an annual meeting in addition. We confirmed all Terms of Reference for each committee were made available online and were up to date.



Committee Reporting

We noted all minutes for Fire Authority, Management Committee and Audit and Governance Committee were made available publicly through the RBFRS website. We reviewed meeting minutes as follows:

- Fire Authority (February, June and October 2022);
- Management Committee (April, June and October 2022); and
- Audit and Governance Committee (March, July and October 2022)

In all instances we confirmed documentation of thorough challenge and scrutiny noted in the minutes, in particular relating to performance reporting. We confirmed actions from previous meetings were followed up at the beginning of each meeting and signed off accordingly.



Member Development Strategy

We reviewed the Member Development Strategy, effective October 2019 as approved by the Fire Authority. We confirmed through review of the meeting minutes from the Audit and Governance Committee from March 2022 that the draft Strategy is due to be reviewed in April 2023 which had not yet occurred at the time of our review. We were provided with a copy of the draft Strategy and confirmed it was in progress at the time of our review.



Member Skills and Training

We reviewed the Member Development Action Plan for 2020-23 as presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in July 2020. Through discussion with the Democratic Support Lead responsible for the Member Development we were informed that the training offered to members is not compulsory and it was noted that returning members have previously been on training courses.

Risk Management



Risk Management Strategy

We obtained the current Organisational Risk Management Policy and confirmed the latest issue of the document is March 2022 and to be reviewed 1 year from this date. Due to only minor changes, specifically the terminology changes from IRMP (Integrated Risk Management Plan) to CRMP (Community Risk Management Plan), it has been stated that no formal consultation is required and the SLT member has approved the policy as of March 2022. We confirmed the policy is up-to-date and obtained a screenshot of the document being made available on the RBFRS website.

Treatment for new and emerging risks are detailed in stages 1, 2 and 3 which give specific guidance as to how to record a new risk, the use of template to describe the risk event, cause, and effect and how to score the risk against likelihood and impact to generate an inherent score. In addition to this there are supporting appendices such as scoring matrix, and examples of internal and external factors that provide context that can be used as an aid with the assessment of a risk.



CRR – Maintenance and Monitoring

Through review of the Organisational Risk Management Policy, we noted that it included the roles and responsibilities for maintaining the risk registers. We noted that it was stipulated that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will own Strategic Risks and will report details of risk to Fire Authority Members. It was documented that Service Plan, Project and Programme Risk Registers will be owned at the lowest reasonable level of management i.e. Heads of Service or Project Manager.

We noted through review that risks are separated between current score and treated score. Current or treated scores equal to or more than 17 are on the CRR and are subject to challenge and scrutiny by the SLT.



CRR – Risk Ownership

We confirmed for a sample of ten risks, all had appointed a risk owner and treatment owner. We verified the roles of the risk owners and treatment owners and confirmed each owner was appropriate for the risk and were at director level or were a member of SLT as appropriate for all strategic risks and risks scored as greater than 17.

We sought to conduct interviews with a sample of five risk owners to discuss their approach for managing risk. Three interviews were conducted via telephone, and one was via email correspondence with the interviewee answering questions via email as their preferred method of communication. We were unable to undertake an interview with one risk owner due to them being unavailable during the review. We confirmed in all instances the responses were similar for each individual and they have applied the knowledge of the process and policy. This is reflected in Appendix B.



CRR – Risk Cause and Effect

Through review of a sample of ten risks from the CRR, we noted that all risks included a current score and an inherent risk score. We noted for all ten risks that a template statement used for risk identification and risk description was utilised to highlight the likelihood, cause, consequences, and objectives. We noted that risk owners are required to insert the relevant information to note a clear cause and effect with added reference to the impact on the organisational objectives in an understandable manner. We noted that the risk register included treatments taken (mitigating controls) and progress updates given for all ten risks reviewed.



CRR – Assurance and Action Plans

We reviewed the CRR treatments and action plans for a sample of ten risks. We noted in eight instances both treatments and action plans had detailed notes that aligned with the SMART goal setting strategy. We confirmed that each risk on the register has multiple treatments and more than one treatment owner. We noted evidence of specific actions that were measurable, achievable, and realistic with time-based goals where applicable.

We confirmed for all ten risks reviewed that there were regular updates noted for each treatment with a documented review date from Q3 2022/23 as appropriate. We noted that the risk register included two columns that gives the assurance level for each individual treatment and an overall assurance score for the risk itself. In addition to this, we confirmed through review that the levels of assurance were defined in the Organisational Risk Management Policy. We were informed that assurance levels are reviewed as part of the risk register reviews undertaken during SLT meetings.



Risk Reporting – SLT and Audit and Governance Committee

We noted through discussion that SLT meetings are not minuted, however we noted that a rolling Actions and Decisions log is retained to document actions agreed during the meeting which we confirmed through review of the document. We noted through review of the standing agenda for SLT meetings that the CRR was included as the first item of discussion.

We confirmed through review of the minutes from the Audit and Governance Committee meetings held in in March, July and October 2022, that the risk register was presented and discussed, and we verified that it was included in the quarterly performance report.

2. DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTIONS

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those areas of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

| Risk Management Strategy | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Control | <p>The Service has an Organisational Risk Management Policy which outlines the approach to risk management, the key responsibilities for staff, the risk scoring matrix, and the risk ownership hierarchy.</p> <p>This policy is subject to review on an annual basis, with minor changes undergoing an informal update whilst significant changes requiring consultation and formal approval by SLT.</p> <p>The policy is accessible via the staff intranet.</p> | Assessment: | | |
| | | Design | ✓ | |
| | | Compliance | × | |
| Findings / Implications | <p>We noted through review of the Organisational Risk Management Policy, effective March 2022 that there was no risk appetite statement included in the policy although noted there were elements of implied risk appetite within the scoring matrix. However, where risk appetite has not been formalised and agreed at an appropriate level of the organisation, there is a risk that although it is being considered with individual risks, there may be a lack of clarity and it may not take into consideration the organisations overall risk tolerance.</p> <p>In addition, we noted there was no guidance for the de-escalation of risks and if prior approval is needed before removal of risks. Without guidance for the de-escalation of risks there may be a risk that risks may be inappropriately managed.</p> | | | |
| Management Action 1 | <p>We will update the Policy to include a formal risk appetite statement which will be developed to clearly articulate the level of risk that the Service is willing to accept.</p> <p>We will also establish a process for de-escalating risks including a guideline to outline when prior approval is needed before risks can be removed.</p> | Responsible Owner: | Date: | Priority: |
| | | Paul Bremble, Area Manager Head of Corporate Services | 31 October 2023 | Medium |

Risk Training

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| Control | <p>Risk Management training was developed by the Data and Performance Team for middle-level managers and above. The training is mandatory for these individuals as they are the most likely to be risk or risk treatment owners.</p> <p>Whilst risk management is mandatory for middle-management managers and above, the training is accessible to all staff that wish to undertake this via the Learning Management system (LMS).</p> <p>Risk owners and SLT members are also provided with individual ad hoc training, based on experience and knowledge with regards to risk management.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ×</p> |
|----------------|--|---|

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Findings / Implications | <p>Through review of the training completion report for the middle-level managers and above which was generated in February 2023, we noted that 80 middle-level managers and 25 staff had completed the training. We confirmed that 53 staff had not started the training and two staff members were stated as n/a.</p> <p>We confirmed through review that reminder emails were sent to remind staff of the completion timeframe however we did not receive evidence to demonstrate that non-compliance was reviewed or chased on a regular basis. Without the completion of training by middle-managers there is a risk that staff may not be able to identify and manage risks appropriately therefore increasing the likelihood of risks materialising.</p> |
|--------------------------------|---|

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Management Action 2 | <p>We will ensure the risk management training is completed at all required levels.</p> <p>A method to monitor compliance regarding training completion will be introduced.</p> | Responsible Owner: | Date: | Priority: |
| | | Paul Bremble, Area Manager Head of Corporate Services | 31 October 2023 | Medium |

Terms of Reference

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Control | The service has terms of references for the Fire Authority, Management Committee, Audit & Governance Committee, and the SLT documenting the membership, quorum, functions of each committee, how often they are reviewed and key responsibilities. | Assessment: | |
| | | Design | ✓ |
| | | Compliance | x |
| Findings / Implications | <p>Through review of the ToR we confirmed it contained consistent content throughout including the quorum of meetings, appointment of chair, meeting frequency, functions of committees, review of terms of reference and key responsibilities. However, we noted the SLT ToR states it is V1.2 of the document and had been last reviewed and approved in November 2021 by the SLT.</p> <p>Without the annual review and approval of the TOR the committee may continue to operate based on outdated goals and objectives. This can result in the committee not effectively addressing current issues or achieving the desired outcomes.</p> | | |
| Management Action 3 | There will be an annual review of the SLT Terms of Reference ensuring it is kept up to date. | Responsible Owner: | Date: |
| | | Paul Bremble, Area Manager Head of Corporate Services | 30 November 2023 |
| | | | Priority: Low |

Member Training

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Control | <p>The Fire Service has a Member Development Strategy and Action Plan, which outlines the way that it intends to improve the skills of the Councillors who serve on the Fire Authority.</p> <p>The strategy is agreed initially by the Fire Authority, then subject to review by the Audit & Governance Committee on an annual basis.</p> | <p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ×</p> |
| Findings / Implications | <p>We were informed by the Democratic Support Lead and through review of the Member Development action plan that there were additions to include an ‘Update the skill-based questionnaire for compulsory completion by members annually’ action. We obtained the latest skills questionnaire and confirmed it showed a good response with the detailing of experience and qualifications with an added column noted as ‘areas you need more understanding’ which then is used to recommend actions to up-skill the member.</p> <p>We noted through discussion there are optional ad hoc training sessions members are encouraged to attend. However, we found that only seven out of the 11 members had completed the skills questionnaire.</p> <p>Without complete member development questionnaires there is a risk that group leaders may not be able to identify skills and interests ahead of Fire Authority annual meetings and may be unable to signpost members for training organised by the Democratic Support Lead.</p> | |
| Management Action 4 | <p>We will ensure the skill-based questionnaires are completed for all members to ensure the right training can be signposted for members.</p> | <p>Responsible Owner: Paul Bremble, Area Manager Head of Corporate Services</p> <p>Date: 30 September 2023</p> <p>Priority: Low</p> |

APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

| Priority | Definition |
|----------|--|
| Low | There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality. |
| Medium | Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media. |
| High | Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines. |

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

| Area | Control design not effective* | | Non Compliance with controls* | | Agreed actions | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|------|----------------|------|---|
| | Low | Medium | High | Low | Medium | High | |
| Governance and Risk Management: To ensure adequate and appropriate governance and risk management arrangements are in place for the organisation to achieve its objectives. | 0 | (12) | 4 | (12) | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 2 | 2 | 0 | | | | |

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS

We conducted an interview with four risk owners to discuss their approach to the management of risks. The table shows the questions we had asked, and a summary of the answers given by each risk owner.

| Summary of responses from risk owners | |
|--|--|
| How do you assign treatment owners? | Discussion would take place to assign a suitable risk owner dependant on the treatment of the risk, activities related to the risk, and the type of risk and then a treatment owner is suitable assigned. Consideration of the suitable treatment owner based on their area and level of responsibility. |
| How do you receive updates from treatment owners? | Treatment owners are required to update the risk database based on updates that have come from changes of risks. Updates of risk are conducted during one-to-ones with senior managers, monthly governance and corporate meetings, once they have been subject to challenge and scrutiny. |
| How does the risk register get updated? | They are updated on an ad hoc basis when a risk is required to be updated or when the review date is due. Updates are input directly into the system by treatment owners or the senior leadership team for any risk above 17 which is intended for the CRR. |
| How do you score a risk? | Within the policy there is a risk scoring matrix which is used as a guide to understand risks, risk treatments and how to effectively score a risk. Scores are given for inherent, current scores and treated score; these are updated based on the comments from the treatment owner. For any scores above 17, these are discussed during SLT meetings. |
| What is the process for escalating/de-escalating risks? | Risk owners discuss the escalation and de-escalation of risk with treatment owners, line managers and SLT meetings, depending on the level of the risks. Risk scored greater than 17 will be escalated to the relevant Director for consideration. De-escalation of risks would be discussed during SLT meetings even if the current score is below 17 and is carried out by the risk owner. |
| How is the assurance level of risk determined? | There are three levels of assurance. Level 1 is the highest level of assurance which suggests treatment will prevent the risk from occurring to the lowest level, level 3 where treatment is unproven or new. Level 2 suggests treatments are reactive or provides mitigation should the risk occur or relate to an established policy which is regularly audited. The levels are subject to challenges at the SLT level and as well as risk owners with the treatment owners. |

APPENDIX C: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following risks:

| Objective of the area under review | Risks relevant to the scope of the review | Risk source |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Risk management framework and accompanying processes are up to date and firmly embedded within the Authority's operations. | Management of operational risk | Corporate risk register |
| Adequate and appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the organisation to achieve its objectives. | | |

When planning the audit the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

Governance:

We will consider whether a robust governance framework has been established and embedded throughout the organisation and whether this is in line with best practice. This review will consider whether:

- Strategic plans and objectives have been set and approved by the Authority and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting have been delegated to subcommittees and management forums, as appropriate. We will also confirm this has been reflected within their terms of reference and minutes.
- Metrics have been developed to enable monitoring of performance against delivery and assurance on performance against strategies, plans and objectives are reported up to the Authority including what action and challenge is being taken where there is underperformance.
- There is evidence in papers and minutes that timely and adequate information within reports is supplied to enable decision making at committee level including challenge, agreement of decisions or any further actions which is followed up.
- There is a process for monitoring the effectiveness of members in discharging their duties and identifying subsequent training needs.
- Terms of reference are in place for each committee with clearly set out the remit of each committee including under which circumstances decisions can be made and where decisions must be escalated in accordance with the Authority's documented governance structure.

Risk Management:

We will consider whether a robust risk management framework has been established and embedded throughout the Authority. This review will consider whether:

- There is an agreed Risk Management Strategy in place, which is available to all relevant staff and includes clear risk assessment criteria and escalation procedures for identifying new and emerging risks.
- Responsibility to review and maintain the Corporate Risk Register has been formally delegated to appropriate groups and/or persons, with training provided where necessary.
- Responsibility for each risk has been assigned to an accountable person with the appropriate delegated authority to manage the risk. As part of the review, we will seek to discuss with a sample of risk owners their approach to managing and monitoring progress on their risks.
- The cause and effect of each risk is evident. Each risk has a pre- and post- mitigating control risk score. Risk scoring considers the characteristics of the risk.
- Controls and assurances have been identified for each risk, updated regularly and reviewed by the appropriate body. Gaps in controls (treatments) and assurances have been identified and are supported by appropriate SMART action plans.
- Regular review and challenge is conducted by the appropriate groups within the Authority and is clearly evidenced within the minutes and papers of these groups.
- Assurances are obtained and reported upon by the Authority to confirm the controls are working and the appropriate management of risks and progress against action plans.
- Relevant staff have been provided with risk management training.

The following limitations apply to the scope of our work:

- We will not confirm whether the correct decisions have been made by the Fire Authority or its committees
- We will not confirm that the delegations to make decisions are appropriate.
- This review will not comment on whether individual risks are appropriately managed, or whether the Authority has identified all risks and opportunities that it faces;
- We will not comment on the appropriateness of the risk scores given;
- We will not confirm that the actions taken, and controls implemented will mitigate the risks from being realised;
- The results of our work are reliant on the quality and completeness of the information provided to us.
- Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

Debrief held 24 April 2022

Draft report issued 17 May 2023

Responses received 9 June 2023

Final report Issued 9 June 2023

Internal audit Contacts **Daniel Harris, Head of Internal Audit**

Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com

+44 (0)1908 687800

Zoe Hibbert

Zoe.Hibbert@rsmuk.com

+44 (0)1245 454106

Client sponsor Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services

Distribution Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services

Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement

rsmuk.com

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Annual internal audit report 2022/23

11 July 2023

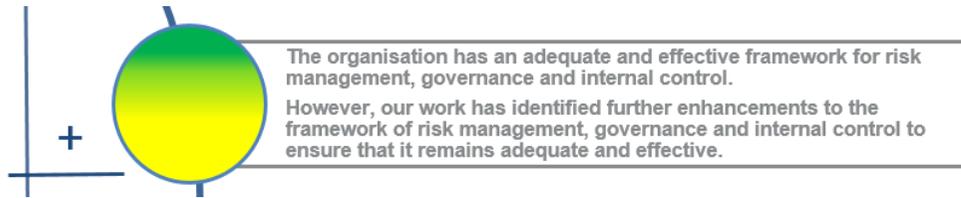
This report is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed.
To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party.

THE ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

This report provides an annual internal audit opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion should contribute to the organisation's annual governance reporting.

The opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2023, the head of internal audit opinion for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is as follows:



Please see appendix A for the full range of annual opinions available to us in preparing this report and opinion.

It remains management’s responsibility to develop and maintain a sound system of risk management, internal control and governance, and for the prevention and detection of material errors, loss or fraud. The work of internal audit should not be a substitute for management responsibility around the design and effective operation of these systems.

Scope and limitations of our work

The formation of our opinion is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management and approved by the audit committee, our opinion is subject to inherent limitations, as detailed below:

- internal audit has not reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the organisation;
- the opinion is substantially derived from the conduct of risk-based plans generated from a robust and organisation-led assurance framework. The assurance framework is one component that the board takes into account in making its annual governance statement (AGS);
- the opinion is based on the findings and conclusions from the work undertaken, the scope of which has been agreed with management / lead individual;
- where strong levels of control have been identified, there are still instances where these may not always be effective. This may be due to human error, incorrect management judgement, management override, controls being by-passed or a reduction in compliance;
- due to the limited scope of our audits, there may be weaknesses in the control system which we are not aware of, or which were not brought to our attention; and

FACTORS AND FINDINGS WHICH HAVE INFORMED OUR OPINION

Based on the work we have undertaken on the systems of governance, risk management and internal control across the Service, our opinion on governance, risk management and control have been informed by the following:

Governance and Risk Management

We have undertaken a specific review of governance and risk management arrangements within 2022/23 which has been issued with a reasonable assurance opinion. In addition, throughout our audits, we have reviewed elements of the governance arrangements and frameworks in place which has helped inform our governance opinion.

Our internal audit plan is risk-based and has included a number of audits designed to allow the Authority to take assurance that controls covering some of the strategic risks are designed and operating effectively. Our risk management opinion has also been informed from our attendance at Audit and Governance Committee meetings, where risk management is a standing agenda item and where strategic and operational risks are discussed and constructively challenged. We have also used our cumulative knowledge of the risk management processes in place to inform our opinion.

Internal Control

During the year we completed eight reports, all of which were assurance based assignments. We have issued one partial assurance (negative) opinion for the IT General Controls review. For the remaining seven reviews, we have concluded these reviews with a positive assurance opinion as follows:

- The following review all concluded with **Substantial** Assurance:
 - Key Financial Controls – Accounts Receivable and Expenses,
 - Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF),
 - Payroll Provider – Dataplan; and
 - Grenfell Action Plans
- The following review all concluded with **Reasonable** Assurance:
 - Health and Safety including Mandatory Training,
 - Facilities Management; and
 - Governance and Risk Management

The details of the one partial and three reasonable assurance assignments are below:

[IT General Controls \(8.22/23\) – Partial Assurance](#)

During our review, we noted that the Service had clearly documented roles and responsibilities with regards to the management of the network, including the use of third-party providers. Some significant issues were however identified which resulted in the agreement of four high, five medium and two low priority management actions being agreed. We will be following up on the implementation of these actions within the 2023/24 internal audit plan.

Health and Safety including Mandatory Training (1.22/23) – Reasonable Assurance

We confirmed that overall controls were generally well designed and complied with, including the policies and procedures in relation to Health and Safety (H&S) and Workplace Safety Inspections. The documentation of defects was also well-designed, and the procedure had been followed throughout our sample testing. However, we found out that there were inconsistencies regarding H&S training not being completed on time by new starters and we also found non-compliance with advisory refresher training for managers who have been with the Service for more than three years.

Furthermore, the Workplace Safety Inspection policy updates had not been approved in a formal meeting and two out of five RIDDOR reportable incidents since were reported later than the required timeframe.

Facilities Management (2.22/23) – Reasonable Assurance

Overall, we noted that the RBFRS had an allocated budget for the reactive and planned maintenance work for 2022/23 which was approved by the Fire Authority and was being monitored on a monthly basis by the Head of Facilities Fleet and Equipment and Finance. We also identified that the Service had in place a Pre-Planned Maintenance (PPM) Schedule which listed the works to be undertaken for each of the Service's properties. During our review, the PPM was in the process of being replaced with an online portal which through review, we confirmed included the ability to plan and view the schedule of planned works, KPIs, trend analysis, and risk breakdowns for open defects raised with the Service's contractors.

However, we found that three residential properties were not recorded on the PPM and therefore we could not confirm the required checks had been completed. We were advised that the Service has not conducted a stock condition survey or asset check on their sites since 2016.

In relation to workplace inspections, we noted eight workplace inspection reports were not signed by the Health and Safety Manager and at the time of our review, a further six sites were overdue a six-monthly workplace inspection. For defects noted through workplace inspections, we found that nine defects recorded as open ranged between 97 and 849 days since the defect was raised on Fire Watch which exponentially exceeded the prioritisation schedule. Through review, we note that there were underlying reasons for the delays, such as external issues, and other prioritisation of works. The Facilities Manager advised that the priority C (action required within one and five business days) defect with 849 days since the defect was raised, was unable to be actioned as minor capital works were required to be completed before the repair could be conducted in order to close the defect.

Governance and Risk Management – Reasonable Assurance

Overall, our review found that there were well-designed and consistently applied governance and risk management arrangements in place at the Service. Strategic plans and objectives were clearly set in the approved Corporate Plan and Annual Plan, and there was a well-documented and applied governance structure in place to monitor performance against these objectives. The Organisational Risk Management Policy outlined the Service's risk management approach and had been communicated to staff. The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) was consistently reviewed and actioned by the SLT, with highlights of the CRR shared with the Audit and Governance Committee and SPB.

We have, however identified areas of weakness in relation to the lack of a formal risk appetite statement, and documented processes for the de-escalation of risks. We also noted weaknesses in the monitoring of risk management training completion by staff.

We did follow up the actions agreed to address previous years' internal audit findings (in the audits that were repeated this year) and this showed that the organisation had made progress in implementing the agreed actions.

A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix B.

Topics judged relevant for consideration as part of the annual governance statement

Based on the work we have undertaken on the Authority's system on internal control, the Authority should consider including the results of the partial assurance review on Cyber Security within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) any any actions already implemented to address the findings in this reivew. There are no other internal audits in 2022/23 where the Authority should consider recording significant governance issues when completing their Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

THE BASIS OF OUR INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION

As well as those headlines previously discussed, the following areas have helped to inform our opinion. A summary of internal audit work undertaken, and the resulting conclusions, is provided at appendix B.

Acceptance of internal audit management actions

Management have agreed actions to address all of the findings reported by the internal audit service during 2022/23.

Implementation of internal audit management actions

Where actions have been agreed by management, these have been monitored by management through the action tracking process in place. During the year progress has been reported to the Audit and Governance Committee, with the validation of the action status confirmed by internal audit where actions are followed up in similar audits.

We did follow up the actions agreed to address previous years' internal audit findings (in the audits that were repeated this year) and this showed that the organisation had made progress in implementing the agreed actions.

Working with other assurance providers

In forming our opinion we have not placed any direct reliance on other assurance providers.

OUR PERFORMANCE

Wider value adding delivery

As part of our client service commitment, during 2022/23, we have issued four emergency services sector briefings within our progress reports presented to the Audit Committee tailed below. We will continue to share our briefings with you during 2023/24.

| Area of work | How has this added value? |
|--|---|
| Emergency Services – Sector Update: June 2022 | <p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management fire standard consultation; • Fire Standard is launched; • Reforming fire and rescue services; and • The Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool. |
| Emergency Services – Sector Update: September 2022 | <p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue Service inspections 2021/22; • Fire standards implementation sessions; and • Fire and rescue incidents statistics. |
| Emergency Services – Sector Update: December 2022 | <p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and Social Value of the UK Fire and Rescue Services Methodology; • Early Intervention Implementation Framework launched; and • Fire Standards Board launches new standard. |
| Emergency Services – Sector Update: March 2023 | <p>The briefing paper provides a useful source of insight into recent developments and publications affecting the sector and provided further insight into the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022; • Fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework; • Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022; • Firefighters far more likely to die from cancer and heart attacks than public; and • The Fire Standards Board open consultations on two Standard. |
| Best Practice | Shared best practice across the sector through our work. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Briefings and Publications | Issued non-sector specific briefings throughout the year to the ARFC and management as part of our ARFC papers, including in relation to Emergency Services Internal Audit Benchmarking. |
| The NED Network | The role of the Non-Executive Director is crucial. Whilst not typically involved in the day-to-day operations of a firm, they should be influencing policy, culture and accountability. RSM launched The NED network to help non-executive directors stay abreast of key issues, networking with peers and share ideas. Non-executive directors are invited to join free of charge. We have delivered an annual programme of events, along with supporting insights, articles and blogs designed specifically for our NED community. |
| Use of specialists | We have utilised specialists to support the delivery of the Internal Audit plan throughout 2022/23. This includes the use of specialists in the Cyber General Controls review. |
| Audit and Governance Committee attendance | We have attended all Audit and Governance Committees and where appropriate contributed to the wider agenda. |

Conflicts of interest

RSM has not therefore undertaken any work or activity during 2021/2022 that would lead us to declare any conflict of interest or a self-review threat.

Conformance with internal auditing standards

RSM affirms that our internal audit services are designed to conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). Under PSIAS, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment every five years. Our risk assurance service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services in 2021 to provide assurance whether our approach meets the requirements of the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), and the Internal Audit Code of Practice, as published by the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Chartered IIA, on which PSIAS is based.

The external review concluded that RSM ‘generally conforms* to the requirements of the IIA Standards’ and that ‘RSM IA also generally conforms with the other Professional Standards and the IIA Code of Ethics. There were no instances of non-conformance with any of the Professional Standards’. * The rating of ‘generally conforms’ is the highest rating that can be achieved, in line with the IIA’s EQA assessment model.

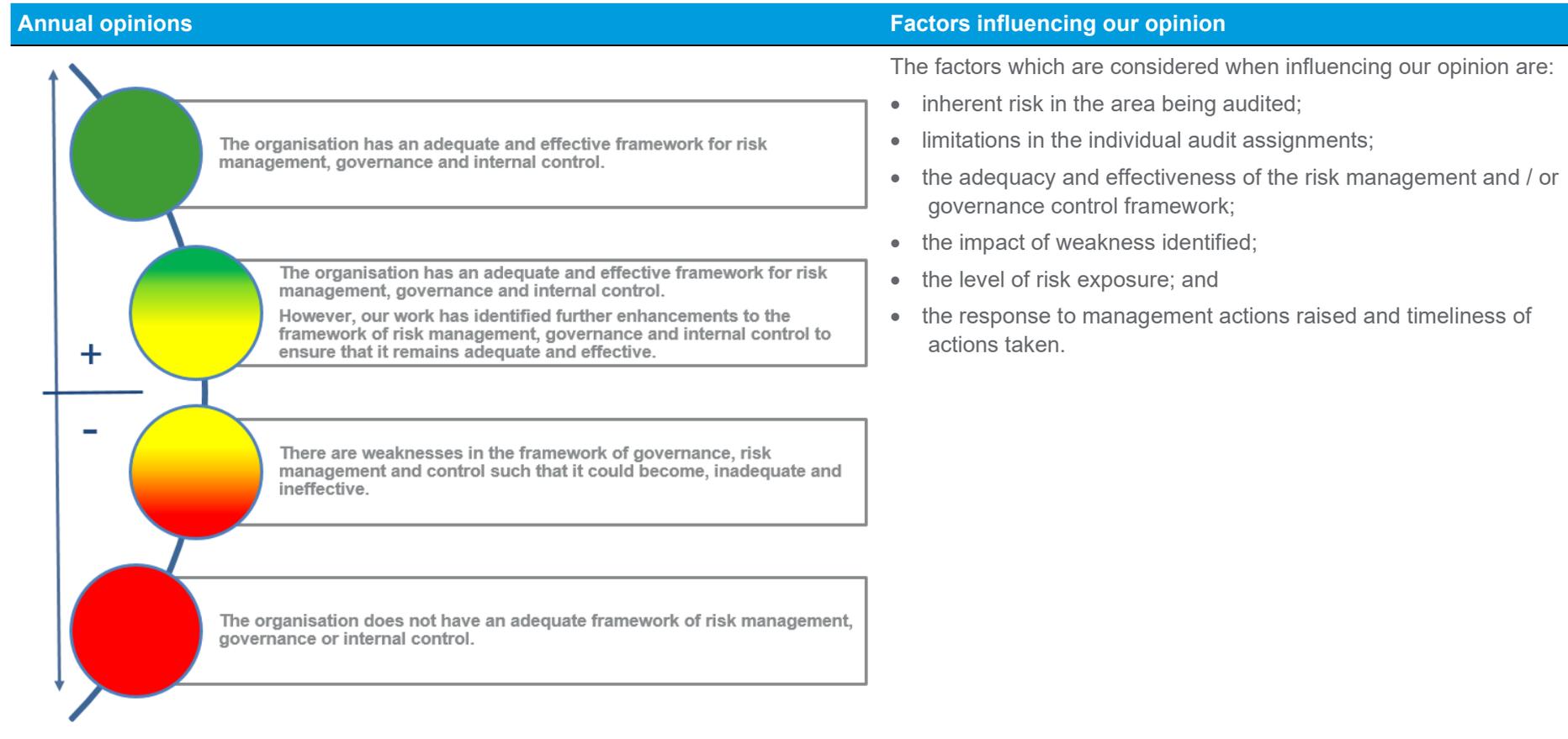
Quality assurance and continual improvement

To ensure that RSM remains compliant with the PSIAS framework we have a dedicated internal Quality Assurance Team who undertake a programme of reviews to ensure the quality of our audit assignments. This is applicable to all Heads of Internal Audit, where a sample of their clients will be reviewed. Any findings from these reviews are used to inform the training needs of our audit teams.

Resulting from the programme in 2022/23, there are no areas which we believe warrant flagging to your attention as impacting on the quality of the service we provide to you. In addition to this, any feedback we receive from our post assignment surveys, client feedback, appraisal processes and training needs assessments is also taken into consideration to continually improve the service we provide and inform any training requirements.

APPENDIX A: ANNUAL OPINIONS

The following shows the full range of opinions available to us within our internal audit methodology to provide you with context regarding your annual internal audit opinion.



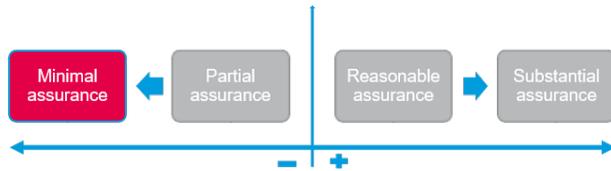
APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK COMPLETED 2022/23

All of the assurance levels and outcomes provided above should be considered in the context of the scope, and the limitation of scope, set out in the individual assignment report.

| Assignment | Assurance level | Actions agreed | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|---|---|
| | | L | M | H |
| IT General Controls (8.22/23) | Partial Assurance [●] | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| Health and Safety including Mandatory Training (1.22/23) | Reasonable Assurance [●] | 3 | 3 | - |
| Facilities Management (2.22/23) | Reasonable Assurance [●] | 3 | 4 | - |
| Governance and Risk Management (7.22/23) | Reasonable Assurance [●] | 2 | 2 | - |
| Grenfell Action Plans (3.22/23) | Substantial Assurance [●] | 1 | - | - |
| Payroll Provider – Dataplan (5.22/23) | Substantial Assurance [●] | - | - | - |
| Firefighter Pension Administration - WYPF (7.22/23) | Substantial Assurance [●] | 2 | - | - |
| Key Financial Controls – Accounts Receivable and Expenses (6.22/23) | Substantial Assurance [●] | 2 | - | - |

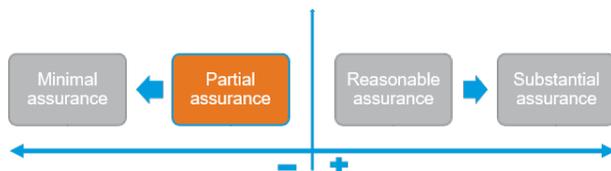
APPENDIX C: OPINION CLASSIFICATION

We use the following levels of opinion classification within our internal audit reports, reflecting the level of assurance the board can take:



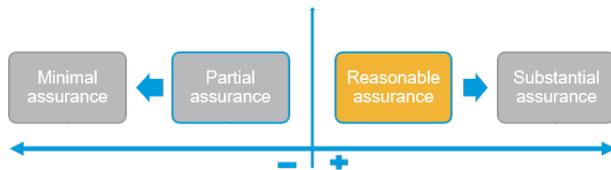
Taking account of the issues identified, the board cannot take assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.

Urgent action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



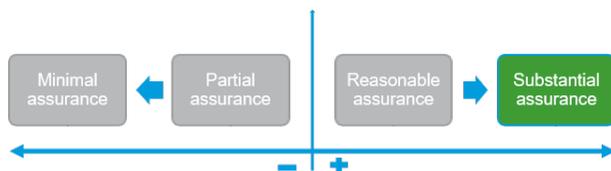
Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take partial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.

Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

However, we have identified issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that the control framework is effective in managing the identified risk(s).



Taking account of the issues identified, the board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.

YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT TEAM

Daniel Harris, Head of Internal Audit

Daniel.Harris@rsmuk.com

+44 (0)7792 948767

Zoe Hibbert, Manager

Zoe.Hibbert@rsmuk.com

+44 (0)1245 454106

rsmuk.com

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

Our report is prepared solely for the confidential use of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and solely for the purposes set out herein. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any third party which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on it (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to you on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales no. OC389499 at 6th floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB.

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE |
| LEAD OFFICER | CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 EY will present a verbal update on the audit of the 2020/21 Statements of Accounts.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Committee **NOTE** the update from the auditors.

3. REPORT

3.1 Audit assurance regarding the Berkshire Pension Fund accounts has now been received from Deloitte.

3.2 EY is therefore in the process of finalising its audit of the Authority's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts which will be presented to the Committee meeting in October for approval.

3.3 A representative from EY will attend the meeting to provide more detail and answer any questions.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

4.1 Sustainability: We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The work of the external auditors assures members that the Authority's finances are in good order.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Complies with the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Financial risks are identified and mitigations and controls are tested by the external auditors.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 The Authority opted into the national procurement exercise run by PSAA to appoint its external auditors.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has noted the contents of the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 None.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Conor Byrne - Head of Finance and Procurement
Email: byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk
Tel: 0118 938 4720

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | RBFRS ACTION PLAN FOR HIS MAJESTY INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTION REPORT 2023 |
| LEAD OFFICER | PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | DECISION |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In autumn 2022, His Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), carried out the second full inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) since the inspectorate took responsibility for Fire and Rescue in 2019.
- 1.2 The inspection resulted in the graded judgment of Good in the three areas of the inspection.
- 1.3 The inspection recognised the continued improvements that RBFRS had made since the first inspection.
- 1.4 However the inspectorate highlighted 12 areas for improvement (AFI), this report outlines those areas and the actions the service will take to improve on these findings.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **APPROVE** RBFRS action plan for HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFI).

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The inspectorate inspected RBFRS in autumn 2022 as part of the tranche 3 inspection timetable. The full report for RBFRS was released in January 2023. The report highlighted 12 areas of improvement for RBFRS.

Agenda Item 9

- 3.2 The inspection covers all areas of the service, categorising them under three headings.
 - 3.2.1 Effectiveness- how effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure.
 - 3.2.2 Efficiency- how efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure.
 - 3.2.3 People- how well does the service look after its people.
- 3.3 RBFRS was graded Good in all three areas.
- 3.4 HMICFRS highlighted “Area for Improvement” in the three areas.
 - 3.4.1 Effectiveness, 6 new AFI.
 - 3.4.2 Efficiency 1 new AFI.
 - 3.4.3 People 5 new AFI.
- 3.5 RBFRS has identified within the Corporate Plan and CRMP 2023/27, Annual plan and Service level plans, areas of work that will look to address these AFI.
- 3.6 Appendix A outlines the areas that have been identified and the actions the service will carry out to improve these areas.
- 3.7 Areas for Improvement, are areas the inspectorate define as falling short of expected standards and are not accompanied by recommendations.
- 3.8 It should be noted that RBFRS did not receive any causes of concern, which are defined as serious, critical or systemic shortcomings

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 will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.
- 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 Any financial implications from an AFI will be met by existing budgets.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any actions will be fully assessed and recorded within an Equality Impact Assessment.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 By not addressing the AFI's this may result in a low grading in the next inspection.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 N/A.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 N/A.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2021/22: An inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/berkshire-fire-and-rescue-service/inspections/2021-22-effectiveness-efficiency-and-people)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A HMICFRS Areas of Improvement.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Paul Bremble, bremblep@RBFERS.co.uk

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HMICFRS Action Plan

| Section one; Effectiveness | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| AFI | Description | Action |
| 1 | The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits of safe and well targeting approach better. | Safe and Well evaluation is currently in progress and an evaluation group has been set up to develop and improve evaluation across the service |
| 2 | Service should ensure it monitors and evaluates its revised approach to the burden of false alarms | Evaluation has been carried out and the findings will be shared with the Fire Authority |
| 3 | The service should develop a clear process for post incident prevention activity | New project to be commissioned to scope areas of prevention to be carried out post incidents |
| 4 | Service should make sure it gathers and records relevant and up to date site specific risk information, to clear its backlog and help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency. | This is being actioned and managed within the current team and forms part of our business as usual work |
| 5 | Service should make sure its mobile data terminals are reliable so that firefighters can readily access up to date risk information | New devices have been procured and installation is currently in progress |
| 6 | Service should monitor and review its response model with reduced availability of its fire engines and in line with its CRMP | As part of our Annual plan 2023/24 CRMP priority 3 will commence this year to determine the areas of focus for the response model review. CRMP priority 6 will incorporate On Call in to our availability of appliances |

| Section two Efficiency | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| AFI | Description | Action |
| 7 | Service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the CRMP | This will form part of our Annual plan 2023/24, first by gathering data to determine the areas of focus to improve productivity |

| Section three; People | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| AFI | Description | Action |

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Appendix A

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 8 | The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders | This will form part of our service level plans within our Learning and Development department |
| 9 | Service should make sure that it has effective absence/attendance procedures in place. Absence policy not widely understood. Inconsistent decisions | This will form part of our service level plans within our HR and Learning and Development department |
| 10 | The service should review its workforce planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core services to the public. Service needs to do more to improve how it considers its future needs and succession planning | This will form part of our service level plans within our HR department, with continued review of data and assessment of options |
| 11 | The service should improve its use of positive action tools and opportunities to increase diversity in the service | This will be incorporated into our new RBFRS Development Program which is under development and considering the sector wide reports on culture |
| 12 | The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process | Review and amendments, have been made to the current process. Further consideration and work to be undertaken and project commissioned |

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT |
| LEAD OFFICER | LINCOLN BALL, CHAIR OF LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | NOTE |

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This annual report updates the Audit and Governance Committee with:
- The scheme administrator’s performance figures for 2022-23;
 - The recent activities of the Local Pensions Board (for the firefighter pension schemes); and
 - An overview of current national issues.
- 1.2. The Local Pensions Board considers the performance of the local firefighter Pensions administrator as broadly to a good standard. There are a few areas where targets are not met with ongoing interaction to address this, although overall performance against targets is at 90.2% (down from 94.7% in statistics year 2021-22)
- 1.3. Complexity remains in relation to the administration of firefighters’ pension schemes and this has a commensurate impact on the Scheme Manager’s current risks. However, the beginnings of a steady-state pensions’ environment are emerging.
- 1.4. The two main national issues are:
- Legislation to remedy for the age discrimination created by the introduction of the 2015 pension scheme is set to be in place by 1 October 2023, although Royal Berkshire has been providing ‘immediate detriment’ pensions to new retirees since 2021.
 - Exercises to address the backdating of and providing access to a pension scheme for previously employed retained / on call firefighters as a result of tribunal decision are ongoing and detailed.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1. The committee is invited to **NOTE** the contents of this report.

3. **REPORT**

Background

- 3.1. In the aftermath of several pension fund scandals in the 1980s, notably at Mirror Group Newspapers, pensions' legislation in the UK was changed to improve transparency, widen governance and enhance oversight. One of the notable changes was the introduction of Pension Boards.
- 3.2. The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Local Pensions Board is established under the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and it exists to assist the Scheme Manager in assuring that there is compliance with the scheme rules.
- 3.3. The Board consists of four members: two management representatives (Lucy Greenway and Mark Arkwell) and two scheme member representatives (Lincoln Ball and Steve Collins). The Chairmanship of the Board can rotate between the management and the member representatives although the Board agreed in May 2023 for Lincoln to remain as the Chair and Lucy the vice-Chair until 2024.
- 3.4. Given the knowledge requirements, all members strive to provide a minimum four-year term.
- 3.5. Additionally, to retain knowledge and aid succession, the Board plans for the replacement of its members to be staggered rather than losing all or most of its members at the same time.

Local Pensions Board Activity

- 3.6. The Board has met on four occasions since last year's Annual Report with all meetings being quorate. Also attending Board meetings are representatives from the Human Resources department and the Chief Fire Officer as the named Scheme Manager. An invite is also offered, periodically, to a representative from West Yorkshire Pensions Fund, the scheme administrators for Royal Berkshire.
- 3.7. Board members keep in touch between meetings as and when needed.
- 3.8. The Board monitors all its activities and the key performance indicators and consolidates them into a Pensions Board Dashboard to assist with currency and oversight.
- 3.9. Over the last twelve months all the Board's documents have been updated including the Terms of Reference, the Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy and the role description for Board members.
- 3.10. The Board has reviewed its risk register and made minor amendments but overall risks have slightly reduced over the period as confidence is growing in the knowledge levels of the Board members.
- 3.11. Board members keep up to date with fire pensions bulletins issued monthly by the Local Government Association and develop their knowledge through the Pension Regulator's education toolkit for public sector pensions.
- 3.12. The Chair attended the annual Fire and Police Pensions Conference.

- 3.13. The Chair meets with members of the Human Resources department periodically to track progress against planned activities.
- 3.14. The Chair is also invited to contract meetings between the Human Resources department and West Yorkshire Pension Fund and attends these meetings periodically.
- 3.15. Members of the Board assist the service in completing surveys, assisting with audits and working on new activities such as the recent amendments to the discretionary powers that the Scheme Manager has responsibility for.
- 3.16. At each Board meeting the Board scrutinises the performance of the Scheme Administrator and where necessary discuss matters with the Human Resources officers for observations or questions to be raised at contract meetings.

Annual Report Information

- 3.17. The Annual Report covers the period 1 April 2022 – 31 Mar 2023.
- 3.18. The Board has maintained scrutiny in relation to the administrator’s key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 3.19. The following table identifies the broad performance of the Scheme Administrators compared with the previous two years:

| Area | 2022-23 | 2021-22 | 2020-21 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Discrete Activities | 296 | 286 | 418 |
| Performance Target met | 90.2% | 94.6% | 95.7% |

Table 1 Comparison of Pension Administrator’s Broad Performance 2020-2023

- 3.20. Drilling into the types of activities undertaken by the administrators, these are summarised in the table below:

| Activity | No of cases | Target met as % | Target % compared with 2021-22 |
|--|-------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Age 55 Increase to Pension | 4 | 100% | +2% |
| Change of Address | 13 | 100% | Same |
| Change of Bank Details | 11 | 100% | +4% |
| Death in Retirement | 14 | 78.57% | -4.5% |
| Deferred Benefits Into Payment of Lump Sum | 8 | 100% | Same |
| Deferred Benefits Set Up on Leaving | 45 | 73.33% | +7.3% |
| Divorce Quote | 1 | 100% | N/A |
| General Payroll Changes | 51 | 100% | Same |
| Initial letter Death in Retirement | 14 | 92.86% | -7.1% |
| Pension Estimate | 45 | 88.89% | -8.1% |
| Retirement Actual | 15 | 100% | Same |

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|--------|-------|
| Set Up New Spouse Pension | 10 | 100% | Same |
| Spouse Potential | 4 | 25.00% | -8% |
| Transfer In Quote | 1 | 100% | Same |
| Update Member Details | 52 | 92.31% | -7.7% |
| Dependant Pension To Set Up | 5 | 100% | N/A |
| Deferred Benefits Into Payment Quote | 3 | 66.67% | N/A |

Table 2 Pension Administrator's Performance 2022-23

3.21. Administrator's performance is a key standing item in the quarterly contract meetings where narrative is provided on areas where the performance targets are not met and a focus placed on performance areas where any delays could be materially significant, for example resolving pension issues upon a bereavement. Broadly, the administrator's explanations for performance targets being missed is the complexity of issues in some cases and delays in getting information back from people such as receiving paperwork after a bereavement.

Other Significant Issues

3.22. Age discrimination remedy.

- Although there is much work to be completed, there are the beginnings of clarity for a steady-state firefighters' pensions' environment.
- HM Government consultation on the remediable service legislation was completed in May 2023 and, notwithstanding Royal Berkshire is already paying out pensions based on immediate detriment, it is expected that remedy legislation will be in place in October 2023.
- HM Government won a court case relating to how the additional costs for age discrimination remedy would be funded meaning the remedy will be funded from within the costs of the existing public sector schemes.

3.23. In relation to on-call firefighter pensions, after losing a legal case, HM Government has consulted on a mechanism to backdate on-call firefighters' pension entitlements to before 2000. The mechanism will also mean that firefighters who did not previously join the pension scheme will be offered the opportunity again. This exercise will involve significant activity as paper-based pay record archives back to the 1970s will need to be looked at.

3.24. The past year has seen some changes in relation to scheme costs and the prospect of continuing rising pension costs has increased.

- After a review, HM Government has decided to maintain its approach to the cost caps on public sector pensions. The mechanism used brings together a number of sometimes contradictory elements to firstly ensure that the cost caps are not breached so as to protect the taxpayer and secondly to ensure that the growth rates of the unfunded public sector pension schemes are in line with the market-environment sensitivities of the private sector pension schemes.
- As a result of these exercises in 2022 and 2023, scheme costs will go up. This is reported separately to the Fire Authority by Head of Finance and Procurement. For 2023-24 the additional costs have been covered by a

government grant and there is a contingency in the RBFA Reserves Policy to cover any loss of this grant funding at least for the short term.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1. Given the costs of the firefighter pension schemes there is a link to commitment 5, Sustainability. We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The Fire Authority currently makes an allowance of £117 per meeting available to each Local Pensions Board member. However, not all board members currently choose to receive this allowance.
- 5.2. The Terms of Reference provide for:
- All reasonable expenses incurred by board members to be reimbursed upon production of a valid expenses claim.
 - Adequate resources for the board to fulfil its role including the provision of legal advice and training. The board will seek approval from Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&LD) for such expenditure.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The provision of the Local Pensions Board is a requirement of sections 5 & 6 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013.
- 6.2. The operation of the Local Pensions Board is also governed by:
- i. The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015 (regulations 4A to 4D),
 - ii. The Public Service Pensions (Record Keeping and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2014 (regulation 6)
 - iii. The Pensions Act 2004 (section 248A)
- 6.3. The Court of Appeal judged in December 2018 that the way in which the transitional provisions of the 2015 pension scheme were implemented amounted to unlawful age discrimination and this has led to the relevant sections of the legislation being overridden by that legal judgement which was clarified by a further judgement made by the Employment Appeal Tribunal on 12 February 2021.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2. The current national issues in relation to firefighter pensions relate directly to age discrimination and the Equality Act 2010 and as such Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's actions and procedures to address these matters also directly relate to being assured that the law is applied.
- 7.3. To reduce the risk of discrimination, the resolutions made by the Fire Authority at its meetings of 17 February 2021, 7 December 2021 (Management Committee) and 28 April 2022 gave effect to the Employment

Agenda Item 10

Appeal Tribunal judgement for individuals about to retire who meet the eligibility criteria regardless of whether they are a claimant or non-claimant. Currently in RBFPS this applies only to pension scheme members who have retired since February 2021 with members retiring on the 2015 scheme before that (back to 1 April 2015) yet to have their cases resolved.

- 7.4. There are no additional equality and diversity implications considered in relation to this report

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. If there is a failure to comply with the requirements of The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (as amended), The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2022 (as amended) and related regulations which may become increasingly likely given the legal determinations, current guidance and complexity with relation to the pension schemes then we can expect that there will be an increase in reports of potential breaches of the legislation, administrative errors, complaints and further legal proceedings leading to reputational and financial loss which are significant given the Fire Authority's strategic commitments.
- 9.2. If local pension board members, who are lay members, possess insufficient knowledge of the various firefighter pensions issues, which is possible given the complexity of the firefighters pensions legislation and guidance, then we can expect that the oversight and assurance provided to the Fire Authority will be negatively affected which is significant given this is a legal requirement of the Public Sector Pensions Act 2013.
- 9.3. The Board maintains a risk register which is reviewed regularly. The five main identified risks are related to: oversight, performance monitoring, knowledge, loss of knowledge and conflicts of interest. All risks are managed and are being monitored with only one risk (knowledge) needing more treatment.

10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 10.1. The legislation enables the establishment of joint boards with others. This was discussed briefly at the last Local Pensions Board meeting on 25 November 2022.
- 10.2. Currently the provision of a joint board is not a matter being pursued within Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 10.3. Locally, especially given a shared administration provider, there is a potential for a joint Local Pensions Board with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1. The Chief Fire Officer has been consulted on the contents of this report.
- 10.2. The Chief Finance Officer has been consulted on the contents of this report.
- 10.3. The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and on the contents of this report.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1. None.

13. APPENDICES

13.1. None.

14. CONTACT DETAILS

14.1. Lincoln Ball, RBFRS Pensions Board Chair, 07541 263386,
lincoln_ball@live.co.uk

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY (CIPFA) FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE REPORT |
| LEAD OFFICER | CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | N/A |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has published a financial management (FM) code with which the Authority needs to demonstrate compliance.
- 1.2 The attached document demonstrates how the Authority has complied with the Code during 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents as presented in the CIPFA FM Code report (**Appendix A**).

3. REPORT

- 3.1 CIPFA's FM code sets out standards of financial management for local authorities.
- 3.2 **Appendix A** details the six principals and associated seventeen standards and how the Authority has complied with them over the last financial year.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – Sustainability. We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

Agenda Item 11

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The FM code is not statutory and does not currently have legislative backing, but does apply to all local authorities.

7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality, diversity or inclusion implications arising from the report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The purpose of the FM code is to help mitigate future financial risk and ensure financial sustainability.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 N/A.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 No issues for statutory officers.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – CIPFA FM Code Report 2022/23

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Conor Byrne – Head of Finance and Procurement
Email: byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk
Tel: 0118 938 4720



CIPFA Financial Management Code Report

2022/23





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Introduction

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) published The Financial Management Code (FM Code) in October 2019. The first full year of compliance was 2021/22.

The FM Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities, giving assurance that authorities are managing resources effectively.

The FM Code requires authorities to demonstrate that the processes they have in place satisfy the principles of good financial management, which is an essential part of ensuring that public sector finances are sustainable.

The FM Code identifies risks to financial sustainability and introduces a framework of assurance. This framework is built on existing successful practices and sets explicit standards of financial management.

Complying with the standards set out in the FM Code is the collective responsibility of elected members, the chief finance officer and their professional colleagues in the senior leadership team. Complying with the FM Code will help strengthen the framework that surrounds financial decision making.

The FM Code builds on elements of other CIPFA codes, such as The Prudential Code for Capital Finance, the Treasury Management in the Public Sector Code of Practice and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

By following the essential aspects of the FM Code, local authorities are providing evidence to show they are meeting important legislative requirements.



Principles of Good Financial Management

The FM Code establishes an approach based on six principles of good financial management:

1. Organisational Leadership

A demonstration of a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into the organisational culture.

2. Accountability

The use of medium-term financial planning which drives the annual budget process and is supported by effective risk management.

3. Transparency

The use of consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently, with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision-making.

4. Professional Standards

Promotion of professional standards by the whole of the leadership team.

5. Assurance

Evidence of political scrutiny of financial assumptions within corporate plans as well as consideration of the outcomes of both external audit, internal audit and inspections.

6. Long-Term Sustainability

The prudent use of reserves to build an effective and efficient organisation whilst maintaining financial resilience.



Financial Management Standards

The CIPFA Financial Management Code translates these principles of good financial management into 17 standards. These standards are split into seven areas. The standards address the aspects of an authority's operations and activities that must function effectively if financial management is to be undertaken robustly and financial sustainability is to be achieved.

The financial management standards are designed to be sufficiently flexible so that they are relevant to the needs of the diverse range of authorities across the local government sector and to the varying circumstances in which these authorities operate and challenges that they face.

The detailed financial management standards are set out below, together with the Authority's level of compliance.



Assessment

| Section | Financial Management Standard | Assessment of Current Position | RAG Status |
|---------|--|---|------------|
| | The responsibilities of the chief finance officer and leadership team | | |
| A | The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the Authority demonstrate value for money | <p>Value for Money is one of the areas assessed as part of the external audit process. No significant weaknesses have been identified to date. No areas of concern were identified in prior year audits.</p> <p>HMICFRS has rated the Authority as 'Good' in its latest inspection.</p> <p>Detailed business cases for large projects are reviewed by SLT, and Members as appropriate.</p> <p>Budget setting papers are presented to Fire Authority in February each year. In year performance is monitored monthly and reported to Members quarterly.</p> <p>Blue light collaboration is a key consideration for all projects and opportunities are utilised whenever possible, with numerous examples available.</p> <p>Appropriate use of national and regional procurement contracts and frameworks can also be demonstrated.</p> | Green |
| B | The Authority complies with the CIPFA <i>Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government 2016</i> | <p>The Head of Finance and Procurement is the Section 112 Officer and Chief Financial Officer. The post is part of the Senior Leadership Team of the Authority.</p> <p>The post-holder has overall responsibility for the finance function, helping to shape and deliver the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework.</p> <p>The post-holder is a fully qualified accountant with significant experience of Local Government. The wider Finance team contains four other fully qualified accountants, and others who are at varied points of their studies.</p> <p>All finance and procurement staff are offered continued professional development and encouraged to attend technical training.</p> <p>The Authority has contracts in place for specialist financial services to assist the finance team in meeting their statutory requirements - technical accounting, treasury management and taxation.</p> | Green |



| | Governance and financial management style | | |
|---|--|---|-------|
| C | The Leadership team demonstrates in its actions and behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control. | <p>The Authority has an approved scheme of delegation as well as Finance and Contract regulations, all of which are regularly reviewed.</p> <p>SLT reviews the Corporate Risk Register on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The Authority has in place a formal governance structure that is appropriate to the way in which it operates. This includes relevant committees and reporting lines, terms of references and conduct, including provision for scrutiny of decisions taken. The Authority has in place a formal scheme of delegation, which sets out which individuals or committees are entitled to make decisions.</p> <p>Internal Audit works to an agreed plan, which is based on a robust analysis of the Authority's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements, the environment within which it operates and the risks and challenges that it faces.</p> | Green |
| D | The Authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE <i>Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)</i> | <p>The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed and approved by Members, and details how we meet the core principles of good governance.</p> <p>The internal audit function is provided under a contract with an external provider, ensuring independence and impartiality of reporting.</p> | Green |
| E | The financial management style of the Authority supports financial sustainability | <p>The budget setting papers are presented to Members annually and include a four year Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), a Reserves Policy and a ten-year Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). Financial sustainability is a fundamental aspect of all of these documents, and the Authority's wider financial plans and performance.</p> <p>The MTFP includes prudent estimates of funding available and budget growth required over the medium term and appropriate levels of contingencies and reserves required based on an assessment of risks it faces.</p> <p>The longer terms funding implications of the required investment in our assets is detailed in the SAIF. The different phases of the required investment over the time period are identified, together with the associated funding sources and potential challenges.</p> | Green |



| | Medium to long-term financial management | | |
|---|---|--|-------|
| F | The Authority has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment | The budget papers state the key assumptions regarding revenue and capital budgets which have been scrutinised by members of the Budget Working Party. In line with the requirement of the Code of Practice these assumptions have been deemed to be prudent. As part of the budget setting process, the level of reserves are reviewed by the Budget Working Party to ensure they are robust, in light of the assessment of financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. The Authority's Reserves Policy outlines resources that have been set aside to enable the Authority to set a robust MTFP, based on possible risks identified. | Green |
| G | The Authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to Members. | The MTFP is based on a four-year period and is presented to Members as part of the budget setting papers annually. These clearly detail Council Tax revenue expectations, usage of reserves and the associated assumptions made and possible risks. The Authority's Reserve Policy is also presented as part of the budget setting papers and demonstrates the planned prudent retention of reserves to manage risks over the medium term. The SAIF sets out capital requirements over a ten-year period and the associated funding requirements. | Green |
| H | The Authority complies with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. | Management of the Authority's debt is governed by the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators which aim to ensure the Authority's capital expenditure plans are prudent, affordable and sustainable. The Authority's Finance team work closely with its appointed treasury advisors, utilising their expert knowledge to formulate borrowing and investment plans based on the latest financial advice. The Authority's Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators comply with the requirements of the Prudential Code and are presented to Members as part of the budget setting papers. Half-yearly and year-end Treasury Reports are presented to Members detailing performance. | Green |
| I | The Authority has a rolling, multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans. | The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Plan is based on a four-year period with indicative budget allocations for future years which underpins annual service planning for departments. This is updated annually, and presented to the Budget Working Party for consideration as part of the budget setting papers. Updates on the latest information and assumptions in respect of funding, costs and risks are provided as required. | Green |



| | The annual budget | | |
|---|---|---|-------|
| J | The Authority complies with its statutory obligations in respect of the budget setting process | The Authority always sets a balanced budget, including any prudent planned use of reserves and complies with the requirement in relation to the S112 Officer statement (s25) on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. | Green |
| K | The budget report includes a statement by the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the estimates and a statement on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves | The Authority sets a balanced budget and complies with the requirement in relation to the S112 Officer statement (s25) on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. | Green |
| | Stakeholder engagement and business cases | | |
| L | The Authority has engaged, where appropriate, with key stakeholders in developing its long-term financial strategy, medium term financial plan and annual budget. | The Lead Member for Finance draws together group leaders of the political parties to form the Budget Working Party. In addition, Member briefing sessions are held in the build up to the annual budget setting meeting each February, detailing key issues and implications. Wider stakeholder engagement with members of the public is completed via an annual Council Tax consultation, where residents are encouraged to give their views on proposed changes. Consultations are also held on key projects, to gain stakeholder engagement. | Green |
| M | The Authority uses an appropriate option appraisal methodology to demonstrate value for money in its decision-making. | Detailed business cases for large projects are reviewed by SLT, and approved by Members. The identification of options and their appraisal are a key part of this, with value for money a key consideration for any projects approved. | Green |



| | | | |
|---|---|---|-------|
| | Monitoring financial performance | | |
| N | The Leadership team takes action using reports enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability. | Regular reviews of the Corporate Risk Register are undertaken by SLT. Emerging and growing risks are subject to challenge, with preventative measures implemented wherever possible. The financial impact of such risks will be quantified and addressed as part of the monthly budget monitoring process, which is presented to Members quarterly. If such risks demand action in the form of additional budget allocations, then this will be addressed in-year by SLT where appropriate or as part of the following years budget setting process. | Green |
| O | The Leadership team monitors the elements of its balance sheet that pose a significant risk to its financial sustainability. | The Authority has specific earmarked reserves and maintains an appropriate General Fund balance to mitigate the main financial risks should they ever crystallise. Daily cash-flow monitoring and forecasting is maintained, with aged debts managed and chased accordingly. Regular reviews of reserve levels and planned usage are completed by the Section 112 officer, and Treasury performance reports are reviewed by the Lead Member for Budget and Income Generation and presented to Members bi-annually to update on investment and debt levels. | Green |
| | External financial reporting | | |
| P | The Chief Finance Officer has personal and statutory responsibility for ensuring that the statement of accounts produced by the Authority complies with the reporting requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. | The Statement of Accounts is prepared on an annual basis in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the local authority accounting Code). The Chief Finance Officer certifies the annual Statement of Accounts indicating their personal and statutory responsibility. The Authority's leadership team and the Chief Fire Officer understand the Chief Finance Officer's responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements. The finance team produce an annual closing timetable, circulated to all staff, to ensure that the Authority meets its obligations in regard to the production of its financial statements. The Authority has consistently received an unqualified audit opinion from the external auditors. However, due to capacity issues being experienced by our external auditor and delays in the audit of the Berkshire Pension Fund, our financial statements since 2020/21 remain unaudited. | Amber |



| | | | |
|---|---|---|-------|
| Q | The presentation of the final outturn figures and variations from budget allows the Leadership team to make strategic financial decisions | The outturn report at the end of each financial year identifies variances from budget allocations and is supported by appropriate explanations outlining the reasons why. These supplement the in-year monitoring reports presented to SLT and Members quarterly. The outturn report is presented and reviewed by both SLT and Members, with the associated bottom line impact on the wider Reserves position of the Authority considered and approved. The Statement of Accounts includes a reconciliation to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that shows the link between the statutory accounts and the Authority's management accounts. | Green |
|---|---|---|-------|

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

-  RoyalBerksFRS
-  @RBFRSOfficial
-  RoyalBerkshireFire
-  Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
-  rbfrs.co.uk

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 24 JULY 2022 |
| SUBJECT | ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 |
| LEAD OFFICERS | PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Report to the Audit and Governance Committee summarising performance in 2022/2023.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To **NOTE** the Annual Report prior to external publication.

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 The Fire Authority agreed its Annual Plan 2022/23 for delivery of the Strategic Commitments as set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-2023. Within the Annual Plan were a number of Corporate Measures against which our performance was monitored by Officers and Members via the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.2 The Annual Report provides a summary of performance in 2022/23, highlighting a number of challenges and achievements in delivering services for the people of Berkshire.
- 3.3 As part of our commitment to transparency, following consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, the Annual Report will be published on our website.

4. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 The Annual Report sets out delivery against the Strategic Commitments in 2021/22.

Agenda Item 12

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 No direct financial implications.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No direct legal implications.

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 No direct equality and diversity implications.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No direct risk implication.

9. **CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 The Annual Report highlights a number of areas in which we have demonstrated our commitment to the duty to collaborate.

10. **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Annual Report has been developed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Annual Plan 2022/23.

11.2 Corporate Plan 2019-2023.

12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A - Annual Report 2022/23.

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services, 07786145153

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Annual Report
» 2022 – 2023



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» Welcome

Welcome to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Annual Report.

2022-2023 has been an important year for the Service. The summer brought a sustained period of hot, dry weather. The Met Office issued a first ever extreme heat warning, which meant there was a risk to life.

As anticipated, the high temperatures experienced in July and August, on top of previous months of low rainfall, created an increased demand on the Service. The number of outdoor fire incidents was double that of an average year and approximately five times the volume experienced across the same period last year.

While facing these challenges, we still hit several important milestones. In 2022-23, we saw the Fire Authority's investment in our facilities and equipment realised with the official opening of Theale Community Fire Station.

This new state-of-the-art facility will help us to deliver on our Strategic Commitment to ensure that our fire stations, people, and resources are placed firmly at the heart of local communities.

New equipment was also been deployed at fire stations across the County, further strengthening the Service's capabilities to respond to the people of Royal Berkshire in times of emergency.

This included new Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets. BA sets are a vital piece of equipment that firefighters wear when responding to incidents with an atmosphere that may cause difficulty breathing. The roll out of the new BA sets forms part of our

ongoing commitment to ensure our crews have the best equipment to enable them to provide the best response to our communities.

Additionally, we saw 18 new Apprentice Firefighters join the Service after they successfully completed a 13-week training course. This was the first year RBFRS recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. Much like previous wholetime recruitment, anyone, from any background or walk of life, could apply to be a Firefighter Apprentice, so long as they were new to the role.

In 2022, we were once again inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which confirmed RBFRS is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected. You can read more about this on page 14.

While we recognise that we will face challenges in the years ahead, this report recognises the fantastic public service that is being provided by our staff to the people of Royal Berkshire and we will continue to build upon the strong foundations highlighted in this report.

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to work hard to deliver our Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (2023-2027) to ensure that the Service has the right resources, people, and plans to build on the work completed in 2022-23.



**Councillor
Paul Gittings**

Chair,
Royal Berkshire
Fire Authority



Wayne Bowcock

Chief Fire Officer
and Chief Executive,
Royal Berkshire Fire
and Rescue Service

» Your Fire and Rescue Service

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides prevention, protection, and response services across the County of Berkshire.

Twelve wholtime fire stations and four on-call fire stations cover 488 square miles from Langley in the East to Lambourn in the West. It serves a diverse cultural population of approximately 949,000, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

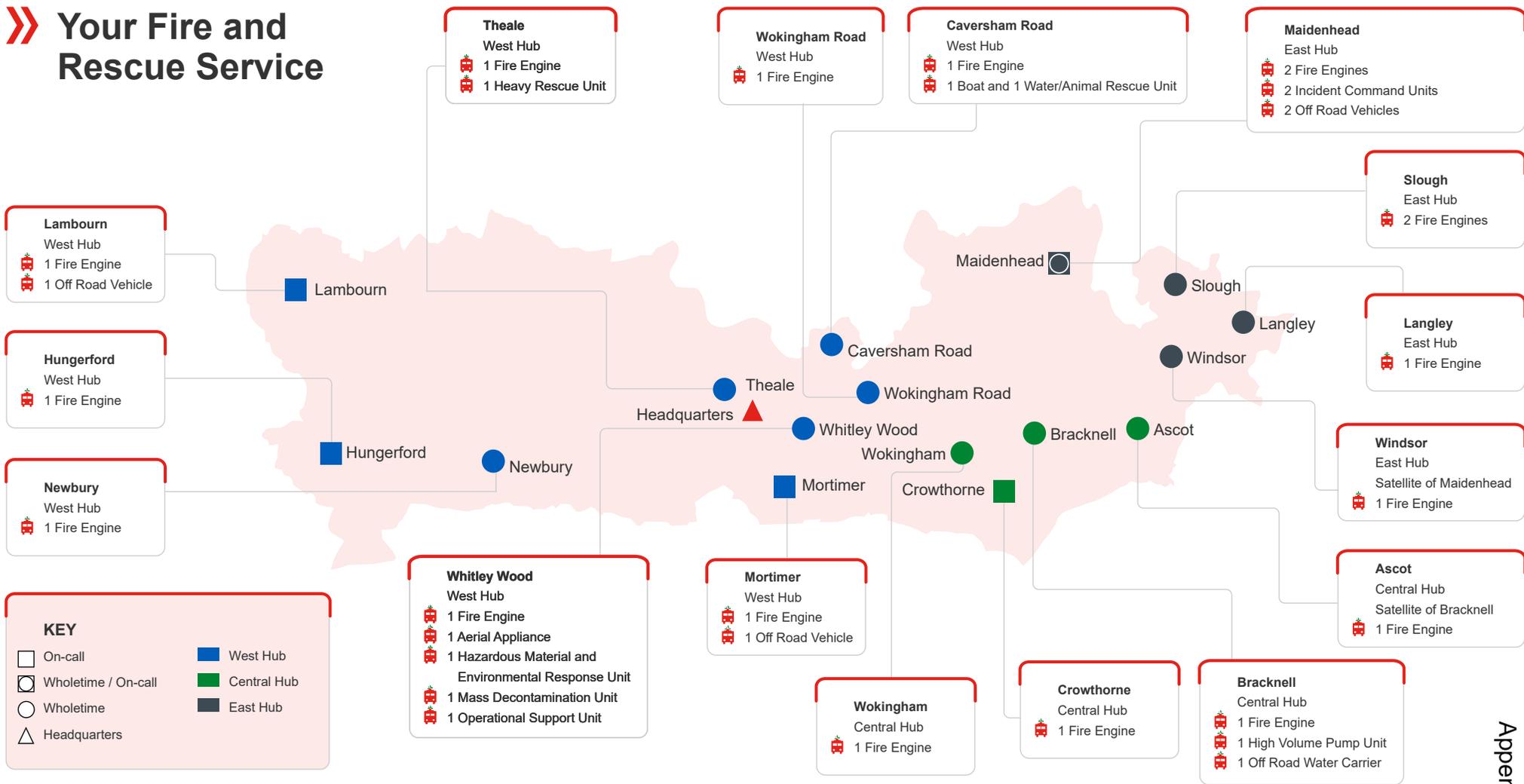
The Service's highly-trained fire crews deal with incidents ranging from road and rail accidents to fuel and chemical spills, aviation and waterway accidents, collapsed buildings, large animal rescues, and, of course, fires.

Along with providing a swift and effective response to incidents, one of the Service's aims is to educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies. Our Service works with schools, businesses, residents, and community groups throughout Royal Berkshire to raise awareness and educate people about a wide variety of safety issues.

The Service has joined forces with Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service to establish a shared emergency call handling centre, Thames Valley Fire Control Service.



» Your Fire and Rescue Service



| Fire Stations | | Staff | | Incidents attended | | Prevention & Protection | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| | 2022-2023 | | 2022-2023 | | 2022-2023 | | 2022-2023 |
| Wholetime | 11 | Non-operational | 168 | All Emergency Incidents | 8,244 | Safe and Well Visits | 6,129 |
| On-call | 4 | Wholetime | 373 | Fires in the home | 380 | Fire Safety Audits | 1,083 |
| Wholetime and On-call | 1 | On-call | 65 | Fires in other buildings | 206 | Building consultations | 1,121 |
| | | Control Staff | 38 | Road traffic collisions | 420 | | |
| | | Volunteers | 11 | Outdoor fires | 954 | | |
| | | | | Water rescues | 53 | | |

» About us

In our Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019-23, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set six public facing commitments:

- We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money.
- We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire

For 2022-23, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:

1. We will recruit, train and develop our people to ensure we create a safe, professional, capable and diverse workforce that are supported to become the best public servants they can be for the residents of Berkshire.
2. We will manage RBFRS in accordance with best practice and national professional standards, understanding and continuous improvement, learning from events and being transparent in our compliance.
3. We will be strong and visible in our leadership in developing a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture, reflecting our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives, where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are recognised.
4. We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.



» Awards and Accreditations



Proudly supporting those who serve



The Service maintained its Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme, the Armed Forces Covenant, in recognition of its commitment to supporting the Armed Forces.



As part of our partnership with Women in the Fire Service, we offered bespoke training opportunities to help women in the Service both professionally and personally.



The Service continued to solidify its commitment to supporting disabled people as a member of the Business Disability Forum. The Forum is a not-for-profit membership organisation that helps services become more accessible.



We are proud to have maintained the Level Three 'Leader' status in the Disability Confident Scheme. We have made efforts, such as our continued involvement with Leonard Cheshire's Change 100 Scheme, to demonstrate our commitment.



This year, the Service was awarded 'Project of the Year' by the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) for our work on the Summer Internship Scheme at AFSA's annual awards event in November 2022.



Membership of Inclusive Employers has been maintained this year to provide further support and ensure that our services are inclusive for all.

» Social Media Highlights



7.9k Followers
917 New followers
376k Total reach
25k Engagements



226k Users
281k Sessions
504k Page Views
1.79m Engagements



2.3k Followers
261 New followers
12k Reach
86 New posts



681 Hours watched
29k Views
456 Subscribers
62 New subscribers



11.5k Followers
559 New followers
1.1k Tweets
31k Engagements



2.4k Followers
542 New followers
184k Impressions
4k Engagements



» Timeline of the Last Year



First Firefighter Apprentices Graduate

Following an intensive 13-week training course, a group of 18 Wholtime Firefighter graduates celebrated their achievements at a Graduation Ceremony in front of their family and friends. For the first time, RBFRS recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role.



Fire Aid for Ukraine

The Service provided four vehicles and various items of equipment to Ukraine. This work was coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector. The first convoy left in mid-March, the second one set off in late April and the third convoy left in early May. All convoys arrived safely in Poland, ahead of the final equipment transfer to Ukraine.



Summer Heatwaves

Between Saturday, 16 July and Wednesday, 20 July, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) took over 1,000 calls and on the hottest day, Tuesday, 19 July, TVFCS staff took more than 550 emergency calls. Similarly, over a three-day period from Thursday, 11 August to Saturday, 13 August, we experienced a 99% increase in calls compared to the same period in 2021.

April 2022

May 2022

June 2022

July 2022

August 2022

September 2022

Positive Action in Action

The Service its first 'Have a Go' events following a two-year pause due to COVID measures. Two female focused events were held at Whitley Wood Fire Station in April and May, whilst Langley Fire Station hosted their own 'Have a Go' evening in March.

Artwork at Theale

Evan Rose, in Year 8, at Theale Green School designed a graphic that was applied to the wall of the lobby in Theale Community Fire Station.



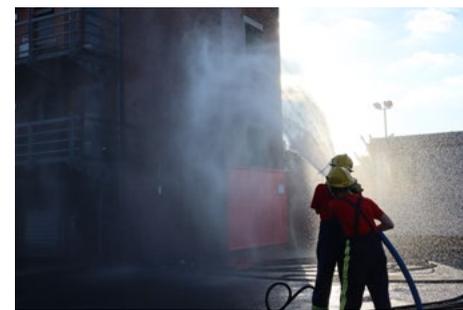
Red Plaque Memorials

In May, two memorial plaques were unveiled to honour the lives of Firefighters David Barnes and Neil Goldsmith, who tragically lost their lives while on duty on 15 September 1977. The plaques were unveiled on 20 May at Caversham Road and Wokingham Road Fire Stations respectively.



Maidenhead Open Day

Maidenhead Fire Station held the first Open Day since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. The event was supported by our emergency service partners.



Fire Cadets Impress at Graduation Ceremony

On Thursday, 7 July 2022, Fire Cadets from across Berkshire showed off their new skills at a Graduation Ceremony at Whitley Wood Fire Station. The event was well attended with approximately 150 guests, including families, the High Sheriff and members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

First Year of Internship Scheme

The Summer Internship Scheme, formally known as the Chairman's Internship Scheme, launched in the summer of 2022. The Scheme targeted young people from Berkshire who aged 16-18 and from ethnic groups that are under-represented in the Service.

Reading Pride 2022

On Saturday, 3 September, colleagues from across the Service joined together to host a stall at the Reading Pride festival in King's Meadow, Reading.



Timeline of the Last Year



Opening of Theale Community Fire Station

Theale Community Fire Station, located on Wigmore Lane, was officially opened following a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Mr. James Puxley, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire. The facility is the third community tri-service station to be opened in the County.



Service Celebrates Success at Awards

On Tuesday, 1 November 2022, the Service's annual Awards Ceremony took place at the Coppid Beech Hotel in Bracknell. Awards were then presented in 13 categories, followed by a Long Service Award, and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, for 20 years' service. This year, three recipients also received a 30-year Long Service and Good Conduct clasp.



Over £10,000 Raised for Charity

Firefighters from Slough, Langley and Maidenhead Fire Stations, along with staff and volunteers from across the Service, organised two car washes and collections to raise money for charity. In total, over £10,000 was raised, with all the proceeds going to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

Appendix A
Agenda Item 12

October 2022

November 2022

December 2022

January 2023

February 2023

March 2023

New Intranet and Internet

With the launch of a new intranet in late October, staff across the Service can now benefit from the integration of Microsoft 365 products and functionality, to assist their work. Our new, refreshed website also went live, providing an improved tool for engagement with our communities. The new website has been built on WordPress, a popular tool for websites across the world. It has been customised to include our Service's branding and structured to align to our ways of working.

Commemorating Queen Elizabeth II

Upon the passing of Her Late Majesty The Queen on Thursday, 8 September 2022, our Service joined the nation in honouring her lifetime of dedicated service. Queen Elizabeth II reigned for 70 years from 1952 to 2022.

Built Environment Programme Concludes

Following a two-year programme focused on the issues identified in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report, the Built Environment Programme (BEP) concluded in December 2022. The Programme addressed the 46 recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report (Phase 1), managed all High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) in Royal Berkshire and coordinated a response to the resulting legislative changes.



HMICFRS Publish Report

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) released their report, which confirmed that our Service is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the three areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected.

New Community Risk Management Plan Proposed

An 11-week public consultation on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's draft Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for the years 2023 - 2027 began on 9 January. The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks.



» Our Year in Numbers



2,030

Primary and secondary fires attended.



8,244

Emergency incidents responded to.



73.6%

Incident response times within 10 minutes.



6,129

Safe and Well Visits completed.



2,324

Non-fire emergencies attended.



1,083

Fire Safety Audits carried out.

» Our Performance

In order to monitor performance and ensure we are working towards our Annual Objectives and CRMP commitments, a number of performance measures were agreed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for the Annual Plan 2022-2023

These measures monitor the delivery of our statutory obligations and services we provide, along with how key resources are managed, including staff, finance and health and safety.

Performance is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Strategic Performance Board and by the Audit and Governance Committee. Our year end performance against the Corporate Measures can be seen on pages 34-36.

Our strategy to prevent fires and other emergencies includes the provision of Safe and Well Visits to those who are at heightened risk of dying or being injured as a result of an accidental dwelling fire.

We work closely with partner agencies to ensure individuals with risk factors are referred to us, which allows us to target the most vulnerable in our communities. This year we increased the number of referrals from our partners by 34.6 percent, to 3,907.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers completed over a thousand Full Fire Safety Audits in premises falling under the Regulatory Reform Order 2005, which outlines our duty to enforce fire safety in non-domestic premises.

In April 2022, we launched our new Risk Based Inspection Programme which will ensure we target our resources at the highest risk premises. This year, 23.4 percent of our audits were carried out

on premises identified as High or Very High risk. In 2022-23, there were 8,244 emergency incidents within Berkshire, 12.6 percent higher than the previous year. The very hot, dry summer was the primary cause of the high number of incidents.

This particularly effected the number of Secondary Fires, which include field fires and other outdoor fires. There were over 50 percent more of these types of fire this year compared to last. In July and August alone, we attended over 500 Secondary Fires.

The number of False Alarm calls has started to stabilise this year after the effects of the pandemic, when Automatic Fire Alarm call numbers fell as businesses closed, rising again as they re-opened.

We have attended nearly 8 percent more Road Traffic Accidents this year than last, as the numbers of these incidents have continued to return to pre-pandemic levels. Although we did not meet our target of a maximum of 4 percent of working time

**Between 2021-2022 and
2022-2023 the number of
emergency incidents rose by**

12.6%



» Our Performance

lost to sickness in 2022-23, we have improved from 5.8 percent last year to 5.3 percent this year, against a societal background of increasing sickness levels.

Our wholtime fire engines have been available 97.5 percent of the time this year, close to our 99 percent target. We constantly monitor and manage our crewing arrangements to maximise availability. Our on-call crews have achieved 40.6 percent availability this year. This is lower than our 60 percent target and we have continued to strive to increase availability of on-call.

In 2022-23, we attended 73.6 percent of all emergency incidents within 10 minutes of receiving a call. We did not achieve our Response Standard target of 75 percent. As mentioned above, we attended an exceptionally high number of incidents in July and August due to the hot, dry weather conditions, and in these months our performance was significantly reduced.

We also experienced a spate of incidents in December associated with storm conditions, again impacting our speed of response. In most other months we achieved the Standard, for example attending over 77 percent of incidents in 10 minutes in January.

Our performance measures and targets enable us to manage our performance and demonstrate our effectiveness at preventing and protecting against potential risk and responding to incidents to ensure that we provide value for money to the communities that we serve.

Audits

In 2022-23, internal audits were carried out in the across a number of areas across the Service.

These areas were:

- Cyber Essentials (advisory)
- Risk Management and Governance
- Firefighter Pension Administration
- Payroll Provider - Dataplan
- Key Financial Controls
- Health and Safety including Mandatory Training
- Grenfell Action Plans
- Facilities Management

Our auditors found substantial assurance in four of these areas and reasonable assurance in the other three (the Cyber Essentials audit is advisory and doesn't result in a rating). All audit actions are monitored through the Strategic Performance Board and Audit and Governance Committee.

Statement of Assurance

We are required by the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England to provide an Annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters to enable our communities, Government, Local Authorities and partners to make a valid assessment of our governance arrangements. This is produced and published on our website and confirms the extent to which the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.



» HMICFRS Inspection

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected all fire and rescue services in 2021/22. The inspection confirmed that RBFRS is performing to a high standard, receiving three 'good' judgments across the areas (effectiveness, efficiency and people) inspected.

The Service has built upon the success of its first inspection in 2019, achieving graded judgments of 'good' across all 11 questions judged under the three areas. Inspectors noted that the Service has worked effectively to address areas for improvement for example, in quality-assuring its prevention and protection activity, making sure that learning from incidents is shared across the service and ensuring the public is informed of ongoing incidents.

The report also noted that the Service has also made sure positive values and behaviours are accepted by everyone across the service. It has developed a positive feedback culture and effective grievance procedures.

Later in the year HMICFRS also released a report around culture in the fire and rescue services across the UK. The report highlighted contained extremely serious and concerning allegations of bullying, harassment and discrimination within the sector.

While the report highlights systemic issues that require Government and sector-led change, the Service would like to reiterate the ongoing commitment to ensure that everyone that works at RBFRS is treated with dignity and respect and work will continue to support continuous improvement in this area.

Effectiveness

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service’s overall effectiveness is **good**.”

Efficiency

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service’s overall efficiency is **good**.”

People

“Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is **good** at looking after its people.”

» At the Heart of Communities

Ensuring a Swift and Effective Response

In the Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023, one of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments is to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.

Summer Heatwaves

The summer of 2022 saw a prolonged period of drought and some of the highest recorded temperatures across the United Kingdom. Consequently, fire and rescue services across the country responded to an extraordinary volume of incidents.

Between Saturday, 16 July and Wednesday, 20 July, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) took over 1,000 calls and on the hottest day, Tuesday, 19 July, TVFCS staff took more than 550 emergency calls. Similarly, over a three-day period from Thursday, 11 August to Saturday, 13 August, we experienced a 99 percent increase in calls compared to the same period in 2021. In total, we responded to a total of 564 fires in the open in July and August.

Our operational staff, firefighters and officers responded to a number of challenging incidents in the Thames Valley throughout the summer. Notably, crews responded to an incident involving acetylene canisters in Thatcham, a large residential fire in Woodley, and a protracted woodland fire near Burchetts Green.

During this time, the Service provided additional support to London Fire Brigade and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service when they declared major incidents in July. Despite substantial demand on the Service, a major incident

was not declared in Berkshire at any point in the summer.

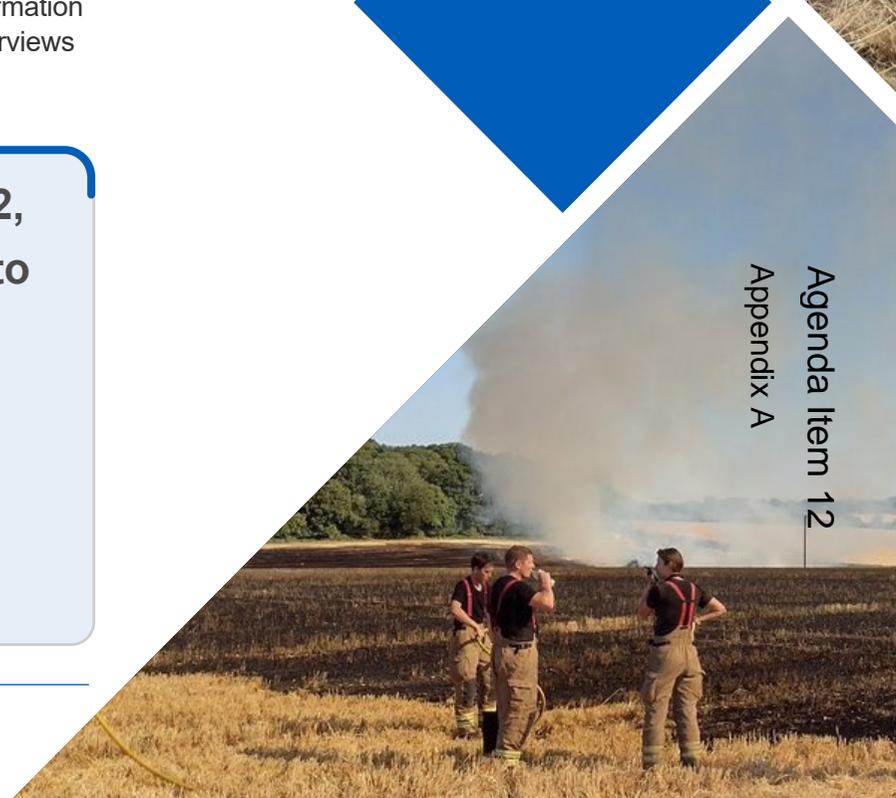
Ahead of and during the heatwaves, our teams engaged with communities across Berkshire to make them aware of the dangers posed by open water and the high risks of wildfire. Staff visited hotspots along the River Thames and Jubilee Flood Alleviation Channel, commonly called the Jubilee River, to warn people of the dangers posed by cold water shock and hidden debris under the water's surface.

These messages were accompanied by information shared on social media and a number of interviews with local media to warn our communities.

In July and August 2022,
the Service responded to

258

fires in the open



Agenda Item 12
Appendix A

» At the Heart of Communities

Promoting Community Safety

In the Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023, one of the Fire Authority’s Strategic Commitments is that we will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.

#Winterwise Campaign

In 2022, the Service launched a #WinterWise campaign to combat new challenges as many members of the public understandably looked for ways to deal with colder weather and rising costs.

RBFRS Prevention Teams identified an increased risk of domestic fires across the County with documented instances of people using unconventional heat sources, such as disposable barbecues and gas hobs to keep warm inside their homes.

Candle, electrical and chimney fires, along with carbon monoxide poisoning, were also among some of the other increased potential risks identified caused by the economic difficulties people in our communities faced.

To support residents, our teams delivered fire safety messaging around a variety of topics including candle safety, carbon monoxide poisoning, electrical fires, amongst others.

Operation Holly – Multi-Agency Working

led by the Joint Operations Roads Policing Unit of Hampshire Constabulary and Thames Valley Police, Operation Holly combines educational and enforcement activity to warn people each year about the risks of driving while under

the influence of drink and drugs during the festive season.

RBFRS has supported this initiative for several years, and last year Wokingham Road and Wokingham Fire Stations constructed simulated road traffic collisions (RTC) outside the front of their Stations to remind our communities about the severe dangers of drink and drug driving. Stations throughout the Service also displayed large banners carrying the hashtag #ItsNotWorthTheRisk prominently outside their buildings.

The overall aim of Operation Holly was to make driving on Berkshire’s roads safer for everyone. It helped reinforce messages around how RTCs not only cause deaths, but also leave people with life-changing and life-limiting injuries.

RBFRS teamed up with Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service to provide advice for people on how to stay safe and avoid putting their lives and the lives of others in danger. The Safety advice also encouraged people to challenge others who may have been tempted to drive having drunk alcohol or used drugs.

Following targeted activity throughout the month of December 2022, Police Officers from Thames Valley and Hampshire made more than 700 arrests across both force areas as part of Operation Holly.



The best way to deal with road traffic collisions is to stop them from happening in the first place. We need to get this important message out to as many people as possible. Simply don't drink or take drugs and drive. It's not worth the risk.

- Darren Barrett - Watch Manager



» At the Heart of Communities

Focus on Fire Safety

One of the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments in the Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and IRMP 2019 – 2023 is to ensure we provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.

Fire Safety (England) Regulations

On 23 January, 2023 the new Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 (FSER) came into force and were an important step towards implementing the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report.

The Government's Fire Safety Consultation ran from July to October 2020, and included proposals to implement the Inquiry's recommendations in a practical way, and in some cases to go further. The new Regulations brought these changes into force and sit alongside the Fire Safety Act amendments to the Fire Safety Order.

The new FSER imposed new duties on the Responsible Persons (RP) for multi-occupied residential buildings and requires them to take specific actions depending on the height of their buildings.

Without the correct information about the design and construction of external walls, fire and rescue services are unable to plan an effective response to incidents occurring in multi-occupied residential buildings.

Floor levels and flat numbers must be clearly identifiable in low visibility conditions and information regarding known faults with lifts and key firefighting equipment must be reported electronically to the

fire service, with RPs required to carry out regular monthly checks.

In preparation for these new changes in legislation, sent letters were sent to all RPs for High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB) in Berkshire, outlining their legal responsibilities and explaining the new regulations.

Presentations with the local authorities and landlord forums were delivered to ensure they were aware of the new regulations and how they could help support us in enforcing them.

Additionally, a wide range of key stakeholders were engaged through a robust engagement plan to ensure that they were aware of the new regulations and their duty to comply with them. Some of which included working with local media to raise awareness around the legislative changes and training with our staff to ensure they were aware of the changes and their responsibilities.

Conclusion of the Built Environment Programme

Following a two-year programme focused on the issues identified in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report, the Built Environment Programme (BEP) closed in December 2022.

The safety of our residents and staff has



» At the Heart of Communities

remained a key priority of the Programme and has helped to inform the changes and improvements that have been embedded across the Service.

From the outset, a risk-based approach was used to ensure sufficient steps were taken to address all 46 recommendations, including the 17 not specifically directed at fire and rescue services.

Many of the recommendations were aimed at the training and upskilling of fire and rescue service staff. These have been addressed through the delivery of a number of e-learning packages and a series of practical assurance exercises. Additionally, the Programme has introduced new equipment and published a number of Operational Information Notes (OINs) - including Fires in Tall Buildings and Evacuation and Rescue of Persons - to support our response capabilities when attending incidents at HRRBs.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service's capabilities to manage large-scale incidents has been strengthened by the introduction of several national initiatives including National Talk Group 20 (NTG20) and Operation Willow Beck.

NTG20 allows each control room to immediately advise all Control rooms in England of an incident and keeps them updated in the event that related calls are diverted to their control rooms.

Operation Willow Beck redistributes calls around participating control rooms in the event of larger incidents.

Both systems have been successfully utilised throughout the year, including during the heatwave in July 2022. Throughout the Programme, we

have worked closely with stakeholders at regional and national levels to ensure the Service supports ongoing work elsewhere and adopts the best practices.

We have collaborated with both Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services to align changes where appropriate. We have also attended exercises with London Fire Brigade and invited partner agencies to take part in our exercises.

Throughout the year, crews have taken part in a series of high-rise training exercises. These exercises have all had different areas of focus, including:

Built Environment Programme Objectives

1. Address the **46 recommendations** of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report (Phase 1).
2. Manage all **High-Rise Residential Buildings** (HRRBs) in Royal Berkshire.
3. Coordinate a response to **legislative changes**, further Grenfell Inquiry recommendations and additional areas of improvement identified within the Programme.

- Communication structures involved in a high-rise incident and a change of evacuation strategy
- Incident command systems and incident ground management, looking specifically at the application of JESIP principles. To test this the Service worked with partner agencies to simulate multi-agency JESIP meetings.
- The use of new technology including: radio boosters, drone deployment; and Electronic Premises Information Plates (EPIPs). During one of the exercises, staff worked with Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue's (BLSAR) drone and saw how Incident Commanders could benefit from the support of drones at a high-rise incident.
- The management of a mass evacuation and multiple Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) calls.
- Engaging with multi-lingual role-players to test a new translation app available on all appliance mobile phones.

As we move forward, RBFRS will continue to work closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our partners in Local Authority Housing Teams and Building Control Bodies, to ensure appropriate actions are taken and interim measures are applied, where deemed appropriate.

» At the Heart of Communities

Donations, Charity and Community Work

As part of our ongoing commitments to the communities we serve, the Service and its staff undertook several charitable efforts throughout 2022/23. Alongside these proactive efforts, the Service continued to provide its facilities to community groups across Berkshire and hosted events year-round for the public.

Fire Aid for Ukraine

RBFRS joined fire and rescue services across the country in providing support to assist with the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Fire services across the UK have donated thousands of items of kit and equipment to be sent to Ukraine, to support firefighters on the frontline.

The donated equipment includes a wide-range of kit, which is either due to be replaced or fire services have the capacity to donate it. It has all been provided in good, working order and all vehicles have been serviced and checked before the

convoy sets off. Each vehicle has been packed with essential – and lifesaving – equipment.

RBFRS has provided four vehicles and various items of equipment, including breathing apparatus sets, hose reels, defibrillators, PPE and generators.

This work was coordinated by FIRE AID, The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the wider sector, where all items will then be sent onto those that need them.

In total, 60 fire vehicles were donated by UK fire and rescue services and from wider fire sector as part of three convoys. The convoys travelled across Europe in groups, stopping in Eastern Poland where the equipment and appliances were handed to Ukrainian authorities.

The first convoy left in mid-March, the second one set off on 21 April and the third convoy left in early May.

These donations of firefighting equipment – which had been requested by Ukraine – helped its fire and rescue service as they continued their life-saving work in extremely challenging circumstances.

Donations to Ukraine from RBFRS

- Four Fire Appliances
- Hose Reels
- Breathing Apparatus Sets
- Defibrillators
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Generators



» At the Heart of Communities

Fundraising Efforts

In 2022-23, fundraising by staff from the Service was mainly in aid of the The Fire Fighters Charity who provide support for serving and retired fire service personnel across the UK. However, staff also supported other great local, national and international causes.

In April 2022, our 18 Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices undertook a challenge to row the equivalent of the entire length of the River Thames on rowing machines. The Apprentices completed their challenge and raised £3,188 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Meanwhile, a team of three runners from Caversham Road's White Watch set off on the Dino Dash, a 97-mile run in inflatable dinosaur suits in June 2022.

Scott Butler, Ross Burton, Tom Houseman and support crew, Richie Young and Ed Robinson, set off from Exmouth after their last night shift. The route included over 13,000 feet of ascent, pushing the runners to their limits. The team raised over £1,400 for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Scott Butler took part in another challenge later in the year. Joined by Matt Hooper from Slough White Watch, the two travelled over 1,000 kilometres across East Africa raising over £2,500 for Made With Hope, a charity supporting African rural schools.

In February 2023, an incredible £10,000 was raised in one weekend at two charity car washes at Slough and Maidenhead for the DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

Clothes Recycling Banks outside fire stations raised significant amounts for The Fire Fighters Charity.

Throughout the 2022/23 financial year, the 11 fire stations with clothes banks in Berkshire raised an incredible £14,104, with Lambourn Fire Station achieving the highest total at £2,543.

Fundraiser totals

£3,188

Raised by Firefighter Apprentices for The Fire Fighters Charity.

£1,400

Raised by the Dino Dash Team for The Fire Fighters Charity.

£10,000

Raised for the DEC Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal and The Fire Fighters Charity.

£14,104

Raised by clothes bank donations at fire stations across Berkshire.



» At the Heart of Communities

Fire Station at the Heart of Communities

Our fire stations are at the heart of our communities, and as such are used in a variety of ways in our communities.

Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority is committed to supporting the Armed Forces community. RBFRS was awarded the Gold Award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme in 2020.

As part of this ongoing commitment, the Service hosts regular Armed Forces Veterans' Hubs around the County which offer attendees a forum to speak to a range of organisations and each other. In 2022/23, three hubs were hosted at Maidenhead, Newbury and Crowthorne Fire Stations.

Wellness Hubs

Crowthorne Community Fire Station hosted a number of sessions in partnership with Bracknell Forest Council's 'Winter Wellness Hubs' series from November 2022 to March 2023.

Following this, Crowthorne's Happiness Hub launched in March 2023. Hosted in the community room, the Happiness Hub is a collaboration of support services including mental health and well-being advice to individuals 18 years and over who live in Bracknell Forest and surrounding areas.

The Winter Wellness and Happiness Hubs have been held monthly since November 2022 allowing people from the Crowthorne area to get advice and support from the Fire Service and other organisations who support the Hubs.

Open Days

2022 saw the return of fire station open days for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic and allowed firefighters, staff and volunteers to welcome the public back into fire stations. During the days, our teams shared key fire and water safety information, while also showcasing RBFRS as a career path, sharing information on the variety of roles available.

Across the year, five open days were hosted at fire stations, raising several hundred pounds for charity across the days.



I witnessed first-hand the time and effort that went into organising and supporting this event, from those on duty crews to the volunteers that gave up their own time, it was great to see.

- Andy Stockwell, Group Manager on the Open Day at Maidenhead Fire Station.



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Modernising our Service

In our Strategic Asset Investment Framework, the Fire Authority has set out how we will maintain and renew our vital capital assets, necessary to support our service delivery. Our capital assets include:

- Our buildings, which includes 16 fire stations and our headquarters;
- Our fire appliances, equipment and support fleet; and
- Our ICT infrastructure and systems.

Together, these assets represent a major capital investment. The efficiency of these assets can also have a significant impact on our revenue budget as older stations, fire appliances and ICT require additional maintenance and are often more expensive to run.

During 2022-2023, the Service has invested in several key areas to modernise the delivery of our services to the people of Berkshire.

New Website and Intranet Project

During 2022-2023, new website and intranet systems were released, improving information sharing both within the Service and to our communities.

An opportunity to improve both systems was identified and the project team carried out engagement surveys with staff and the public to help inform the new solution.

Following the appointment of the successful supplier, teams worked to ensure that the key requirements of the project were met and the transition to the new systems was as smooth as possible. Accessibility was a key consideration throughout the project, to ensure that as many people as possible can easily access the website and intranet.

The new intranet system has been built on Microsoft Sharepoint, which has provided a high level of integration with other applications that are being used by staff in the Service. This has enabled staff to seamlessly share information and work more effectively together.

The website replacement project ran simultaneously and has been built on WordPress. While existing content was carried over to the new site, new features have been added such as the addition of a dedicated feed for displaying relevant incidents to the public and media, a digital dashboard displaying our performance measures and improved functionality when using mobile devices.

Since the launch of the new website, it has received over 167,000 visits.



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Breathing Apparatus Project

New breathing apparatus sets are being worn by our firefighters, following a successful project run alongside Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service and Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service.

140 of the BA sets were issued to staff, each with their own personal issue facemask made from the latest, technologically advanced Chemical, Biological, Radiation, Nuclear (CBRN) certified material. The roll out of the new BA sets forms part of our ongoing commitment to ensure our crews have fit for purpose equipment to enable them to provide the best response to our communities.

The BA sets, manufactured by Interspiro have been produced as part of the Thames Valley Operational Alignment Programme, which aims to deliver seamless, cross-border mobilisation of fire and rescue service assets by Thames Valley Fire Control Service and firefighters who can work together using the same operational guidance, training, and equipment.

As part of the tendering process, operational firefighters from the Service took part in a rigorous and thorough practical evaluation, in which BA sets were tested for ease of use and operability. Participants from on-call and wholtime stations braved sweltering temperatures during the height of summer 2022 to support the evaluation process, which saw the Interspiro sets coming top with users, largely as a result of its robust, light-weight harness which proved fully adjustable to meet the requirements of a diverse workforce.

Total savings across the three Thames Valley services

£532,178

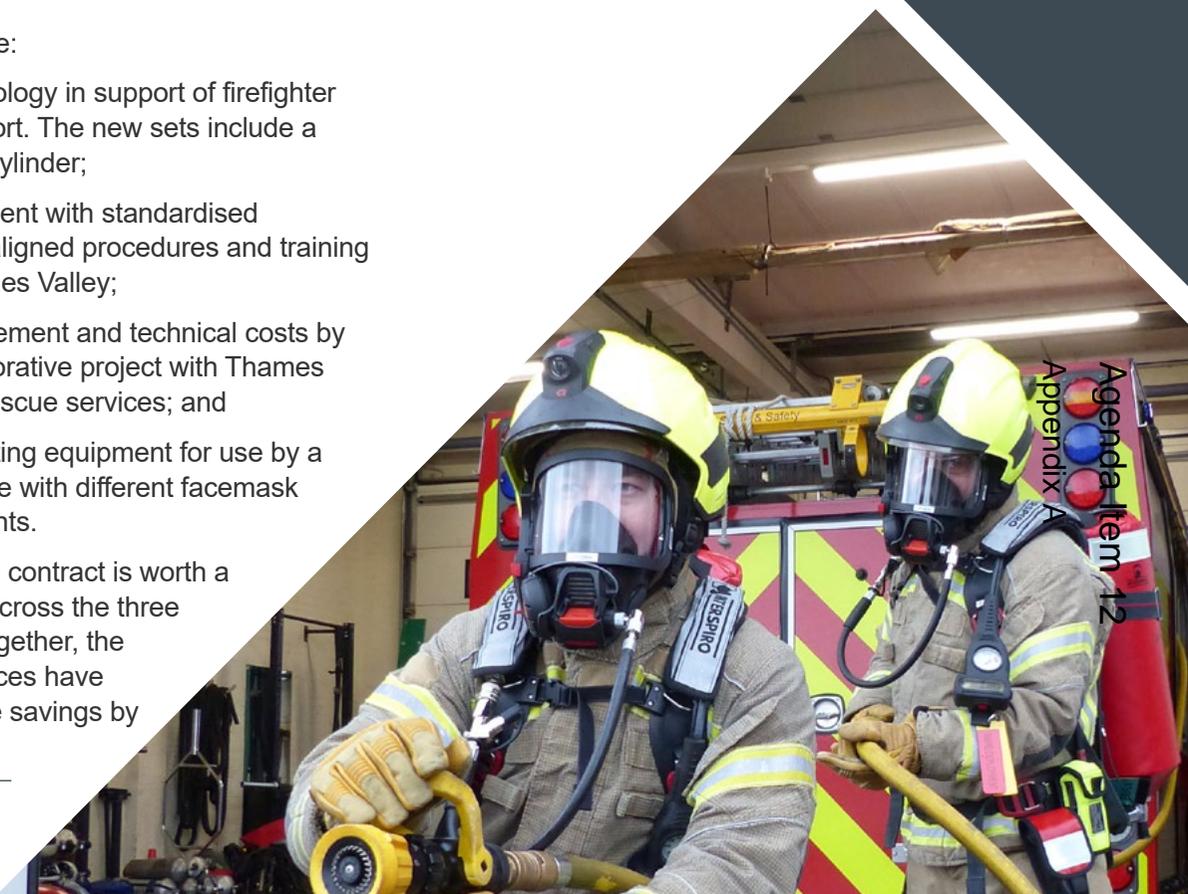
Total savings by RBFRS alone

£130,000

The new sets provide:

- The latest technology in support of firefighter safety and comfort. The new sets include a lighter, 300 bar cylinder;
- Improved alignment with standardised equipment and aligned procedures and training across the Thames Valley;
- Reduced procurement and technical costs by running a collaborative project with Thames Valley fire and rescue services; and
- Lighter, better fitting equipment for use by a diverse workforce with different facemask fitting requirements.

The BA collaborative contract is worth a total of £1,768,468 across the three services. Working together, the Thames Valley services have been able to achieve savings by



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

not duplicating processes, sharing specialist resources and bringing economies of scale to the project. In total, the three services have saved £532,178 with RBFRS saving in the region of £130,000 for the first year.

RBFRS was the first of the three services to go live with the new sets and associated equipment and firefighters from have been responding using the new sets since March 2023, when old kits were replaced.

Investing in our Stations

Our Service has 16 fire stations located across the County. As we continue to evolve and improve, it is essential that we continue appropriate investment in our estate, for the benefit of staff and the public.

Over the past few years, the Service has delivered several major build and refurbishment projects, such as Theale, Crowthorne and Hungerford. This

investment has provided improved community focused fire stations, which have shared facilities with our blue light partners which improves closer working, as well as providing greater value for the public purse.

In addition, we are accelerating a new Estates Development Programme, which has already seen a range of improvements undertaken at sites including Bracknell and Maidenhead Fire Stations.

The primary objectives of this Programme are to:

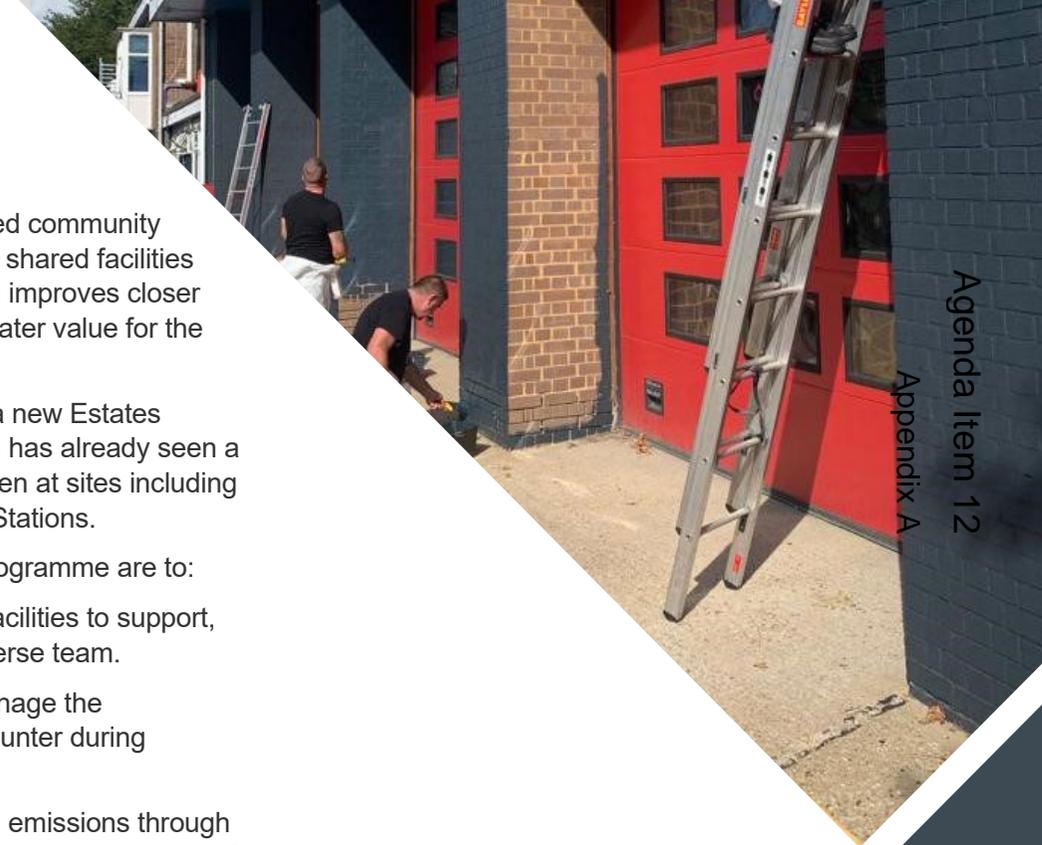
1. Improve the equality of our facilities to support, attract and retain a more diverse team.
2. Better enable our staff to manage the contaminants they may encounter during emergency incidents.
3. Reduce the Service's carbon emissions through investment in sustainability features and ways of working.

Bracknell Fire Station was refurbished in three stages over the course of 14 weeks through winter 2022.

Phase one saw significant improvements to the contamination management arrangements by creating a separate space for fire kits, upgrading extraction and ventilation in the locker area, installing a new laundry and drying room facilities.

Phase two included an upgrade to the Station's Mess Room to create a more modern and professional environment for the crew to occupy and Phase three focused on improving the equality of the facilities, such as enhancing female specific accommodation.

**Bracknell Fire Station's
refurbishment project took
14 weeks
through the winter
months of 2022.**



» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Following the refurbishment, one member of staff shared the following: “Overall, the station is now much better equipped, providing the functions expected of a modern fire station.

“Despite there being extensive works throughout, there was minimal disruption to the station and a contractor was on site every day to make sure everything was running smoothly.”

After a period of staff engagement, work began in September 2022 to refurbish Maidenhead Fire Station to make it a fit for purpose, modern workplace.

The upgrades include, refurbishment of the



.....

Overall, the station is now much better equipped, providing the functions expected of a modern fire station. Despite there being extensive works throughout, there was minimal disruption to the station and a contractor was on site every day to make sure everything was running smoothly

- Staff Member, Bracknell Fire Station

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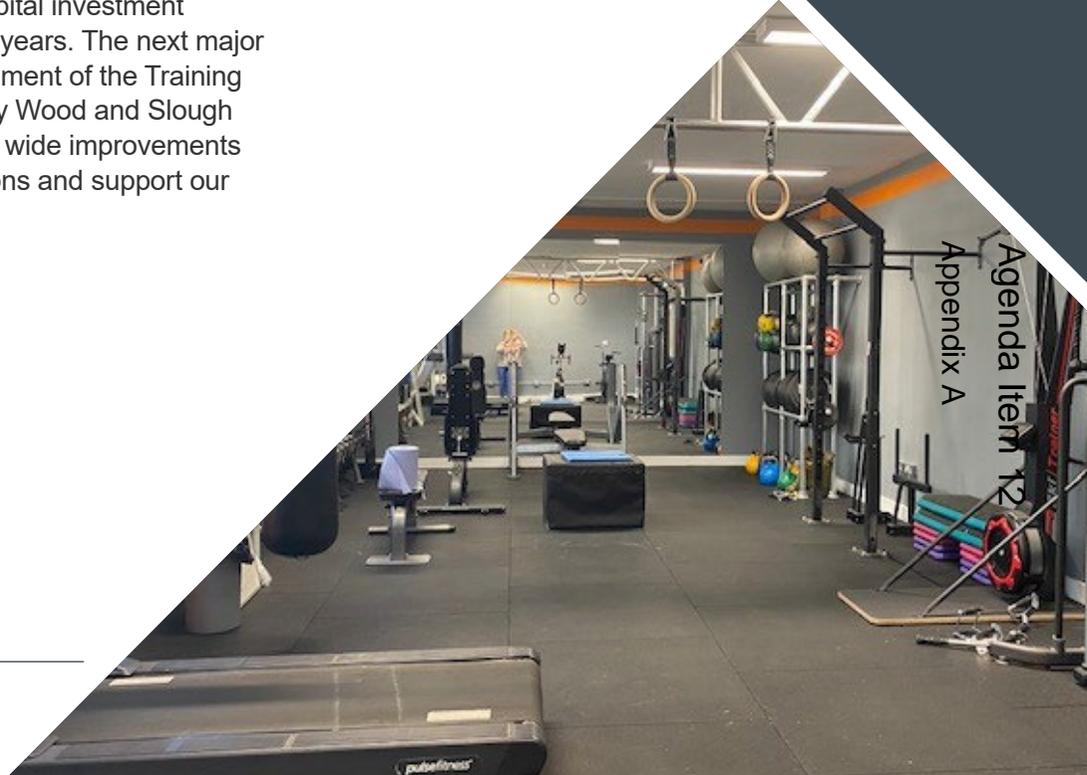


first floor to create a new open-plan office to enable closer working between response, prevention and protection staff, two new meeting rooms, and individual rest areas for operational crews.

Further improvements were achieved including female facilities, including individual shower, toilet and changing cubicles, an upgrade to the gym space, the creation of a third office, new laundry facilities and an upgrade to the breathing apparatus room. Finally, the project’s last phase saw improvements to the male WC and showers.

This refurbishment project has significantly transformed the station and makes better use of our existing buildings.

Looking ahead, our Strategic Asset Investment Framework describes our capital investment programme over the next 10 years. The next major projects will be the redevelopment of the Training Centre facilities at the Whitley Wood and Slough Fire Station as well as estate wide improvements to reduce our carbon emissions and support our diverse workforce.



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Agenda Item 12

» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Official Opening of Theale Community Fire Station

Following planning permission in August 2018, Theale Community Fire Station was officially opened on 20 October last year following a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by Mr. James Puxley, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire.

The Station has been operational since October 2021 with firefighting crews attending emergency incidents and providing a valuable service to communities across Berkshire. However, due to the disruption caused by COVID-19, the official opening ceremony was postponed for a year.

The state-of-the-art facility is the third community tri-service station to be opened in the Royal County, following the refurbishment of Hungerford Fire Station and the rebuild of Crowthorne in and 2017 and 2020 respectively.

The tri-service station was designed to be easily identifiable and provided an important space for local communities to use. The Station's location was deliberately chosen with the main aim of improving the overall speed of response times to emergency incidents, while ensuring emergency vehicles were closer to the surrounding communities.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "The Station represents a landmark to be proud of. It has been designed to be easily identifiable and provides an important space for local communities to use.

"Careful consideration was given to the location of Theale Community Fire Station. As such,

the Station now offers improved access to major road networks, such as the M4 and A4 corridors, while ensuring emergency vehicles are closer to the surrounding communities."

Theale Community Fire Station has brought an even closer working relationships between local ambulance, fire and rescue and police services. All three emergency services have taken part in joint training exercises, allowing them to share expertise in a number of areas, including rescue and casualty care.

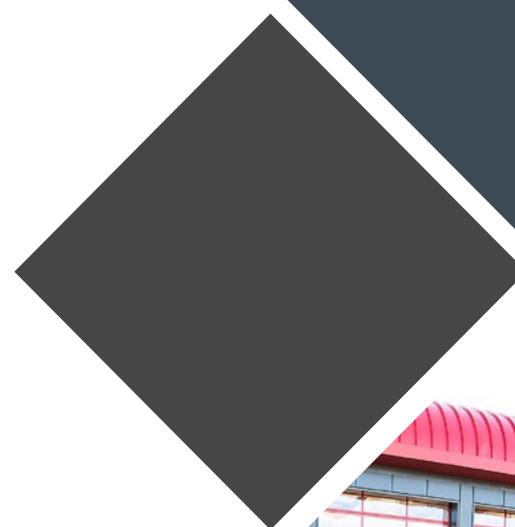


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The Station represents a landmark to be proud of. It has been designed to be easily identifiable and provides an important space for local communities to use.

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer

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» Capacity, Capability and Resilience

Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices

In January 2022, for the first time, we recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. Following an intensive 13-week training course, a group of 18 Wholetime Firefighter graduates celebrated their achievements at a Graduation Ceremony at Whitley Wood Fire Station in front of their family and friends in April 2022. Following this they took up their station placements across the County.

This was the first time that RBFRS has recruited Apprentices into the crucial firefighter role. Much like previous Wholetime recruitment, anyone, from any background or walk of life, could apply to be a Firefighter Apprentice, as long as they were new to the role.

The first part of the training course was delivered by external provider, the Fire Service College (Capita). Capita are approved to deliver the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship through the

Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP).

The Apprentices were thoroughly tested with a range of practical and theoretical training, core skills, breathing apparatus, fire behaviour, water rescue and road traffic collision training.

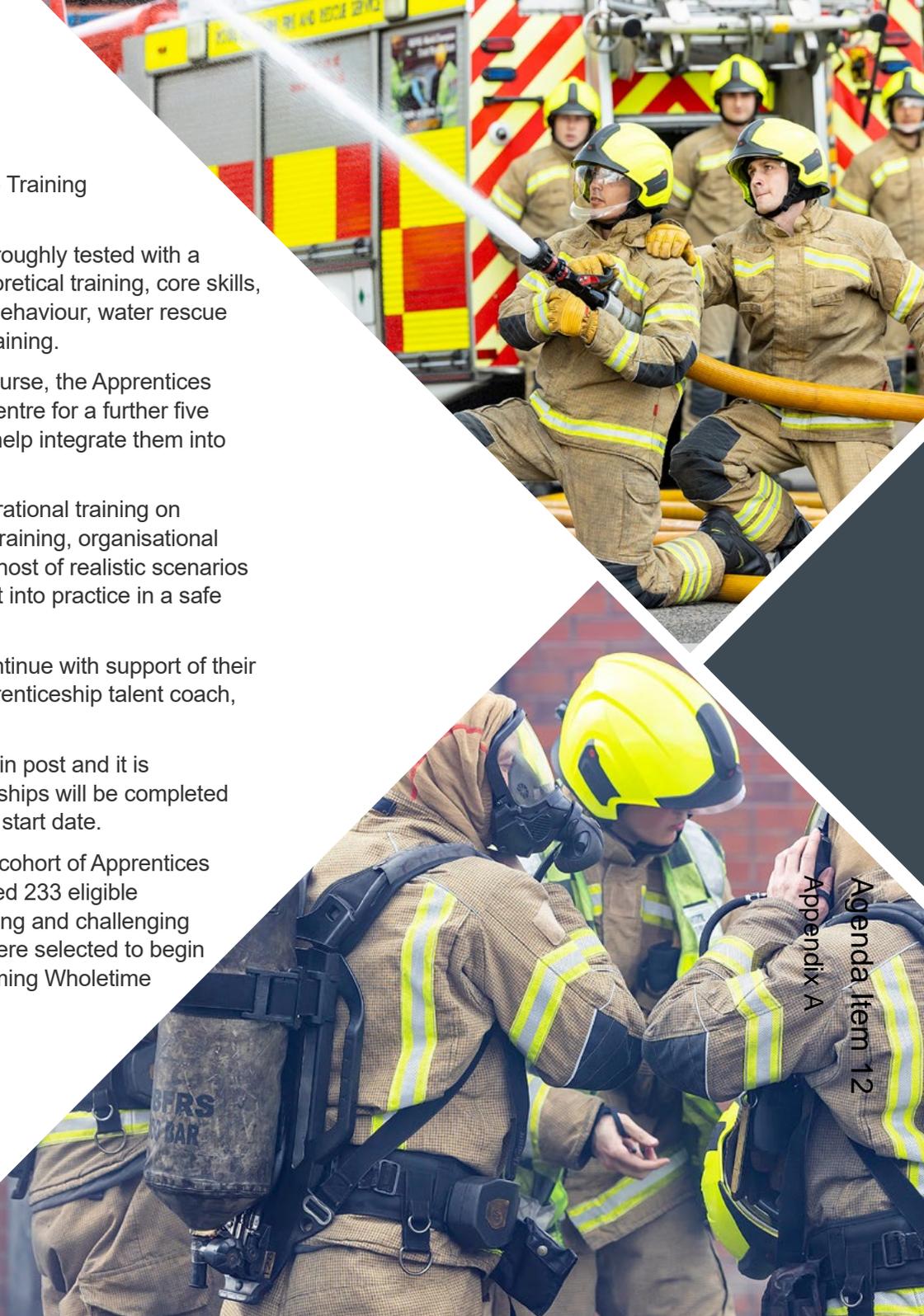
Upon completion of the course, the Apprentices returned to our Training Centre for a further five weeks with Instructors to help integrate them into RBFRS' ways of working.

This included specific operational training on equipment, safeguarding training, organisational awareness training and a host of realistic scenarios to put what they had learnt into practice in a safe environment.

Their development will continue with support of their line manager, and an Apprenticeship talent coach, supported by the Service.

All 18 Apprentices remain in post and it is anticipated the Apprenticeships will be completed within 24 months from the start date.

In January 2023, the next cohort of Apprentices were recruited. We received 233 eligible applications, and after a long and challenging recruitment process, 24 were selected to begin the training towards becoming Wholetime Firefighters.



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**Royal Berkshire Fire and
Rescue Service welcomed
18
Wholetime Firefighter
Apprentices in its first cohort.**

» One Team Working Collaboratively

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Fire and Rescue Sector is characterised by a disproportionately low number of women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our Service's EDI initiatives aim to help remedy this whilst also helping to connect the Service to the many diverse communities of Berkshire.

This work has also allowed the Service to tailor itself to the different needs of Berkshire's communities, whilst creating a workplace where everyone feels valued and able to be themselves. Consequently, the Service recognise that being an open and inclusive Service will ultimately make it more effective.

As part of our EDI Objectives, we are committed to building on our inclusive culture. We will continue taking action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect. We will support all staff to contribute to the creation of an inclusive working environment.

New EDI Objectives

Following a public consultation, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority adopted four revised EDI Objectives on behalf of the Service.

The first objective is focused on increasing the diversity of staff at all levels, recognising the value of a diverse workforce. The second is centred on leadership and our corporate commitment to support our organisational leaders to understand their role in tackling inequalities and demonstrate inclusive behaviours.

The third objective focuses on improving service delivery by creating strong links with different communities across Berkshire. The final objective emphasises the importance of growing an inclusive culture of equality and diversity in the Service.

All four objectives were created in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Change 100 Internships

The Change 100 Programme was developed by Leonard Cheshire and 2022 marked the fifth year of our Service's participation. As part of the Scheme, the Service welcomed three interns for 100 days over the summer.

The interns worked as part of the Communications and Engagement, Business Support and Built Environment Programme teams.

The Programme provides an opportunity for them to develop new skills and build confidence. All the while, the Service gains increased organisational diversity awareness and increases its capacity to deliver services.



It's increased my confidence, helped kickstart my career, and enabled me to work for an outstanding organisation which does inspiring work helping communities in Berkshire.

- Ali Abdi, Change 100 Intern



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Summer Internship Scheme

The Summer Internship Scheme, previously known as the Chairman's Internship Scheme, is designed for young people in Berkshire, specifically targeting individuals from ethnic groups that are under-represented in the Service. The Scheme is a three-year pilot and will run annually until summer 2024.

For the first year of the pilot scheme, the Programme was designed for a five-week period over the summer. Individuals were eligible to apply if they were aged between 16 and 18, lived in Berkshire and were from an ethnic group that is currently under-represented within the Service.

In the 2022 intake, 10 internship positions were offered. This was an expansion from the originally planned number of eight. All of these positions were oversubscribed, with the Programme receiving 50 applications.

The interns worked in designated 'home departments' as part of the internship, contributing to the Service whilst learning about the fire and rescue sector.

They convened as a group twice a week; to visit a fire station on Wednesdays and share their learning on Fridays. Station visits typically included a range of activities for the interns with sessions being run by operational members of the Service.

The responses of interns who took part in the Programme suggest a highly positive experience. In their commentary, interns demonstrated enjoyment of a variety of aspects of the programme, in particular the opportunity to try new things and meet

new people. All of the interns said that they would recommend the Programme to others.

Mustafa Khan, who interned as part of the Finance Team, said: "From the moment I entered Finance, it felt like home. Everyone was a friend and the working environment within Finance was special.

"The three days a week sat at my desk, were surprisingly my favourite across the whole internship; and the amount of experience I gained whilst having fun was truly fantastic and was something I never would have thought I would have had upon joining the Scheme."

In May 2023, a second cohort of interns will be selected to take part in the Internship Programme. Several aspects of the Scheme have been altered based on the findings of the previous year's evaluation report.

The total number of interns has been reduced to five, with the interns rotating between five teams on a weekly basis. The age bracket has also been lowered to include just 16 and 17 year olds.

The outcomes of this year's Scheme will, combined with the evaluation report from year one, be used to determine the structure of the internship in the final year of its pilot in 2024.



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Positive Action

Our Service ran a series of initiatives to help promote a career in the fire and rescue sector to groups in our community that may not have considered us or the role of a firefighter before.

In April 2022, we took the drill ground assessment out to a crossfit gym in Reading and ran the first of two female focused 'Have a Go' events. Across the events, 19 people took part, 11 women and eight men, with the majority of them completing the assessment in the required time.

In the same month, the Service held the first of two female focused 'Have a Go' events. During these, 12 attendees tried some of the fitness tests, spoke with firefighters and toured Whitley Wood Fire Station. They were then invited back in May to see how their training was going. At this event the 13 attendees were able to have a go at all of the physical tests for becoming a firefighter.

At all of the events, attendees were introduced to the Behavioural Competency Framework and at the May female focused event, the Resourcing and Development Team ran a session to help potential candidates write their supporting statement, which is along with the application form is the initial part of the recruitment process.

In February 2023, Bracknell's Red Watch welcomed members of Wokingham Netball Club into the Station to take part in a 'Have a Go' day. As part of the visit, the team took part in the selection tests they would be expected to perform if they applied for a firefighter role within the Service.



It's really important, as a public service, we reflect the communities that we serve. What we're trying to communicate is that there is no stereotypical firefighter anymore.

- Helen Morbin, Wellbeing Manager



Pride 2022

This year, we once again attended Reading Pride, reaffirming our commitment to supporting and making a positive difference to the communities we serve. Similarly, Red Watch from Newbury Fire Station attended Newbury Pride in June 2022.

These events gave the Service an opportunity to promote careers and important safety advice. One of our core aims is to ensure that everyone feels safe to access our services, enabling us to better serve our County.



» One Team Working Collaboratively

Prioritising Health, Safety and Wellbeing

In our People Strategy, we set out our objective to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our staff. During the 2022-2023 financial year, we progressed a number of areas dedicated to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.

Cycle2Work Scheme

Last year, the Service took part in the Cycle2Work Scheme in partnership with Halfords. The scheme is aimed at encouraging staff to cycle rather than drive or use alternate transportation. The Scheme has a limit of £2,000, the cost of which is covered by Halfords. Halfords partner with over 480 independent bike retailers which means, brands not normally stocked by Halfords can be accessed through the Scheme. In total, 15 applications were made from within the Service.

Flu Vaccinations

As part of the Service's commitment to the health and wellbeing of its staff, all staff who were not eligible for an NHS vaccination were offered the opportunity to be reimbursed for a flu vaccination up to a cost of £16.99.

To be eligible for an NHS vaccination you must be either aged 50-64, pregnant, a carer or under 50 and clinically at risk.

The Service encouraged everyone is to consider having the flu vaccination to both support the capacity of the NHS and support the Service to maintain crewing and staffing levels.

Mental Health Support

Every quarter Health Assured, our employee assistance provider, sends the Service anonymised information concerning the mental health of our staff.

This information includes the number of calls into the 24/7 telephone helpline and the primary reason for the call. RBFRS monitors this information, and initiatives are implemented to support staff where trends are identified. Between March 2022 and April 2023, 93 calls were made to the helpline by staff from the Service.

Of these 93, 27 calls (29%) made by staff within the Service concerned feelings of anxiety. In response, we provided specific advice and activities to assist staff in managing these feelings. Staff were regularly reminded of the other support avenues that our Service offers, including its dedicated Health and

**43 Green Book
and 24 TVFCS
staff completed a bi-annual
wellbeing check-in last year.**

Safety Team, Wellbeing Manager, Blue Light Champions, and Occupational Health.

Wellbeing Check-ins

In May, we began offering all staff the opportunity to complete bi-annual wellbeing check-ins. Until this year, only station based staff were eligible for the tests. However, recognising that the pandemic has had a significant impact on wellbeing, the Service opened up the opportunity for Green Book and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) staff.

Following the change, 43 Green Book staff and 24 TVFCS staff completed a wellbeing check-in between May 2022 and the end of March 2023.

The consultation uses Fitech, a fitness assessment programme, to give an overview of a person's physical health and wellbeing. Fitech creates reports which include advice and guidance to support people in making positive changes to their lifestyle. Anonymised reports are retained by the Service and are used to spot trends, target health promotion campaigns and provide support for our staff.

» One Team Working Collaboratively

Valuing our Staff

In our People Strategy, we set out how we will support staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver an efficient and effective service on behalf of the Fire Authority, to manage all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect the people of Berkshire.

Awards Ceremony

On Tuesday, 1 November 2022, the Service held its annual Awards Ceremony at the Coppid Beech Hotel in Bracknell.

The original event was due to take place on 10 September at Welford Park. However, this was postponed due to the passing of Her Late Majesty the Queen.

It is important to recognise some of the outstanding contributions of staff, volunteers, partners and members of the public over the past 12 months. The Awards Ceremony is also an opportunity to celebrate some of our longest serving colleagues, who have now completed 20, 30 or 40 years of public service.

Awards were presented in 13 categories, followed by Long Service Awards, and Long Service Good Conduct Medals, for 20 years' service. This year three recipients also received a 30-year Long Service and Good Conduct clasp, to be worn on the ribbon of recipient's existing 20-year medals.

The evening started with Awards being presented by Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor Paul Gittings, including Excellence in Community Safety; Volunteer of the Year; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion and Excellence in Leadership.

Chief Fire Officer Wayne Bowcock presented Awards, including Support Department of the Year; Fire Station of the Year; Certificates of Commendation; Employee of the Year and Emergency Responder of the Year.

Deputy Lieutenant for the Royal County of Berkshire, Mr Willie Hartley Russell, joined the Ceremony and presented Awards for Fundraiser of the Year; Certificates of Merit; Outstanding Team Achievement and the Long Service Award and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals.

Councillor Paul Gittings, Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, said: "It was such an honour to recognise some of our amazing members of staff, partners and members of the public for their outstanding contribution and dedication to the service, and acts of courage over the past year.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer, said: "For me personally, it's really important to be able to celebrate the achievements of all of our staff and recognise the hard work and dedication particularly of those who received Awards this year."

"I am extremely proud of our Service and the way we serve the communities of Royal Berkshire."



For me personally, it's really important to be able to celebrate the achievements of all of our staff and recognise the hard work and dedication particularly of those who received awards this year.

- Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer



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» Community Risk Management Plan

People living, working or travelling in Berkshire were encouraged to have their say on the future of the Service. An 11-week public consultation on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBFA) draft Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for the years 2023 – 2027 began on 11 January, 2023 and closed on Monday, 27 March 2023.

RBFA set out how it intends to meet its goals to create safer and more resilient communities by preventing incidents, protecting homes and businesses and responding to emergencies. The CRMP explains how all fire and rescue-related risk in the community is evaluated and how resources are allocated to manage those risks.

The overarching Vision set out in the plan is for RBFRS staff to work together as One Team for the communities we serve. In order to fulfil that vision, it is vital that staff work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Although progress has been made in creating a service that reflects the communities it serves, there is more work required to achieve this goal.

Within the CRMP, a number of priorities have been identified for the next four years:

Priority 1 - We will develop our Integrated Service Delivery Strategy to meet the changing profile of risk in Berkshire due to climate change, societal and technological shifts.

Priority 2 - We will develop a Risk Based Prevention Programme to target those most vulnerable and at risk from emergency incidents.

Priority 3 - We will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is sustainable and provides value for money.

Priority 4 We will review the incidents that do not form part of our core statutory responsibilities, to better understand the implications for the service in attending these incidents. Notwithstanding the review of our response and the gathering of this data, public safety will remain the primary priority of the Service.

Priority 5 - We will develop our Fire Protection service to support the resilience of businesses, to ensure the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022, and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to ensure that our enforcement role is effective and clear.

Priority 6 - We will maintain 19 frontline fire appliances, and a baseline service provision of 14 frontline fire appliances, utilising wholetime and on-call staff as effectively as possible, through local management.



The years ahead are likely to be some of the most challenging we have faced, which is why we are focused on working ever closer with our local communities, businesses and partner agencies to deliver a first-rate service.

**- Councillor Paul Gittings,
Chair, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**



» Corporate Measures

Service Provision

Service Provision monitors the service we provide to the public. Performance is monitored in relation to attendance at incidents, types of incidents, Prevention activities and fire safety in commercial buildings.

| Measure | 2022/2023 Target | 2022/2023 Actual |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Number of fire deaths | 0 | 4 |
| Number of non-fatal fire casualties | 37 | 36 |
| Number of deliberate primary fires | Reduce | 129 |
| Number of deliberate secondary fires | Reduce | 270 |
| Prevention | | |
| Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well Visits received from our partners | 10% | 34.6% |
| Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours | 100% | 100% |
| Percentage of Very High and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time | 90% | 41% |
| Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time | 75% | 40.8% |
| Protection | | |
| Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme | Monitor | 23.4% |
| Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result | 60% | 73.7% |
| Percentage success when cases go to court | 80% | N/A (No cases) |



» Corporate Measures

| Measure | 2022/2023 Target | 2022/2023 Actual |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes | 95% | 96.4% |
| The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received | Improve | 3,153 |
| Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend | 30% | 24.8% |
| Response | | |
| Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered | 75% | 73.6% |
| Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability | 99% | 97.5% |
| Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing) | 60% | 40.6% |
| Resilience | | |
| Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale | Monitor | 38.1% |
| Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed | 12 | 12 |
| Customer Experience | | |
| Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service | 100% | 100% |
| Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service | 95% | 100% |
| Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits | 90% | 98.9% |
| Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit | 100% | 99.7% |
| Number of complaints received | Monitor | 28 |
| Number of compliments received | Monitor | 22 |



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» Corporate Measures

Corporate Health

The Corporate Health quadrant monitors the wellbeing of the organisation. Performance is monitored in relation to staffing levels, health and safety and finances within RBFRS, to ensure the organisation is being run safely, efficiently and is cost effective.

| Measure | 2022/2023 Target | 2022/2023 Actual |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Human Resources and Learning & Development | | |
| Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups | 4% | 5.3% |
| Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews | 100% | 88.0% |
| Number of formal grievances | Monitor | 18 |
| Health and Safety | | |
| Number of *RIDDOR accidents and diseases | 4 | 9 |
| Finance and Procurement | | |
| Percentage of spend subject to competition | 85% | 85.9% |
| Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend | 100% | 100% |
| Freedom of Information | | |
| Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Free-dom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Pro-tection Legislation) | 0 | 0 |

*RIDDOR is the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. Under RIDDOR we have a duty to report certain events, those events being accidents that led to a person being unfit for their normal work for more than 7 days, or 'specified injuries' which are more serious types of injuries. These include injuries such as broken bones, crush injuries and amputations.



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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**



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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 27 JULY 2023 |
| SUBJECT | QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23 QUARTER FOUR (JANUARY – MARCH 2023) |
| LEAD OFFICER | BECCA CHAPMAN, DATA, PERFORMANCE AND RISK MANAGER |
| LEAD MEMBER | N/A |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | TO NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide Audit & Governance Committee with an overview of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) fourth quarter (January – March 2023) performance for the 2022-23 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Audit & Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the performance against Service Provision and Corporate Health measures for the targets agreed by the Fire Authority for 2022-23.
- 2.2 **NOTE** the progress made on the priority programmes.
- 2.3 **NOTE** the position of corporate risk.
- 2.4 **DISCUSS** and **AGREE** any further actions, if appropriate.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The quarterly performance report supports the Performance Management Framework which provides structure and governance that will enable RBFRS to measure, monitor and manage outputs and outcomes in a timely manner, allowing the organisation to respond and make informed decisions to ensure that statutory obligations and the Fire Authority's Strategic Commitments are successfully delivered.
- 3.2 Following data capture, review and analysis, evidence is reviewed by the Strategic Performance Board (SPB) whose purpose is to lead, support and

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monitor the effective delivery of the Strategic Objectives by monitoring and reviewing performance across the four Quadrants.

- 3.3 Informed by these processes, key data and highlights have been extracted and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and are presented in this report for scrutiny at the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.4 The attached report provides an overview of performance for the fourth quarter (January - March 2023) performance for the 2022-23 financial year. It reports performance in four key areas:
- 3.5 Quadrant one - Service Provision - This section presents data and information which will allow members to monitor how RBFRS are doing at delivering its statutory obligations and any internal services provided between teams, departments and functions.
- 3.6 Quadrant two - Corporate Health - This section brings together all data, information and measures from across the organisation, which will allow members to monitor how RBFRS are managing key resources, e.g. People and Finance.
- 3.7 Quadrant three - Priority Programmes (CRMP, People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework and the HRRB Project) - This section will allow members to monitor progress of work designed to deliver a defined outcome which is different to or improves on current working practices, policies and procedures in support of delivering against the strategic commitments and corporate plan 2019-23.
- 3.8 Quadrant four - Assurance - This section groups provides an assessment of corporate risks that may impact on service delivery. This section will also include data and information from audit monitoring and an update on the HMICFRS Action Plan.

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 will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.

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 This report provides RBFA financial information under the corporate health quadrant.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This report provides RBFRS equality and diversity information under the corporate health quadrant.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 This report provides RBFRS corporate risk information under the assurance quadrant.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 This report provides information on RBFRS performance measures and targets, as such there are no identified areas for collaboration.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer was consulted during preparation of this report.

10.2 The Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted on the content of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Annual Plan 2022-23.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix (Quarter Four Performance Report) attached as a separate cover.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.2 Becca Chapman
Data, Performance and Risk Manager, 07585 991629

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| ITEM | DECISION BODY | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Slough Fire Station Development | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Ad-hoc | Agree | DCFO | N/A | Part II |
| On-call strategy - presentation | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Ad-hoc | Note | AM R &R | N/A | Part I |
| AFA Mobilisation Policy review | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Ad-hoc | Agree | AM C&P | N/A | Part I |
| Contaminants presentation | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Ad-hoc | Note | DChEx | Healthy and wellbeing champion | Part I |
| Budget Monitoring Q1 | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| L4 Resilience | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | Ad-hoc | Note | DChEx | N/A | Part I |
| Appliance Availability Q1 | Management Committee | 16.10.23 | quarterly | Note | AM (R&R) | N/A | Part I |
| External Audit report | A&GC | 30.10.23 | Quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Statement of Accounts | A&GC | 30.10.23 | Annual | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Governance Statement | A&GC | 30.10.23 | Annual | Note | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Q1 Performance Report | A&GC | 30.10.23 | Quarterly | Note | Data, Performance and Risk Manager | N/A | Part I |
| Disciplinary Policy | A&GC | 30.10.23 | Bi-annual | Note | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Independent Review of Scheme of Allowances | Fire Authority | 08.11.23 | 4 years | Agree | MO | N/A | Part I |
| Serious Violence Duty presentation | Fire Authority | 08.11.23 | Ad-hoc | Note | AM C&P | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Treasury Report | Fire Authority | 08.11.23 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Budget Monitoring Q2 | Management Committee | 4.12.23 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Appliance Availability Q2 | Management Committee | 4.12.23 | quarterly | Note | AM (R&R) | N/A | Part I |
| Statement of Assurance | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Quarterly | Note and Recommend | HCS | RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman | Part I |
| Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Annual | Note | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Pay Policy Statement | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Internal Audit report | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |

| ITEM | DECISION BODY | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------|
| Q2 Performance Report | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Quarterly | Note | Data, Performance and Risk Manager | N/A | Part I |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme - Presentation | A&GC | 24.01.24 | Bi annual | Note | HBIS | N/A | Part I |
| Draft Annual Budget 24/25 | Management Committee | 6.02.24 | Annual | Note and recommend | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Budget Monitoring Q3 | Management Committee | 6.02.24 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review | Management Committee | 6.02.24 | Annual | Note and recommend | MO | N/A | Part I |
| Appliance Availability Q3 | Management Committee | 6.02.24 | Quarterly | Note | AM (R&R) | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget | Fire Authority | 15.02.24 | Annual | Agree | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead | Part I |
| Pay Policy Statement | Fire Authority | 15.02.24 | Annual | Agree | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 24/25 | Fire Authority | 15.02.24 | Annual | Agree | MO | N/A | Part I |
| Internal Audit Report | A&GC | 28.3.24 | quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| External Audit Report | A&GC | 28.3.24 | quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Report on Members Development | A&GC | 28.3.24 | Annual | Note and Recommend | DChEx | Member Development Champion | Part I |
| Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results | A&GC | 28.3.24 | Annual | Note and Recommend | DChEx | A&GC Chairman | Part I |
| Quarter 3 Performance Report | A&GC | 28.3.24 | Quarterly | Note | Data, Performance and Risk Manager | N/A | Part I |
| | Management Committee | 09.04.24 | Ad-hoc | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| | Management Committee | 09.04.24 | Ad-hoc | Agree | AM C&P | N/A | Part I |
| Corporate Calendar 2024/25 | Fire Authority | 22.04.24 | Annual | Agree | DChEx | N/A | Part I |
| Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports | Fire Authority | 22.04.24 | Annual | Note | Lead Officers | Lead Members | Part I |

**Categories of “Exempt Information”
under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972**

| | Category |
|---|---|
| | [For each of nos 1 - 7, see <u>Qualification 1</u> below] |
| 1 | Information relating to any individual |
| 2 | Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual. |
| 3 | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). [see <u>Qualification 2</u> below] |
| 4 | Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority. |
| 5 | Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. |
| 6 | Information which reveals that the authority purposes: (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment. |
| 7 | Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime. |

Qualifications:

- (1) Information falling within paragraph 3 is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under -
 - (a) the Companies Act 1985;
 - (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
 - (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
 - (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
 - (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
 - (f) the Charities Act 1993.
- (2) Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.
- (3) Information which -
 - (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of the two preceding paragraphs

is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest

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in disclosing the information.

Interpretation:

- (4) "*Employee*" means a person employed under a contract of service;
- (5) "*Financial or business affairs*" includes contemplated, as well as past or current, activities;
- (6) "*Labour relations matter*" means -
 - (a) any of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (g) of section 218(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992[10] (matters which may be the subject of a trade dispute, within the meaning of that Act);
or
 - (b) any dispute about a matter falling within paragraph (a) above;and for the purposes of this definition the enactments mentioned in paragraph (a) above, with the necessary modifications, shall apply in relation to office-holders under the authority as they apply in relation to employees of the authority;
- (7) "*Office-holder*", in relation to the authority, means the holder of any paid office appointments to which are or may be made or confirmed by the authority or by any joint board on which the authority is represented or by any person who holds any such office or is an employee of the authority;
- (8) "*Registered*" in relation to information required to be registered under the Building Societies Act 1986, means recorded in the public file of any building society (within the meaning of that Act).

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