



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

Tuesday, 28th March, 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: Tuesday, 28th March, 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 Christine Bateson	Councillor Mike Smith
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Morag Malvern
Councillor Haqeeq Dar	Councillor Sandra Malik
Councillor Biyi Oloko	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor Tony Linden	

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

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. 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.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2023 (Pages 5 - 16)

Recommendation:

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

4. Consideration of any matters properly referred to this Committee for decision

Purpose:

There were no matters referred to this Committee for decision.

5. Internal Audit Update (Pages 17 - 110)

Purpose:

To note an update on audit activity together with the draft Audit Plan for 2023/24.

6. External Audit Update (Pages 111 - 112)

Purpose:

To note the update from the auditors.

7. Annual Report on Members Development (*Pages 113 - 162*)

Purpose:

To note the Annual Report on Members Development and recommend 2023-2027 Member Development Strategy to the Fire Authority for approval (Appendix C).

8. Annual report on Governance (*Pages 163 - 174*)

Purpose:

To note the Annual report on Governance and recommend to Fire Authority for approval.

9. Quarterly Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter Three (October - December) (*Pages 175 - 254*)

Purpose:

To note Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) third quarter (October-December 2022) performance for the 2022-23 financial year.

10. Forward Plan (*Pages 255 - 256*)

Purpose:

To note the Forward plan.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 25 July 2023, at 6.30pm, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Held on Monday, 23rd January, 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

- Members:**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(*present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Councillor Christine Bateson * Councillor Tricia Brown * Councillor Haqeeq Dar * Councillor Biyi Oloko * Councillor Tony Linden | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Councillor Mike Smith Councillor Morag Malvern Councillor Sandra Malik * Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle |
|---|--|

- In Attendance:**
- Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
 - Andrew Brittain (EY, External Auditor)
 - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 - Doug Buchanan (Area Manager, Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
 - Sam Faulknull- Mills (Performance and Planning Officer, PPO)
 - Lucy Greenway (Senior HR Adviser)
 - Daniel Harris (Internal Auditor, RSM)
 - Abdifatar Hassan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
 - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
 - Andy McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment HFF&E)
 - Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
 - Jim Powell (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
 - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DcHEX)
 - Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
 - Tregear Thomas (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Christine Bateson, Sandra Malik and Morag Malvern.

Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey was in attendance as Councillor Morag Malvern’s substitute.

Councillor Tina McKenzie –Boyle was present remotely.

Action

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Tony Linden and Biyi Oloko declared a personal interest regarding Item 6 (External Audit Update). Councillor Linden's was due to his role on The Berkshire Pension Fund Committee and Councillor Oloko as an ex-employee of EY.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

27. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2022

Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D) confirmed the action in the Minutes had been completed.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held and recorded actions on 17 October 2022, be confirmed, as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

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

29. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Dan Harris, Internal Auditor (RSM) provided an update on the progress of Audit Plan. He reported the Health and Safety Including Mandatory Training audit received a positive opinion. Three medium and three low priority actions. In referring to the summary of programme of works on page 21 of the report, Dan Harris stated a draft report had been written on the audit of Facilities Management, the Grenfell Action Plan was in draft and another two further reviews were in progress, namely Payroll Provider – Dataplan and Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF).

Dan Harris informed the Committee some changes were made on the timing of a number of audits, however were still on track to deliver the programme of works.

In response to a question from Councillor Linden on RSM's Public Procurement Training Level 1, Conor Byrne advised RSM provided online workshops.

Councillor Mckenzie-Boyle sought clarification on the amber Reasonable Assurance opinion for the Health and Safety Including Mandatory Training audit. Dan Harris explained the assurance was based on three priority actions. Refresher training was advisory. In terms of RIDDOR, two out of five were

reported late. Dan Harris reported the audit found well designed controls were compliant and stated Reasonable Assurance was a positive opinion.

Councillor Smith asked for the possible scenarios as to why RIDDORs were reported late. Becci Jefferies, HHR&L&D, reported all accidents were tracked by the Health and Safety Team and at Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee meetings, however, some RIDDORs do not become apparent straight away e.g. the individual may not have reported sick at the time the event occurred.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Smith regarding the reason why refresher training was an advisory. Becci Jefferies reported her team had moved all requirements around training to mandatory and looked at alternative ways of training e.g. online training.

Councillor Oloko asked for further information and the difference between RSM's four types of audit opinions. Dan Harris agreed to circulate the definition to Members. In response to an additional question from Councillor Oloko, Dan Harris confirmed the date indicated on page 27 of the report was the date the action was agreed to be completed.

RSM

RESOLVED that the report findings as presented in RSM's Progress Report be noted.

30. EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

Andrew Britten, External Auditor, EY explained the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts audit had been delayed due to ongoing delays in Deloitte's audit of the Berkshire Pension Fund accounts. He stated that the delay also impacted the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts audit. He stated a meeting had been scheduled to explore alternatives and reported the delay had also impacted Unitary Authorities.

Councillor Linden stated HM Revenue & Customs would not be pleased with the delay and queried whether it was worth informing them. Conor Byrne suggested it might be worth writing to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) and was happy to write to them on behalf of the Committee.

In discussing the delay in Statement of Accounts, Andrew Britten reassured Members all other work relating to the audit of accounts were complete. Deloitte's audit was required to deliver an audit opinion for Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and explained valuations of property had become complex due to the pandemic. Deloitte were not obliged to state the reason for the delay.

A number of Members present expressed their concern and lack of confidence. Councillor Smith asked whether the delay was at additional cost to the Authority. Conor Byrne reported there had been an additional cost to the Authority.

In response to a request from the Chair to write to PSAA and National Audit

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	Action
<p>Office, Conor Byrne reported that he would liaise with the Chair outside of the meeting.</p>	HF&P
<p>RESOLVED that the Committee note the update from External auditors.</p>	
<p>31. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME PRESENTATION</p>	
<p>Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P), provided a comprehensive background and update presentation on Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP).</p>	
<p>In response to a question from Councillor Oloko, Jim Powell confirmed he will circulate further detail on the governance structure of ESMCP.</p>	AM C&P
<p>Jim Powell explained the users of ESMCP include all blue light services (Fire, Police and Ambulance). Two new timelines for the delivery of the programme had been proposed to 2026 and 2027. The programme had been paused to re-procure Lot 2 'user services'. During this time, central programme activity will continue and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) ESMCP team will continue to represent the Fire sectors interest and provide assurance into and out of the programme.</p>	
<p>In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey on the delay of the programme, Jim Powell reported, the current radio system, Airwave had built-in resilience and was available for as long as required.</p>	
<p>Jim Powell confirmed he would circulate the presentation to the committee.</p>	AM C&P
<p>For a copy of the presentation, contact committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk</p>	
<p>32. ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22</p>	
<p>Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), reported the Annual Statement of Assurance was a requirement from the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. Appendix A is structured as headline judgements about the adequacy of arrangements associated with the financial, governance and operational matters. He stated the report was seeking the draft Statement of Assurance be published on rbfrs website.</p>	
<p>Paul Bremble took Members through each of the summary judgements of financial, governance, operational and National Framework listed on page 52 of the report.</p>	
<p>In response to a question from Councillor Smith, Doug Buchanan, Area Manager Response and Resilience (AM R&R) reported the summary judgement for operational was fully met, subject to marauding terrorist attack (MTA) incidents. He explained MTA is an operational procedure under discussion with</p>	

the Fire Brigade Union on the role of Firefighters during such incidences, and he provided Manchester Arena Terrorist attack and the Forbury Gardens attack in Reading, as examples. London Fire Brigade and Manchester Fire and Rescue Service had built MTA into Firefighter's role. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) had limited capability due to a 60 minute turn out time. He stated in terms of training and qualifications, RBFRS was in a reasonable place and was currently working on mass casualty triage exercise with staff.

In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, Doug Buchanan clarified that RBFRS have MTA capability, however in relation to the Statement of Assurance judgement, the Service wanted to present a realistic assessment.

Councillor Oloko queried the financial summary judgement of 'fully met', albeit the Statement of Accounts had not been signed off by this Committee and requested for the evidence around the Framework.

In referring to page 61 of the report, Financial Assurance, Conor Byrne explained historically the Authority always met its statutory deadlines in relation to the external audit. He stated the evidence was from audit opinion received from the 21/22 audit was the highest audit opinion.

Paul Bremble explained the Statement of Assurance was draft and would be brought back to this Committee if not 'fully met', following the conclusion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts. Becci Jefferies stated the evidence in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was part of the public consultation held on the EDI objectives, year one of the Summer Internship, Change 100 Interns and Disability Confident network are all actions in the EDI action plan supporting these objectives.

The Chair stated the EDI evidence was in the EDI Action Plan and suggested this could have been hyperlinked to the Statement of Assurance. Councillor Oloko requested for further detail on the mythology on how the judgements were made against the Framework and suggested a small amendment to 2.3 of the recommendation, to remove *'following'* and insert *'subject to'*.

HCS

Councillor Oloko moved the amended recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Linden. On being put to the vote, all Councillors present unanimously:

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the summary judgements within the Statement of Assurance for each of the four key areas of Finance, Governance, Operations and delivering the National Framework be noted;
- 2) That the draft RBFA Statement of Assurance 2021/22 be approved; and
- 3) That it be agreed the Statement of Assurance will be finalised and re-published by the Head of Corporate Services, *subject* to the conclusion of the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22, in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

33. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY - PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24

Lucy Greenway, Senior HR Adviser presented the report and stated the Pay Policy Statement was a requirement of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) to prepare and publish each financial year, outlined in the Localism Act 2011.

In referring to Appendix A, she reported the section relating to the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the impact of RBFRS had been updated. This included the removal of the employer and employee contribution information related to the 1992 and 2006 Firefighter pension Schemes, which was closed, as all members had transitioned to the 2015 scheme. Lucy Greenway also highlighted the sections of the document which had been updated outlined in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.9 of the report.

In referring to page 81 of Appendix A, Councillor Linden made a correction to the number of the total population in Berkshire and stated it was 945,000 residents. He asked whether the Service documented the vacancy level percentage. Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D), reported the Service monitored vacancies through the Workforce Planning Group..

In response to Councillor Smith, Conor Byrne reported employer contributions for members of the LGPS scheme were set at 13.5% of annual salary and as an employer, RBFA also pays an annual lump sum to the pension fund of £366,000. In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Smith, Becci Jefferies reported employees that had opted into the Benenden healthcare scheme contributed to the tax element of the scheme which was £11.90.

The Chair asked how many employees had hired bicycles through the "Cycle to Work Scheme". Becci Jefferies confirmed she would circulate the figures to this Committee.

HHR&L&D

Councillor Linden moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Smith.

RESOLVED that the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 (Appendix A) be noted and recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.

34. LOCAL PENSION BOARD UPDATE

Lucy Greenway, Senior HR Adviser provided an update on the Local Pension Board. She highlighted the Terms of Reference had been reviewed by the Board and was recommending approval by this Committee.

Since the last update report, held in July 2022, West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) had attended a Board meeting. She reported there were no breaches since July 2022. In answer to Councillor Linden, she confirmed Lincoln Ball was still the Chair of the Pension Board.

Councillor Smith queried whether WYPF accounts had been signed off and whether there was an independent expert on the Pension Board. Becci Jefferies reported she was unaware whether WYFP had their accounts signed off and in regards to the Pension Board, she stated there were a number of streams for the Board to access specific knowledge. For example, the Board had access at all times to the Local Government Association (LGA) Adviser, Administrator and WYPF provided technical advice. She further stated, through RBFA, if necessary, legal advice would be bought in.

In answer to a question from Councillor Oloko, Lucy Greenway reported the membership of the Pension Board was an equal number of employees and employers in line with the legislative requirements. Becci Jefferies reported the Local Pension Board had a scrutiny role on behalf of the Authority (Scheme Manager). She explained it was possible for RBFA to have a joint Local Pension Board with Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for example, however, membership of a joint board and governance arrangements would need consideration and the current pension landscape and workloads associated would delay this. .

The Chair moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor Smith.

RESOVLED that:

- 1) (Appendix A) revised Terms of Reference for the Local Pensions Board be approved.
- 2) The Local Pensions Board's view on the size of the Local Pensions Board and the size of the board going forward to be set at four members be approved.
- 3) The Local Pensions Board's six-monthly update be noted.

35. GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP REPORTS 2022

Lucy Greenway, Senior HR Adviser, stated the Gender Pay gap report was a statutory requirement outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The Ethnicity Pay Gap report was not mandatory in the UK, however, for the second year, the Service had opted to publish its Ethnicity Pay Gap figures voluntarily.

In referring to paragraph 3.6 of the report, Lucy Greenway reported the findings indicated males were paid more than females. For each £1 earned by males, females earn 97p (Mean) and 90p (Median). The gender pay gap was considerably better than the available 2021 national figures. She stated it was a

fire sector wide issue that females were still significantly underrepresented in the operational workforce and the Service continue to work hard to attract a more diverse workforce through positive action plan and recruitment opportunities.

In referring to the Ethnicity Pay Gap report, findings identified the overall mean was 3.61% and median was 9.91% (i.e. white staff were paid slightly more than ethnic minorities. For each £1 earned by white staff, ethnic minorities earn 96p (Mean) and 90p (Median). She stated it was recognised that staff from ethnic minority groups were significantly underrepresented across the Service, and RBFRS is committed in working to attract a more diverse workforce through positive action plans and Summer Internship.

In response to a question from Councillor Linden, Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D), confirmed an advert for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator post was due to go out.

Councillor Smith asked whether the Service had a target it wanted to achieve. Lucy Greenway reported the Service was in a fortunate position as it figures were below the national average which in 2021 the average mean ethnicity pay gap was 8.1% and average median was 12.9%. In response to Councillor Smith, Becci Jefferies stated the Service reported performance against its corporate measures, equality objectives and EDI action plan.

Councillor Oloko stated he felt the Service should implement a set target. Becci Jefferies reported the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives recently went out to consultation and the EDI action plan on pages 133-138 of the report were activities with dates the Service had set targets to achieve each action. The actions identified came from a number of projects and reported Audit and Governance Committee will receive updates on the EDI action plan.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The details of the Gender Pay Gap Report shown in Appendix A be noted and it be agreed that it is published on the RBFRS website and on gov.uk;
- 2) The details of the Ethnicity Pay Gap Report shown in Appendix B be noted and it be agreed that it is published on the RBFRS website; and
- 3) The EDI Action Plan in Appendix C be noted.

36. EQUAL PAY AUDIT 2022

Lucy Greenway, Senior HR Adviser reported an equal pay audit was undertaken to review the effectiveness of policies and practices with regard to fair pay regardless of Gender, Ethnicity, Age, Disability and Contract type. The audit is a recommendation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) under the Equal Pay: Statutory Code of Practice, section 14 of the Equality Act 2006 (as amended).

She listed the elements of pay considered within the report were basic pay, allowances, overtime, merit payments and spinal column starting points. In referring to basic pay, the findings identified part-time workers earn on average 19.4% more per hour than full-time employees.

In referring to the action plan on pages 153-154, Councillor Smith requested further information on detachment payments. Lucy Greenway explained detachment payments were provided when an individual moved from one station to another station and that merit payments were either a one-off payment or continuous payments.

Councillor Smith suggested for the use of graphs to better understand the Equal Pay Audit.

RESOLVED that the contents of this report and the actions arising from the audit be noted.

37. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23 QUARTER TWO (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022)

Sam Faulknall-Mills, Performance and Planning Officer presented the Quarter Two Performance Report and explained it was set out into four quadrants (Service Provision, Corporate Health, Priority Programmes and Risk).

Quadrant One - Service Provision – Tregear Thomas, Area Manager Prevention and Protection (AM P&P) reported there had been a decrease in non-fatal fire casualties compared to the previous quarter and previous year. The number of deliberate fires was slightly higher than target. An increase in primary fires related to serious crime observed over the year to date and this had been targeted through partnership working with Thames Valley Police (TVP).

An issue had arisen to the number of Safe and Well referrals completed within the prescribed timescales and the Service have looked at ways to improve processes to minimise waiting times. Tregear Thomas explained it was unlikely the 100% target is achieved due to the complexities of clients' needs or changing circumstances e.g. client could be in hospital or changed their mind.

Doug Buchanan, Area Manager, Response and Resilience (AM R&R), reported the Summer Heatwave created an increase in operational demand to the Service. On-call availability remains a challenge and reported the Service has a dedicated on-call Station Manager involved in the recruitment and has influenced the change in policies to support on-call recruitment.

Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P) provided an update on measure 14 (Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend). He stated the target was set at 30% based on benchmarking exercise. The target relied on call challenge by Control staff and that a further

update will be presented to the Fire Authority in June 2023.

In referring to the summer heatwave, Doug Buchanan reported the Service responded to incidents outside of Berkshire's borders and explained there were mutual aid arrangements.

Quadrant Two – Corporate Health – Becci Jefferies, HHR&L&D referred to sickness management measure. She stated there was some improvement in the reduction of long-term sickness. Quarter Two saw an increase in musculoskeletal absences. Support provided via Benenden and Movement Specialist. Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) were delayed due to HMICFRS inspections during that time.

Councillor Smith asked for further detail on the EDI Objectives progress update. Becci Jefferies reported the Summer Internship was one initiative which had been delivered in that quarter.

Quadrant Three – Priority Programmes – This quadrant brings together progress updates on areas of work where we are delivering defined outcomes that are different to current working practices, policies and procedures. They were Community Risk Management Planning (CRMP), People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF), High Risk Residential Building (HRRB) Project and the assessment of progress against the projects and objectives set in the 2022/23 Annual Plan.

In referring to Objective 5 (Change policies, processes and systems to ensure they enable and support the delivery of a fit for purpose, efficient and effective service to the community) Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DChEx), explained the objective was specifically around equality of access to services and employment for potential staff and communities. Focus areas was the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), which was completed prior to projects. The RAG rating of red of this measure was due to capacity.

Quadrant Four – Risk – In discussing risk (664) management of Budget Pressures, Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P) outlined this risk was around Pay Awards. He stated the Green Book pay award had been agreed this year. The Grey Book Pay award was budgeted and built into the Medium Term Financial Plan at 2.5%. The 5% pay offer had been rejected and discussed the potential Industrial Action (IA). The Budget for 2023/24 will be brought to the Fire Authority for approval in February 2023.

In answer to Councillor Linden, Conor Byrne reported the Government had offered the potential to increase the precept by £5 without going to a referendum, which had gone out to public consultation. The £5 increase, if approved would only cover the unbudgeted Grey and Green book pay award for next year. He reported through Budget Working Party, he was looking at programme of savings, reserves and balancing the budget.

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; and
- 3) The position of corporate risk be noted.

38. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 28 March at 6.30pm, RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

(The meeting concluded 9:51pm)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 MARCH 2023
SUBJECT	INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCURMENT
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Committee will receive an update on audit activity to date together with the draft Audit Plan for 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to:

2.1 **NOTE** the findings as presented in RSM's Progress Report and

2.2 **APPROVE** the draft 2023/24 Audit Plan.

3. REPORT

3.1 RSM's Progress Report is attached as **Appendix A** and shows that four audits has been completed and finalised since the last Committee meeting. All four audits received positive assurance ratings.

3.2 RSM issued its highest assurance opinion in relation to four audits: the Grenfell Action Plan audit, the Firefighter Pensions Audit, the Payroll Audit and the Key Financial Controls Audit, stating that, "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."

3.3 RSM issued its second highest assurance opinion in relation to the Facilities Audit, stating that, "Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can

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take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.”

- 3.4 RSM have produced their draft Audit Plan for 2023/24 which is attached as **Appendix B**. The Plan is based on an analysis of the Authority’s corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other external factors that are affecting the sector. Members are asked to approve the Plan.
- 3.5 A representative from RSM will attend the meeting to answer any questions.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The work of the internal auditors assures members that the Authority has appropriate controls and governance arrangements in place.

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 audit work performed during the year on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s risk management, control and governance processes. The opinion will 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 duty where applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 2022/23 Internal Audit Plan

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A - 2022/23 Progress Report

12.2 Appendix B – Draft Audit Plan 2023/24

13. CONTACT DETAILS

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

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Internal Audit Progress Report

For the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 March 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.

Agenda Item 5
Appendix A

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Agenda Item 5
Appendix A

Introduction

The internal audit plan for 2022/23 was approved by the Audit & Governance Committee at the 28 July 2022 meeting. This report provides an update on progress against that plan and summarises the results of our work to date.

Reports

1.1 Summary of final reports being presented to this committee

We have **finalised five reports** since the last meeting. This section summarises these reports.

Assignment	Opinion issued	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H
Facilities Management (2.22.23)	Reasonable assurance	3	4	-

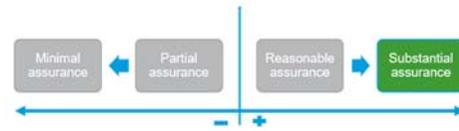
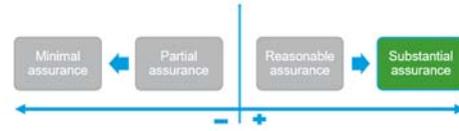
Overall, we noted that the RBFRS has an allocated budget for the reactive and planned maintenance work for 2022/23 which was approved by the Fire Authority and was being monitored on a monthly basis by the Head of Facilities Fleet and Equipment and Finance. We also identified that the Service had a Pre-Planned Maintenance (PPM) Schedule in place which lists 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 includes 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 had 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.



Assignment	Opinion issued	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H
<p>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.</p>				
<p>Grenfell Action Plans (3.22.23)</p> <p>Our review confirmed that RBFRS had developed actions and established a framework to monitor progress to address gaps identified against the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (phase 1). The framework included embedded processes and activities relating to the gap analysis of the current position of RBFRS progress against the recommendations from the Inquiry.</p> <p>A Built Environment Programme (BEP) had been established to ensure that the actions are centrally coordinated and monitored to completion with periodic reporting of the status of BEP undertaken across the governance structure including via the Programme Co-ordination Board, Corporate Programme Board and the Fire Authority.</p> <p>We noted one minor control weakness in relation to the lack of centralisation for the storage and retention of evidence to confirm completion of actions.</p>	Substantial assurance	1	-	-
<p>Firefighter Pension Administration – West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) (4.22.23)</p> <p>From our review we concluded that there were robust controls in place to manage pension administration processes at WYPF and these controls were being followed in practice. Work instructions were in place and accessible to staff, starters, leavers and amendments had been processed correctly, pension payment runs reconciled and mechanisms to recover overpayments had been put in place.</p> <p>In addition, we followed up three low priority management actions agreed during our review in 2021/22 and confirmed that these had been sufficiently completed. We did however note minor weaknesses for which two low priority actions have been agreed in relation to confirmation of amendments to details being processed and reconciliation reports being reviewed and approved.</p>	Substantial assurance	2	-	-



Assignment	Opinion issued	Actions agreed		
		L	M	H

Payroll Provider – Dataplan (5.22.23)

We confirmed that overall controls were robust, well designed and applied in line with relevant procedures in relation to payroll processing. We also confirmed that the guide regarding the processing of payroll for RBFRS staff outlined the required procedures for new starters, leavers and amendments which we found had been appropriately applied throughout the sample testing we carried out as part of the review.

Our review concluded that there were also robust controls in place covering financial controls and the general framework of control at Dataplan regarding year end documentation, reconciliations and overpayments.

Substantial assurance	-	-	-
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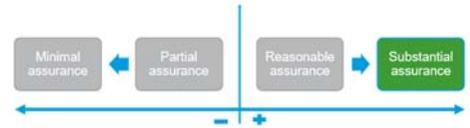


Key Financial Controls – Accounts Receivable and Expenses (6.22.23)

We noted that a well-designed control framework was in place regarding the raising of invoices and the processing of expenses. We noted that the Finance Department had defined processes supported by a range of comprehensive procedural documents. We found that invoice requests were authorised appropriately as well as processed by Finance in an accurate and timely manner. Similarly, we found that approval requirements were being followed for expense claims processed and that the three-month rule between expenses being incurred and claimed was consistently enforced.

We identified areas where controls could be further enhanced to strengthen the control framework and to improve the operation of the accounts receivable and expense functions. These include actions to ensure the consistent application of credit control procedures, the clarification of expense policies, improvements to the document trail quality and a more timely approval of expense claims.

Substantial assurance	2	-	-
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1.2 Themes arising from control observations in 2022/23

Theme*	Low	Medium	High
Planning	0	0	0
Policies and / or procedures	3	0	0
Non-compliance with policies / procedures	4	4	0
Design of the control framework	1	0	0
Training / awareness for staff	0	2	0
Management of performance information	2	1	0
Terms of Reference	0	0	0
Lack of segregation of duties	0	0	0
Security	0	0	0
Governance weaknesses	1	0	0
Information technology	0	0	0
Succession Planning	0	0	0
Total	11	7	0

* The themes arising above relate to the finalised 2022/23 reports only

Appendix A – Progress against the internal audit plan 2022/23

Assignment and Executive Lead	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed			Actual / Expected Audit & Governance Committee
		L	M	H	
Health and Safety Including Mandatory Training (1.22/23)	FINAL – Reasonable assurance	3	3	-	January 2023
Facilities Management 2.22/23	FINAL – Reasonable assurance	3	4	-	March 2023
Grenfell Action Plans	FINAL – Substantial assurance	1	-	-	March 2023
Payroll Provider – Dataplan	FINAL – Substantial assurance	-	-	-	March 2023
Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF)	FINAL – Substantial assurance	2	-	-	March 2023
Key Financial Controls	FINAL – Substantial assurance	2	-	-	March 2023 / June 2023
Risk Management	March 2023				June 2023
Cyber Essentials	April 2023				June 2023
	Total	11	7	0	

Appendix B – Other matters

Changes to the audit plan

We have agreed with management to amend the dates of a number of audits in year to ensure the audits add the most value and take account of operational pressures. We will still be completing the audit plan in full to allow us to provide a year end opinion on the risk management, governance and internal control arrangements by the June 2023 meeting.

Information and briefings

Since the last A&GC we have issued the following client briefing, which we have appended:

- Emergency Services client briefing March 2023;
- Emerging Risk Radar; and
- Procurement and Contract Management Newsletters (January and February 2023).

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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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Why we completed this audit

A review of Facilities Management was undertaken for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), as part of the approved internal audit plan for 2022/23. The purpose of the review was to allow management to take assurance that effective programmes are in place for the maintenance and upkeep of the organisation's buildings, and controls are in place to ensure the estate is being adequately managed in terms of statutory obligations.

All staff members at the Service have access to the internal asset management system, Fire Watch which enables staff to report defects requiring attention. Where defects are spotted and require additional works, an email notification is issued to the facilities team to action in accordance with the priority schedule. Defects are reported to contractors including SMS Environmental for legionella, Healthy Buildings International (HBI) for asbestos, and Corrigenda for Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) through their corresponding contractor portal or via email. Performance against defects and general planned works are discussed at the contractor's performance meetings which is held in accordance with the contract reporting arrangements.

The Service has a total of 20 properties that the Facilities Team are responsible for maintaining. These include 17 sites used by the Service (15 fire stations, one training centre and one fire headquarters) in addition to three residential properties.

Planned and responsive maintenance works completed at the Service are managed and overseen by the Facilities Manager. The Service has allocated a planned maintenance, and an additional reactive maintenance budget which form part of the overall annual budget. The Service manages and reviews the planned maintenance through an excel spreadsheet.

Conclusion

Overall, we noted that the RBFRS has an allocated budget for the reactive and planned maintenance work for 2022/23 which has been approved by the Fire Authority and is monitored on a monthly basis by the Head of Facilities Fleet and Equipment and Finance. We also identified that the Service have a Pre-Planned Maintenance (PPM) Schedule in place which lists 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 includes 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.

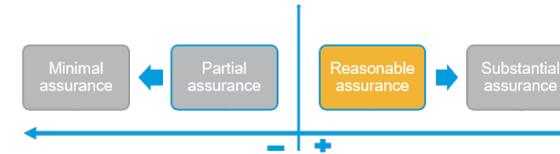
However, we found that three residential properties were not recorded on the PPM and therefore we could not confirm the required checks had been completed. We were advised that the Service has not conducted a stock condition survey or asset check on their sites since 2016.

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.

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 risk(s).

**Key findings**

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

PPM Schedule and Stock Condition/Asset Survey

At the time of the review, the Service used a manual spreadsheet to record the completed and pre planned maintenance. We noted the three residential properties in Windsor and Pangbourne were not recorded on the PPM and therefore we could not confirm whether checks had been completed. If the PPM does not contain all properties under the responsibility of the Service, there is a risk that maintenance is not undertaken resulting in potentially unsafe buildings.



Stock condition surveys / asset checks have not been conducted since 2016 since Kier was the contractor responsible for undertaking this. The Service agreed to include the asset and stock condition surveys within the new tenders. However, we were unable to identify the additional requirements set out within the Corrigenda contract, and only the asset checks were included within the SMS Environmental contract.

We were informed at the time of our review that the Service was in the process of re-tendering for the provision of the Building Fabric Contract due in 2023. Through review of the invitation to tender, we found that asset and stock condition surveys were included as a requirement for the winning contractor to complete for all sites that the Service are responsible for.

Whilst we appreciate that the invitation to tender covers the need for the contractors to undertake stock condition surveys, noting that this has not been done since 2016 at the time of our review, there is a risk that planned maintenance will not be provided and prioritised appropriately, resulting in potentially unsafe buildings which could impact the Service's reputation and staff safety. **(Medium)**

PPM Schedule (Recording)

We reviewed a sample of 10 overdue works recorded on the PPM and found that seven of the 20 were completed but had not been updated, five of which were completed after the specified due date. The remaining three were still overdue and required an inspection at the time of our review.

If the PPM works are not accurately recorded once completed, monitored or followed up, there is a risk that the PPM works are completed later than required and may be showing inaccurate due dates resulting in potential unsafe equipment and buildings. **(Medium)**

Workplace Inspections



As per the Workplace Inspections Policy dated September 2022 workplace inspections should be completed every six months in April or October, signed by the Health and Safety Manager and sent to the facilities team to action any defects. We reviewed a sample of 10 sites and confirmed that eight workplace inspection reports were not signed by the Health and Safety Manager. We were not provided with evidence to confirm that the workplace inspection reports were then sent to the facilities team in line with the Policy.

At the time of our review, we noted a further six sites were overdue a six-monthly workplace inspection.

If workplace inspections are not conducted and signed off in accordance with the policy, there is a risk that issues, and defects identified within the reports will not appropriately be actioned in a timely manner. **(Medium)**

Defects



Through review, we found that nine of the 20 defects we sampled were still recorded as open, ranging between 97 and 849 days since opening after the defect was raised on Fire Watch. However, we noted that three of which were priority C which are required to be closed within one to five business days. The remaining six were priority D which are required to be closed within six to 10 business days. Through review and discussions with management, we note that there were underlying reasons for the delays, such as external issues, and the prioritisation of other 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.

We also found that eight defects were completed outside of the assigned priority level, one defect had no priority level assigned and another defect raised within the workplace safety inspection report was unidentifiable on Fire Watch.

If defects are not appropriately conducted in the given timeframe, there is a risk that defects will be missed and subsequent delays to actions undertaken by the facilities team. **(Medium)**

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



Statutory checks

Through review of the Service's 20 sites, we sought to verify that the Facilities Department have covered statutory checks as part of the PPM and we found that 17 were included as required. For the remaining three, we noted the following:

- Whilst Lambourn did not include a PPM compliance category or check for air conditioning. We were advised by the Facilities Manager that this was fitted in September 2022 and will be included in the 2023/24 PPM. Through review of the online portal, we confirmed that this had been updated as appropriate and is scheduled for a six-month review in March and 12-month review in September 2023;
- Mortimer did not include a PPM compliance check for air conditioning. We were advised by the Facilities Manager that this was an omission and the unit was installed October 2021 so it should be recorded on the PPM for October 2022. We were later provided evidence to confirm that Air Conditioning was checked in October 2022; and
- Caversham House, and the Training Centre did not include a PPM compliance category or check for asbestos however evidence of the asbestos checks were appropriately completed and recorded on the shared drive.



Contact details

For all 17 of the Service's sites, we confirmed that key contacts such as watch managers including their contact numbers and email addresses were included on the Service's intranet, Siren. We also confirmed for the three residential properties, occupants' contact details were retained within the facilities team shared drive. At the time of the review the Service transitioned to Microsoft 365 with an updated Siren webpage, and we found that eight of the 17 sites had changes to the watch managers and responsible officers at the station which were updated on the intranet.



Planned and Reactive Maintenance Budget

We confirmed that the 2022/23 annual budget of £38.4m was presented to and approved by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority in February 2022 through review of meeting minutes. We confirmed that the annual budget includes the facilities budget which includes £251k for planned maintenance and £251k for reactive maintenance. We confirmed through review that the facilities element of the budget was approved and signed off by the Head of Facilities in March 2022.



Sustainability Funding

At the time of the review, the Service did not have a sustainability strategy or plan in place. However, we reviewed evidence that the Service has worked with the organisation Salvis, energy management & building services engineering consultants to create feasibility reports for 12 of the active fire stations. We noted that the report provided a summary of the works costs including professional fees for the carbon saving proposals which could be funded under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.



Legionella Contract

Through review of the contract award recommendation for the legionella services to SMS Environmental, we confirmed that the agreement to award the contract was approved by the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Facilities and Head of Procurement in April 22. Through review of the contract, we confirmed that the contract was signed by both parties in May 2022.



Gas (HVAC) Contract

Through review of the contract award recommendation for the gas (HVAC) services, we confirmed that the agreement to award the Contract was appropriately approved by the Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Facilities and Head of Procurement in July 2022. Through review of the contract, we confirmed that the contract was signed by both parties.



Budget Monitoring

As at September 2022, we confirmed through review the budgeted position for planned and reactive maintenance to be as follows:

Description	Annual Budget Allocation	Forecast at September 2022	Variance
Planned Maintenance	£251,250	251,250	£0
Reactive Maintenance	£222,300	310,000	(£87,700)

We were informed by the Head of Facilities that a large proportion of the overspend, currently estimated at £88k, is due to the reactive maintenance and hire of portacabin units for the temporary set up of the training centre due to the damage within the lecture block from a water leak at the Whitley Wood fire station which is estimated to cost around £77k which we were informed will largely be reimbursed through an insurance claim. At the time of the review, the Service was awaiting confirmation from the insurance company on the reimbursement figures.

We confirmed through review that this overspend was escalated and reported within the Q1 report for budget monitoring which we confirmed was presented to the Management Committee in October 2022 along with details of the overspend and the expected insurance reimbursement amount.

We found there was a lack of formal recording of monthly finance meetings, however, through discussions and evidence of email trails we confirmed that communication between the Facilities Manager and Finance was in place around the budget monitoring on a monthly basis.

We have also agreed three low priority management actions, which are detailed in section two of this 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.

PPM Schedule

Control	The Service has a planned maintenance schedule, which includes statutory obligations such as Asbestos, Gas, and Electrical in place which has been devised by the Facilities Manager.	Assessment:	
	The Facilities Manager utilises a PPM Schedule which is recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. The PPM includes the 17 sites which the Facilities Department are responsible for maintaining including last inspection dates and next due review dates for areas such as asbestos, gas safety, fire risk assessments and list inspections.	Design	✓
		Compliance	✘

Findings / Implications 1 Through review we noted that the PPM included Fire Station Number 3 - Dee Road Fire Station which we were advised by the Facilities Manager was no longer active and had not been removed from the list. We were advised by the Head of Facilities that this is kept on the PPM for record retention purposes. We were advised that the PPM is created, and managed within the Facilities team and by the Facilities Manager, however, it does not go through an approval process as this is not a requirement. Further at the time of the review, the contractors' portals where the PPM schedule is recorded was not available. However, We also noted the three residential properties in Windsor and Pangbourne were not recorded on the PPM and therefore we could not confirm checks had been completed.

If the PPM does not contain all properties under the responsibility of the Service, there is a risk that maintenance is not undertaken resulting in potentially unsafe buildings.

We were informed by the Facilities Manager that the stock condition surveys, or asset checks have not been conducted since 2016 when Kier was the contractor. However, as part of tenders for the provision of gas and legionella services, we were advised that the Service included a requirement for the contractor to undertake a stock condition survey of the assets. At the time of our review, we were unable to identify the additional requirements set out within the Corrigenda contract, and only the asset checks were included within the SMS Environmental contract. We were informed that Corrigenda were yet to provide RBFRS with the completed condition survey reports. In addition, SMS Environmental have completed an asset gap analysis which has been provided to RBFRS.

The Facilities Manager advised that the decision was then verbally agreed with the Head of Facilities to include estates condition reports within the new Building Fabric Contract due to re-tender in 2023. This was due to a discussion with the Service's current contractor regarding completing condition surveys which was noted to be estimated at around between £3-15k per site depending on the size for which the Service were not willing to approve the expenditure.

In addition, whilst we appreciate that the invitation to tender covers the need for the contractors to undertake stock condition surveys, noting that this has not been done since 2016 at the time of our review, there is a risk that planned maintenance will not be provided and prioritised appropriately, resulting potentially unsafe buildings which could impact the Service's reputation and staff safety.

**Findings /
Implications
2**

At the time of the audit, through review of the PPM, we found that there were a total of 171 PPM and compliance categories with missing information. In addition, we found that the spreadsheet included overdue inspections for statutory checks such as air conditioning, health and safety, electricity, gas safety and fire safety.

We noted during our review that the Service were in the process of moving to an online portal where information on the current PPM is recorded, scheduled, and is the location in which reports can be produced to monitor the progress of PPM schedule. We confirmed through review of screenshots of the online portal that it includes the schedule of planned works, KPIs, trend analysis, and risk breakdowns for open defects raised with the contractors.

We reviewed a sample of 10 overdue works from the PPM and found that seven PPMs were completed but had not been updated on the PPM spreadsheet which we confirmed through review of contractor completion certificates; five of which were completed after the due date between 97 and 165 days after they were due. For the remaining three, we noted the following:

- At Lambourn Fire Station, the PPM for the lighting protection system was overdue since September 2022. We confirmed through review of emails that the Service had chased the supplier in June, September and October 2022;
- At Mortimer Fire Station, the PPM for an asbestos check was overdue since July 2022. We were advised that the works issued to the contractor for the annual asbestos works had been missed due to human error. We confirmed through review of an email trail with HBI that this was re-booked for November 2022; and
- At Whitley Wood Fire Station, the fire risk assessment was overdue since January 2020.

We also noted that Bracknell Fire Station had a PPM recorded for a lift inspection, we were informed that this should be removed as the property no longer has a lift. Similarly, Newsham Court has a weekly flushing of low usage outlets required which we were informed should be removed as this was a COVID hygiene requirement and no longer applicable. We were informed that the online portal will be updated to reflect this.

We reviewed a sample of 10 works marked as completed on the PPM and found that in one case (Caversham House), that the fire risk assessment was stated as completed in November 2021. However, the saved document linked to it was not dated and included fields left to be completed, therefore we were unable to confirm that the Fire Risk Assessment was in date.

If the PPM works are not accurately recorded once completed, monitored or followed up, there is a risk that the PPM works are completed later than required and are representing misaligned due dates resulting in potential unsafe equipment and buildings.

**Management
Action 1**

We will ensure that the contractor portal is kept up to date for each of the contractor scheduled works and all necessary statutory compliance checks will be included.

We will ensure that the three residential properties the Service is responsible for are included within the contractor scheduled works.

Responsible Owner:

David Kynaston

Date:

Implemented

Priority:

Medium

We will ensure the contractors will undertake stock condition surveys as part of the agreed contracts.

Management Action 2	We will develop a process to ensure upcoming works are checked and delayed works are identified and chased.	Responsible Owner: David Kynaston	Date: 30 April 2023	Priority: Medium
	We will ensure that all overdue works are picked up and completed work certificates are saved within the shared drive.			

Monitoring and Reporting of the Planned Maintenance Schedule

Control	The Facilities Manager presents the PPM which is reviewed and discussed at the Facilities Team Meetings which are held on a monthly basis.	Assessment:	Design	x
	Currently, there is no forum or meeting charged with challenging or scrutinising progress against the PPM.		Compliance	N/A

Findings / Implications

We were informed by the Facilities Manager that there is no agenda, formal minutes, or notes taken from the Facilities Team Meetings. Through review of the Facilities Manager’s calendar, we noted that the last team meeting was in the calendar for September 2022, with the next meeting scheduled to take place in November 2022. We were advised by the Head of Facilities that there has been a large gap in between team meetings, and therefore the PPM was not appropriately reviewed, due to annual leave, sick leave, and availability of staff.

We are unable to confirm how the Service monitors the overall progress against the PPM as no records of discussions are retained and there is no forum charged with the accountability for ensuring the delivery of the PPM. Through discussions with the Facilities Manager, we were informed that progress against the PPM is not reported, escalated or scrutinised by a forum or committee and PPM works are generally discussed with the Head of Facilities on an informal basis.

In addition, we noted that there is no notification, prompt or alert to the facilities team to draw attention to upcoming or overdue PPM works required. We were advised that the Facilities Manager conducts ad-hoc site visits to monitor works completed, however results and outcomes of site visits are not recorded or documented.

If there is a lack of monitoring and scrutiny over the PPM, there is a risk that maintenance is not performed in line with the PPM schedule which could potentially result in unsafe buildings which could impact the Service’s reputation and staff safety.

Management Action 3	We will ensure that the PPM is formally reviewed and monitored with progress notes and actions recorded against the PPM.	Responsible Owner: David Kynaston	Date: 30 April 2023	Priority: Low
	We will also consider whether formal scrutiny over the PPM should take place and be presented on a frequent basis to a committee or forum.			

Contractors and Monitoring Arrangements

Control	There is a contract in place with SMS Environmental for the provision of testing and maintenance for legionella and with Corrigenda for the provision of testing and maintenance of HVAC.	Assessment:	
	There is no SLA or contract in place with HBI for the provision of asbestos services.	Design	✓
		Compliance	x

Findings / Implications

During testing, we sought to confirm that the contractors providing gas, legionella, and asbestos services have a signed contract or SLA in place and the provision of services is monitored on a frequent basis.

We were advised by the Facilities Manager that the asbestos services are provided by HBI and have been since 2017. We were informed that due to the value of the provision of services (below £10k), a contract is not required which we confirmed through review of the Contract Regulations under the procurement thresholds. In addition, we found that there was no SLA in place to outline the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of the contractor. Through review of email correspondence with HBI, we found that HBI were open to receive and sign an SLA which would outline the authorities expectations however, the Service had not since actioned this. In absence of an SLA, we are unable to evidence any formal performance meetings were being held with the contractor.

We sought to review the August, September and October 2022 performance reports and contractor performance meeting minutes from Corrigenda and SMS Environmental. Whilst we noted meeting notes (inconsistently recorded) had been taken for the meetings held in August and September for Corrigenda and September for SMS Environmental, we were unable to evidence any performance meetings were held in October for Corrigenda and we were informed by the Head of Facilities that the next performance meeting will not be held until November 2022 (which was in the future at the time of the review). We were advised by the Head of Facilities that the October meeting for SMS Environmental was delayed due to a COVID outbreak and other commitments and coverage will be in November 2022.

If service providers are not formally monitored against a signed contract or agreement and performance monitoring meetings are not held on a frequent basis, there is a risk that the Service will not identify issues to ensure services are provided as required which can result in undetected poor performance and reduced value for money.

Management Action 4	We will consider whether a service level agreement should be established with HBI for the provision of asbestos services.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
	We will ensure that performance meetings are held in accordance with the contractual obligations and recorded in a consistent format.	David Kynaston	Implemented	Low

Workplace Inspections

Control	<p>The Service has in place a Workplace Safety Inspections Policy which outlines the requirements of the maintenance checks. Safety inspections are undertaken by the workplace managers and are conducted on a six-monthly basis on a which should be conducted in April and October every year.</p> <p>The Policy also stipulates that the inspections are required to be signed by the Health and Safety Manager and sent to the facilities team.</p>	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ✘</p>
Findings / Implications	<p>We reviewed a sample of 10 properties and through review, we found that seven sites had their inspection completed outside of the April and October 2022 timeline requirement and the remaining three were completed as expected in April or October.</p> <p>As seven sites were completed outside the April or October requirement, the six-monthly date for next review had changed based on the date of the previous inspection. We therefore tested to confirm whether each site had a six-monthly inspection despite the dates being misaligned and we found that two sites had their six-monthly inspection completed a month earlier than planned and the remaining five sites had their inspection completed with delays between two and eight months.</p> <p>In addition, as at the time of our review, we noted six sites (Newbury, Wokingham, Slough, Langley, Whitley Wood, and Theale) which were overdue for their next inspections.</p> <p>In addition, we found that in eight of the most recent completed workplace inspections, the inspection was not approved and signed by the Health and Safety Manager as per the Policy. We further sought to confirm that the associated workplace inspections were sent to the facilities team, however we were not provided evidence to confirm this took place and as such, we cannot confirm the Policy was followed.</p> <p>If workplace inspections are not conducted and signed off in accordance with the policy, there is a risk that issues, and defects identified within the reports will not appropriately be actioned in a timely manner.</p>	
Management Action 5	<p>We will ensure that inspections are undertaken on a six-monthly basis for all sites and completed workplace inspection reports will be signed off and sighted in accordance with the Policy.</p>	<p>Responsible Owner: Health and Safety Manager</p> <p>Date: 1 June 2023</p> <p>Priority: Medium</p>

Defects

Control	<p>The Service have in place an asset management system called Fire Watch. Staff can raise defects directly onto the system which will then be sent to the facilities team to action. The Service also has a prioritisation schedule in place to provide guidance to staff around the categorisation of defects, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A - four hours response to alleviate the situation. Permanent repair may take longer; • B - Within 24 hours (1 business day); • C - one to five business days; • D - six to 10 business days; and • Fixed - typically greater than 10 days. 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ✗</p>
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Findings / Implications	<p>We reviewed a sample of four defects identified from each of a sample of five fire stations that had received a workplace safety inspection in 2022. Through review we found that one was closed within the required timeframe and for the remaining 19, our findings were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nine of the 20 defects were still recorded as open as at end of 31 October 2022, ranging between 97 and 849 days since opening. We noted that three of which were priority C and the remaining six were priority D, we were informed by the Facilities Manager (and we confirmed through review) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ two of which (priority D, both open for 97 days) were improvement requests rather than a defect and so were not viewed as a priority; ○ two of which (priority D, open for 244 days and C open for 849 days) were awaiting another project to finish before repairing; ○ one of which (priority D, open for 362 days) were delayed for when the annual maintenance was conducted to repair defect; ○ one of which (priority D, open for 547 days) is not the service's responsibility and is working with the Woking Borough Council to resolve; ○ one of which (priority C, open for 547 days) were delayed as a result of contractor issues and was subsequently closed during our review; and ○ two defects (priority D, open for 173 days and C open for 353 days) was delayed due to obsolete parts to repair the defect. • eight of the nine defects recorded as closed were completed later than their priority level assigned; • one closed defect was not assigned a priority; and • one was not included on Fire Watch which relates to low priority issues regarding a loose section of a brick wall identified within the site inspection. <p>Of the eight defects recorded as closed and completed, we noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five defects did not require action from the facilities department as they were either passed onto another department, not due for review, no longer required or were not applicable;
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Defects

- one defect of which the Facilities Manager advised us that the team were awaiting a completion work report from Corrigena;
- one defect of which the Facilities Manager advised us that site signs have been installed, which the Facilities Manager has identified completing a station audit and there was no requirement to support this defect with any evidence; and
- for the remaining one, the Facilities Manager advised us that works were completed by a service provider under contract who has ended up going into administration and no completion certificate had been issued.

If defects are not appropriately conducted and passed onto the facilities team for action, there is a risk that defects will be missed and subsequent delays to actions undertaken by the facilities team and potential further damage to properties.

Management Action 6	We will ensure that defects are appropriately monitored, tracked and implemented in accordance with the prioritisation schedule where possible.	Responsible Owner: David Kynaston	Date: 30 April 2023	Priority: Medium
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Sustainability

Control	The Service does not yet have a sustainability strategy in place which would include how the facilities team can provide improvements and repairs sustainably by using efficient and environmentally friendly replacements such as energy efficient lightbulbs.	Assessment:	
		Design	x
		Compliance	N/A

Findings / Implications	The Service currently does not have a formal sustainability strategy in place which could guide the facilities team to a sustainable approach for replacing defects and PPM works. For example, replacement of energy efficient light bulbs. However, we have obtained evidence to suggest that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority are actively looking to obtain sustainability funding and improve in this area. If there is no sustainability strategy in place, there is a risk that sustainability will not be achieved efficiently, and resources will be ineffectively utilised.
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Management Action 7	We will ensure that a sustainability plan is developed to identify and plan ways to embed sustainability in the Facilities Department.	Responsible Owner: Andy Mclenahan	Date: 31 July 2023	Priority: Low
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – GRENFELL ACTION PLANS

Why we completed this audit

We undertook a review of Grenfell Action Plans at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) as part of the approved internal audit plan for 2022/23. The objective of the review was to allow management to take assurance that actions have been developed and are being progressed to address gaps identified against the Grenfell Tower inquiry (phase 1).

The Grenfell Tower inquiry was created to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017. The Inquiry was set up to investigate a list of issues separated into two phases. Phase 1 to focus on the factual narrative of the events which provided 46 recommendations arising out of the evidence heard and the findings of fact based on it. Phase 2 to investigate the underlying causes of the disaster, including the building refurbishment, the regulatory regime, the preparedness of the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and the response of both central and local Government.

Pursuant to the aim to promote community safety, including safety and protection advice to residents and businesses, as well as to enforce fire safety legislation and reduce fire risk in the built environment, RBFRS responded by introducing a four-phase plan to manage the immediate and anticipated implications of fire risk in the built environment following the Grenfell Tower fire as follows:

1. **Phase 1:** During this phase, RBFRS inspected the common parts of all High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB) identified across Berkshire to obtain an updated overview of its high-rise building stock.
2. **Phase 2:** RBFRS established a specialist Community Safety Project Team (CSPT) to consolidate the initial work engaging with six unitary authorities, including Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest, and Wokingham, and conducted a detailed inspection of the highest risk HRRBs.
3. **Phase 3:** RBFRS set up the Built Environment Programme to implement the 46 recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1. This programme mainly includes performing a gap analysis to identify potential areas of improvement based on the recommendations.
4. **Phase 4:** The final phase of RBFRS's response (and the phase in which RBFRS were in at the time of our review) will ensure that updated procedures and training packages are successfully transferred into business.

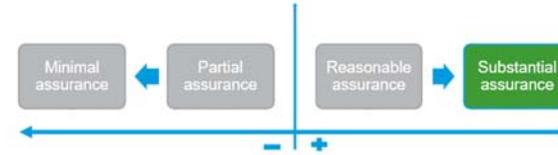
Conclusion

Our review confirmed that RBFRS had developed actions and established a framework to monitor progress to address gaps identified against the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (phase 1). The framework included embedded processes and activities relating to the gap analysis of the current position of RBFRS progress against the recommendations from the Inquiry. A Built Environment Programme (BEP) had been established to ensure that the actions are centrally coordinated and monitored to completion with periodic reporting of the status of BEP undertaken across the governance structure including via the Programme Co-ordination Board, Corporate Programme Board and the Fire Authority.

We noted one minor control weakness in relation to the lack of centralisation for the storage and retention of evidence to confirm completion of actions.

Internal audit opinion:

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

**Key findings**

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



We confirmed RBFRS had conducted a gap analysis against the 46 recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (phase 1) and identified 32 risks and associated treatments to address the 46 recommendations via the Risk and Prioritisation spreadsheet. Through review of the Spreadsheet, we confirmed that treatment owners had been assigned to the risks.



We noted that RBFRS had established a BEP based on actions raised from the gap analysis contained in the Risk and Prioritisation spreadsheet and designed project trackers based on all of the following workstreams:

- Risk and Information
- Command Support
- Tactics and Equipment
- Call Management.

We confirmed through review that each project tracker contained project tasks which were timebound and had been assigned to task owners and for a sample of 10 project tasks, we confirmed that there was no duplication with any other actions across the organisation.



We confirmed that a Communication/Engagement Plan is in place. Through review of version 17 (effective 30 November 2022) of the Plan, we confirmed that it provides the overarching engagement approach of RBFRS with its stakeholders. We noted that the responsibility for the delivery of the Communication/Engagement Plan had been assigned to the Communications and Engagement Lead and the Programme Manager as marked in the Plan.

We confirmed through review of the Plan that RBFRS had identified 31 stakeholders including staff (and departments), the public, local authorities, and Members of the Parliament. We noted that a stakeholder matrix was also included in the Plan which identified stakeholders according to their degree of interest and influence and RBFRS has identified the staff and Authority as its key stakeholders to keep updated on progress on an on-going basis.



We confirmed that the Programme Manager maintains a Built Up External Information Log, which, through review we noted records new information related to the BEP. We noted that the information comes from legislation updates, guidance updates, reports, consultations, training, conferences, webinars, and courses relevant to recommendations within the BEP project trackers.

In addition, we reviewed a sample of five actions logged as completed in the BEP External Information Log and we confirmed that in all five instances, the actions were linked to the tasks identified in the BEP project trackers. We were further provided with evidence to confirm that each action had been completed.



We confirmed through review that the Programme Manager has an approved budget to carry out the BEP and we were informed that they monitor the actual cost against the budget. The total budget for BEP in 2022 was £263.5k.

Through review, we noted that the budget spend line items on the system included staff, operation equipment purchase, conferences, and travel/subsistence costs. As of 8 November 2022, we noted that 43.6 per cent of the overall budget for the BEP had been utilised.



At the time of our review, we noted that the Programme Manager had identified Business as Usual (BAU) actions that will be handed over to the business units following completion of actions identified from the gap analysis. Through discussion with the Programme Manager, we noted that the handover would commence after our review in January 2023. Consequently, as it had not yet occurred at the time of our review, we could not assess the controls around the mechanism with which the Programme Manager of BEP maintains oversight of the BAU and the processes in place to ensure that responsible owners within the organisation or the business units are taking action to manage the BAU on an ongoing basis.



On a quarterly basis, the Programme Manager provides updates on the BEP to the Programme Coordination Board and Corporate Programme Board. These reports include Programme Coordination Board Report and Progress Report respectively.

We reviewed minutes of the meeting where a presentation on the BEP was made to the Fire Authority in April 2022. We confirmed that the presentation contained the status of the implementation of the Grenfell recommendations, the challenges, and the expectations for the future. We noted that members deliberated on the contents of the presentation through review of the minutes of the meeting.

Although we were informed by the Programme Manager that RBFRS do not keep minutes of meetings from the review of the quarterly reports by the Programme Co-ordination Board and Corporate Programme Board, we noted that management maintained Actions and Decisions logs for tracking and monitoring actions/decisions to completion as they arise during the meetings which we confirmed were completed for the meetings reviewed. In addition, we noted through review that the Action and Decision logs were on the first agenda at both Programme Coordination Board meetings we reviewed (July and November 2022).



For a sample of 10 actions and risks reported to the Programme Coordination Board and Corporate Programme Board, we confirmed that the status was accurate as per the project trackers (workstreams) and the Risk and Prioritisation spreadsheet.

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.

Document (Evidence) Management				
Control	Actions marked as complete are recorded in the Project Trackers for each of the four workstreams and evidence to support completed actions is retained by management.	Assessment:		
		Design	✓	
		Compliance	×	
Findings / Implications	<p>We reviewed a sample of 10 completed actions across the four workstreams as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command Support (action 6.2); • Tactics & Equipment (actions 1.6, 17.2, 11.11 and 15.4.1); • Call Management (actions 1.4, 1.5, 7.6 and 12.7); and • Risk & Information (action 18.3). <p>Through review, we confirmed in all 10 cases that the evidence retained supported the completed status of the actions. However, from discussions with management and through consideration of the time taken to provide evidence for our review, we noted that documents demonstrating the closure of actions were not maintained centrally as they were stored in the personal drives of colleagues.</p> <p>There is a risk that if the colleagues' drives are lost or damaged, the evidence of closed actions will be lost, and valuable work to closed actions will be wasted; thus, making the process inefficient.</p> <p>In addition, critical documents demonstrating closed actions may be liable to unauthorised changes where control is not centralised.</p>			
Management Action 1	<p>Management will ensure that documents that demonstrate evidence of closed actions are captured, tracked and stored centrally.</p> <p>This approach will ensure that documents are readily available, minimise loss risk, and authorise document changes.</p>	Responsible owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Noosha Churchill, Programme Manager	31 March 2023	Low

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - FIREFIGHTER PENSION ADMINISTRATION – WEST YORKSHIRE PENSION FUND

Background

The pension administration processes for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services (RBFRS) are carried out by an external service provider, West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF), and have been since April 2016. WYPF utilise an internally developed pension system called UPM to manage the pension administration process, maintain member profiles and record invoices for overpayments.

RBFRS has three pension schemes in progress which are administered through WYPF: the 1992, 2006 and 2015 Firefighters Pension Schemes. The 1992 scheme was replaced for new members by the 2006 scheme in April 2006, and the 2006 scheme was replaced by the 2015 scheme in April 2015.

Conclusion

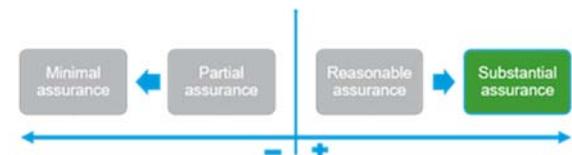
From our review we concluded that there are robust controls in place to manage pension administration processes at WYPF and these controls are being followed in practice. Work instructions were in place and accessible to staff, starters, leavers and amendments had been processed correctly, pension payment runs reconciled and mechanisms to recover overpayments had been put in place.

In addition, we followed up three low priority management actions agreed during our review in 21/22 and confirmed that these had been sufficiently completed.

We did however note minor weaknesses for which two low priority actions have been agreed in relation to confirmation of amendments to details being processed and reconciliation reports being reviewed and approved.

Internal audit opinion:

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



Key findings

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



Work Instructions

We confirmed through walkthrough of the intranet system and review of evidence that there are key processes within Fire Fighter Pension Administration that are made accessible to staff. We also reviewed evidence to confirm members of staff are informed on updates to the documented processes on the intranet via email communication and if required during team meetings. The working instructions have responsible owners who are captured within the documentation and on the intranet page, the owners ensure these remain up to date and make the necessary changes when required.



Immediate Detriment

Retiring Fire Fighters who were initially on the 1992 scheme before joining the 2015 scheme are offered 'immediate detriment'. This means where applicable, the member can decide to either receive benefits that the member would be entitled to under the terms of the 1992 Scheme or the 2015 Scheme.

Through review of a sample of ten cases and a walkthrough with the Member Services Manager we confirmed that all supporting documentation for the immediate detriment cases had been retained in the UPM system and respective members Microsoft folders. We reviewed a sample of two cases where immediate detriment was offered to the retiree. In both cases, we confirmed that the member had received all the required information, and documentation had been processed accurately by WYPF.



New Starters

We reviewed a sample of 10 new starters that had started at RBFERS since April 2022 and confirmed in all cases the new starter had been added to the correct pension scheme on UPM in a timely manner. Accurate details had been processed in the UPM system with the member receiving a welcome letter confirming all the required information to stipulate they had entered into the pension scheme.



Leavers

We reviewed a sample of 10 leavers that had left RBFERS since April 2022, of these leavers we noted that two were immediate detriment cases, two were members who had retired and the remaining six leavers were non-retirees. Through review of the sample, we confirmed in all cases the retirees had received a Retirement Quote and a Retirement Pack which had been authorised appropriately, pension advice letters had been sent and the lump sum was accurately processed and reconciled to the pack sent.

For the six non-retiree leavers we confirmed in all cases a leaver notification had been received, a compliance letter had been sent to the leaving member, a leavers matrix calculation had been performed and the deferred benefits calculations had been processed.

We noted in five out of six cases the Deferred Benefits letter had been checked by the Senior Pensions Officer and the members updated to deferred on UPM. In the remaining case there was uncertainty around the calculation, so the member had been contact to clarify details of the amount therefore no letter had been sent.



Abatement

We were informed by the Finance Team Manager that there had been no cases resulting in abatement within the last 12 months. We have not therefore conducted any further testing in this regard. We noted that there had only been one early retirement within the last 12 months (since January 2022) which we confirmed was an immediate detriment member and was covered in our sample testing to confirm processes had been followed.



Tax Code Changes

Tax code changes are downloaded by the WYPF IT team on a daily basis, direct from HMRC. The files are uploaded onto member records automatically by matching parameters such as their roll number, NI number and surname. We were informed that since the start of the calendar year (2022) no tax code changes or amendments were required, thus no further testing was undertaken (we evidenced this via a search of the UPM system).



Annual Allowances

We sample tested five members whose annual pension contributions in the financial year 2021/22 exceeded the £40k annual allowance of which the member is allowed to receive from their pension fund within the year, if they exceed this amount they will incur a tax charge. Before this charge occurs WYPF will issue their Pension Savings Statement prior to the 6 October 2022. Through our testing in all cases the pension savings statement was sent to the member prior to 6 October.

We undertook a deep-dive sample test on one member who had a breached their annual allowance of £40k. Through testing, we confirmed that the member was informed of the requirements under both Scheme Pays via letter, and the deduction to benefits and annual allowance tax charge was calculated by a member of the RBFRS team and authorised by the Senior Pensions Officer at WYPF. Additionally, we confirmed the member was sent a Scheme Pays Actual Confirmation letter, and the request to pay was added to UPM and submitted via BACS in line with the Scheme Pays deadline. We noted that the payment of the mandatory scheme pay (MSP) and voluntary scheme pay (VSP) charge had been included in the Accounting for Tax File Note on UPM for payment in January 2024 and January 2023 respectively in line with agreed procedures.



Pension Payment Runs

Pension payment runs occur monthly and are paid via an online payment system requiring two staff members, a preparer and an authoriser. Those with the ability to authorise the payment run cannot prepare the transaction(s). Testing of the pay runs processed in October, November and December 2022 confirmed in all cases the Fire Payroll Checklist had been completed, exceptions reports had been produced and countersigned, and the SQL Reports Checklist had been completed. We also confirmed that in all instances the BACS File Summary Reports were produced in line with the month-end timetable and Gross-to-Net reports had also been produced, the amounts on which (i.e. the Net Pay figure and tax) agreed back to the reconciliation spreadsheet.



Overpayments

There are different types of overpayments that are processed at WYPF, firstly any under the amount of £100 are automatically written off, then there are those relating to injury reviews, which could be over £10k, these are referred to RBFRS to agree timescales and amounts to recover. For regular amounts WYPF would contact the member to understand how these one-off payments are to be re-paid, this can be through monthly deductions in pension payments or a one-off payment being made. Once agreed with the member the Finance team would send out an invoice.

Through our sample of the four overpayments made for RBFRS members, we reviewed the UPM system during our onsite walkthrough, we confirmed that the member had been contacted regarding the overpayment and the agreed schedules had been input accurately into the UPM system. We were informed that overpayments were in the process of being recovered which we corroborated with the system through review.

We have agreed two 'Low' priority management actions, and these are documented within the detailed findings below.

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.

Pension Administration				
Control	<p>The retired members and non-retirees can notify WYPF of any changes to existing details in writing or via email or phone for changes not related to bank details. If the request is made by phone or email security questions are asked to locate the members record and verify the members identity prior to processing the amendment. Additionally, for retired members changes to standing data such as contact details and home address amendments can be updated by members via My Pension.</p> <p>My Pension automatically notifies the Service Centre 5 team (SC5) of amendments to action. Changes to bank details are actioned by the SC5 team's Pension Officers and reviewed by a Senior Pension Officer. Once actioned, the member is sent a letter to confirm that the amendment has been made. Changes to other standing data items such as changes to contact details are actioned by the Contact Centre, or SC5 for retired members and by the Fire team for non-retired members.</p>	Assessment:		
		Design	✓	
		Compliance	×	
Findings / Implications	<p>We reviewed a sample of 10 amendments, two of which related to bank detail changes. In all cases, we confirmed that the amendment was actioned by the Finance Team and authorised by the Senior Pensions Officer in the UPM system. We also confirmed the member was sent a letter to confirm the amendment had been actioned. For the remaining eight amendments relating to changes to details on members accounts, we noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in all cases the amendment related to an address change; • in four cases the amendment was completed over the phone, the change was actioned as requested and no confirmation letter was required; and • in three cases the amendment was completed by email, the change was actioned as requested and a confirmation letter was sent to the member. <p>However, we noted one exception whereby an address amendment was requested by letter, the change was actioned as requested however no confirmation letter of the amendment was sent to the member.</p> <p>There is a risk of member dissatisfaction if amendments are made to their details but no confirmation of the amendment is received.</p>			
Management Action 1	WYPF will send confirmation that details have been updated when they are contacted by RBFRS members to make changes to their existing details.	Responsible Owner: Assistant Director (Finance, Administration and Governance)	Date: 1 April 2023	Priority: Low

Pension Administration

Control	<p>After each pay run, the Senior Finance Officer at WYPF produces the Gross to Net report and prepares the reconciliation with control totals. These are produced electronically, stored on the Finance shared drive and sent through to RBFERS each month via email.</p> <p>These are used for RBFERS's own reconciliations completed by the Pay and Pensions Officer and reviewed by the Accounting Manager. Reconciliations completed include PAYE reconciliation, pension control accounts reconciliation to the General Ledger for each pension.</p> <p>Partially Missing Control - The reconciliation with control totals produced by the Senior Finance Officer are not reviewed by another member of staff.</p>	Assessment:	
		Design	x
		Compliance	N/A

Findings / Implications	<p>Through discussion with the Senior Finance Officer, we were informed that SC5 runs the payroll in week three of the month. Once complete, a number of reports are run by the Senior Finance Officer from UPM, e.g. pension payments. An SAP report is also run for any payments or receipts outside payroll and these documents are then put together in an active reconciliation sheet which is updated every month.</p> <p>The reconciliation report together with other reports are sent by the Senior Finance Officer at WYFP via galaxkey, a secure email network, to relevant staff at RBFERS for recharge. We reviewed emails sent for P7, P8 and P9 on 27 October, 25 November and 19 December 2022 respectively to confirm the process. In addition, we sighted other reports which are also prepared such as an injury on duty report and fire monthly payment report all of which include member PAYE details, and pension benefits by status report.</p> <p>We confirmed that reconciliations are completed after the week the payment was due and all control accounts are reconciled to SAP on a weekly basis and reports are prepared before month end. Our discussion with the Senior Finance Officer noted that reports generated from both the UPM system and SAP system are used for the reconciliation.</p> <p>However, we noted that the reconciliation reports prepared by the Senior Finance Officer are not reviewed by a second member although any discrepancies are discussed with the Finance Manager. Due to a lack of independent review of reconciliations prepared by the Senior Finance Officer, there is a risk that differences may not be promptly identified to be acted on. Hence, RBFR could be provided with inexact data.</p> <p>For the samples P7, P8, and P9, we further confirmed that a reconciliation of the Pension Control Account to the General Ledger and PAYE reconciliations were prepared by RBFERS for the months of October and November 2022 only. Through discussions with the Accounting Manager at RBFERS, we were advised that reconciliations for December are yet to be done. All reconciliation reports prepared by the Accounting Manager are reviewed and authorised by the Finance Manager at RBFERS.</p>
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Management Action 2	WYPF will ensure the review of the Reconciliation Reports is completed by an independent checker and is documented on UPM.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Assistant Director (Finance, Administration and Governance)	1 April 2023	Low

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - PAYROLL PROVIDER - DATAPLAN

Why we completed this audit

Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) has outsourced the processing of their payroll to West Yorkshire Pension Fund (WYPF) who have in turn subcontracted the payroll element to Dataplan. Dataplan has been a provider of payroll services for over 50 years and has been processing the payroll of RBFRS since April 2016.

At Dataplan, the RBFRS payroll account is managed by a permanent team of two members of staff, consisting of the Deputy Head of Education and a Payroll Processor, who are supported by other members of the Education team as required. RBFRS utilise Flexipay Payroll Software to manage the payroll. RBFRS and Dataplan utilise ePaysafe, an online payroll portal to share payroll related documentation including amendment notifications and monthly exception reports.

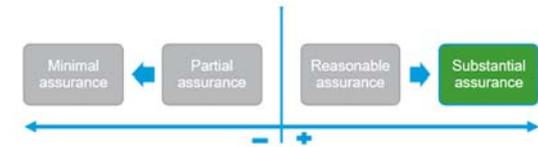
Conclusion

We confirmed that overall controls were robust, well designed and applied in line with relevant procedures in relation to payroll processing. We also confirmed that the guide regarding the processing of payroll for RBFRS staff outlined the required procedures for new starters, leavers and amendments which we found had been appropriately applied throughout the sample testing we carried out as part of this review.

Our review concluded that there were also robust controls in place covering financial controls and the general framework of control at Dataplan regarding year end documentation, reconciliations and overpayments.

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively.



Key findings

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



Contract

We confirmed that there is a signed contract in place between the WYPF, and Dataplan, which notes that Dataplan will provide employee payroll services for RBFRS. This contract is signed by both parties. The initial contract term ran until 3 January 2019, with an option to extend for a further two years which was exercised and further extended in January 2021 to May 2024.

**Procedures**

There is an Operational Guide to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Payroll in place which details the processes followed by Dataplan including the checks undertaken on payroll as well as sign off. We confirmed that the Guide included a table for monitoring version control which confirms that the 2021/22 review has been implemented. We noted through review that the Guide had been made available to all staff through the system network folders and intranet system and is currently in date having been reviewed in October 2022 with the next review date in October 2023.

**Access rights**

Access to the RBFRS payroll on the Flexipay system, as well as access to the Payment Hub BACS system, is suitably restricted to appropriate members of Dataplan staff. We reviewed the 'Flexipay list of users' report dated 9 January 2023 which confirmed there were 37 staff (of which only two had editing rights, the remaining 35 were view only access), one IT and one master account, covering five main access profiles. We reviewed the editing rights of the Manager, Basic, Standard, Project and IT and confirmed that the rights were appropriate, and that no profiles have the right to delete audit trails.

We also confirmed that the functions of Payroll and HR have a suitable segregation of duties as HR and the associated systems are operated by staff at RBFRS, while payroll functions are administered by Dataplan staff.

**Starters and Leavers**

The HR team at RBFS upload details of new starters, leavers and other amendments to the ePaysafe system on a monthly basis. For new starters, Dataplan receive an Action 5 Sheet, a Changes to Bank Details form and HMRC Starter Checklist from RBFRS. For leavers, Dataplan receives an Action 5 sheet from RBFRS. Outstanding holiday pay is calculated by Dataplan and Flexipay is updated using the information provided on the Action 5 sheet.

Dataplan manually enter the data into Flexipay which is then checked for accuracy by an independent person. Due to remote working, the original document is placed in a folder by one staff member, and then moved to a checked folder by another staff member to confirm this check has taken place.

Through review of a sample of 20 staff (10 starters and 10 leavers), we confirmed that all processes had been appropriately followed with segregation of duties applied and no exceptions were noted.

**Permanent and Temporary Amendments to Standing Data**

Through review of a sample of 15 amendments which included changes to pension contribution, temporary and permanent amendments, we confirmed in all cases the amendment was actioned in a timely manner as per the request from RBFRS and had been independently checked and verified. For October, November and December 2022, we also confirmed a random sample of amendments had been selected from the Balancing Payment spreadsheet and a check had been marked as undertaken on the calculations to confirm that they had been accurately processed.



Tax Code Changes

We reviewed a sample of five tax code change instructions from HMRC from 2022/23, through review, we confirmed that all had been correctly updated in Flexipay and the changes were implemented within an appropriate timeframe and actioned as per the HMRC notification. We also confirmed that all tax changes were visible in the staff member's payslip in the month following the change.



Exception Reporting

For a sample of three months (October, November and December 2022) we confirmed that the Payslips Report and Analysis of Pay for Period including the Variance Report had been provided to RBFERS for review and approval prior to payments being made.

Through review of the reports, we confirmed that they were provided to RBFERS and subsequently, checked and approved by RBFERS each month prior to payment with a segregation of duties applied.



Year End Documentation

Through review, we confirmed that for 2021/22, year-end documentation including the month end BACS file for period 12, RTI file which includes tax information and other deductions under the PAYE system, and employee P60s had been produced in a timely manner and in line with government deadlines. We also reviewed one an example of a tax code uplift and confirmed it had been applied appropriately.



Overpayments

Through review of a sample of five overpayments, we confirmed in all cases Dataplan were notified via an Action 5 Sheet of how to reclaim the funds. In all cases, we noted that the overpayment was reclaimed in line with RBFERS instructions and pay and deducted from the payslip accordingly.



Pension Contributions

Deductions of pension contributions are automated in line with the member's scheme rules. Through review of a sample of five members from a report provided by RBFERS, we confirmed in all instances the pension contribution had been reflected correctly on the payslip.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – KEY FINANCIAL CONTROLS – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE AND EXPENSES

Why we completed this audit

We undertook a review of the Accounts Receivable and Expenses functions at Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service as part of the agreed internal audit plan for 2022/23. The objective of the review was to ensure that invoices are correctly processed, and debts are effectively managed. Additionally, we considered the policies and processes concerning expense claims to assess whether they are being applied appropriately.

A limited number of invoices are raised due to the nature of the Service's operations, invoices raised include payments for incident reports, recharges for services provided to partner organisations, rental income from ambulance and fire authorities using RBFRS properties and fees from telecommunications companies for mast hosting. Invoice requests are raised by the relevant department and processed by Finance. Finance utilise Sage Accounting software to prepare and record invoices which are sent to the customer by email and stored within the V1 Electronic Document Management software. The Finance department are also responsible for the monitoring of debts. At present, the Service has not written off any debts since 2019/20.

The Service paid approximately £50k in expenses since April 2022 (for the 2022/23 financial year). Forms are completed by employees and signed by the employee's line manager before being emailed to the Finance Department for actioning. Expenses are paid by the Service's Payroll provider Dataplan with that month's wages. We were informed that the Service is currently moving to a new system for the processing of Expenses (Emburse Certify). We were advised that the new system will include greater automation; for example, expenses will be submitted and sent for approval electronically before being actioned by Finance. The findings of this review will be considered when implementing the new system.

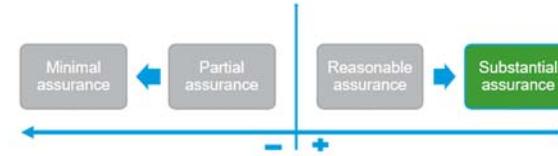
Conclusion

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has a well-designed control framework in place regarding the raising of invoices and the processing of expenses. We noted that the Finance Department had defined processes supported by a range of comprehensive procedural documents. We found that invoice requests were authorised appropriately as well as processed by Finance in an accurate and timely manner. Similarly, we found that approval requirements were being followed for expense claims processed and that the three-month rule between expenses being incurred and claimed was consistently enforced.

We identified areas where controls could be further enhanced to strengthen the control framework and to improve the operation of the accounts receivable and expense functions. These include actions to ensure the consistent application of credit control procedures, the clarification of expense policies, improvements to the document trail quality and a more timely approval of expense claims.

Internal audit opinion:

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



Key findings

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

Accounts Receivable



Sales Ledger Procedures

The Service has two sales ledger procedures with the Sales Ledger – Customer Set Up procedure instructing the Finance team on how to set up new customers on Sage, and the Sales Ledger procedure detailing how to raise invoices day-to-day. Through review of both documents, we found that guidance was included on how to verify invoice request forms, the level of authorisation needed to raise an invoice and how to raise the invoice using Sage.

We confirmed through review that both policies were in date, due for review in April and November 2023 respectively and had been made available to the Finance Team through the S Drive. We found that both procedures had been appropriately marked as being approved by the Exchequer and Systems Manager.



Invoices Raised

To raise an invoice, the respective department will complete an invoice request form. The form is approved by the department’s budget holder before being emailed to the finance inbox. The invoice request will be approved by the Exchequer and Systems Manager before being raised through Sage within one week of the request being received.

We reviewed a sample of 20 invoices raised since April 2022 and we confirmed that an invoice request form had been completed and approved by the budget holder in a timely manner. We noted that once received by Finance, the invoice was approved by the Exchequer Manager and raised between one and four working days from receipt. Additionally, we matched the amount raised on the invoice to the amount per the request and confirmed that each invoice had been saved within the V1 archiving system as appropriate.



Credit Control Processes

Aged debtor reports are generated from Sage by a member of the Finance Department every week as part of the cash management process whereby the Service's cash balances are reconciled with accounts receivable. Additionally, the reports also form part of enhanced credit control procedures completed two to three times monthly. The aged debtor reports are signed off by the Exchequer Manager and stored within the V1 archiving system.

We reviewed a sample of five aged debtor reports from August and November 2022 and December 2023 and confirmed that each report has been signed off by the Exchequer and Systems Manager and stored within V1 as per the Credit Control Procedure. We also noted evidence of scrutiny on each report including highlighting key transactions and provision of narrative where remittance advices had been received or additional contact had been made with the debtor to confirm status of the debt.



Credit Control Procedure

We reviewed the Credit Control Procedure and noted an eight-step process for how debts are managed and recovered. We noted that initial steps include regular debt monitoring activities such as regular aged debtor reports whilst latter steps give instruction to Finance on how to chase debts over the 30-day normal credit period. We confirmed that the Procedure was in date having been last reviewed in November 2022 and due for next review in November 2023. We also confirmed that the Procedure had been marked as approved by the Exchequer and Systems Manager and was available to all Finance staff via the S-Drive.



Debt Write-Offs

We confirmed through review that the thresholds for the level of authorisation to write off bad debts are documented within the Service's Financial Regulations. We confirmed that the Financial Regulations had been approved in 2020 and we were informed at the time of our review that these were under review with an updated Policy due to be implemented in April 2023. We confirmed that the Financial Regulations had been made available on the Service's website.

Additionally, a Sales Invoice Write-Off Procedure for the coordination of write-offs is available to the finance team including how to gather evidence to support a write off, the approvals required and how to remove the account on Sage. We confirmed the procedure had been approved, was in date and available to all Finance employees through review of the S drive.

We were informed by the Exchequer and Systems Manager that there had been no debt write offs since 2019/20.

Expenses



Expense Policies

We reviewed the Service's four policies concerning allowable expense claims. We found that each allowable expense type was covered by one of the four policies. We found that the reimbursement of subscription costs for members of professional bodies covered within the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 whilst mileage and subsistence claims were detailed within the Expenses and Allowances (including Travelling and Subsistence Payments) Policy. Additionally, we noted that the rules concerning allowable childcare expense claims were outlined in the Reimbursement of Childcare Costs Policy and that the Medical Allowance Policy for Grey Book Employees listed the criteria for medical expense claims.

We found that all Policies had been approved and were available to staff with the Pay Policy Statement approved by the Fire Authority and published on the Service's website whilst the other three policies were approved through consultation as per the Service's Document Management Policy and published on the Service's intranet page. Additionally, all policies were in date at the time of our review with the Pay Policy Statement currently under review with the updated version due for implementation in April 2023.



Expenses Procedure

Through review of the Mileage and Expenses Monthly procedure, we confirmed that the document gives specific instruction to the Finance Department for processing expense claims. We noted that it details how expense claims are to be verified including the recalculation of miles travelled, which forms are required for each claim type and which documentation is required to evidence the claim. We also noted that the procedure highlights which expenses are taxable and how each should be treated to ensure the correct tax is paid.

We confirmed that the procedure was in date having last been reviewed in January 2023 and due for next review in January 2023. We found that the procedure had been marked as approved by the Exchequer and Systems Manager and was available to all Finance staff through the S-Drive.



Expense Claims

We reviewed a sample of 20 expense claims paid since April 2022. We confirmed that for each claim, an appropriate form had been completed, and that receipts evidencing the expense had been provided.

Through review of the payroll runs between May 2022 and January 2023, we confirmed that each expense had been paid with the relevant month from when the expense form had been submitted (by the seventh day of the month). Additionally, we matched the amount paid to the amount as listed on the expense forms, including where mileage claims had been calculated using the mileage and subsistence procedure and historic advisory mileage rates.



Expense Authorisations

Through review of the organisational charts and FB42 forms for temporary managers, we confirmed that each of the 20 expense claims in our sample had been appropriately approved by the employee's line manager whether this be through physical signature, e-signature, or confirmation email to Finance.

Follow Up



Purchase Requisition Procedure

As part of this review, we also followed up on a previously agreed management action concerning the inclusion of a version history within the Purchase Requisition Procedure. We reviewed the Procedure and confirmed that a version history table had been added with columns for a description of the changes made, the approver of the revision, and the next review date of April 2023. We were advised that this table had been included on all procedural documents and found that this was accurate for the Sales Ledger, Debt Recovery and Debt-Write Off Procedures.

We have also agreed four low priority management action, which are detailed in section two of this 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.

Debt Recovery Process

Control	<p>If a debt is still outstanding and no remittance advice received following the end of the credit period, the Service will send a first letter to the debtor to remind them of the debt owed and to give them the contact details of the Finance Department.</p> <p>If no response is received from the debtor 14 days after the first letter, then a second letter is sent. If there is no engagement with the second letter, then the Finance Department will attempt to make frequent contact with the debtor to confirm the status of the debt.</p> <p>Finally, the Finance department will contact the department which initially raised the debt to chase the debt with their contact at the debtor company.</p> <p>This entire process is documented on the debt recovery spreadsheet.</p>	Assessment:	
		Design	✓
		Compliance	x

Findings / Implications	<p>Through review of the aged debtor report as at January 2023, we identified one debt which had been outstanding beyond the 30-day credit terms and was therefore due for debt recovery procedures. We noted that the debt had been outstanding for over two months with the transaction dated November 2022.</p> <p>We reviewed all correspondence sent to the debtor and confirmed for this one debt, that all stages of the debt recovery process had been completed. We found that first and second letters had been sent and additional contact had been made where there had been no engagement with the letters. We found that updates had been recorded by the Finance Team on the debt recovery spreadsheet where chasing activities are noted.</p> <p>However, whilst the second letter was sent and further contact made at the correct point in time, we noted that the first letter had been sent 15 days after the end of the 30-day credit period and not as soon as 30 days had elapsed despite no remittance advice having been received. We were advised that this was due to staff absences over the holiday period and was not usual operating protocol. Additionally, we were informed that the invoice related to an Incident Reporting System (IRS) report and would not be issued until payment is made.</p> <p>If debts are not chased as soon as soon as the credit period has ended as per the Service's procedure, there is a risk that debts will not be recovered in a timely manner.</p>
--------------------------------	--

Management Action 1	We will issue the first debt-chasing letter as soon as 30 days has elapsed since the due date of the original invoice.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Irene Kema Onyeri	1 April 2023	Low

Expenses Policies and Procedure

Control	The Service has four Policies concerning allowable expenses, the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 which is issued by the Fire Authority as well as the Expenses and Allowances (including Mileage and Subsistence), Reimbursement of Childcare costs, and Medical Allowance Policy for Grey Book Employees Policy which are issued by HR.	Assessment:		
		Design	✓	
		Compliance	✗	

Findings / Implications

We noted that the Pay and Expenses (including mileage and subsistence) Policy states that expenses should be claimed within three months of the expense being incurred whilst we noted that this information had been omitted from the Reimbursement of Childcare costs and Medical Allowance Policy.

Additionally, within the Pay and Expenses Policy, we noted that under the manager’s responsibilities section it states that managers should ensure that claims are made timely ie within one month of the expense being incurred despite the Policy noting three months as the limit for expense claims.

Through our sample testing of 20 expense claims, we noted one instance where a staff member had cited that they were unaware of the three-month rule, in this case the individual in question was making a medical claim where the three-month rule was not included within the Policy.

If the policies do not reflect the current practise regarding expenses, there is a risk that expenses will not be claimed in line with the Service’s expectations and therefore must be resubmitted or deemed no longer reclaimable.

Management Action 2	We will update all appropriate expense policies to highlight the three-month maximum expense period.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Irene Kema Onyeri	1 April 2023	Low
	We will update the Pay and Expenses Policy to best reflect current expense practice.			

Expense Requests

<p>Control</p>	<p>The Service currently operates a manual expense system.</p> <p>Expense forms are completed, approved by line manager, and emailed/given to the Finance Department along with any supporting receipts. Expenses can be claimed for up to three months previous.</p> <p>The Finance Department verifies the expense claim with the evidence provided, scans, and uploads onto an expense spreadsheet. The expense spreadsheet is uploaded to outsourced Payroll service's system and expenses are paid as part of the monthly payroll run. The spreadsheet is reviewed by two members of the Finance Department before submission.</p> <p>This entire process is required to be completed by the seventh working day of each month when the payroll spreadsheet is submitted.</p>	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Design ✓</p> <p>Compliance ✗</p>
<p>Findings / Implications</p>	<p>For a sample of 20 expense claims paid since April 2022, we analysed the date when each expense form was marked as completed and the date of the transaction as recorded on the receipt. We found that in 15 instances claims had been made within three months of the expense being incurred whilst for three claims the form had been completed in an excess three months. However we confirmed that for each the three-month period had been waived by an appropriate level of management.</p> <p>In the remaining two instances we found that the expenses claims had been signed off by the individual before the expense had been incurred with one mileage claim signed six days before the journey was made and another membership reimbursement claim signed 21 days before payment.</p> <p>We were informed that it is common for employees to re-use old expense forms without changing the date or resigning the form; however, that no payment is made by the Service unless a receipt is provided confirming that the expense has been incurred.</p> <p>If expense claims are signed before expenses have been incurred, the Service has no written confirmation that the expense claims have been made honestly.</p>	
<p>Management Action 3</p>	<p>We will reiterate to all staff that expense claim forms should be signed after every expense listed has been incurred (and not before).</p>	<p>Responsible Owner: Irene Kema Onyeri</p> <p>Date: 1 April 2023</p> <p>Priority: Low</p>

Expense Authorisation Timeliness

Control	All expense claims require approval from the staff member's line manager before they are to be submitted.	Assessment:	
	Line Managers either physically sign the expense form, or the member of staff claiming will email their request and evidence to their line manager who will then forward this and their approval to the Finance Department.	Design	x
	The Service currently has no defined timeframe for the approval of expense claims.	Compliance	N/A

Findings / Implications	For a sample of 20 expense claims paid since April 2022, we calculated the interval between the claim form being signed as completed and approval being given. We noted that in 13 claims, approval had been given within 20 days of the form being completed, however, in the remaining seven claims 30 or more days had elapsed between the form being completed and authorisation given.
	We found that in two of the instances, managers had highlighted that the request had become lost in their inbox. We were informed that this is largely the result of managers being on active duty and subjected to operational pressures which means forms are not signed quickly. However, the Finance Department assist in chasing managers where approval is required. Additionally, we were advised that the new expense system is being introduced will include reminders where expenses have been left without approval.
	Whilst the Service does not have an outlined timeframe for expenses to be approved by managers, if expenses are not signed off promptly, there is a risk that staff will not be paid their expenses within the following payroll.
	If claim forms are not authorised in a timely manner, there is a risk that employees will not be compensated for the expense they have incurred promptly.

Management Action 4	We will introduce a benchmark for the approval of expense forms and where a manager is consistently late with approvals consider whether any delegated authority can be issued.	Responsible Owner:	Date:	Priority:
		Irene Kema Onyeri	1 June 2023	Low

Emergency Services News Briefing

March 2023



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In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, with particular focus on the latest reports from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the latest updates from the government.

Police

An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations

HMICFRS has published a report following an examination on how effective the police are at providing digital forensics, capturing evidence from a range of different digital devices, from smartphones to computers. The findings revealed that some forces were overwhelmed and did not have a clear understanding of what digital forensics are. This led to huge delays in examining devices, which had a knock-on effect on both victims' wellbeing and chances of a successful prosecution. There was also no clear and coherent national plan for improvement.

HMICFRS has made nine recommendations to help policing improve. These include:

- appointing a national digital forensics policing lead to oversee a programme of improvement;
- a Home Office review into digital forensics budget and future funding;
- a governance and oversight framework should be developed to better understand the local demand for digital forensic services; and
- the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for digital forensics, the Home Office and relevant support services should provide guidance to all forces on the use of cloud-based storage and computing power.

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

- Do you know how your force is responding to digital forensics?

Police requests for third party material

The Home Office has published its response following its consultation on police requests for personal data from third parties, such as the NHS or local authorities, when investigating crimes. The response to the consultation, which includes a commitment to introduce new legislation on the way the police can request access to personal data from third parties, will better protect people's data by ensuring the police and other parties only request this information where this is absolutely necessary and proportionate. Respondents to the consultation were supportive of the government's plans for new legislation, including a duty to inform people about what type of information is being requested, why, and how it will be used. These duties will be further clarified in a code of practice to aid the police in fulfilling their duties.

[Read more](#)

Review of police dismissals launched

To ensure that the police officer dismissal process is effective at removing those who are not fit to serve the public, the Home Office has launched a review which will examine the “effectiveness of the disciplinary system so the public can be confident it is fair but efficient at removing officers who fall short of the high standards expected of them.” The review, which will conclude within approximately four months, will also make sure that forces are able to effectively use regulations that allow “probationary officers who do not meet the required standard to be let go, and look at whether the current three-tier performance system is effective in being able to dismiss officers who fail to perform the duties expected of their rank and role.”

The National Police Chiefs’ Council has also confirmed that it will ask all police forces to check their officers and staff against national police databases. This will help identify anyone who has slipped through the net before vetting standards were toughened and ensure those who are unfit to serve can be rooted out. The Home Secretary has asked the College of Policing to strengthen the statutory code of practice for police vetting, making the obligations all forces must legally follow stricter and clearer. This will make a raft of guidance a legal requirement for all police forces. The Home Secretary has also launched an internal review into police dismissals to make sure the system is effective at removing officers who fall short of the standards expected of them.

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee’s consideration

- How are ACs gaining assurance over performance/dismissal processes?
- Do you know how many dismissals and the nature of these?
- What independent assurance are you getting over these areas (performance/vetting etc)?

Policing to receive up to £287m funding boost next year

The Home Office has announced a further £287m to the 2023/24 funding package to help victims feel safe and deliver more visible policing. The rise will take total funding for policing up to £17.2bn and mean police and crime commissioners (PCCs) across the 43 police forces in England and Wales will receive a nominal increase of up to £523m from government grants and precept income to focus on getting the basics right, such as driving down anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime.

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee’s consideration

- Have the benefits been realised by your Force / PCC for the additional funding?

Safer Streets Fund is building confidence in the police

The Home Office has released their findings from the evaluation of the first round of Safer Streets funding. So far, £120m has been awarded enabling PCCs to invest in local initiatives alongside partners to improve community safety and prevent crime. The evaluation shows the positive impact of investing in initiatives to improve local environments, and how this makes people feel safer and more engaged in their communities.

[Read more](#)

Government supports a new public sexual harassment offence

Suella Braverman, Home Secretary, has announced support for a Private Member’s Bill to make public sexual harassment an offence. The Bill will enable harsher sentences for perpetrators. The [consultation](#) showed the need for a specific offence to make the laws surrounding public harassment clearer to both the public and the police. The new legislation supports the government’s commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. It also follows previous action to help tackle these crimes in public spaces.

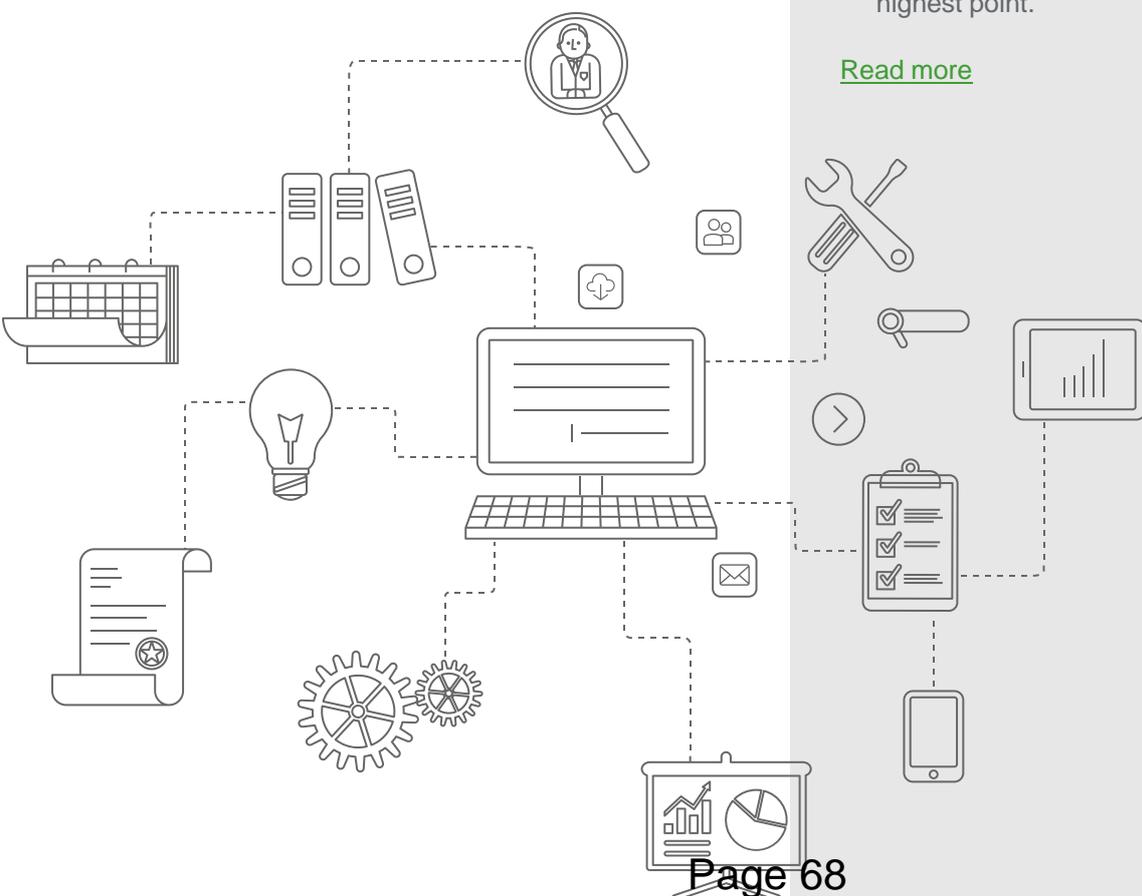
[Read more](#)

Police Officer Uplift, quarterly update to December 2022

The Home Office has published its quarterly update on the progress made with the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales. Key statistics include:

- there are more than 16,700 additional police officers in England and Wales since April 2020;
- an additional 1,420 officers have joined police forces across England and Wales in the past three months, as the government continues its drive to recruit 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023;
- the government has met 84% of its target and is well on the way to recruiting 20,000 new officers by March; and
- there are also now 51,107 female officers in 43 police forces in England and Wales, which is also at its highest point.

[Read more](#)





Fire

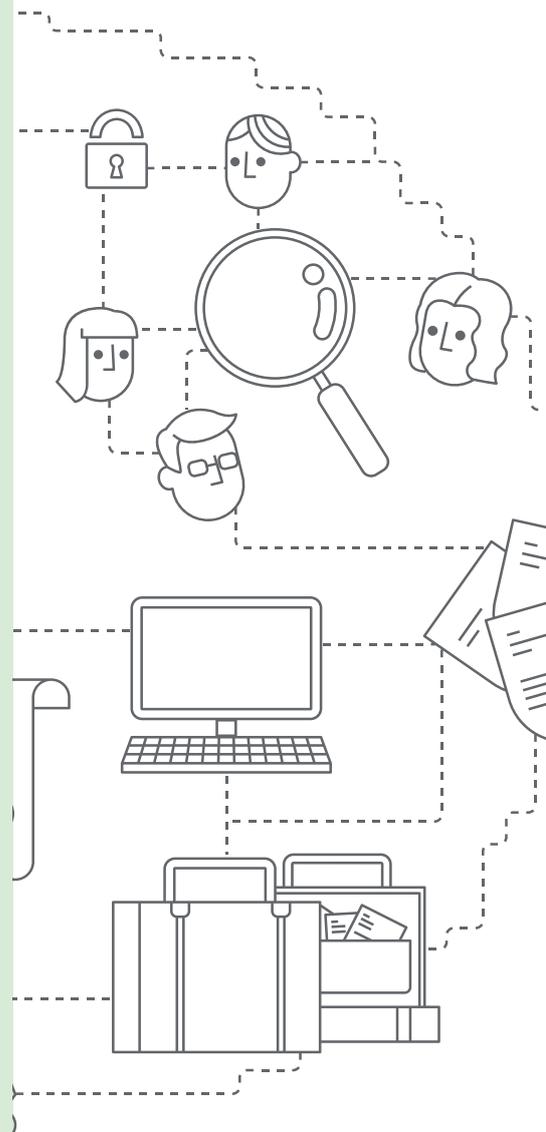
State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022

HMICFRS has published its State of Fire and Rescue 2022. Between February 2021 and August 2022, HMICFRS carried out its second full cycle of all 44 fire and rescue service (FRS) inspections in England. His Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services, found that:

- in its third tranche of inspections, grades have worsened in six out of 16 services;
- a key concern in the first tranche of inspections was “fire protection”, albeit there has since been a positive shift in the way services prioritise this area;
- “fire prevention” was an area that needed significant improvements with almost half of services needing to improve to keep their communities safe;
- 14 of 44 services could do more to improve how they respond to routine incidents;
- health and safety and wellbeing of staff continue to be a strength for almost all services;
- 23 services (21 “requires improvement” and two “inadequate”) were not able to demonstrate that they are appropriately allocating resources to manage risks;
- there are still aspects of bullying, harassment and discrimination within services and some services have not taken enough steps to “promote and improve equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)”. HMICFRS will increase the scrutiny of this area in future inspections;
- only two of the inspectorate’s previous six recommendations for reform of the fire service have been implemented, which the Inspectorate described as extremely disappointing; and
- the Home Office, the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs Council and trade unions should work together to consider reforming structures for negotiating pay, terms and conditions, which would reduce the risk of industrial action. The Home Office consulted on this recommendation in the White Paper on fire reform. HMICFRS are awaiting the results of this consultation which is expected in March 2023 and include detailed plans on how this recommendation will be implemented.

HMICFRS has changed their inspection gradings, moving from four gradings to five gradings. HMICFRS will also be changing its approach to tranches of inspection and will publish service reports as soon as they are ready instead of in tranches.

[Read more](#)



Fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework

HMICFRS has published the FRSs inspection programme and framework for all 44 FRSs in England, commencing January 2023. In its inspections, HMICFRS focus on the operational service the FRS provides to the public. HMICFRS carry out a rounded assessment of every FRS and cover its effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. The following areas are also assessed:

- the “operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection and response)”;
- the efficiency of the service (how well the service provides value for money and collaborates with other emergency services); and
- how well the service looks after its people (how well it “promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce, and develops leadership and service capability”).

[Read more](#)

Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 are now law and form part of a package of risk mitigating fire safety measures that the government is delivering following the Grenfell Tower fire to keep the public safe.

The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, which implement the majority of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations has come into force. These are new requirements for “responsible persons” of mid and high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to FRSs to assist them with operational planning and provide additional safety measures. In all multi-occupied residential buildings, residents should now be provided with fire safety instructions and information on fire doors.

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

- Do you know when your assessment will be and what preparation is ongoing for your assessment?



Questions for committee's consideration

- What actions have been taken following the inquiry?
- What are the impacts on resource following the legislation coming into force?
- What assurance can be provided over your mid and high-rise blocks of flats?

Firefighters far more likely to die from cancer and heart attacks than public

Research carried out by the University of Central Lancashire and commissioned by the Fire Brigades Union, has found that firefighters have a mortality rate for all cancers 1.6 times higher than other people, with researchers suggesting that excess cancer mortality is likely linked to different kinds of exposures and fire toxins. It also revealed firefighters are dying from heart attacks at five times the rate of the general public and suffering from strokes at almost three times the average rate.

The study concludes that “health monitoring for firefighters; reducing their exposures from contaminants at their workplace; and financial and medical support for those already affected are urgently needed.”

[Read more](#)



Questions for committee's consideration

- How are you management and/or ACs getting assurance over health monitoring of your firefighters?

The Fire Standards Board opens consultations on two Standards

The Fire Standards Board has outlined the next two Fire Standards, the proposed contents for which have now been shared with FRSs and all stakeholders for consultation. Forming part of the suite of Fire Standards relating to service delivery, the Fire Control Fire Standard is now open for consultation, as is the Fire Standard for Communications, Engagement and Consultation.

The [Fire Standard on Fire Control](#) has been developed with input from the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Fire Control team, the NFCC lead for fire control, the Mobilising Officers Group and also with input from fire control specialists across a range of FRSs. To achieve this Fire Standard:

- FRSs will need to include “fire control managers in its community risk management planning”;
- fire control employees will need to be provided with effective systems and arrangements; and
- mental and physical health and wellbeing support should be easily accessible and widely promoted to its fire control employees.

The [Communications, Engagement and Consultation Fire Standard](#) has been developed with input from FirePro UK, the NFCC communications teams and communication and collaboration specialists from a wide range of FRSs. To achieve this Fire Standard:

- FRSs will need to have a strategic approach to communication, engagement and consultation;
- FRSs will need to have “resilient and out of hours arrangement to handle out of hours enquiries and manage communications during crises and emergencies, in line with the requirements of the Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Fire Standard”; and
- communications planning frameworks should be consistent for communications and campaign work.

Both consultations have now closed and all consultation responses will be considered. Following this, the Fire Standard will undergo a quality assurance process before the final Fire Standard is proposed to the Fire Standards Board for approval.

[Read more](#)

Police and Fire

RSM's Local Government VAT webinar

9 March 2023, 10am – 11am

We are pleased to announce our next VAT and tax webinar for local authorities and emergency services is taking place on Thursday 9 March 2023.

Our webinars aim to help officers gain up-to-date and bite-size insights on VAT and tax issues affecting their organisations.

This webinar will be an excellent opportunity for you to hear and raise questions on sector related VAT issues within a trusted forum. As well as hearing about technical updates, our sector specialists will be on hand to provide feedback on recent developments.

In our session, topical sector updates will include:

- recent case law and legislative changes affecting the sector;
- HMRC VAT policy changes including sector activity;
- VAT saving opportunities; and
- questions and answers.

To register for the webinar, please [click here](#).



Did you join RSM and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) in Tenders

28 February 2023, 12:30pm - 1:15pm

On 28 February we held a joint webinar with CIPFA to help you get assurance that your internal arrangements are in order.

TUPE often raises tricky and complex complications in public tenders or when insourcing services. Failure to fully comply not only prejudices the success of the procurement process but can also lead to employment tribunals which can result in additional costs and damaged reputations.



References



An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations



State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022



Police requests for third party material



Fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework



Review of police dismissals launched



Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022



Policing to receive up to £287m funding boost next year



Fire Standard on Fire Control



Safer Streets Fund is building confidence in the police



Communications, Engagement and Consultation Fire Standard



Government supports a new public sexual harassment offence



Firefighters far more likely to die from cancer and heart attacks than public



Police Officer Uplift, quarterly update to December 2022



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Emerging Risk Radar

Emerging risk considerations



16 December 2022

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Emerging risk radar at December 2022

Given your business strategic objectives what do you see as the emerging events or threats that could impact on your business either negatively or positively and that you believe should be watched?

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138 separate responses from board members from across all sectors (over last 3 months).

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Emerging risk consideration:



How far will these emerging risk affect your business? What do you see as the emerging risks?



How far will these emerging risk play through into your existing strategic risks? how far will they change the way you currently manage your strategic risks?



How will you respond? How will you continue to keep under review the emerging risks?

Emerging risk – why? And what?

Why?

The board should establish and keep under review the risk and internal control framework and determine the nature and extent of the principal risks it is willing to take in order to achieve its strategic objectives.

What?

An **emerging risk** might be defined as:

- a new or unforeseen level of uncertainty driven by external events – the risk may still be forming and it may not be clear as to the implications for the business, be these negative or positive.



To be watchful of these emerging risks and how they might play through is an important element of preparedness and the business management of risk.



Given your business strategic objectives what do you see as the emerging events or threats that could impact on your business either negatively or positively and that you believe should be watched?

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 Current	Short – medium term	Medium – longer term
<p>6.2 Economic recession and impact on business plans, budgets, staff and customers (Priority #1)</p>	<p>2.1 Increasing levels of legislation and regulation affecting businesses</p>	<p>6.3 Fuel and energy crisis – access to and availability of energy and increasing costs (see 6.1 & 6.2)</p>
<p>3.1 Climate change and sustainability implications both positive e.g. opportunity to fully embrace green agenda and leverage off this and negative e.g. greenwashing, costs of meeting targets (Priority #2)</p>	<p>1.1 Societal changes – pace of change and extremes in society</p>	<p>1.2 Responding to implications of the pandemic and further lock downs</p>
<p>2.2 Uncertainties in government priorities resulting in policy changes and reform (Priority #3)</p>	<p>5.1 Extended supply chains – ensuring continuity and quality</p>	<p>4.1 Cyber attacks – becoming more aggressive and more frequent</p>
<p>7.2 Recruiting, developing and retaining staff - implications (Priority #4)</p>	<p>3.2 Increasing demand from stakeholders to demonstrate and deliver social value</p>	<p>5.5 Effectiveness of partnerships and collaborations</p>
<p>4.2 Keeping up and taking advantage of advances in technology (v cost) (Priority #5)</p>		
<p>6.1 Inflation and effects of increasing costs of services and cost of finance (Priority #6)</p>		

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Societal and Community

- 1.1 Societal changes – pace of change and extremes in society
- 1.2 Responding to implications of the pandemic and further lock downs

Policy and Regulation

- 2.2 Uncertainties in government priorities resulting in policy changes and reform (Priority #3)
- 2.1 Increasing levels of legislation and regulation affecting businesses

Governance

No related risks to report.

Environmental

- 3.1 Climate change and sustainability implications both positive e.g. opportunity to fully embrace green agenda and leverage off this and negative e.g. greenwashing, costs of meeting targets (Priority #2)
- 3.2 Increasing demand from stakeholders to demonstrate and deliver social value

People Resources

- 7.2 Recruiting, developing and retaining staff - implications (Priority #4)

Technological

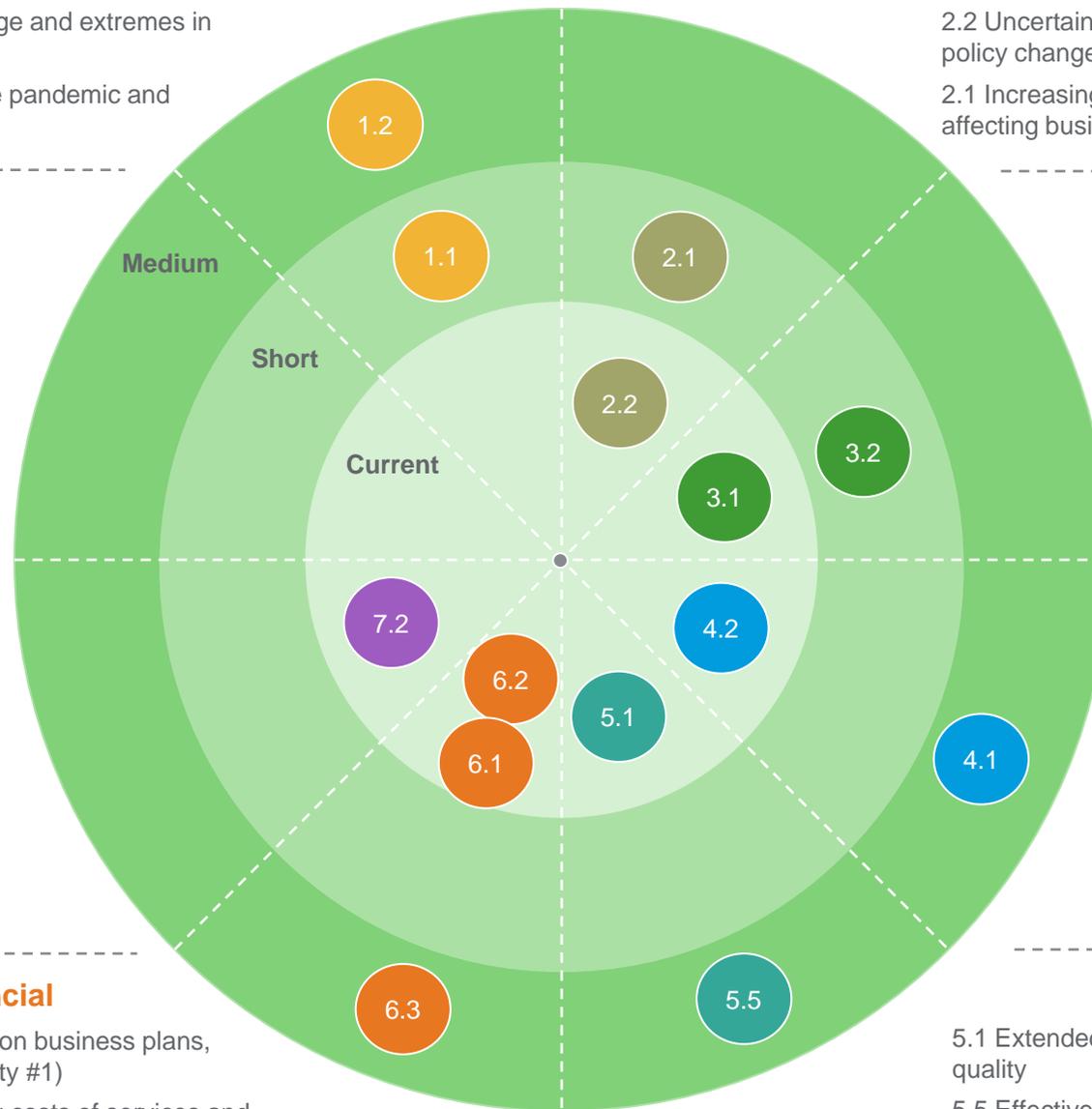
- 4.2 Keeping up and taking advantage of advances in technology (v cost) (Priority #5)
- 4.1 Cyber attacks – becoming more aggressive and more frequent

Economic and Financial

- 6.2 Economic recession and impact on business plans, budgets, staff and customers (Priority #1)
- 6.1 Inflation and effects of increasing costs of services and cost of finance (Priority #6)
- 6.3 Fuel and energy crisis – access to and availability of energy and increasing costs (see 6.1 & 6.2)

Commercial

- 5.1 Extended supply chains – ensuring continuity and quality
- 5.5 Effectiveness of partnerships and collaborations



Further information

Insight4GRC™

RSM's Governance, Risk Management and Compliance Digital Solution.



4risk
<https://youtu.be/12NyJhSNK3o>

4action
<https://youtu.be/xEuFSwzbzvw>

4policies
<https://youtu.be/ufXYt1juwhA>

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[Boredom in the Boardroom | RSM UK](#)

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Procurement & Contract Management

Newsletter & Technical Brief

Jan 2023

In this our first newsletter of 2023 we cover the key technical developments and news about public sector procurement and contract management in the UK.

In this edition:

1. New Procurement Bill reaches the House of Commons, but progress is taking longer than expected.
2. Government puts a good spin on the benefits of the new Procurement Bill, however the knives are out in the House of Commons and everything could change.
3. Disclosing details of other bidders: a balancing act of transparency vs commercial interests.
4. The 30 day time limit for procurement challenge is clear but when does the clock start ticking?
5. Oh what a tangled web we weave when we design to run roughshod over the rules.
6. Up coming webinars and training courses.

Please contact us for more information about the content of this newsletter or if you would like to attend our free webinars or paid-for training events.

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1. New Procurement Bill reaches the House of Commons, but progress is taking longer than expected.

The Procurement Bill completed its committee and report stage in the House of Lords and was passed to the House of Commons on 14 December 2022. The current amended version of the bill has been published and can be found here: [Procurement Bill](#). The second reading in the Commons took place on 9 January 2023. The Bill's passage is taking longer than expected and it is now anticipated that we will reach royal assent in late 2023 with implementation during the first half of 2024.

Join us on 30 January 2023 at 12:30 at our next webinar when we will discuss the new draft procurement legislation and the impact it will have on us all. To join this FREE Webinar on 30 January 2023 12:30, use this TEAMS link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

2. Government puts a good spin on the benefits of the new Procurement Bill, however the knives are out in the House of Commons and everything could change.

This week the Cabinet Office Government Commercial Function published a report; [Benefits for Prospective Suppliers to the Public Sector](#). The document sets out how the new regime will deliver a range of benefits for suppliers of all sizes wishing to do business and deliver contracts for the public sector. However, the Bill is yet to face the rigour of the Commons and significant amendments are expected. That said if just some of the benefits set out by the Cabinet Office report are realised it will be a significant improvement on the current regime. You have to applaud the ambition.

3. Disclosing details of other bidders: a balancing act of transparency vs commercial interests

Do public bodies need to release the names of parties who took part in a procurement exercise and failed to secure a bid?

Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, there is no obligation to disclose details of other bidders beside the specific requirement in the standstill letters, where only details of the successful contractor must be disclosed to the individual unsuccessful bidder. However, could the Freedom of Information override this?

The First-tier Tribunal of the General Regulatory Chamber dismissed an appeal in [Greenwood v Information Commissioner](#), brought under section 57 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The court found that there was insufficient evidence to persuade them that on balance it was in the public interest to disclose the withheld information, particularly following evidence that disclosure would or would be likely to adversely affect these companies' commercial interests. The case required a balancing act between the public interest in the Government's handling of the pandemic versus the respondents' notion of protection and safeguarding the anonymity of unsuccessful bidders. The Tribunal found the commercial interest in withholding the information outweighed any public interest and therefore dismissed the appeal.

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4. The 30 day time limit for procurement challenge is clear but when does the clock start ticking?

We see instances when contracting authorities believe the clock starts rigidly when they inform bidders of the outcome, however if you withhold information (intentionally or by error) from unsuccessful bidders this 30 day period could start much later and open a challenge at a future date. The case law is clear; The clock is stated to run from “the date when the Claimant first knew or ought to have known that grounds for starting the proceedings had arisen”.

We have been provided with further guidance on when things about which a Claimant “ought to have known” in [Siemens Mobility Ltd v High Speed Two \(HS2\) Ltd](#). This judgment provides a useful analysis of the case law on this often confusing situation about the 30 day limitation period for procurement claims, and the point at which a Claimant can be said to have acquired or should have acquired enough knowledge to start that limitation clock running. The judgement is worth a read.

5. Oh what a tangled web we weave when we design to run roughshod over the rules

The case of [Consultant Connect Limited v NHS Bath](#) is most extraordinary. So many breaches of the regulations all happening during one procurement process is rare. Contracting authorities must comply with both Regulations 18 and 33 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR) when awarding call-off contracts, and in this case they clearly did not.

The judgement finds wide-ranging breaches of the Regulations, including that:

- the Defendants used the framework to effect the direct award of the contract to the Interested Party in breach of the equal treatment requirements under Regulation 18;
- the mini competition did not comply with Regulation 33, because (a) only one bidder was invited to tender; (b) the Defendants had tailored their requirements to that bidder; and (c) the pricing arrangement did not remotely resemble the pricing set out in the framework agreement; and
- two employees had conflicts of interest and, in breach of Regulation 24, no appropriate measures were taken by the Defendants to prevent them from being involved in the procurement.

Further the judge rejected the Defendants' argument that non-parties should be unable to challenge the award of a call-off contract under the relevant framework agreement. On the facts of the case, the Court found that the contract award breached a relevant duty owed to the non-member and the non-member suffered, or risked suffering, loss in consequence.

The judge was clearly not happy and he made a contract shortening order, the first of its kind in the UK, ordered the Defendant to pay civil financial penalties and further found that the Defendant's breaches were sufficiently serious to award damages.

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6. Up coming webinars and training courses

Training

The next Public Procurement & Contract Management Training days are open for bookings. Please write to walter.akers@rsmuk.com to book.

- Beginners Guide to Public Procurement (Level 1) - Friday 10 March 2023 (9:30 – 15:45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.
- Introduction to contract Management (Level 1) – Wednesday 15 March 2023 (9:30 – 15:45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.
- Guide to completing FTS Notices – Friday 24 March 2023 (9:30 – 12:45) Cost £180 plus VAT per attendee.
- How to Undertake Compliant Tender Evaluations - Friday 28 April 2023 (9.30 -15.45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.

Webinar 30 January 2023

The next FREE Webinar is on 30 January 2023 from 12:30 to 13:15. During this Webinar we will be providing an update on the new UK procurement bill. To join this FREE Webinar on 30 January 2023 12:30, use this TEAMS link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

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Procurement & Contract Management

Newsletter & Technical Brief

Feb 2023

In this our second newsletter of 2023 we cover the latest developments and news about public sector procurement and contract management in the UK.

In this edition:

1. How to prepare - It is time to put the new Procurement Bill on your to do list!
2. Call for evidence – your chance to shape the new Procurement Bill, however act fast as time is tight.
3. The new Procurement Bill debarment and exclusion of bidders will be a war zone.
4. A painful lesson - Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust.
5. Contracts Finder thresholds changed again.
6. Looks like the Government has still not published all Covid contracts – what could they be hiding or have they simply lost the contracts?
7. Upcoming webinars and training courses.

Please contact us for more information about the content of this newsletter or if you would like to attend our free webinars or paid-for training events.

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1. How to prepare - It is time to put the new Procurement Bill on your to do list!

The new Procurement Bill means change – change brings opportunity as well as risk.

The new Bill will be the most significant change to public procurement practice in a generation. Whilst it has echoes with the outgoing Public Contract Regulations 2015, it brings entirely new elements and will require every public sector organisation to make significant changes.

Much has been discussed in our seminars and across the sector about what elements of new legislation might mean for us all as procurement specialists, and this will continue right through to the Bill being passed as an Act of Parliament and after. However, the challenge will be about distilling, understanding and implementing the changes required.

Procurement permeates organisations way beyond lawyers and procurement specialists. We will all need to think specifically about how the new Act will need to be introduced into organisational practice. You should be thinking now, about:

1. Where should this change be led from to get the greatest support and chance to succeed?
2. How will it be delivered?
3. Who in the organisation will need to be involved? Including those responsible for procurement but also those outside your procurement teams.
4. How will information be cascaded?
5. What support and guidance will be required ahead of the Act coming into law?
6. How to operationalise the new Act and reflect it in policy and procedures that govern not only procurement but broader areas across the whole organisation?

The breadth and detail of the change requirements is likely to be the same regardless of the size of the organisation. However, larger organisations are likely to have to implement changes across a greater number / range of staff and activities. Smaller organisations, meanwhile may have smaller numbers to deal with, but may not have the bandwidth to accommodate changes in the required timeframes. Both challenges mean early preparation and planning will be needed.

The to do list for February 2023 should include:

- Getting the top of the organisation engaged about the Procurement Act. Put it on the board's agenda now!
- Start planning. Even though we don't yet know what the final Act will contain we should start developing a high level outline plan that addresses the 6 key questions set out above.

We will be running dedicated webinars & seminars on implementing changes to draw in and share thoughts on planning for the new Act over the coming months.

For information on what the Government Commercial Function are advising organisations to do visit [Transforming Public Procurement - planning and preparation checklist](#)

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2. Call for evidence – your chance to shape the new Procurement Bill, however act fast as time is tight

The Procurement Bill was debated at a second reading in the House of Commons on Monday 9 January 2023 without any major opposition and has now been sent to a Public Bill Committee which will scrutinise the Bill line by line and is expected to report to the House by Thursday 23 February 2023. It is anticipated that whilst there will be several amendments to the Bill over the next few months, they are likely to cover technical deficiencies in the Bill, rather than major amendments. The timetable for royal assent is expected to be Spring/ Summer 2023 and implementation in early 2024.

The Public Bill Committee [has called for evidence](#) and seeks views to be received by 5pm on 23 February 2023. So act fast if you want to participate.

3. The new Bill debarment and exclusion of bidders will be a war zone

The Procurement Bill introduces new grounds for exclusion from all public sector tenders where a supplier has committed a sufficiently serious breach of any relevant contract. This exclusion for poor performance could apply when a breach has resulted in contract termination, the award of damages or a settlement agreement between the supplier and any relevant authority. In the past these difficult situations have often been dealt with by contracting authorities behind closed doors, however the new Bill will change this.

In an unusual move the Government has published a memorandum addressing the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\) in relation to the Procurement Bill](#). It is clear the proposed regime allowing for bidders' debarment and exclusion from all public sector contracts will be a hugely contested area once the new Procurement Act is enacted. This is because being excluded from all future public sector tenders will be catastrophic for most suppliers. In the memorandum the government puts forward its case as to why the debarment provisions are not inconsistent with the ECHR. Looks like the government is getting their argument in first knowing that trouble is on the way.

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4. A painful lesson - Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust

With the substantive issues decided by the Courts in favour of Bromcom, the litigation now proceeds to a trial on exactly how much it should receive by way of damages. This hearing is expected to take place later in 2023.

The sad truth about this case is that damages and costs could amount to more than £800,000. That is a huge amount which will have to be funded from the academy's budgets to the ultimate detriment of the school children.....yes running a compliant procurement process is time consuming and costly but getting it wrong is far more painful.

Interesting to read [Bromcom's statement on the ruling](#) wherein they say that "...schools have been locked in legacy non-cloud technology due to procurement gaps and the lack of a level playing field in the marketplace" and that they were motivated (and now vindicated) in bringing the legal claim against ULT in a desire "to drive the changes needed."

[Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust](#) is a useful reminder of some key rules for contracting authorities:

a) consensus scoring cannot be done with a calculator

The fact that "average scoring" may be common practice within the public sector did not make it lawful. In this case, the final score for each technical criterion was determined by simply aggregating and averaging the scores awarded by each individual evaluator. The Judge held that this approach to scoring was unlawful. It resulted in scores being awarded that were not whole number scores, as indicated in the ITT. It also meant that erroneous scores would remain within the final score. Most importantly, as there was no moderation process at which the evaluators discussed their scores and agreed a final consensus score, there was no record of the authority's reason for the scores (there was just a record of why each individual evaluator awarded the scores they did).

b) award criteria must relate to the contract being awarded, and not to any other contract.

United Learning should not have allowed the incumbent (Arbor) to include a discount in its commercial tender to reflect a rebate on fees charged under its existing (entirely separate) contract in the event that its tender was successful.

c) read submissions carefully and, if something is unclear, it may be more appropriate to ask clarification questions rather than to guess. That is particularly acute when adding costs that appear to be missing.

United Learning should not have added a cost to Bromcom's financial submission to reflect the cost of establishing a link for the transfer of data. The only reason the same cost was not added to Arbor's tender was because the applicable data link had already been established under the existing contract.

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APPENDIX A NEWSLETTER & TECHNICAL BRIEF

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4. A painful lesson - Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust (continued) ^{Page 5}

d) Don't use a drop box

The Court also found that it was unlawful for the winning bidder (Arbor) to have submitted its final tender by way of a drop-box to which the winning bidder (Arbor) continued to have access, both after submitting its final tender, and after the deadline for final tenders had passed.

e) Quality of evaluation is important

The Court further found that individual evaluators between them made no less than 10 manifestly erroneous scoring errors in the scoring of the quality responses.

Examples include:

- a miscalculation of the winning bidder's mobilisation costs, unduly inflating their score.
- a misunderstanding (by the evaluators) of what the invitation to tender required in each bidder's response to the "Meet Local Needs" part of the tender such that scores awarded were inaccurate.
- a misinterpretation of Bromcom's response to one question where the evaluator had incorrectly concluded that Bromcom could not meet ULT's requirements. The court concluded, however, that Bromcom were "plainly offering what the tender required".

We will be discussing Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust during our FREE webinar on 6 March 2023 (12:30 – 13:15). This FREE Webinar has been specially developed following this important judgement and will provide guidance and useful tips to ensure you avoid potential procurement breaches. To register for this FREE Webinar on 6 March 2023 at 12:30, use this link: [Webinar Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust](#)

5. Contracts Finder thresholds changed again

[Procurement Policy Note 01/23](#) – update to legal and policy requirements to publish procurement information on Contracts Finder

The Public Contracts (Amendment) Regulations 2022 came into force on 21 Dec 2022. This makes two changes to the Below Threshold Regime:

- a) The contract value limits have been amended: from £10,000 to £12,000 for central government authorities; and from £25,000 to £30,000 for sub-central authorities.
- b) NHS Foundation Trusts now have the same publication value thresholds as sub-central authorities, alongside NHS Trusts (i.e. £30,000 and above), and need only publish the minimum information required by the PCR 2015, and to the 90 day timescale.

All contracting authorities should also note that the contract value limits are to be calculated inclusive of VAT (this took effect from 1 Jan 2022).

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6. Looks like the Government has still not published all Covid contracts – what could they be hiding or have they simply lost the contracts?

Back in March 2021, former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, said in Parliament that details of all Covid contracts were now “on the record”. A month later, Cabinet Minister Julia Lopez, claimed “all historical covid-related contracts” had been published. However, [an investigation by Good Law Project](#) has found examples of 29 deals awarded where the contracts still haven’t been made public.

The Government is facing a judicial review challenge from the Good Law Project over a three-year delay in publishing the details of ventilator contracts worth £247m.

In a pre-action protocol letter sent to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Secretary of State for Defence, the legal campaign group claim the Government's failure to release the contracts amounts to a breach of Government policy on transparency.

The dispute centres around three sets of contracts awarded between May 2020 and January 2021 as part of the Government's "ventilator challenge" programme, which called on manufacturers to step up the production of ventilators in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The first set of contracts highlighted in the claim were awarded to 14 manufacturers in May 2020 at a cost of £193m. A second batch of contracts awarded in August 2020 totalling £51m and a third contract totalling £3m are also targeted in the claim.

7. Upcoming webinars and training courses

Training

The next Public Procurement & Contract Management Training days are open for bookings.

Please write to walter.akers@rsmuk.com to book.

- Introduction to Contract Management (Level 1) – Wednesday 15 March 2023 (9:30 – 15:45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.
- Guide to completing FTS Notices – Friday 24 March 2023 (9:30 – 12:45) Cost £180 plus VAT per attendee.
- Beginners Guide to Public Procurement (Level 1) - Friday 19 May 2023 (9:30 – 15:45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.
- How to Undertake Compliant Tender Evaluations - Friday 28 April 2023 (9:30 -15:45) Cost £240 plus VAT per attendee.

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PROCUREMENT & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER & TECHNICAL BRIEF FEBRUARY 2023

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7. Upcoming webinars and training courses (continued)

The next FREE Webinars are:

28 February 2023 (12:30 – 13:15) TUPE in Tenders

TUPE often raises tricky and complex problems in public tenders or when insourcing services. Failure to fully comply not only prejudices the success of the procurement process but can also lead to employment tribunals which can result in additional costs and damaged reputations. To register for this FREE Webinar on 28 February 2023 at 12:30, use this link: [Webinar TUPE in Tenders](#)

6 March 2023 (12:30 – 13:15) Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust

This recent case has lessons for all public procurement professionals and specifically schools and academies. This FREE Webinar has been specially developed following this important judgement and will provide guidance and useful tips to ensure you avoid potential procurement breaches. To register for this FREE Webinar on 6 March 2023 at 12:30, use this link: [Webinar Bromcom Computers Plc v United Learning Trust](#)

Walter Akers

Partner

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Internal Audit Strategy 2023/24

Presented at the Audit Committee meeting of: 28 March 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In preparing our Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 we have worked closely with management to produce an audit programme which remains mindful of the continuing developments and challenges around Covid-19. Whilst this plan is presented for consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee, we will continue to hold regular meetings with management during the year, to deliver an internal audit programme which remains flexible and ‘agile’ to ensure it meets your needs in these ever changing circumstances.

The key points to note from our plan are:



2023/24 Internal Audit priorities: Internal audit activity for 2023/24 is based on analysing your corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other factors affecting you in the year ahead, including changes within the sector. Our detailed plan for 2023/24 is included at Section 1.



Level of Resource: The level of resource required to deliver the plan is consistent with the rates within our contract with you. We will continue with our approach of introducing the use of technology when undertaking our operational audits. In recent years, we embraced more ways of using technology to undertake our audit work including; the use of 4questionnaires, MS Teams meetings, secure web portals for audit data sharing (Huddle) and data analytics technology. This will strengthen our sampling and focus our audit testing. Refer to Appendix A.



Core Assurance: At the request of management and detailed in section 1, the areas for consideration are broadly in line with prior years in a number of areas where core assurance reviews have been requested over a number of key areas. In particular, we have included audits on **Information governance/GDPR, Corporate Risk Management Planning** and **Sickness Absence Management**. We have also included coverage on an area of Key Financial Controls and we have been requested to undertake a further review of Cyber Security. Six of the reviews in 2023/24 have been directly driven by risks on the strategic risk register.



‘Agile’ approach: Our approach to working with you has always been one where we will respond to your changing assurance needs. By employing ‘agile’ or a ‘flexible’ approach to our service delivery, we are able to change the focus of audits / audit delivery; keeping you informed of these changes in our progress papers to Audit & Governance Committee during the year.

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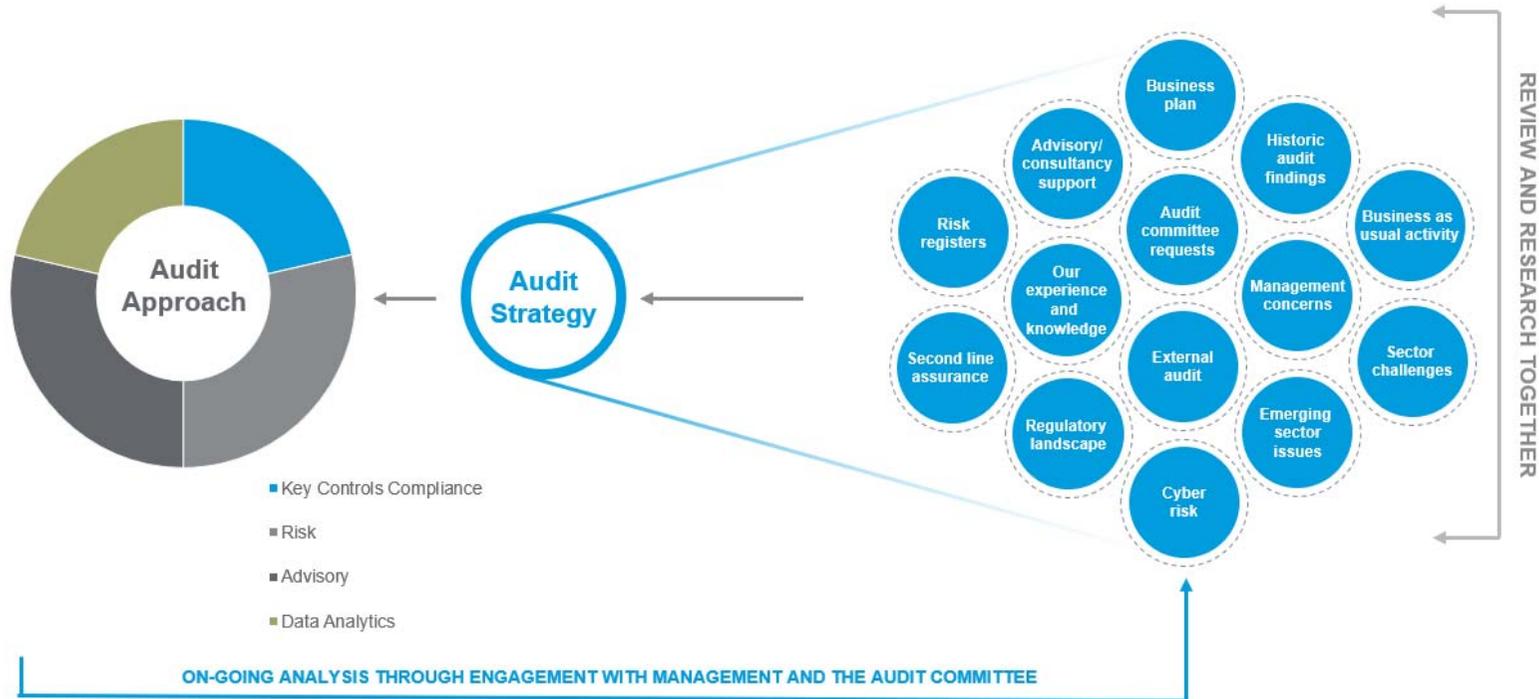
1. YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24

Our approach to developing your internal audit plan is based on analysing your corporate objectives, risk profile and assurance framework as well as other, factors affecting Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service in the year ahead, including changes within the sector.

Risk management processes

We have evaluated your risk management processes and consider that we can place reliance on your strategic risk register to inform the internal audit strategy. We have used various sources of information (see Figure A below) and discussed priorities for internal audit coverage with senior management who have indicated a preference to continue to review areas of key concern which are detailed in section 2 which follow a similar theme with prior years

Figure A: Audit considerations – sources considered when developing the Internal Audit Strategy.



Based on our understanding of the organisation, the information provided to us by stakeholders, and the regulatory requirements, we have developed an annual internal plan for the coming year and a high level strategic plan (see Section 2 and Appendix B for full details).

2. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023/24

The table below shows each of the reviews that we propose to undertake as part of the internal audit plan for 2023/24. The table details the strategic risks / strategic objectives which may warrant internal audit coverage. This review of your risks allows us to ensure that the proposed plan will meet the organisation's assurance needs for the forthcoming and future years. As well as assignments designed to provide assurance or advisory input around specific risks, the strategy also includes: time for tracking the implementation of actions and an audit management allocation.

	Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit & Governance Committee
Corporate Risk: Management of Cyber Security				
Cyber Essentials Our audit would allow the Service to understand whether a robust control framework in relation to cyber security has been put in place. We would utilise our Technology Risk Assurance team and the exact scope will be agreed with the sponsor of the audit ahead of the fieldwork being completed. We will also follow up any management actions agreed as part of the 2022/23 audit in this area.	Advisory	£8,250	March 2024	July 2024
Corporate Risk: Management of Premises Risk Information				
Information Governance/GDPR We will review compliance with the GDPR requirements. Specific areas for coverage to be agreed at the time of detailed scoping. We will utilise our specialist Technology Risk Assurance team to undertake this review.	Advisory	£7,050	August 2023	January 2024
Corporate Risk Management Plan Review of the Corporate Risk Management Planning Framework and Service reporting structure in place to approve and monitor the Plan. We will also look at a sample of assumptions which will be agreed at the scoping stage. As part of our audit we will assess the clarity of the framework and reporting structure to ensure roles and responsibilities have been defined and are being effectively discharged through the Service reporting structure.	Risk based	£5,000	August 2023	January 2024
Risk Management and Governance In order to comply with public sector internal audit standards, and to facilitate RSM's annual Head of Internal Audit opinion on risk management and governance, RSM will undertake the following:	Risk based	£5,000	March 2024	July 2024

	Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit & Governance Committee
<p>Risk Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep dive on a sample of risks to challenge controls, assessments, assurances and actions recorded within the risk register to ensure that reflect operating practice. • Follow up of prior year actions <p>Governance (coverage tbc but could include one of the following areas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business / Strategic Planning • Key Performance Indicators • Performance Management 				
Service Plan Risk: Pensions Governance				
<p>Firefighter Pension Administration (WYPF)</p> <p>A review of the Fire Authorities pension provider 'West Yorkshire Pension Fund', to allow the service to take assurance that WYPF have adequate processes and controls in place to process Firefighter pensions.</p>	Risk based	£5,000	November 2023	January 2024
Service Plan Risk: TVFCS Staffing Resilience				
<p>Sickness Absence Management</p> <p>To review the policies and procedures in place in relation to sickness absence management and the compliance with these, this will include short and long term, in addition to how trigger points and trends are identified and managed. As part of our audit, we will use data analytics to support identification of our sample testing.</p>	Risk based (& use of analytics)	£5,000	July 2023	October 2023
Core Assurance				
<p>Payroll Provider – Dataplan</p> <p>A review of the Fire Authorities payroll provider 'Dataplan', to allow the service to take assurance that Dataplan have adequate processes and controls in place to process the payroll.</p>	Key controls	£5,000	November 2023	January 2024
<p>Key Financial Controls</p> <p>In prior years, RSM has conducted a high-level review across a number of KFC areas. We will in future undertake a deep dive of one / two of the areas on a cyclical basis.</p>	Key controls	£5,500	January 2024	March 2024

		Audit approach	Fee	Proposed timing	Proposed Audit & Governance Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General ledger (2023/24) Cash, bank and treasury management (2023/24) Payroll Payments and creditors – 2019/20 Income and debtors - 2022/23 Asset Management Annual Pension Return – 2020/21 Creditors – 2021/22 Expenses - 2022/23 				
Other Internal Audit Activity					
Follow Up	To meet internal auditing standards, and to provide assurance on action taken to address recommendations previously agreed by management.	N/A		The fees and timings will be included within the internal audit reviews noted above	
Management	This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual planning Preparation for, and attendance at, audit committee Regular liaison and progress updates Liaison with external audit and other assurance providers Preparation of the annual opinion 	N/A	£7,550	Ongoing	Ongoing

A detailed planning process will be completed for each review, and the final scope will be documented in an Assignment Planning Sheet. This will be issued to the key stakeholders for each review.

2.1 Working with other assurance providers

The Audit & Governance Committee is reminded that internal audit is only one source of assurance and through the delivery of our plan we will not, and do not, seek to cover all risks and processes within the organisation. We will however continue to work closely with other assurance providers, such as external audit and HMICFRS to ensure that duplication is minimised, and a suitable breadth of assurance obtained.

APPENDIX A) YOUR INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

Your internal audit service is provided by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP. The team will be led by Dan Harris as your Head of Internal Audit, supported by Zoe Hibbert as your client manager.

Fees

Our fee to deliver the plan is £53,350 (excluding VAT).

Core team

The delivery of the 2023/24 audit plan will be based around a core team. However, we will complement the team with additional specialist skills where required.

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.

Conflicts of interest

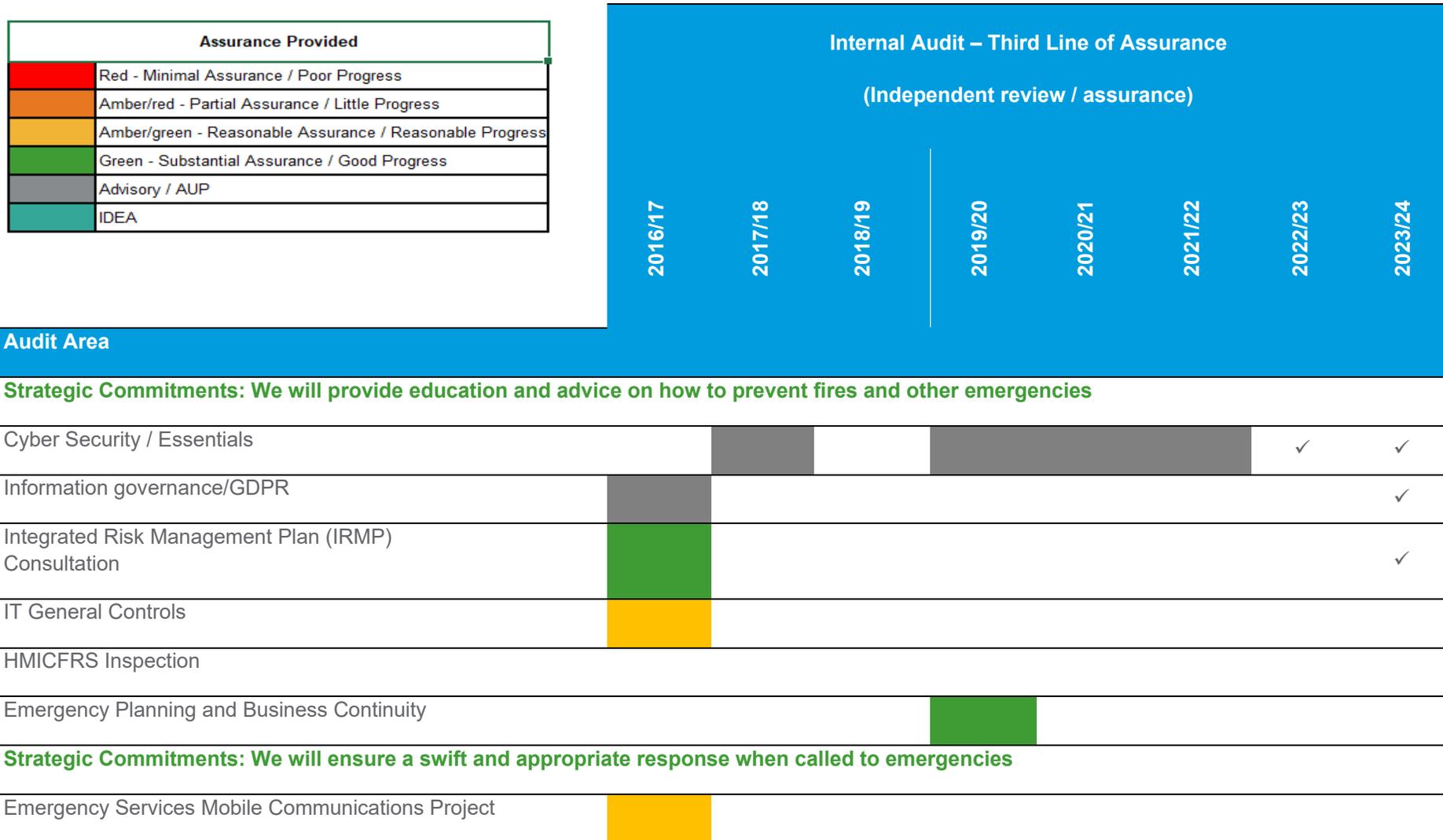
We are not aware of any relationships that may affect the independence and objectivity of the team, and which are required to be disclosed under internal auditing standards.

Corporate responsibility

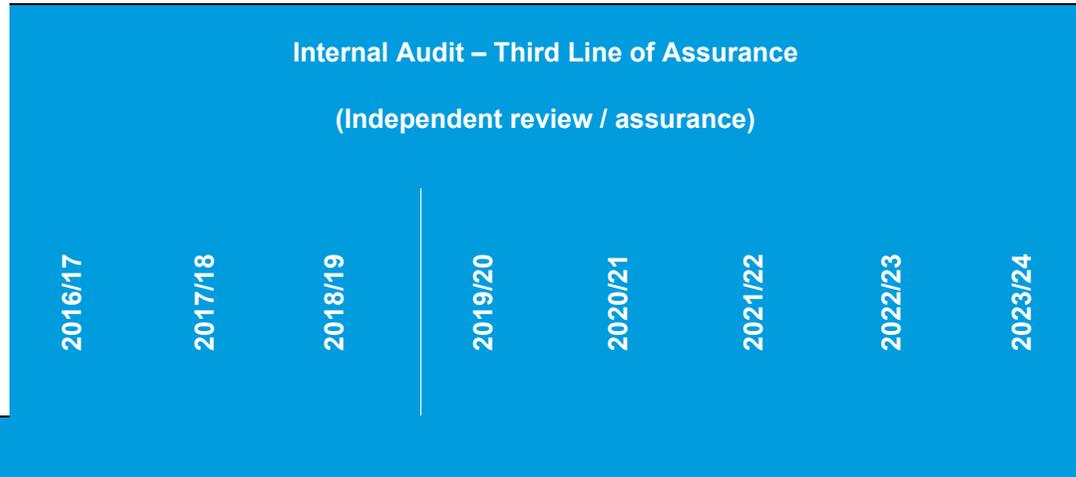
At RSM we believe it is our responsibility to positively impact on our society and the environment. We have three pillars of corporate responsibility: environment, charity and community. For more details on RSM’s commitment visit our website: [Corporate responsibility | RSM UK](#).

APPENDIX B) INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY 2023/24

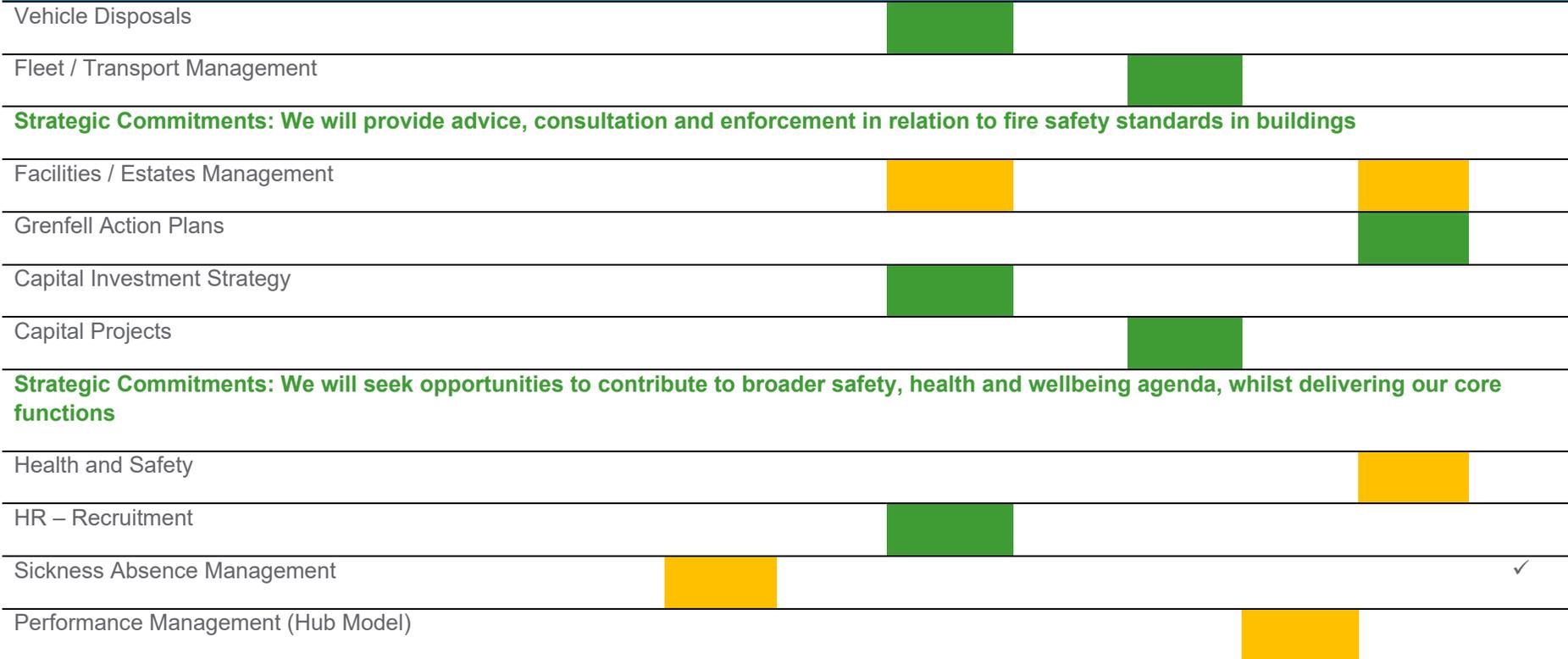
The table below shows an overview of the audit coverage to be provided through RSM's delivery of the internal audit strategy. This has been derived from the process outlined in Section 1 above, as well as our own view of the risks facing the sector as a whole.



Assurance Provided	
	Red - Minimal Assurance / Poor Progress
	Amber/red - Partial Assurance / Little Progress
	Amber/green - Reasonable Assurance / Reasonable Progress
	Green - Substantial Assurance / Good Progress
	Advisory / AUP
	IDEA



Audit Area



Assurance Provided	
	Red - Minimal Assurance / Poor Progress
	Amber/red - Partial Assurance / Little Progress
	Amber/green - Reasonable Assurance / Reasonable Progress
	Green - Substantial Assurance / Good Progress
	Advisory / AUP
	IDEA



Audit Area

Performance Development Reviews									
Vetting									
Strategic Commitments: We will ensure that RBFRS provides good value for money									
Key Financial Controls									✓
Fire Fighter Pension Administration									✓
Payroll Provider – Dataplan				Follow up – Good progress					✓
Procurement									
Timesheet and Timekeeping									
Financial Planning / Long Term Budgeting									
Value for Money									
Core Assurance									
Risk Management & Governance									✓ ✓
Follow Up (Included within individual audits)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX C) INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

Need for the charter

This charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service. The establishment of a charter is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and approval of the charter is the responsibility of the audit committee.

The internal audit service is provided by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP (“RSM”).

We plan and perform our internal audit work with a view to reviewing and evaluating the risk management, control and governance arrangements that the organisation has in place, focusing in particular on how these arrangements help you to achieve its objectives. The internal audit function is required to comply with the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) as follows:

- Core principles for the professional practice of internal auditing;
- Definition of internal auditing;
- Code of ethics; and
- The Standards.

Mission of internal audit

As set out in the PSIAS,, the mission articulates what internal audit aspires to accomplish within an organisation. Its place in the IPPF is deliberate, demonstrating how practitioners should leverage the entire framework to facilitate their ability to achieve the mission.

“To enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight”.

Independence and ethics

To provide for the independence of internal audit, its personnel report directly to Dan Harris (acting as your head of internal audit). The independence of RSM is assured by the internal audit service reporting to the chief executive, with further reporting lines to the Head of Finance and Procurement

Your head of internal audit Dan Harris has been in place for nine years. The Internal Audit Code of Practice as published by the Chartered IIA suggests that this is brought to the attention of the audit committee [or as appropriate] to review and confirm your assessment on the independence of your internal audit services. To assist the assessment; RSM is able to remain independent for the following reasons:

- As an outsourced provider of internal audit services to Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service, independence is inherent in our delivery and audit methodology.

- Our internal auditors do not have any operational responsibilities across Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- No member of the audit team is employed by Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- The head of internal audit reports to the Chief Executive and Audit Committee chair [amend as appropriate].
- RSM methodology includes a second partner review (by another head of internal audit who does not work on Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service) of the annual plan, the year-end annual report and opinion.
- The Internal Audit Charter details our role and responsibilities and the authority we have which enables us to undertake our internal audit service.

You should explicitly state here if RSM provides any other services and explain how the conflict is managed

You should explicitly state here if RSM provides any other services and explain how the conflict is managed

The head of internal audit has unrestricted access to the chair of audit committee to whom all significant concerns relating to the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management activities, internal control and governance are reported.

Conflicts of interest may arise where RSM provides services other than internal audit to Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service. Steps will be taken to avoid or manage transparently and openly such conflicts of interest so that there is no real or perceived threat or impairment to independence in providing the internal audit service. If a potential conflict arises through the provision of other services, disclosure will be reported to the audit committee. The nature of the disclosure will depend upon the potential impairment and it is important that our role does not appear to be compromised in reporting the matter to the audit committee. Equally we do not want the organisation to be deprived of wider RSM expertise and will therefore raise awareness without compromising our independence.

Responsibilities

In providing your outsourced internal audit service, RSM has a responsibility to:

- Develop a flexible and risk based internal audit strategy with more detailed annual audit plans. The plan will be submitted to the audit committee for review and approval each year before work commences on delivery of that plan.
- Implement the internal audit plan as approved, including any additional tasks requested by management and the audit committee.
- Ensure the internal audit team consists of professional audit staff with sufficient knowledge, skills, and experience.
- Establish a quality assurance and improvement program to ensure the quality and effective operation of internal audit activities.
- Perform advisory activities where appropriate, beyond internal audit's assurance services, to assist management in meeting its objectives.

- Bring a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and report on the effectiveness of risk management, internal control and governance processes.
- Highlight control weaknesses and required associated improvements together with corrective action recommended to management based on an acceptable and practicable timeframe.
- Undertake follow up reviews to ensure management has implemented agreed internal control improvements within specified and agreed timeframes.
- Report regularly to the audit committee to demonstrate the performance of the internal audit service.

For clarity, we have included the definition of ‘internal audit’, ‘senior management’ and ‘board’.

- Internal audit – a department, division, team of consultant, or other practitioner (s) that provides independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. The internal audit activity helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes.
- Senior management who are the team of individuals at the highest level of organisational management who have the day-to-day responsibilities for managing the organisation.
- Board of governors - The highest level governing body charged with the responsibility to direct and/or oversee the organisation’s activities and hold organisational management accountable. Furthermore, “board” may refer to a committee or another body to which the governing body has delegated certain functions (eg an audit committee).

Client care standards

In delivering our services we require full cooperation from key stakeholders and relevant business areas to ensure a smooth delivery of the plan. We proposed the following KPIs for monitoring the delivery of the internal audit service:

- Discussions with senior staff at the client take place to confirm the scope six weeks before the agreed audit start date.
- Key information such as: the draft assignment planning sheet are issued by RSM to the key auditee six weeks before the agreed start date.
- The lead auditor to contact the client to confirm logistical arrangements at least 15 working days before the commencement of the audit fieldwork to confirm practical arrangements, appointments, debrief date etc.
- Fieldwork takes place on agreed dates with key issues flagged up immediately.
- A debrief meeting will be held with audit sponsor at the end of fieldwork or within a reasonable time frame.
- Draft reports will be issued within 10 working days of the debrief meeting and will be issued by RSM to the agreed distribution list / Huddle.

- Management responses to the draft report should be submitted to RSM.
- Within three working days of receipt of client responses the final report will be issued by RSM to the assignment sponsor and any other agreed recipients of the report.

Authority

The internal audit team is authorised to:

- Have unrestricted access to all functions, records, property and personnel which it considers necessary to fulfil its function.
- Have full and free access to the audit committee.
- Allocate resources, set timeframes, define review areas, develop scopes of work and apply techniques to accomplish the overall internal audit objectives.
- Obtain the required assistance from personnel within the organisation where audits will be performed, including other specialised services from within or outside the organisation.

The head of internal audit and internal audit staff are not authorised to:

- Perform any operational duties associated with the organisation.
- Initiate or approve accounting transactions on behalf of the organisation.
- Direct the activities of any employee not employed by RSM unless specifically seconded to internal audit.

Reporting

An assignment report will be issued following each internal audit assignment. The report will be issued in draft for comment by management, and then issued as a final report to management, with the executive summary being provided to the audit committee. The final report will contain an action plan agreed with management to address any weaknesses identified by internal audit.

The internal audit service will issue progress reports to the audit committee and management summarising outcomes of audit activities, including follow up reviews.

As your internal audit provider, the assignment opinions that RSM provides the organisation during the year are part of the framework of assurances that assist the board in taking decisions and managing its risks.

As the provider of the internal audit service we are required to provide an annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving our opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide to the board is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes. The annual opinion will be provided to the organisation by RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP at the financial year end. The results of internal audit reviews, and the annual opinion, should be used by management and the Board to inform the organisation's annual governance statement.

Data protection

Internal audit files need to include sufficient, reliable, relevant and useful evidence in order to support our findings and conclusions. Personal data is not shared with unauthorised persons unless there is a valid and lawful requirement to do so. We are authorised as providers of internal audit services to our clients (through the firm's terms of business and our engagement letter) to have access to all necessary documentation from our clients needed to carry out our duties.

Quality Assurance and Improvement

As your external service provider of internal audit services, we have the responsibility for maintaining an effective internal audit activity. Under the standards, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment every five years. In addition to this, we also have in place an internal quality assurance and improvement programme, led by a dedicated team who undertake these reviews. This ensures continuous improvement of our internal audit services.

Any areas which we believe warrant bringing to your attention, which may have the potential to have an impact on the quality of the service we provide to you, will be raised in our progress reports to the audit committee.

Fraud

The audit committee recognises that management is responsible for controls to reasonably prevent and detect fraud. Furthermore, the audit committee recognises that internal audit is not responsible for identifying fraud; however internal audit will be aware of the risk of fraud when planning and undertaking any assignments.

Approval of the internal audit charter

By approving this document, the internal audit strategy, the audit committee is also approving the internal audit charter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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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 AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 MARCH 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 of audit activity in relation to both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Statements of Accounts.

2. RECOMMENDATION

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

3. REPORT

- 3.1 Although it had been hoped to bring the audited 2020/21 Statement of Accounts to this committee meeting for approval, this has not been possible due to the ongoing delays in Deloitte's audit of the Berkshire Pension Fund accounts. It is anticipated that the Statement of Accounts will be ready for sign off at the next Committee meeting in July 2023.
- 3.2 Representatives from EY will attend the meeting to update Members on the status of both audits.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

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



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 MARCH 2023
SUBJECT	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT AND PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR MIKE SMITH
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	NOTE AND DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To receive an Annual Report and to note the progress of the Action Plan on Member Development activities in 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Audit and Governance Committee:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the Member Development Annual Report;
- 2.2 **NOTE** the progress of the 2022-23 Member Development Action Plan (Appendix A);
- 2.3 **NOTE** the results of the Member Development Survey (Appendix B), and
- 2.4 **RECOMMEND** 2023-2027 Member Development Strategy to the Fire Authority for approval (Appendix C).

3. REPORT

- 3.1 In June 2022, the Fire Authority appointed six new Fire Authority Members and appointed Councillor Mike Smith as Member Development Champion. A review on the 2020-2023 Member Development Strategy and Action Plan was made, and upon review, it was identified that the majority of returning Members had attended courses throughout the Strategy period.
- 3.2 Focus was made towards targeting Member Development courses to the six newly appointed Members and Members appointed onto new roles.

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- 3.3 Appendix A show the progress against the 2022/23 Action Plan and Red, Amber, Green (RAG) status has been included to indicate whether actions were completed during the year. There are two actions indicated as Red and Amber highlighted in the action plan.
- 3.4 The activities identified as Amber, numbers (3) and (15) are courses the Member Development Champion and Member Development Working Group recommended additional documentation to accompany Member Inductions, and the introduction of two new courses, (Wellbeing and Understanding Audit and Governance Committee) which were rolled out in early 2023.
- 3.5 The red actions, numbers (4) and (20) are actions that were not completed during the year. In 2023/24, new Members will be assigned Member and Officer Buddies to assist their induction to the Fire Authority. The number of Members completing e-learning during the year has been low, indicated as red on the action plan.
- 3.6 The majority of Member Development courses were scheduled prior to committee meetings, to minimise the frequency in Members attending meetings at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. In addition, some courses were also set up as hybrid meetings to allow greater flexibility in Member attendance.
- 3.7 The list of Member Development activities in Appendix A is not exhaustive, as it does not include individual briefings between Members and Senior Leadership Team on specific areas of the business such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safety, Health and Wellbeing and Thames Valley Collaboration and Control Service Joint Committee meetings.
- 3.8 Each year, Members are requested to complete an anonymous online survey on Member Development courses / activities attended, and where possible, Democratic Support use survey feedback to develop courses or activities for the next Municipal year. Table One shows Member attendance on courses attended in 22/23 over the three year strategy period. The table does not include Member attendance at Workshops and briefings.
- 3.9 This year, the online survey was held from 10 February – 6 March 2023 and was completed by nine respondents. Member participation in the survey is not compulsory, and as outlined in paragraph 3.2, new Members were targeted to attend courses as longer serving Members had attended the courses on offer in previous years.
- 3.10 The feedback received (Appendix B) was generally positive. One Member, stated they were unaware of the annual 1:1 with Group Leaders, therefore an increased effort will be made to ensure all Members are aware of those sessions. Another comment received was an increase in arranged station visit across the Hubs, which will be taken into consideration when planning station visits in 2023/24.
- 3.11 Appendix C is the proposed new Member Development Strategy recommended for Fire Authority approval. The Strategy is aligned to the Draft

Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan and Draft Strategic Commitments. This will be reviewed following the approval of these documents by the Fire Authority in April, to ensure it they are still aligned.

Table One

Course Title	Facilitators	Attendance 2020/21	Attendance 2021/22	Attendance 2022/23
1:1 with Group Leaders	Group Leaders Cllrs Dudley, Gittings and Shepherd- DuBey	15	14	10
Thames Valley Fire Control Visit	TVFCS Group Manager	11	3	6
Formal Fire Station visits	RBFRS	N/A	11	10
Understanding the Financing of the Fire Authority	RBFRS	6	5	4
Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing	RBFRS	6	3	4
Modern.Gov App	RBFRS	N/A	1	0
Safety at Home Course	RBFRS	6	5	5
New Member Induction	RBFRS	1	2	6
New Audit and Governance Committee Course	RBFRS	N/A	N/A	6
New Wellbeing Course	RBFRS	N/A	N/A	3
Local Government Association (LGA) Leadership Essentials	LGA	1	1	4

4 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

4.1 All Strategic Commitments are supported by the Member Development Programme.

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5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The majority of the Member Development courses and activities have been delivered in-house within existing resources. External courses were provided at a subsidised rate by Local Government Association (LGA) as Royal Berkshire Fire Authority are members.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Member Development Strategy and Action Plan supports the Fire Authority in discharging its statutory duties.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training forms part of the Member Development Programme.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None specified.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 As outlined in the Member Development Strategy, we will continue to identify opportunities to work with partners to deliver the Member Development programme where possible.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Statutory officers and the Senior Leadership Team have been consulted in the development report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Member Development Action Plan
12.2 Appendix B – Member Development Survey Results
12.3 Appendix C – Member Development Strategy 2023-2027

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead 0118 938 4611

Progress Against Member Development Action Plan 2022/23

Action	Target completion	Progress 2022/23	Lead Officer/Member	R	A	G
Publish an annual Member Development Programme (1)	Annually	Published at the start of the Municipal Year.	Head of Corporate Services			G
Update the skill based questionnaire for compulsory completion by Members annually (2)	Annually	Skills questionnaire updated by the Member Development Working Group, for completion by all Fire Authority Members for 1:1 meetings with Group Leaders. The purpose is two-fold, for Group Leaders to identify skills and interests ahead of Member appointments at Fire Authority annual meeting, and for Democratic Support to signpost Members to training organised internally (RBFRS) or externally e.g. Local Government Association (LGA).	Update the skill based questionnaire for completion by Members annually.			G
NEW – Introduction to the Fire Authority and Committee meetings (3)	Annually	Documentation to inform new Members about the Fire Authority and Committee meetings will be developed and available in June 2023.	Communications and Engagement Team		A	
New Members to be assigned a Member and Officer Buddy on joining the Fire Authority (4)	Business as usual	This action did not take place in 2022/23. In 2023/24 New Members will be assigned Member Buddy (Group Leader) and an Officer Buddy (member of the Senior Leadership Team) as a contact for questions and queries.	Group Leaders and Head of Corporate Services	R		
Review the annual Member Induction Programme (5)	Business as usual	Annual Member Induction session reviewed for new Members appointed in 2022/23. As part of the Member Induction, one to one meetings were held with Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Corporate Services. In 2023/24, a combined session involving the Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Corporate Services will be provided.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support			G
Review Members Members' Handbook (6)	Annually	The 'About Us' section of the Member Handbook is reviewed annually to support Member Development.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G
Group Leaders to undertake annual 1:1 with Members (7)	Annually	2022/23 1:1s were held in June September and October 2022, between Group Leaders and Members using the skilled based questionnaire. In 2023/24 agendas will be sent to assist Members and Leaders in setting development objectives.	Group Leaders			G
Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing Course (8)	Business as usual	This course provide an in-depth view of health and wellbeing initiatives within RBFRS and include Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, Mental Health and unconscious bias training.	Head of HR and Learning and Development			G

Progress Against Member Development Action Plan 2022/23

Action	Target completion	Progress 2022/23	Lead Officer/Member	R	A	G
Control Room Visits (9)	Business as usual	Control Room sessions were arranged by Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Group Manager.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G
Formal Station Visit for the members (10)	Annually	Two Fire Stations visits were arranged and held at Theale and Wokingham Fire Stations. The organised visits provided an opportunity for Members to meet the crew and learn in greater detail the equipment used at incidences. Chair, Vice-Chair, A&GC Chair and Member Champions visited Caversham Road, Slough, Crowthorne and Bracknell (Station Visit Day).	Democratic Support Lead			G
Informal Station Visits (10a)	Business as Usual	Fire Authority Members were encouraged to make impromptu visits to Stations or they could be arranged directly between Members and Station Manager. To aid Member organised station visits, Members may wish to refer to protocol attached as Annex 1.	Fire Authority Members			G
Understanding the Financing of the Fire Authority (11)	Business as usual	This course provided an overview of budget setting and the process behind reports presented to the Fire Authority and the statutory reporting requirements of producing Annual Statement of Accounts.	Head of Finance and Procurement			G
Hold an strategic Members Briefing / Workshop (12)	Business as usual	Member briefings have continued 2022/23 and cover a range of matters including the development of a new Community Risk Management Plan, progress towards the Service's second inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. These will be valuable for all members to attend, as they are to enable members to keep up to date with new developments in the Service.	Head of Corporate Services			G
Safety at Home Course and Understanding Safe and Well Visits (13)	Business as usual	This course is delivered by Safety Education Officer and provides smoke alarm advice and tips on ways to protect your home and family from kitchen-related fires. Members were taken through the process of Safe and Well Visits and how that data is fed into quarterly performance reports.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G
Members to be invited to RBFRS events and demonstrations (14)	Business as usual	Members were invited to the attend the official opening of Theale Fire Station, Fire Cadets passing out parade and annual Awards Ceremony.	Senior Leadership Team and Democratic Support Lead			G
NEW – Two new courses – Understanding Audit and Governance Committee and Wellbeing course (15)	Business as usual	Understanding Audit and Governance Committee is aimed at new members and will be looking at Annual Objectives, targets and measures of the Service's performance. This course will be rolled out in February 2023. Wellbeing course will provide Members with a deeper understanding of the support offered to all staff following high profile incidences and agencies staff are signposted to for additional support e.g. counselling and support provided by Trauma Support Champions and Chaplin's. This course will be rolled out in January 2023.	Head of Corporate Services		A	G
Undertake an annual Member Development Survey (16)	Annually - February	Annual Member Development survey will be circulated to all Members. The results of the survey will form part of the annual Member Development report for consideration by Audit and Governance Committee in March 2023.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G
Members to participate in the Understanding the Fire Authority RBFRS Core Skills Course (17)	Business as usual	Whilst primarily focused on staff development, the course offer opportunities for Member Development and a chance for Members to meet with staff members from across the service.	Democratic Support Lead			G

Appendix A

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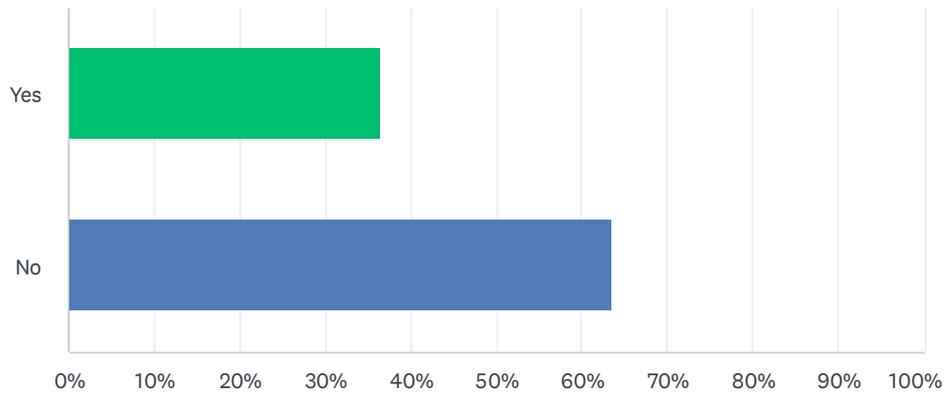
Progress Against Member Development Action Plan 2022/23

Action	Target completion	Progress 2022/23	Lead Officer/Member	R	A	G
Ongoing opportunities to work in partnership with other fire and rescue services and local authority partners to be explored. (18)	Business as usual	Opportunities to be explored on an ongoing basis and as they arise.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G
Ensure attendance at all Member Development activities is captured and added to each Members profile page on the website. (19)	Business as usual	All Member training has been captured and updated on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service website under each Member profile. Attendance will be reported annually via the Audit and Governance Committee.	Democratic Support Lead			G
Opportunities for e-learning to be utilised for Members. (20)	Business as usual	E-learning courses on Protecting Information and Equality, Diversity and Induction were sent to all members.	Democratic Support Lead	R		
Annual report on Member Development to the Audit and Governance Committee. (21)	Business as usual	Annual updates on Member Development to Audit and Governance Committee in March 2023.	Head of Corporate Services			G
Modern.Gov Q&A Session (22)	Annually	Members that have opted to receive agenda packs electronically (paperless) have been offered to attend an informal drop-in session arranged to support Members with using the Modern.gov app.	Democratic Support Lead			G
Attendance at development opportunities outside of the organisation (23)	Annually	Members attended courses organised by Local Government Association (LGA) on Audit Committee and Fire and Rescue Essentials.	Head of Corporate Services and Democratic Support Lead			G

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Q1 Did you attend Member Induction in 2022/23?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0

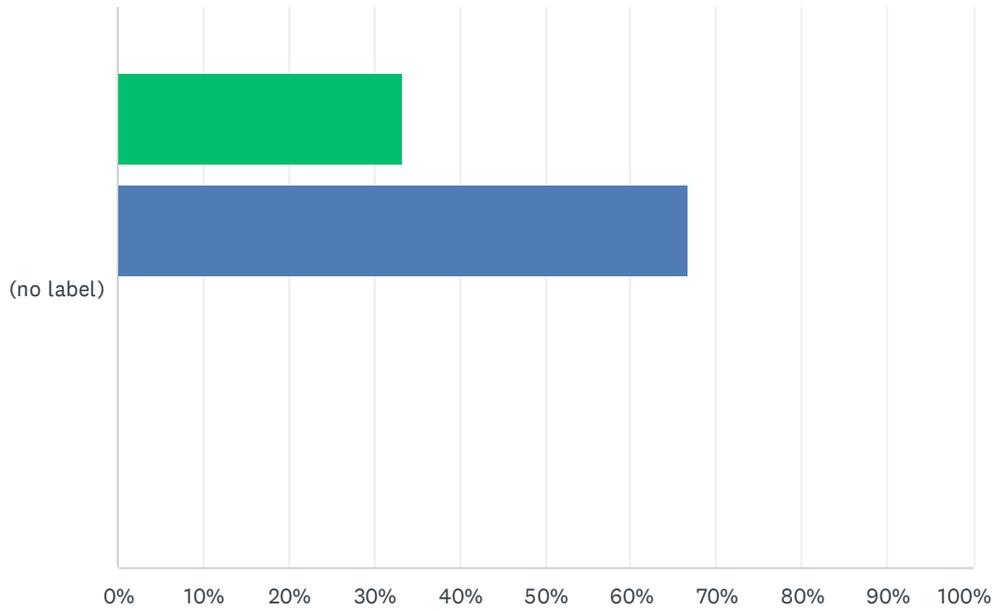


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	36.36%	4
No	63.64%	7
TOTAL		11

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Q2 Please indicate by ticking one of the four boxes below, whether you found Member Induction useful?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 8



■ Strongly Ag...
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Di...

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%	3	1.67
	1	2	0	0		

**Q3 Is there anything we could have done to improve your understanding of the Fire Authority and its Committees, and general housekeeping?
E.g. Handbook, fob, location of meetings?**

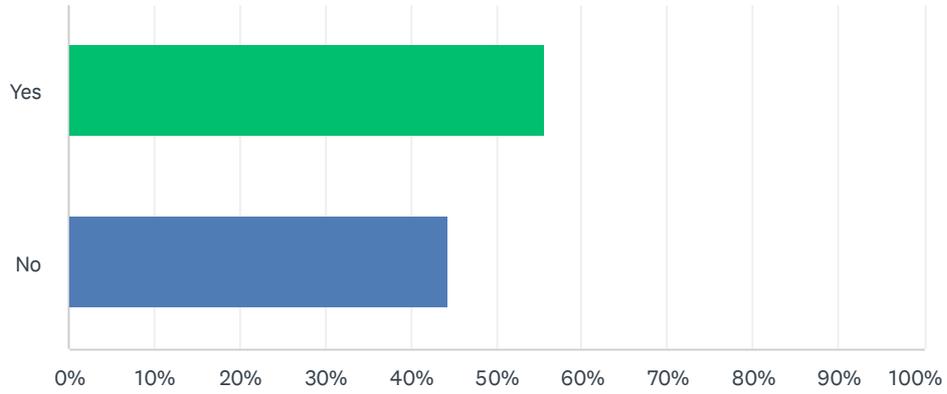
Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Everything we members need has been considered and the handbook is invaluable	2/27/2023 5:13 PM
2	No	2/15/2023 12:31 AM

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Q4 Did you attend the Financing of the Fire Authority course?

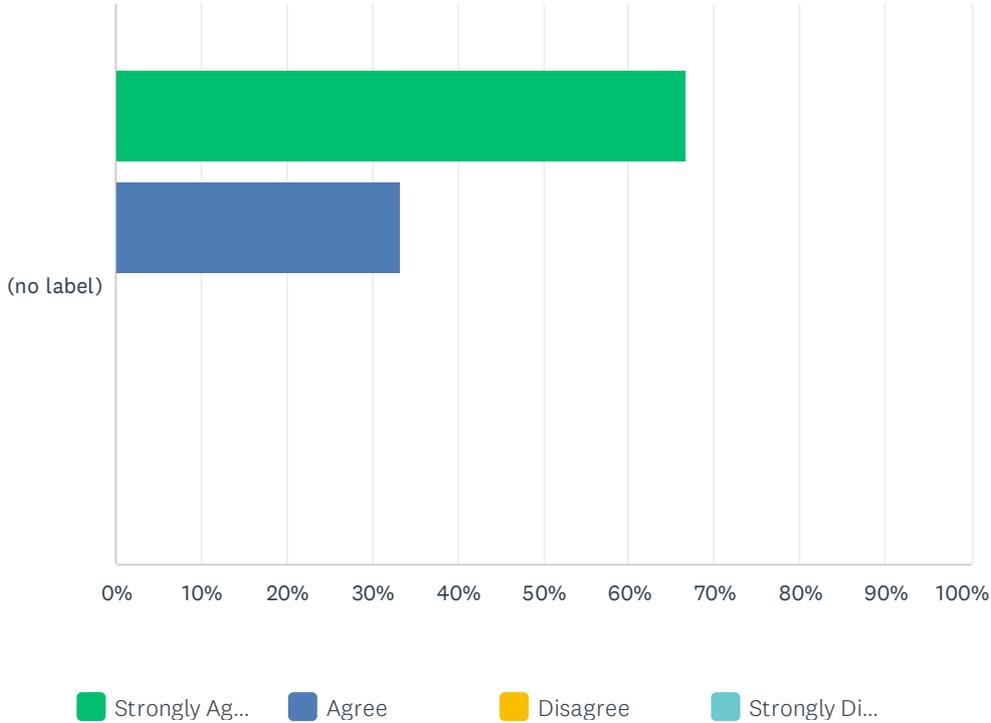
Answered: 9 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	55.56%	5
No	44.44%	4
TOTAL		9

Q5 I feel I have a greater understanding of budget monitoring and how Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is funded. Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below, how true is the above statement to you?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 5



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	6	1.33
	4	2	0	0		

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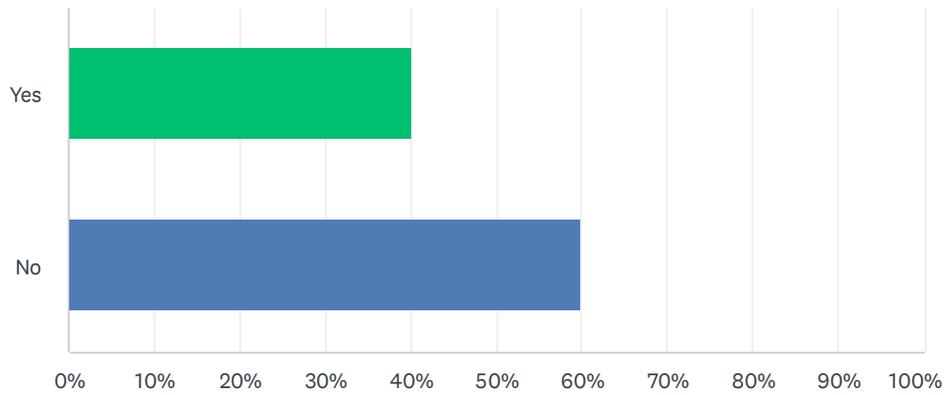
Q6 Is there anything we could have done to improve your understanding of how the Service is financed?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	2/15/2023 12:31 AM
2	no	2/10/2023 5:56 PM

Q7 Did you attend the Healthy Organisation and Wellbeing course?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 1

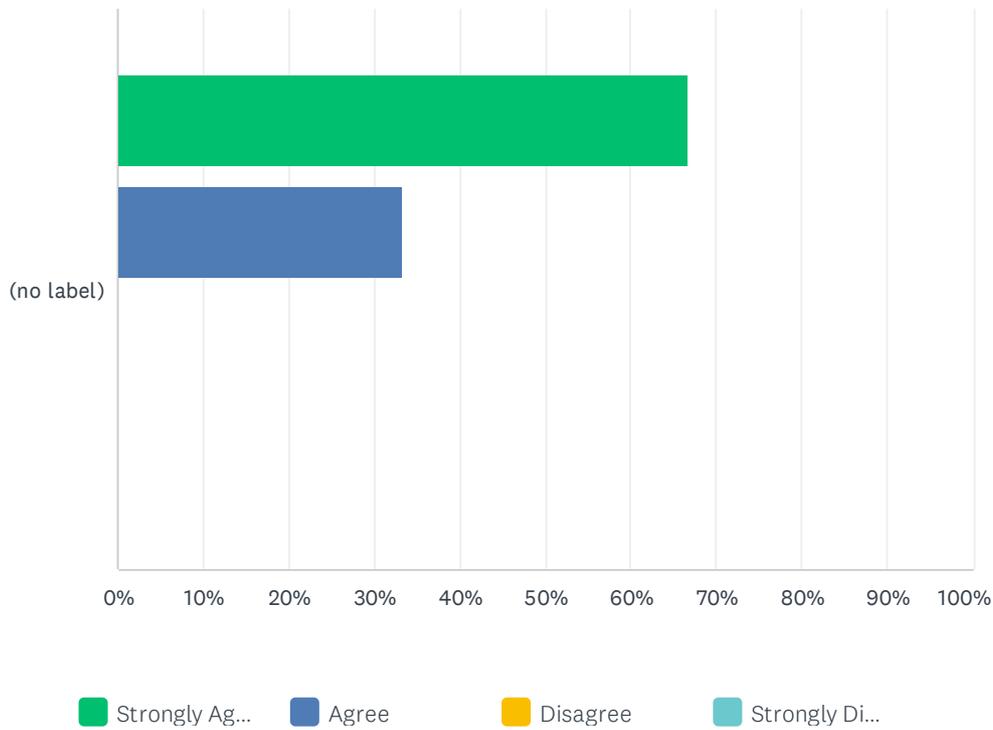


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.00%	4
No	60.00%	6
TOTAL		10

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Q8 I have gained knowledge and understanding on how Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service promotes well-being across the organisation, and I am aware of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives and Action Plan? Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below, how true is the above statement to you?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 8



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	1.33

Q9 Do you think there was anything else we could've done to help better your understanding on this course

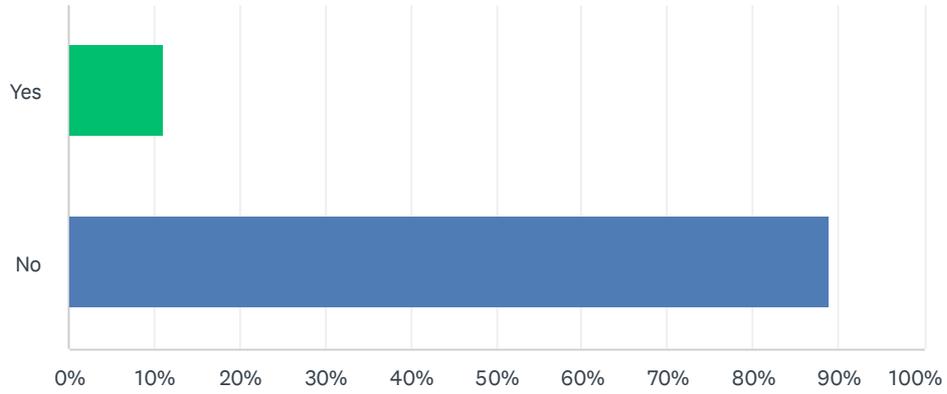
Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	2/27/2023 9:14 PM
2	The invitation to attend any EDI forum is published and if a member needs further information the forum is then best place to answer questions	2/27/2023 5:15 PM

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Q10 Did you attend Safety at Home course?

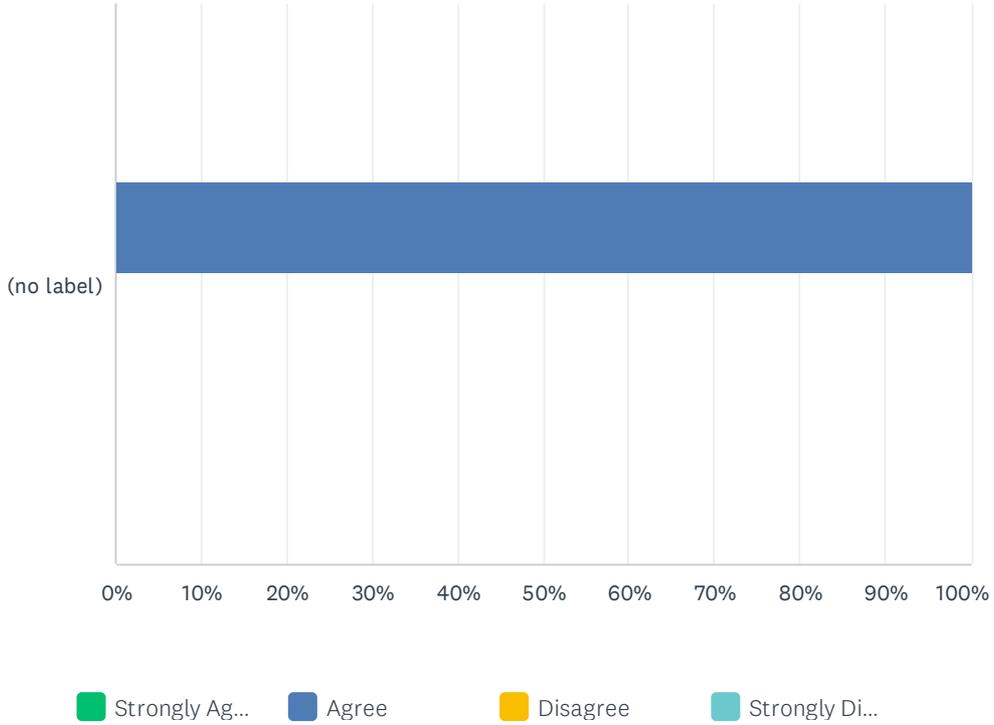
Answered: 9 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	11.11% 1
No	88.89% 8
TOTAL	9

Q11 Do you think you have an greater awareness of electrical safety at home and you are now ensuring you apply those safety measures discussed on the course?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 10



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	2.00

Appendix B

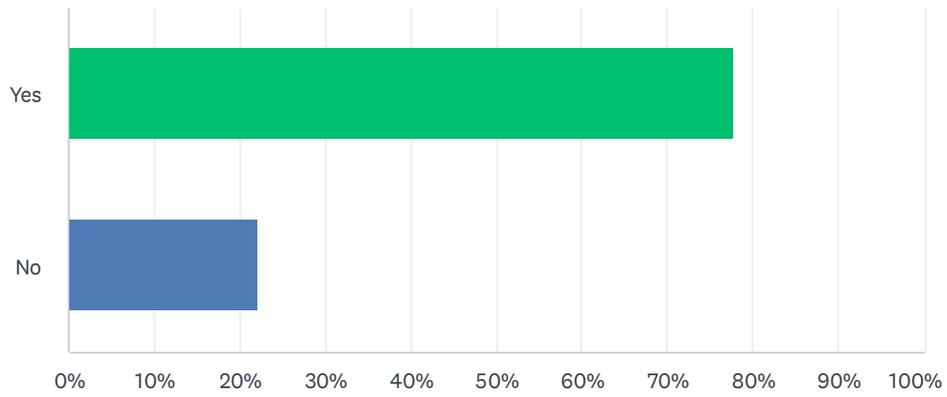
Q12 Do you think there was anything else we could've done to help better your understanding on this course

Answered: 0 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
	There are no responses.	

Q13 Did you attend Thames Valley Control Service, at Headquarters?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 2

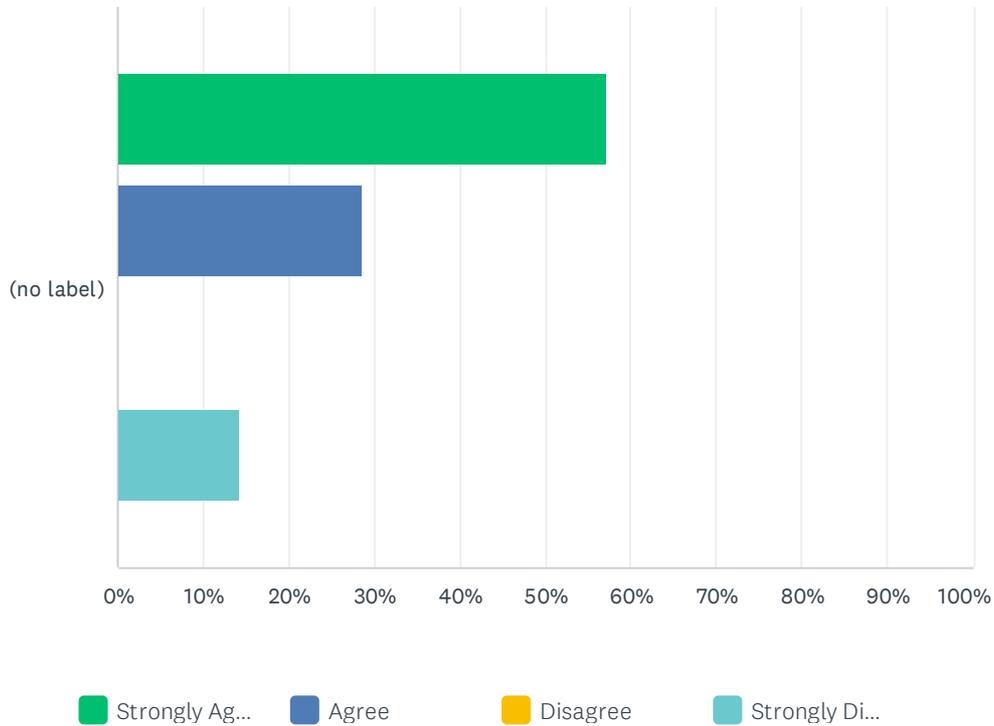


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.78%	7
No	22.22%	2
TOTAL		9

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Q14 Do you have a greater understanding of the functions of the control room?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 4



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	57.14% 4	28.57% 2	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	7	1.71

Q15 Do you think there was anything else we could've done to help better your understanding of the Control room?

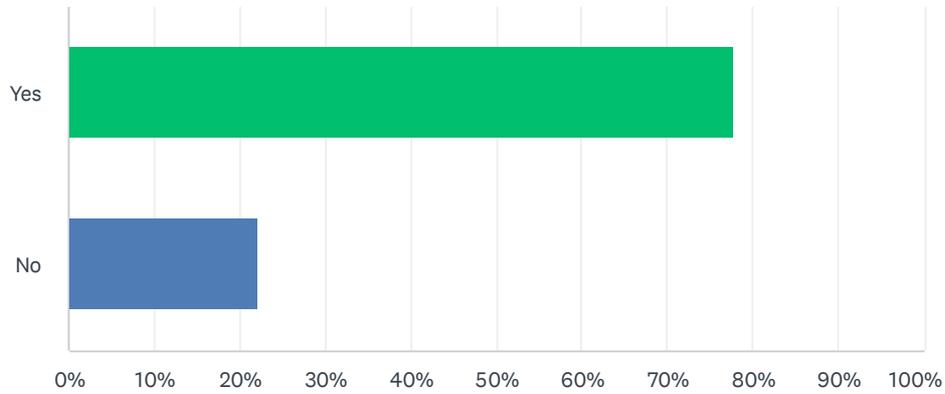
Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	2/27/2023 9:14 PM
2	no	2/10/2023 5:57 PM

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Q16 Did you visit any Fire Station during the year? (this includes single or multiple visits)

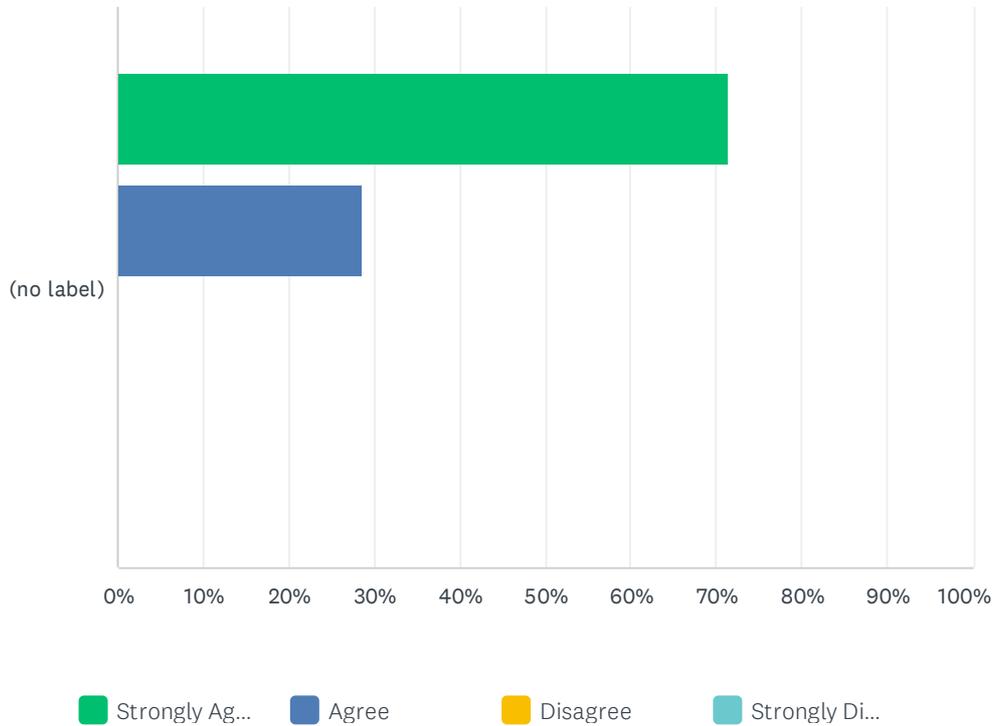
Answered: 9 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	77.78%	7
No	22.22%	2
TOTAL		9

Q17 Do you think you have greater knowledge of the Service and its assets from visiting Fire Stations?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 4



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	71.43%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%	7	1.29
	5	2	0	0		

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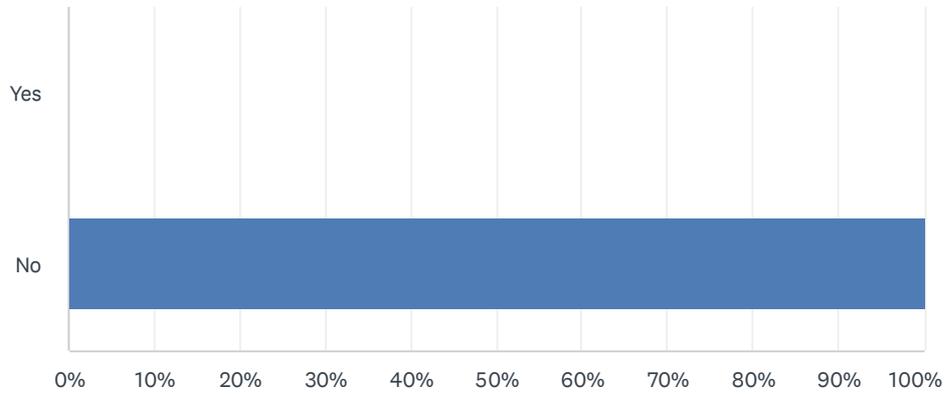
Q18 Please comment, if there is anything we could have done to enhance your station visit?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No, but I feel I should arrange more visits, perhaps across the hubs	2/27/2023 9:15 PM
2	none, need to visit others for the first time	2/10/2023 5:58 PM

Q19 Did you attend Core Skills course (aimed at staff) 'Understanding the Fire Authority'?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	9
TOTAL		9

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Q20 I found this course useful for staff and also Members. Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below, how true is the above statement to you?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 11

 No matching responses.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00

Q21 Please provide further comments, if you feel there is anything we could do to help staff understand the role of the Fire Authority and Members.

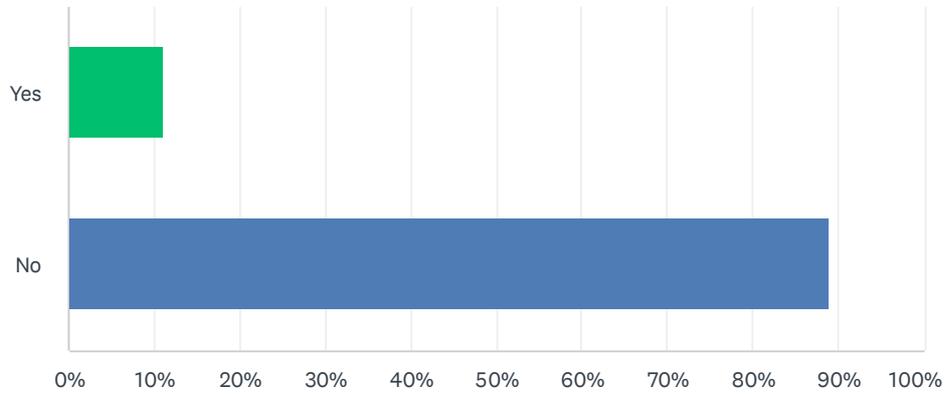
Answered: 0 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
	There are no responses.	

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Q22 Did you request assistance from Democratic Support to help you use Modern.gov app to access agenda packs?

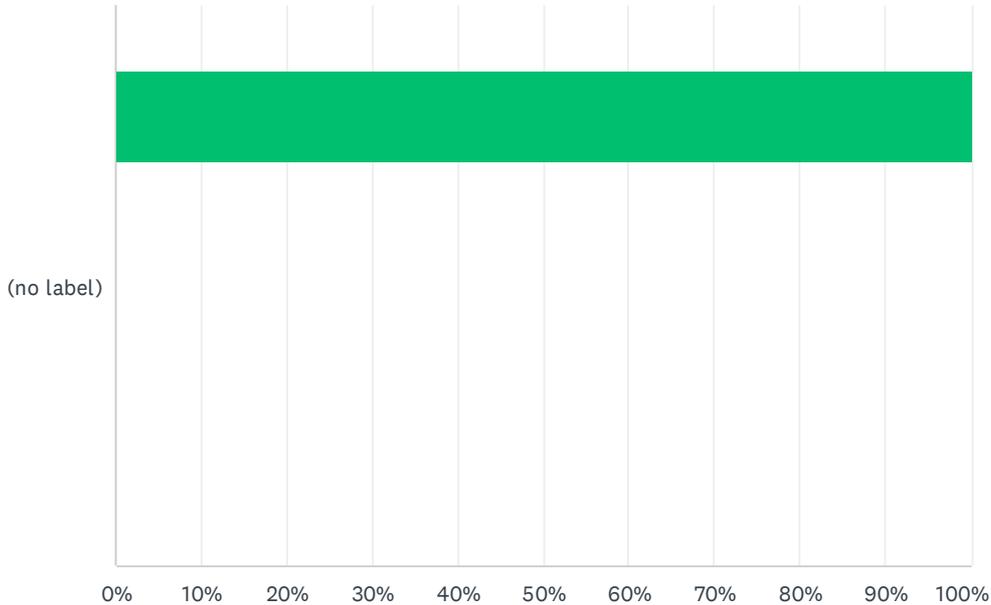
Answered: 9 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	11.11%	1
No	88.89%	8
TOTAL		9

Q23 'The support I received was knowledgeable and I am more confident in using Modern.gov app to access agenda packs?' Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below, how true is the above statement to you?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 10



■ Strongly Ag...
 ■ Agree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Di...

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1	1.00
	1	0	0	0		

Appendix B

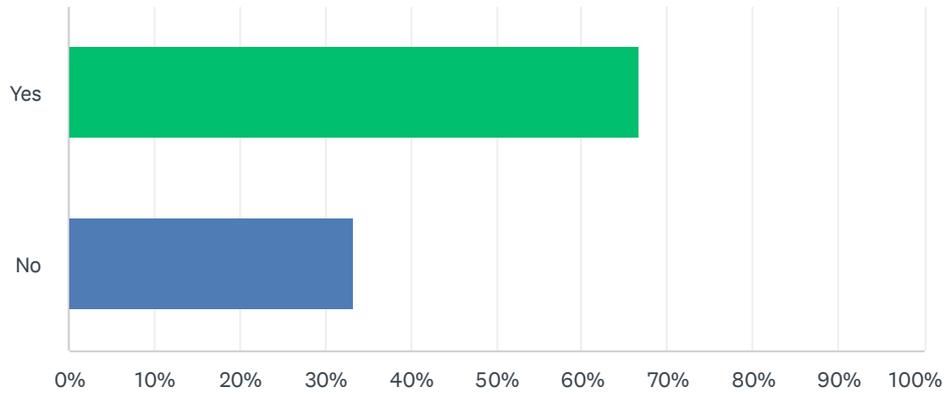
Q24 Please comment, if there is anything else you feel we could have done to assist you when using the app.

Answered: 0 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
	There are no responses.	

**Q25 Did you attend your annual 1:1 meeting with your Group Leader?
(this may have been held in June, September or October 2022)**

Answered: 9 Skipped: 2

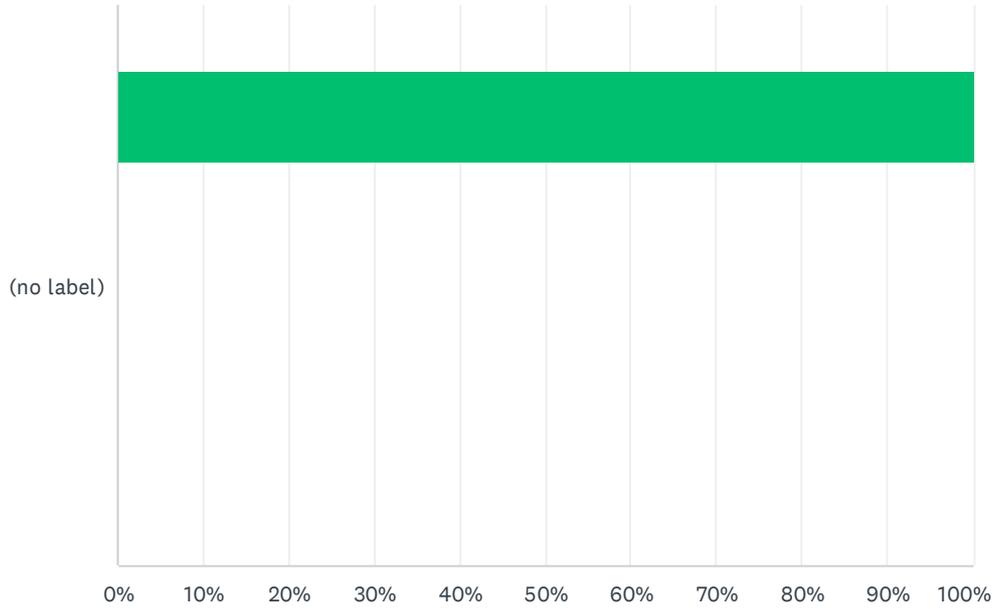


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	66.67%	6
No	33.33%	3
TOTAL		9

Appendix B

Q26 Please indicate on the scale below how satisfied were you with your annual 1-1?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 6



■ Very Satisfi...
 ■ Satisfied
 ■ Unsatisfied
 ■ Very Unsati...

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	UNSATISFIED	VERY UNSATISFIED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	100.00% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	1.00

Q27 Please state the reason you did not attend?

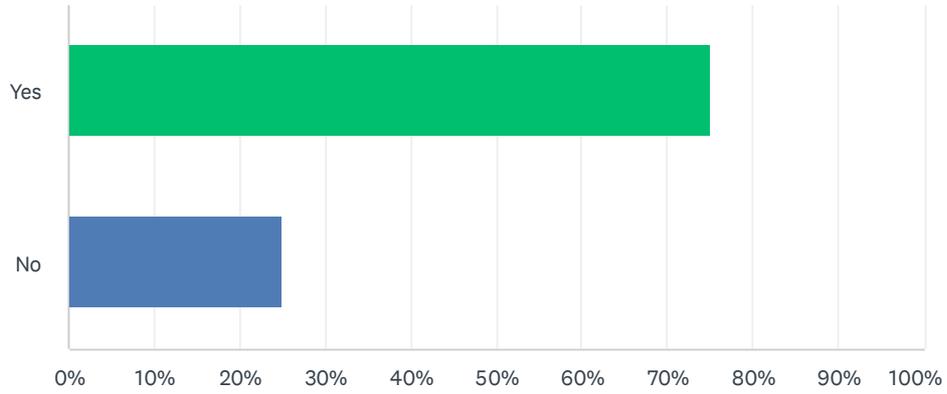
Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I'm the group leader	2/28/2023 12:59 PM
2	I wasn't aware of it	2/27/2023 9:16 PM

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Q28 Did you complete a skills questionnaire?

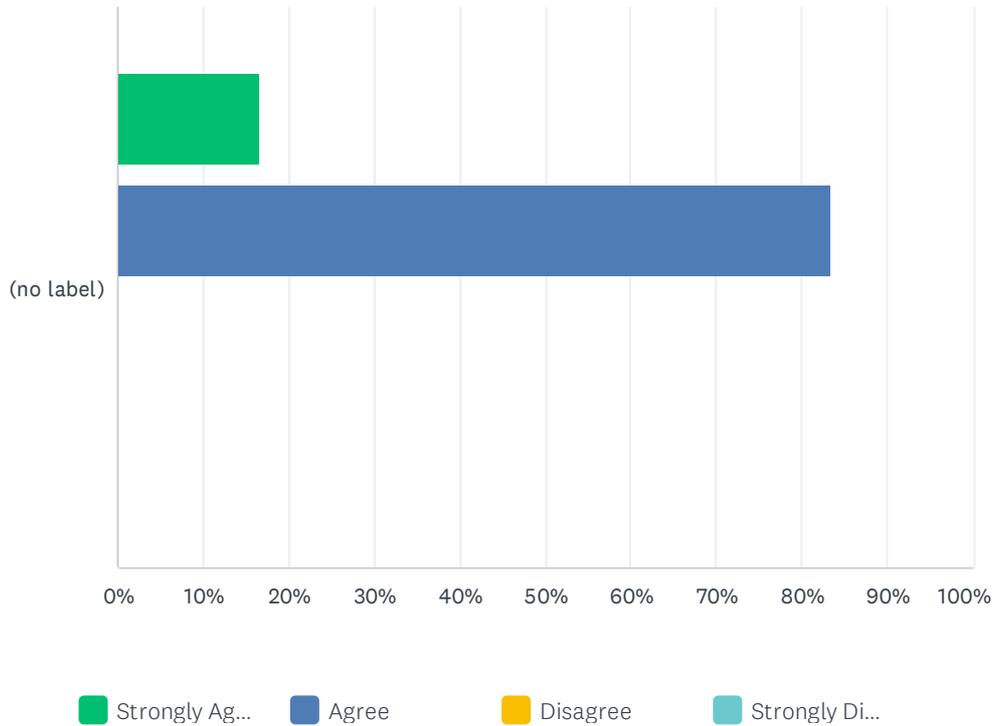
Answered: 8 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.00%	6
No	25.00%	2
TOTAL		8

Q29 Please state whether you think the skills questionnaire is a useful tool to be used for Member nominations and further development?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 5



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	16.67% 1	83.33% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	6	1.83

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Q30 Please comment if you feel improvements could be made to the skills questionnaire form?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 9

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I think I filled it in	2/27/2023 9:17 PM
2	We need to ask people which areas of interest they have on the FA, but I think we shall be doing this from now on.	2/10/2023 7:08 PM

Q31 Please use this section if you have further comments you would like to make on Member Development.

Answered: 3 Skipped: 8

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I need to try harder	2/27/2023 9:17 PM
2	There are a number of sessions I havent attended this last session, however I have attended before.	2/27/2023 5:18 PM
3	more members need to attend, including senior members. Need to be advised on what courses to attend, ie previous attendance	2/10/2023 6:00 PM

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Member Development Strategy

2023 - 2027





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Member Development Strategy 2023 - 2027

Section 1: Our Legal Responsibilities

The following legislation provides the main legal basis and outlines the statutory responsibilities and powers of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Policing and Crime Act 2017

In 2018, the Government launched a revised Fire and Rescue National Framework which sets out the Fire Authority's main responsibilities and these are shown below:

- Contribute to safer communities by developing a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to identify, assess and mitigate all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks faced by the communities of Royal Berkshire.
- Work in partnership with the people of Royal Berkshire and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver a capable, resilient service.
- Be accountable to you for our actions and decision making.
- Have scrutiny arrangements in place that reflect the high standard you expect for an important public safety service.
- Provide assurance to you and to Government on financial, governance and operational matters and on national resilience capability.

Section 2: Strategic Policy Statement

This four year strategy aims to ensure all Members have access to a high standard of support and information to facilitate their role on Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. This Strategy aims to support Member development across three categories:

1. Need to know information about Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
2. Visits to local fire stations including Wholetime and On-Call
3. Other information that Members would like to know

Section 3: Context and RBFA Strategic Commitments

This Strategy is underpinned by the Corporate Plan and CRMP 2023-2027, and must be considered in the context of the Strategic Commitments with outcomes aligned to delivery of the Corporate Plan and CRMP



2023-2027. In overall terms, this Strategy is designed to enable Members to fulfil our mission in **Serving the People of Royal Berkshire**.

Outcomes will be aligned to at least one of the following Strategic Commitments:

Prevention

We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.

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.

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.

Resilience

We will ensure our resilience and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.

Sustainability

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

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.

[Full details of the policy agenda is available in Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027.](#)

Section 4: Strategy

Through the Member Development Strategy, we will aim to:

- Equip Members with the skills and knowledge necessary to fulfil their roles and ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities listed in Section 1 of this strategy, and Section 11 of [Member's Handbook Role Description document](#);
- To ensure Member development is fully embedded in the culture of RBFA and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFPS) and its importance is recognised by all;
- Equip Members to balance the conflicting and competing priorities of their roles and constructively work with officers in Serving the People of Royal Berkshire.



The principles that will underpin all Member development activity are:

- To maintain a clear commitment to Member development and support;
- To ensure a strategic approach is taken to Member development;
- To support Members in their roles on RBFA.
- To ensure Member development is effective in building knowledge of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Our Member development objectives are:

To ensure we meet our aims and principles, this Strategy sets out a number of objectives that we will be working towards as part of our Member development activity:

Maintain a clear commitment to Member development and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek commitment and approval of the Member Development Strategy by Fire Authority; 	Year 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the planning and delivery of Member development is the responsibility of Head of Corporate Services; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equality of opportunity and access for all; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specialist training for the Democratic Support team and the wider organisation through the core skills programme. 	Ongoing
Ensure a strategic approach is taken to Member development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an induction programme for all new Members covering core skills, governance matters and learning specific to RBFPS and the Fire and Rescue Service generally; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annually refresh the Member Development Programme based on Member need 	Annual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a lead Member (Member Champion for Member Development) and lead officer (Head of Corporate Services) responsible for Member Development providing regular strategic oversight; and 	Annual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in collaboration with Local Authorities and partners in Berkshire to identify opportunities to deliver Member development programmes that are complementary and cohesive. 	Annual Ongoing
Ensure Member development is effective in building knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes and benefits of Member development activities are clearly communicated and understood by those participating; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the outcomes and benefits of Member development activities through participant feedback; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Member understanding of local and national issues that impact on the Fire and Rescue Service; 	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Member and Member Champions in place for key themes with briefing and support in these roles as appropriate; 	Ongoing



Support Members in their roles on RBFA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of tools in the delivery of Member development to ensure suitability for a range of learning styles; • Provide opportunities to meet with agencies and the community; • Monitor and record attendance at Member development activities; • Annually report on the progress of the Member development programme to the Audit and Governance Committee. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>Annual</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a programme of Member development activities and publicise at the earliest opportunity; • Ensure the Member development programme is delivered at times appropriate for Members; • Offer Member development opportunities at a range of locations across Berkshire; • Ensure our systems and ways of working best support Members in their roles; and • Champion the role of RBFA in terms of local democracy and contribution to Serving the People of Royal Berkshire. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Section 5: Delivering the Strategy

A Working Group chaired by the Member Champion for Member Development, will develop an action plan for delivery of a Member development programme under the three headings outlined at the start of the Strategy.

To support the delivery of the Member Development Strategy, a number of different opportunities can be used including (but not limited to):



New Member Induction Programme	Bespoke inhouse briefing sessions	Annual Workshop	Buddy System
Joint training opportunities with Local Authorities	Visit your local station	External learning opportunities e.g. conferences (based on business case where funding required)	Member Handbook
Attendance at RBFPS Events	Communication Channels e.g. Press Releases and Social Media	Opportunities to meet with partners such as SCAS and TVP	Dedicated Member support provided by Corporate Services
Support through systems such as Modern Gov	Briefing notes	Peer coaching and mentoring	E-learning

Measuring our Delivery

To ensure continuous improvement, a number of measures will be used to monitor the success of the Member Development Strategy including:

Annual Member Development Satisfaction Survey	Feedback and Evaluation Forms	Attendance numbers at Member development sessions /events
No. of joint training opportunities with partners/Local Authorities	Participation in external learning opportunities e.g. Local Government Association (LGA)	

As part of the Annual Report on Member Development, performance against these measures will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee at the end of each Municipal Year.



Approval

The draft Member Development Strategy will be considered for approval by Fire Authority in April 2023. The Member Development Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis by Audit and Governance Committee.

Version	Lead Member	Lead Officer	Review Date
V1	Member Development Champion	Head of Corporate Services	March 2024

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 MARCH 2023
SUBJECT	ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR TRICIA BROWN
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the Annual Report on Governance detailing Member Attendance and Allowances in 2022/23 for submission to the Fire Authority on 8 June 2023.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this report, appendices A and B (Members Allowances and Attendance) are shown from 1 June 2022 to 28 February 2023. As outlined in recommendation 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, the appendices will be updated to the end of May 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report; and
- 2.2 **RECOMMEND** that the Fire Authority:
 - 2.2.1 **NOTE** Members' Allowances received from 1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023;
 - 2.2.2 **NOTE** the 2022/23 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members from 1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 This report will be my first annual report as Chair of Audit and Governance Committee and on behalf of all Members, I would like to congratulate the Service on its recent His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service inspection result, which confirmed that our Service is

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performing to a high standard. That is not to say, we are to be complacent, which I believe, we have evidenced our willingness to improve and continue our journey as a modern fire and rescue service, looking back on the reports and items discussed at Audit and Government Committee meetings from July 2022 to March 2023.

- 3.2 This year saw the appointment of five out of the six newly appointed Fire Authority Members onto this Committee and they have all had to learn very quickly the role of Audit and Governance Committee, which has resulted in the development of a new Member Development course, Understanding Audit and Governance Committee. This course came as an idea from the Member Development Champion, Councillor Mike Smith and was piloted in early 2023. This new course will be an invaluable tool for new Members going forward.
- 3.3 In July 2022, we received our Internal Audit Progress Report, which gave substantial assurance on the following audits; Value for Money: Effectiveness of the management of pension arrangements by RBFRS, Key financial controls – creditors and Governance and risk management. The audit on Cyber Essentials was advisory and low priority actions recommended by RSM (our auditors) were implemented by management by the end of 2022.
- 3.4 We have received regular updates on Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), Pension Board, reviewed Discipline Policy, Pay Policy Statement, Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report, Equal Pay Audit, Annual Statement of Assurance and held officers to account on Quarterly Performance Reports.
- 3.5 Quarterly Performance reports, are set out in four quadrants; Service Provision, Corporate Health, Priority Programmes and Risk providing comprehensive data on the Service's performance and updates on projects and the Corporate Risk register.
- 3.6 The year has been challenging in relation to the impact of the summer heatwave in 2022 on wholetime and on-call appliance availability identified in quarter two performance report (July – September 2023), however officers have continually detailed the processes they have implemented to tackle these. In terms of the quarterly updates received from External Auditors, as a Committee we have continued our pressure on them to sign off the Statement of Accounts (albeit, the delay is due to issues identified by Deloitte in relation to their audit of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund).
- 3.7 Governance**
 - 3.7.1 The Fire Authority appointed three new Independent Person (s) and three reserve Independent Person (s) at its Annual meeting in June 2022 for four years. No formal complaints have been received against Members this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Independent Persons who have been on continual standby should they be required to investigate complaints along with our Monitoring Officer, Graham Britten.

3.11 **Member Allowances**

Member Allowances for the period of June 2022 – Feb 2023 are shown in **Appendix A**. An update on these figures will be made to Fire Authority on 8 June 2023.

3.12 **Member Attendance**

The attendance record of Members for the Municipal Year 2022/23, is shown in Appendix B of this report. The Appendix include all meetings up to the 28 February 2023. Like Member Allowances, these attendance figures will be updated and reported to the Fire Authority in June 2023.

3.13 Member attendance has been good with no meetings being inquorate, and all business being able to be conducted. Committee meeting absences have often been due to Unitary Authority meeting clashes, and apologies, when received, have generally been in good time.

3.14 Appendix B details Committee meeting attendance only (meetings which have been held in public), and does not include Member attendance at Member briefings and events held during the year, for example, Working Groups, Fire Liaison Group meetings, briefings, Armed Forces meetings, Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group meetings and Member Development courses.

4. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Member Allowances and expenses (Appendix A) outline the cost to the Fire Authority.

6 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications in this report.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no risk implications in this report.

9. **CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 None for the purpose of this report.

10. **PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

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10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Audit and Governance Committee meetings in 2022/23.

11.2 Members' Scheme of Allowances – February 2023.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Members' Allowances.

12.2 Appendix B – Members' Attendance.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead 0118 938 4611

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - Member Allowances and Travel Expenses paid to date

Member Payments 1 June 2022- 28 February 2023

<u>SURNAME</u>	<u>FORENAME</u>	<u>To date Member Allowance</u>	<u>To date Special Responsibility Allowance</u>	<u>To date Travel Expenses</u>	<u>Total Paid to Date 31/02/23</u>
Bateson	Christine	£2,044.18	£108.19	0.00	£2,152.37
Benneyworth	Dennis	£2,044.18	£365.72	41.14	£2,451.04
Brooks	Jeff	£2,044.18	£2,701.55	0.00	£4,745.73
Brown	Tricia	£2,044.18	£2,701.55	0.00	£4,745.73
Cannon	David	£2,044.18	£367	0.00	£2,410.81
Dar	Haqeeq	£1,801.07	£0	60.50	£1,861.57
Dudley	Colin	£2,044.18	£3,586.15	0.00	£5,630.33
Gittings	Paul	£2,044.18	£9,251.04	119.20	£11,414.42
Helliar-Symons	Pauline	£2,044.18	£611.52	109.54	£2,765.24
Linden	Tony	£2,044.18	£0.00	0.00	£2,044.18
Lovelock	Jo	£2,044.18	£900.50	0.00	£2,944.68
Malik	Sandra	£1,827.29	£0.00	0.00	£1,827.29
Malvern	Morag	£1,801.07	£548.19	0.00	£2,349.26
McElroy	Dave	£1,801.07	£2,701.55	0.00	£4,502.62
McKenzie-Boyle	Tina	£2,044.18	£364	0.00	£2,408.10
Oloko	Biya	£1,827.29	£0	0.00	£1,827.29
Shepherd-DuBey	Rachelle	£2,044.18	£4,748.21	0.00	£6,792.39
Smith	Dexter	£2,017.95	£0	0.00	£2,017.95
Smith	Mike	£1,827.29	£901	0.00	£2,727.79
Werner	Simon	£2,044.18	£2,701.55	0.00	£4,745.73
Independent Person (s)					
		0	0.00	0.00	0.00
		0	0.00	0.00	0.00
					72,364.52

Please Note:

Councillor Dexter Smith owed £26.23 for backpay

Councillors Sandra Malik, Biya Oloko and Mike Smith overpaid £26.22 for backpay

Councillors Bateson, Benneyworth, Cannon, Dudley, Gittings, Helliar-Symons, McKenzie-Boyle received backdated SRA allowances.

Councillors Dar, Malik, Oloko, M. Smith, McElroy and Malik 4.04% salary backdated to 1 June 2022 based on when they were appointed to the Fire Authority.

Councillors Bateson, Brooks, Brown, Benneyworth, Cannon, Dudley, Gittings, Helliar-Symons, Linden, Lovelock, McKenzie-Boyle Shepherd-DuBey, D. Smith and Werner 4.04% salary increase backdated to 1 April 2022.

No more than 10 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) were paid.

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Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Biyi Oloko	8	8	100%	0	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30 28/07/22 18:30 17/10/22 18:30 23/01/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 30/06/22 19:00 15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Present, as expected
Councillor Christine Bateson	8	5	63%	2	Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 19:00 28/07/22 18:30 17/10/22 18:30 23/01/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Present, as expected Absent Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected
Councillor Colin Dudley	9	8	89%	1	Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 19:00 18/07/22 18:30 11/10/22 18:30 06/12/22 18:30 07/02/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected
Councillor Dave McElroy	9	5	55%	4	Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 19:00 18/07/22 18:30 11/10/22 18:30 06/12/22 18:30 07/02/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30	Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor David Cannon	9	8	89%	1	Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	9	8	89%	1	Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Apologies, sent representative
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Dexter Smith	9	7	78%	1	Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Apologies, sent representative
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Apologies
Councillor Haqeeq Dar	8	8	100%	0	Audit and Governance Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	17/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	23/01/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Jeff Brooks	9	8	89%	1	Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Jo Lovelock	11	6	55%	5	Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	15/12/22 14:00	Apologies, sent representative
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Apologies, sent substitute
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	11/07/22 14:00	Apologies, sent representative
Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected					
Councillor Mike Smith	8	9	100%	0	Audit and Governance Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	17/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	23/01/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Councillor Morag Malvern	10	9	90%	1	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	17/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	23/01/23 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	11/07/22 14:00	Substitute
Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	15/12/22 14:00	Substitute					

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Paul Gittings	9	9	100%	0	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons	9	8	89%	1	Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	9	9	100%	0	Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Sandra Malik	8	7	88%	1	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	17/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	23/01/23 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Simon Werner	11	9	82%	0	Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	18/07/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	11/10/22 18:30	Absent
					Management Committee	06/12/22 18:30	Absent
					Management Committee	07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	04/10/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	19/12/22 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	11/07/22 14:00	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Jo	15/12/22 14:00	Present, as expected

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	8	4	50%	4	Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 19:00 28/07/22 18:30 17/10/22 18:30 23/01/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Apologies, sent representative Apologies Present, as expected, virtual Present, as expected Apologies Apologies Present, as expected virtual
Councillor Tony Linden	8	8	100%	0	Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	30/06/22 19:00 28/07/22 18:30 17/10/22 18:30 23/01/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Present, as expected
Councillor Tricia Brown	9	9	100%	0	Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Management Committee	30/06/22 19:00 28/07/22 18:30 17/10/22 18:30 23/01/23 18:30 30/06/22 18:30 04/10/22 18:30 19/12/22 18:30 15/02/23 18:30 07/02/23 18:30	Present, as expected Present, as expected Substitute

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	28 MARCH 2023
SUBJECT	QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23 QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2022)
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) third quarter (October-December 2022) performance for the 2022-23 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION/S

That the 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 four 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

Agenda Item 9

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 third quarter (October-December 2022) 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 Commitment 1 – We will provide education and advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies
- 4.3 Commitment 3 - We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.4 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.5 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.6 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

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 risk 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 Included with main report.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Sam Faulknall-Mills
Performance & Planning Officer
07786 135 706
13.2 Becca Chapman
Data, Performance and Risk Manager
07585 991629

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Quarterly Performance Report

Q3 2022-2023 October-December



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Contact Us

Accessibility

If you require any of the information contained within this document in a more accessible format, [please contact us](#). Please advise us which information you would like to access and provide your name and email address.

In an emergency

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the fire service.

If you are inside a building when a fire starts, remember to get out, stay out and call 999. Never try and put out a fire unless you have received sufficient training.

Contacting us when it's not an emergency

 Visit our website: rbfrs.co.uk

 Email us at: performance@rbfrs.co.uk

 Call us on: 0118 945 2888

 Write to us at: Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



Introduction

This is the Quarter Three Performance Report, summarising our progress across the Service.

In our Annual Plan for 2022-23, we set 10 Annual Objectives for the year, which can be found at Appendix B. The Objectives are delivered through our Service Plans and Local Safety Plans and our projects and programmes. Ongoing analysis of performance data and information supports decision-making across the organisation. We monitor performance across four quadrants:

Service Provision: Monitoring the delivery of our statutory obligations and the services provided by RBFRS.

Corporate Health: Monitoring how key resources are managed, which includes measures relating to staff, finance and health and safety.

Priority Programmes: Progress against our key programme activity (our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework and Built Environment Programme).

Assurance: Monitoring corporate risk management and other assurance activity including internal audit and our HMICFRS Action Plan.

The Strategic Performance Board monitors performance quarterly, before key data and analysis is provided in this report for the Audit and Governance Committee to scrutinise.



Key

Performance Measures

	Target exceeded by more than 10%	Comparison with target
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%	
	Target missed by up to 10%	
	Target missed by more than 10%	
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting	
↑	Improvement in performance from equivalent period the previous year	Comparison with actual the previous year
↔	Maintenance of performance from equivalent period the previous year	
↓	Decline in performance from equivalent period the previous year	

Priority Programme Project Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start

Classification of Risk Scores and Risk Movement

20 - 25	Outside assumed Risk Appetite and requires mitigation to proceed
19	Inside Risk Appetite only because of extremely low probability. Mitigate if necessary and possible, accept only if no further action can be justified
17 & 18	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so - discuss with a Director
7-16	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so
1-6	Inside Risk Appetite and unlikely to need further mitigation
↑	Risk increasing
↔	No risk movement
↓	Risk decreasing



Q3 Summary



2018

Total number of incidents in Berkshire



74.2%

% of occasions we responded to emergency incidents within 10 minutes



41.6%

% increase in the number of Referrals for Safe and Well visits received from our partners



74.8%

% of Full Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result



11

Number of complaints received



5.5%

% of working time lost to staff sickness across all groups



100%

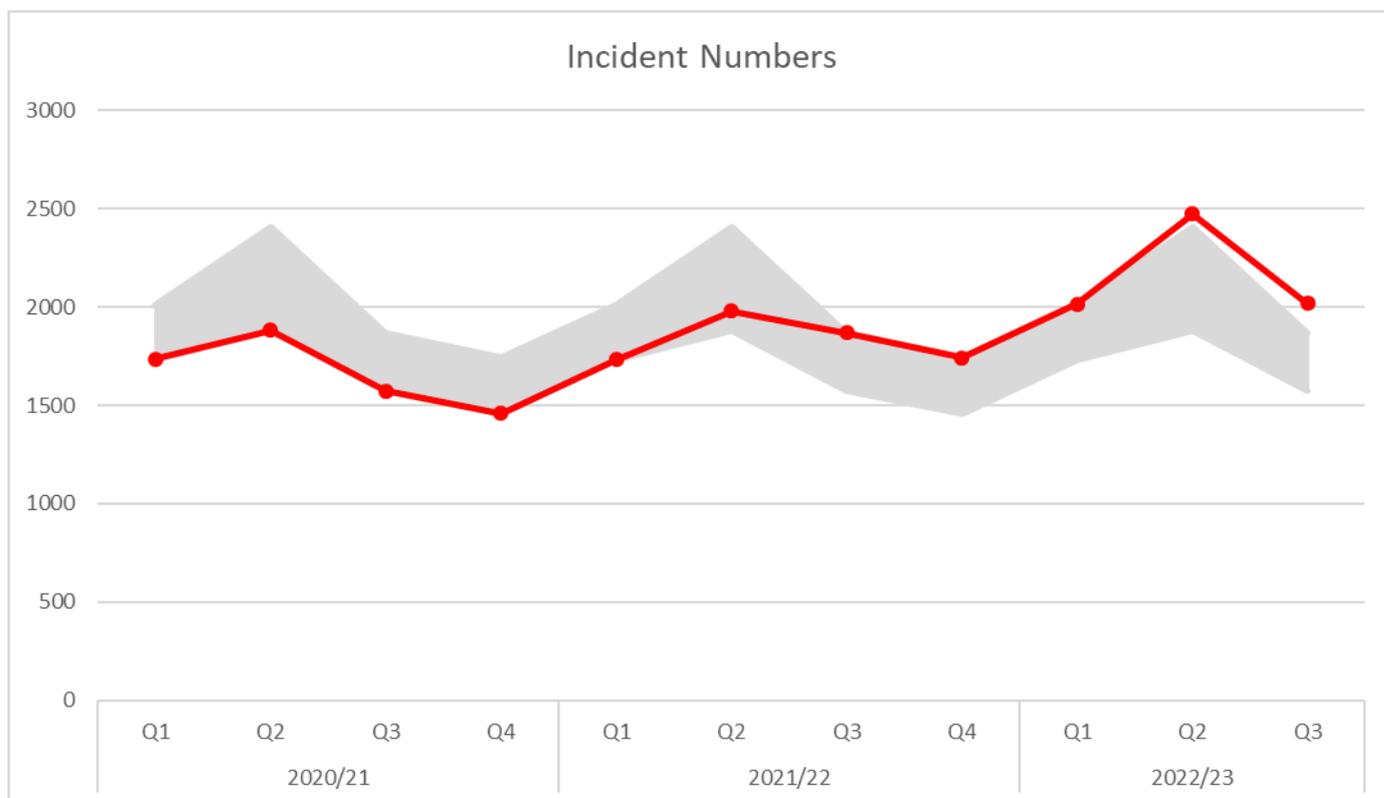
Compliant spend as a % of overall spend



Incident Trends

The table below illustrates the number of emergency incidents we responded to in Quarter 3 2022-23 in comparison with previous years. This data is also presented in a graph below as a red line, with the previous 5 years minimum and maximum as background shading for context.

Incident Numbers				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2020/21	1735	1883	1574	1460
2021/22	1732	1980	1869	1742
2022/23	2016	2474	2018	



The number of incidents in 2020-21 fell due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst the number of incidents in 2021-22 returned to pre-pandemic levels. These historic years are included in the tables in this report to aid comparisons.

Whilst Primary Fires remain at relatively stable numbers, the number of Secondary Fires in this quarter decreased substantially after the summer spate conditions in the summer of 2022 and are now in line with previous quarter threes.

The number of Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) calls received rose in this quarter compared to last quarter and are at their highest level for the last two years. Hoax calls remain very low in volume.

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) have increased in quarter three, particularly during December, which aligns with cold weather snaps.



Quadrant One – Service Provision

Response

Following a particularly busy operational period in quarter two, response activity during quarter three was more consistent with incident profiles we would expect to see. There was however, a spike in December, whereby incidents were up 44% from December 2022, with a total number of 802 incidents. This increased activity is largely attributed to the colder weather, which resulted in a substantial rise in special service incident types including internal property flooding and road traffic collisions.

Some incidents of note during the quarter include:

- Slough bus station fire – six fire appliances, officers and specials
- Lawrence court (Bracknell) flat fire – five fire appliances, officers and specials
- Brownlow Road (Reading) fire in common parts of flats – three fire appliances, fire survival guidance from TVFCS, two residents led to safety with use of smoke hoods
- Folly farm (Hungerford) thatched roof fire – 12 fire appliances, officers and specials

The Service response standard fell slightly short of target during the quarter at 74.2%. The continued volatility in relation to crewing and availability across both duty systems continues to present challenges. Managers within Service Delivery are working closely with colleagues from other parts of the Service to mitigate the impacts of the volatility.

Prevention

Regrettably there have been 3 fire fatalities during Q3 which are examined in greater detail below. However it is positive to see that the reduction in non-fatal fire casualties has been continued through the Quarter.

Teams have continued to work closely with partner organisations including TVP to target primary fires resulting from an increase in anti-social behaviour and vehicle crime. This has seen a slowdown in the rate of increase but remains an issue that we seek to support the police in addressing. Work with partners, combined with the inclement weather experienced through Q3 has resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of deliberate secondary fires recorded.

Teams have continued to promote Safe and Well Visits resulting in a continued increase in referrals of vulnerable people compared to the same period in 2021/22. Engagement activities are now being focussed in underrepresented areas to ensure that all communities are reached. Completion of S&W visits within timescales continues to be challenging due to the complex needs and availability of clients and carers.

Protection

Q3 has seen the focussing of resource to risk via the RBIP with FSIs working in Hubs where the greatest risks remain. Additional work has been undertaken through the festive period with shops campaigns resulting in the auditing of a substantial number of retail outlets and the provision of fire safety advice.



There has been a substantial increase in the number of statutory fire safety consultations over this period however, FSI's have maintained the already high completion rate within the required timescales.

Work has progressed through the quarter in preparation for the introduction of the Fire England Regulations on 23 January. This has also resulted in additional training and CPD events for FSI's in order to ensure that they remain up to date with the legislation and regulations.

Operational Risk Information Visits

Operational Risk sites are those locations with particular characteristics (e.g. use, location) that pose a specific or unusual risk to our firefighters and the surrounding communities. Regular familiarisation visits by crews and support staff are required to ensure understanding of the risk is up to date.

Progress has been made in improving and refining the operational risk information process in terms of both reporting and recording. Risk Information and Emergency Planning Officers (RIEPOs) have been working with colleagues to develop a report which will readily capture the number of due visits, visits completed, and visits completed in time. When finished, this report will make it easier to identify visit trends and adherence to visit schedules. In the meantime, RIEPOs continue to produce a weekly report to identify the number of outstanding visits per station, and per hub. This has proved successful in significantly reducing the number of overdue visits and enables Hub Managers to identify areas where support is required.

RIEPOs are also close to delivering a Familiarisation Visits Schedule for stations to use when planning familiarisation visits in addition to an existing schedule for officers, which has been well received. This will be easily accessible via new Risk Information intranet pages and will assist the planning and recording of visits. A tab on IBIS has also been created for RIEPOs to record familiarisation visits and therefore improve the recording process.

As of the end of February 2023, RIEPOs are up to date with all but one of their visits to High Risk sites. They have also been accompanying colleagues on station audits during Q3, which has enhanced the audit process and enabled RIEPOs to identify areas requiring more support. RIEPOs also continue regular monthly meetings with colleagues in Protection and Prevention to ensure risk information is up to date, particularly on premises presenting a higher risk. RIEPOs continue to share relevant information with TVFCS.



QUADRANT ONE – SERVICE PROVISION		DATA SUMMARY			
Overall Measures					
1. Number of Fire Deaths					2022/23 Target: 0
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	1	0	2	3	3
Target	0	0	0	0	0
2022/23 Actual	0 ↑	0 ↔	3 ↓		3 ↔
2. Number of non-fatal fire casualties					
					2022/23 Target: 75 max
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	12	13	3	12	28
Target (max)	18	19	19	19	56
2022/23 Actual	13 ↓	5 ↑	15 ↓		33 ↓
3. Number of deliberate Primary Fires					
					2022/23 Target: Reduce
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	30	27	37	35	94
Target (max)	29	26	36	34	91
2022/23 Actual	34 ↓	30 ↓	39 ↓		103 ↓
4. Number of deliberate Secondary Fires					
					2022/23 Target: Reduce
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	76	35	38	50	149
Target (max)	75	34	37	49	146
2022/23 Actual	91 ↓	115 ↓	19 ↑		225 ↓
Prevention Measures					
5. Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well visits received from our partners					2022/23 Target: 10%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	682	701	740	780	2123
Target	750	771	814	858	2335
2022/23 Actual Number	889	886	1048		2851
2022/23 Percentage Change	30.4%	26.4%	41.6%		33.0%
6. Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours					
					2022/23 Target: 100%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022/23 Actual	100% ↔	100% ↔	100% ↔		100% ↔
7. Percentage of Very High and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time					
					2022/23 Target: 90%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
2022/23 Actual	40.6%	31.9%	41.1%		37.9%



8. Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time						2022/23 Target: 75%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3	
Previous Year (21/22)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Target	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	
2022/23 Actual	34.3%	28.9%	49.6%		37.9%	
Protection Measures						
9. Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme						2022/23 Target: Monitor
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3	
Previous Year (21/22)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Target	-	-	-	-	-	
2022/23 Actual	N/A*	12.5%	16.9%		14.9%	
*The Risk Based Inspection Programme was launched on the 28 th April. Monitoring data available from Q2 22/23.						
10. Percentage of Full Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result *						2022/23 Target: 60% max
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3	
Previous Year (21/22)	56.2%	57.4%	63.3%	51.3%	59.1%	
Target (max)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	
2022/23 Actual	78.8% ↓	72.8% ↓	74.8% ↓		75.3% ↓	
*As part of the Risk Based Inspection Programme the Fire Safety Inspecting Officers should be visiting premises which are less likely to conform to the RRO 2005 and are therefore a higher risk to life. This measure illustrates the percentage of closed Fire Safety Audits carried out in commercial premises, where the result was 'Broadly Compliant' (satisfactory) and no further action or follow-up was required.						
11. Percentage success when cases go to court						2022/23 Target: 95%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q2	
Previous Year (21/22)	0 cases	100% (1 case)	0 cases	0 cases	100% (1 case)	
Target	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	
2022/23 Actual	0 cases	0 cases	0 cases		0 cases	
12. Percentage of Statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes						2022/23 Target: 95%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3	
Previous Year (21/22)	94.1%	97.7%	98.4%	97.2%	96.6%	
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	
2022/23 Actual	96.3% ↑	98.9% ↑	97.2% ↓		97.4% ↑	
13. The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received						2022/23 Target: Reduce
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3	
Previous Year (21/22)	622	853	868	698	2343	
Target (max)	621	852	867	697	2340	
2022/23 Actual	763 ↓	787 ↑	901 ↓		2451 ↓	



14. Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend					2022/23 Target: 30% min
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	23.8%	22.0%	21.2%	28.1%	22.2%
Target	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
2022/23 Actual	26.7% ↑	23.0% ↑	24.2% ↑		24.6% ↑
Response Measures					
15. Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered					2022/23 Target: 75%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	76.0%	77.0%	79.4%	76.3%	77.5%
Target	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
2022/23 Actual	76.0% ↓	69.3% ↓	74.2% ↓		72.9% ↓
16. Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability					2022/23 Target: 99%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	98.6%	98.1%	97.0%	98.2%	97.9%
Target	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
2022/23 Actual	97.6% ↓	97.4% ↓	96.6% ↓		97.2% ↓
17. Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)					2022/23 Target: 60%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)*	59.8%	34.7%	36.5%	43.8%	43.6%
Target	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
2022/23 Actual	44.4% ↓	40.3% ↑	35.9% ↓		40.2% ↓
*excluding Pangbourne					
Resilience Measures					
18. Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale *					2022/23 Target: Monitor
*Data for this measure is not yet available. Risk visits and risk information form an integral part of our operational preparedness. It was recognised at the beginning of Q2 that there was an unacceptable amount of high and medium risk visits which were past their revisit date. Managers were directed to focus attention on rectifying this situation, prioritising the high risk sites. Progress has been made across the Central and East Hubs in Q3, with low numbers of outstanding Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites not achieved. West Hub have some visits to complete which has been addressed in SDMT.					
19. Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed					2022/23 Target: 12
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Target	3	3	3	3	9
2022/23 Actual	3↔	1↓	4↑		8↓



Customer Experience Measures					
20. Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service					2022/23 Target: 100%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022/23 Actual	100% ↔	100% ↔	100% ↔		100% ↔
21. Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service					2022/23 Target: 95%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	100%	No returns	100%	100%	100%
Target	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
2022/23 Actual	100% ↔	100%	No returns		100% ↔
22. Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits					2022/23 Target: 90%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	95.8%	100%	100%	100%	97.8%
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
2022/23 Actual	100% ↑	100% ↔	100% ↔		100% ↑
23. Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit					2022/23 Target: 100%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	98.2%	100%	99.0%	100%	99.3%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022/23 Actual	99.1% ↑	100% ↔	100% ↑		99.6% ↑
24. Number of complaints received					2022/23 Target: Monitor
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	7	8	9	4	24
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2022/23 Actual	7 ↔	6 ↑	11 ↓		24 ↔
25. Number of compliments received					2022/23 Target: Monitor
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	5	3	1	5	9
Target	-	-	-	-	-
2022/23 Actual	7 ↑	5 ↑	5 ↑		17 ↑



Key - Performance Measures

	Target exceeded by more than 10%	Comparison with target
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%	
	Target missed by up to 10%	
	Target missed by more than 10%	
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting	
↑	Improvement in performance from equivalent period the previous year	Comparison with actual the previous year
↔	Maintenance of performance from equivalent period the previous year	
↓	Decline in performance from equivalent period the previous year	



Quadrant Two – 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.

Finance

The 2022/23 Revenue Budget agreed by Members in February 2022 was set at £38.446m as a balanced budget with no use of reserves.

The forecast revenue outturn for 2022/23 is shown in Appendix A, and shows an anticipated deficit of £648,000, to be funded from the Budget Contingency Reserve. Variances against individual revenue lines are explained below.

The current situation in regard to Grey book staff is that an offer of 5%, backdated to 1 July 2022, has been rejected. We have incorporated the pay award offer of 5% into the current forecast, and compared with the original budget of 2.5%, this gives a forecast increase in employment costs for Grey book staff in 2022/23 of £393,000. This is split between *stations* (£322,000) and *non-station* Grey book staff (£71,000).

Station staff budgets are also under pressure with overtime forecast to be £578,000 over budget (including an adjustment for back dated pay rises and the NI reduction). At the end of Q2 the variance was forecast as £453,000. There are various factors for the increase and level of the variance, including the additional bank holiday for the Queen's funeral, increased working in the summer heatwave, the need to cover absences for sickness and those on light duties, annual leave and training in order to maintain crewing levels. 18 new recruits came onto stations in mid-April but needed time to build up operational competency and have an effect on crewing cover. On a positive note, these additional overtime costs have partly been offset due to a different mix of station staff in development and competent roles compared to budgetary assumptions. Some of the increased workload in the summer was for over the border cover, particularly in Buckinghamshire, the costs for which are recovered and included under *Income Other*.

On-call stations are showing positive and negative variances across the county with an overall net pressure of £49,000, including allowance for the payrise and NI reduction.

The Green Book pay award for 2022/23 has been accepted and paid (backdated to 1 April 2022). The additional budget pressure of £219,000 has been built into the Q3 forecast. This additional cost is mitigated by a number of vacancies that have not been filled due to the overall budgetary position.

Set against the adverse variances for pay rises is the Government announcement that the additional 1.25% rise in employers' national insurance contributions would be reversed from November 2022 - resulting in forecast savings of £85,000, split between *stations* (£49,000) and *non-station* (£36,000).

Training – due to a number of factors, including workload pressures such as summer fires, the Royal Funeral and other crewing pressures, attendance on some courses has been delayed and an underspend of £45,000 in the current year is anticipated.



Repairs and Maintenance. Water damage to the lecture block at the Whitley Wood Fire Station is estimated to cost around £77,000, but will be mostly reimbursed through an insurance claim (see other income below).

Rates. The final appeal on business rate charges (Dee Road site) has been successful and has resulted in a net refund of £109,000.

Cleaning. A review of the current cleaning contract and controls over the amount of janitorial materials being used is expected to result in a decrease of £44,000 in cleaning costs for the year.

Utilities. As Members will be aware, energy costs have been rising sharply. Although additional budget provision for utilities had been made in the current year, the prices rises that have come into effect from 1 October 2022 mean that it is anticipated that costs will exceed the budget allocated by a total variance against budget of £235,000. This takes into account some support that the Government is providing to the public sector.

Transport. It is estimated that increased activity and high fuel prices will result in an additional £60,000 in transport costs this year.

Cross border charges have been agreed with Thames Valley partners for the first three quarters of the year and, based on this, it is estimated that charges will be £56,000 higher (under *Contracts Other*) and income £152,000 higher (under *Income Other*) higher than the budgeted targets.

As part of the preparation work for possible industrial action, officers have reviewed the existing contract for contingency cover and enhanced the level of external support that would be available to the Authority. This has resulted in additional costs of £149,000 (under *Contracts Other*) in 2022/23 to train and equip the additional resource in preparation for any possible deployment need.

Other ongoing work to ensure that the Authority has sufficient arrangements in place has also led to additional *Equipment* costs of £35,000 being incurred.

Pensions. Costs for injury to feelings claims arising from the McCloud judgement will now be settled by central government. This means provisions that we made in previous years' accounts to cover these claims can be released, resulting in a favourable variance of £209,000.

Income Other also includes £15,000 as our share of prior year surpluses that have been distributed by the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company as well as £72,000 from the insurance claim for water damage at Whitley Wood. A claim has been made for the reimbursement of £41,000 of additional costs associated with the Royal Funeral. Compensation from a supplier, court fee recoveries and collaborative income brought in an additional £49,000 in unbudgeted income.

The *Grants* line is showing an adverse variance as the Authority unexpectedly received notification from the Home Office that the grant funding provided for Firelink will be completely phased out over a five year period, starting in 2022/23. A 20% reduction in funding will occur in each of the next five years. This has resulted in a £75,000 budget pressure in 2022/23. It should also be noted



that the grant did not cover all of the costs of Firelink and the Firelink contract increases by RPI each year. Within five years the unsupported costs of Firelink could be around £550,000.

Investment Interest. Given the recent interest rate rises it is anticipated that yields from invested sums should generate additional income this year of £241,000.

Gov Grants/Precepts. As part of budget setting the Authority had to estimate the income it is due from central Government for section 31 business rates relief payments, for both the current and prior years. These figures are still to be confirmed fully, and are made up of a number of variables outside of the direct control of the Authority. The net expected variance will be £155,000 in reduced income.

HR

Both the levels of sickness days lost and percentage of working time lost to sickness has increased this quarter.

The total days lost to sickness absence across all staff groups this quarter is 9.6% higher compared to last quarter (1476 in Q3 vs 1334 in Q2). There is however a decrease of 19.7% when compared to the same period last year (1838 days). Further analysis can be found later on in the report.

The percentage of working time lost across all staff groups this quarter is 5.5% this is an increase of 0.6% compared to last quarter (4.9%) with a decrease of 1.8% on the same quarter last year (7.3%).

Respiratory absence increased this quarter by 25%. Absence due to confirmed COVID-19 cases only made up 7% of all sickness absences (99 days - 29 episodes).

Musculoskeletal (MSK) sickness has reduced by 3% this quarter and continues to remain one of the top causes of sickness absence equating to 33% of total days lost. The number of episodes has reduced from last quarter.

Mental health sickness days lost has decreased this quarter by 4% equating to 16% of total days lost. Compared to the same time last year days lost to Mental Health absence equated to 19%

The percentage of eligible staff receiving a PDR meeting this quarter is 86% (467 staff). This is a reduction from the same quarter last year (98.2%).

The number of employees from an ethnic minority background has reduced to 45 the percentage of staff remains the same 7.06% due to staff in post figures decreasing.

The number of female firefighters employed in the Service reduced from 29 to 28 this quarter the percent remains the same (6.6%) due to staff in post figures decreasing

The number of staff employed by RBFRS declaring a disability remains at 33.



Trauma Support

Q3 saw an increase in the demand for the trauma support team who are deployed following serious incidents. Usage analysis identified watches that had attended more than one trauma support session in quick succession. Managers were alerted to ensure the welfare of those involved was monitored. The support from the manager, alongside the trauma screening questionnaire, which is completed four weeks after a session, prompted professional help to be sought. This included accessing appropriate programmes of support available through the EAP and Occupational Health input to determine whether any adjustments were necessary.

Menopause

During Q3 the Fire Fighters Charity ran a women's health programme with a focus on the menopause. Following conversations recommending the programme, with the line manager and HR some of our staff attended the programme at one of the charities residential venues. They found it hugely beneficial and were able to apply some of the practical advice which led them to remain in the workplace. They wrote an article advocating the programme and its benefits which appeared in the December issue of The Shout with the aim of encouraging others to engage with support from the Charity.

These cases demonstrate the range of supports our staff have access to and the coordinated approach we take to address a range of health and wellbeing issues.



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Budget Update - Revenue Position Quarter 3 2022/23

	Annual Budget £'000	Q3 Outturn £'000	Forecast to YE £'000	Fcast - Budget Variance £'000
EMPLOYEES				
STATIONS	17,163	13,109	17,898	735
NON-STATIONS	11,944	8,745	12,000	56
TRAINING	635	264	590	(45)
OTHER	269	204	273	4
	30,011	22,322	30,761	750
PREMISES				
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	806	539	895	89
RATES	821	572	712	(109)
CLEANING	285	184	241	(44)
UTILITIES	479	263	714	235
	2,391	1,558	2,562	171
SUPPLIES				
INSURANCE	397	392	392	(5)
EQUIPMENT	652	432	696	44
IS EQUIPMENT & LICENCES	797	674	811	14
CLOTHING/PPE	370	270	373	3
COMMUNICATIONS	817	511	823	6
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	242	165	242	0
PRINT/STATIONERY/PUBLICATIONS/SUBSCRIPTIONS	143	118	154	11
COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY SUPPLIES	160	88	147	(13)
SUPPLIES OTHER	193	134	183	(10)
	3,771	2,784	3,821	50
CONTRACTS				
CONTRIBUTION TO TVFCS & COLLABORATION	930	657	922	(8)
LEGAL	50	9	50	0
CONTRACTS OTHER (incl Professional Services)	695	355	898	203
	1,675	1,021	1,870	195
TRANSPORT				
VEHICLE RUNNING COSTS	727	623	789	62
TRAVEL	212	135	205	(7)
	939	758	994	55
PENSIONS				
PENSIONS	434	325	225	(209)
	434	325	225	(209)
INCOME				
GRANTS	(2,169)	(1,936)	(2,095)	74
RENTAL INCOME	(243)	(199)	(243)	0



TVFCS RECHARGE INCOME	(354)	(265)	(354)	0
INCOME OTHER	(405)	(184)	(741)	(336)
	(3,171)	(2,584)	(3,433)	(262)
NET COST OF SERVICES	36,050	26,184	36,800	750
DEBT CHARGES INTEREST	388	185	371	(17)
INVESTMENT INTEREST	(60)	(117)	(300)	(240)
REVENUE FUNDING OF CAPITAL	1,500	0	1,500	0
APPROPRIATION TO/(FROM) RESERVES	(227)	0	(227)	0
FINANCING COSTS	795	0	795	0
NET EXPENDITURE	38,446	26,252	38,939	493
GOV GRANTS/PRECEPTS	(38,446)	(32,746)	(38,291)	155
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT BEFORE USE OF RESERVES	0	(6,494)	648	648



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
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Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

	Annual Budget £'000	Outturn to Dec 22 £'000	Forecast to Y/E £'000	Forecast Variance £'000
EMPLOYEES	1,868	1,353	1,834	(34)
CORPORATE RECHARGES TO TVFCS FROM RBFPS	354	266	354	0
SUPPLIES/ OTHER	39	(10)	41	2
TECHNOLOGY	252	167	263	11
NET COST OF TVFCS	2,513	1,776	2,492	(21)
RBFRS Share of Costs (37%)	930	657	922	(8)



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives Progress Update

New objectives agreed in April 2022 are used for this report. The table below illustrates progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.

	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<p>Objective: Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels</p> <p>We recognise the value that a diverse workforce brings and will take action to increase the diversity of job applicants, seeking individuals with the right behaviours and skills to help us reflect and engage with our local communities.</p>	New	G	G	A	
<p>Objective: Leadership and corporate commitment</p> <p>We will support our organisational leaders to understand their role in tackling inequalities and demonstrating inclusive behaviours, in line with our Behavioural Competency Framework. This commitment means we will be strong and visible in our leadership and ensure that all staff and members of our local communities have confidence in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>	New	G	G	G	
<p>Objective: Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community</p> <p>We will connect and communicate with our diverse local community to develop meaningful and sustainable links, which help us to increase our understanding of their needs. We will ensure that we tailor our prevention, protection and response activities accordingly and target the most vulnerable people with the greatest risk.</p>	New	A	A	A	
<p>Objective: Building on our inclusive culture</p> <p>We will continue taking action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect, and support all staff to contribute to the creation of an inclusive working environment.</p>	New	A	A	G	

Tables containing relevant Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data are presented quarterly and are available in Appendix A, which provide further explanation and detail regarding the below figures.

In summary, minimal changes have occurred in this quarter. The number of employees from ethnic minority groups and the number of female firefighters both remain the same, although due to an increase in staff in post the percentage drops by 0.1%. There was no reduction in the number of individuals sharing information regarding a disability, with this figure remaining at 33. In the organisational age profile, again minimal changes were seen. Trends will continue to be monitored by quarter to identify short-term changes as well as longer-term trends, in conjunction with activities as described above to monitor the impact of this work on demographics over time.



Further work is also planned as part of the growth of the EDI Steering Group to explore options for equality monitoring and use of equality data.

Data on recruitment and promotion campaigns is currently with the team and under evaluation for future consideration, in line with a review of equality data as part of the revised EDI Action Plan. Further information regarding the current wholetime recruitment campaign will also be shared in the appropriate forums in line with the progression and conclusion of the process.

Key - Project or Action Plan Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start



QUADRANT TWO – CORPORATE HEALTH					DATA SUMMARY
26. Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups					2022/23 Target: 4% max
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	3.4%	5.5%	7.3%	7.1%	5.8%
Target	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
2022/23 Actual	6.2% ↓	4.9% ↑	5.5% ↑		5.6% ↑
27. Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Appraisals					2022/23 Target: 100%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	76.0%	93.8%	98.2%	98.7%	98.2%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022/23 Actual	30% ↓	81% ↓	86% ↓		86% ↓
28. Number of formal grievances					2022/23 Target: Monitor
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	2	1	4	0	7
Target	--	--	--	--	--
2022/23 Actual	2 ↔	1 ↔	9 ↑		12 ↑
29. Number of RIDDOR accidents and diseases					2022/23 Target: 4 max
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	2	1	1	1	4
Target (max)	1	1	1	1	3
2022/23 Actual	3 ↓	1 ↔	3 ↓		7 ↓
30. Percentage of spend subject to competition					2022/23 Target: 85%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	94.7%	92.3%	89.9%	83.8%	92.7%
Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
2022/23 Actual	85.7% ↓	82.2% ↓	87.4% ↓		85.8% ↓
31. Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend					2022/23 Target: 100%
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2022/23 Actual	100% ↔	100% ↔	100% ↔		100% ↔
32. Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation*					2022/23 Target: 0
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year to Q3
Previous Year (21/22)	0	0	0	0	0
Target	0	0	0	0	0
2022/23 Actual	0 ↔	0 ↔	0 ↔		0 ↔
*Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Protection Legislation					



Key - Performance Measures

	Target exceeded by more than 10%	Comparison with target
	Target met or exceeded by up to 10%	
	Target missed by up to 10%	
	Target missed by more than 10%	
	NA or data accuracy issues affect confidence in reporting	
↑	Improvement in performance from equivalent period the previous year	Comparison with actual the previous year
↔	Maintenance of performance from equivalent period the previous year	
↓	Decline in performance from equivalent period the previous year	



Quadrant Three – Priority Programmes

Our Priority Programmes Quadrant brings together progress updates on our areas of work where we are delivering defined outcomes that are different to, or improve on, current working practices, policies and procedures.

Updates are provided on our CRMP, People Strategy, Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF), and the HRRB Project, assessing progress against the projects and objectives set in our 2022-23 Annual Plan.

A review of the existing initiatives is underway with the actions being reported on currently due for an update following the publication of key governance documents. Our CRMP and Corporate Plan, the Strategic Asset Investment Framework and People Strategy are currently under review due for publication early 2023. Following engagement, consultation and publication, the initiatives and actions associated with these areas will be refreshed to align with the new strategic direction. The BEP which incorporates the HRRB project was closed down at the end of 2022. The completed & outstanding work of the HRRB project has been handed over to the hubs and forms part of Business As Usual from the start of 2023.

Until publication, existing initiatives and actions will continue to be monitored unless completed.

Intranet & Website Replacement Project

RBFRS were under a contract for our external facing Website: rbfrs.co.uk and our Intranet: Siren. The contract had been extended several times, with an eventual end date of 31st October 2022. As the Service required a replacement external Website and Intranet, this project commenced at the end of 2021.

Our External Website is our online interface for the communities we serve and as such we asked the residents of Berkshire to complete a survey on our website, what they did/did not like about it, any functionality they would like to see, and more.

For our Intranet Siren, it being one the interfaces most used by RBFRS staff, the project team knew that the solution would need to stand the test of time and enable us to grow as needs required. We sent a survey to all staff, asking for feedback on what they felt worked/didn't work, and what they would like to see from a functionality perspective going forward.

After a successful tender process and several iterations of testing the proposed solutions, we went live with our new, revised external Website on 14th October 2022. Prior to going live, during the summer of 2022, our previous external Website was audited by the Government Digital Service (GDS) for accessibility. The report from GDS detailed mostly issues we were aware of and had included in the requirements in the specification for the replacement.

Our focus for migration had to be 'lift and shift' considering the time based implementation date. For our Intranet: Siren the initial plan was to also go-live on 14th October 2022, however, there were several key parts of the system that we were waiting to be fixed and so we deferred the go-live until 24th October 2022, when the solution was in a much better place.



The delivery for both parts of the project, was overall smooth and without serious issues. We have an engaging supplier who not only supported us through build and implementation, but stayed engaged post go-live to assist RBFRS with concerns and issues. The supplier provides us a Customer Success Manager who meets with us monthly and continues to provide advice, fix issues, and provide information on platform improvements that are happening that all their customers have the benefits of adopting.

As a Service, we also trained 40+ Content Authors to be the advocates of the new Siren for their departments. We hold regular meetings with the Content Authors, and we are pleased to see that several departments are making great progress on not only becoming familiar with SharePoint, which Siren is running on, updating their department sites, but also other areas of Microsoft 365. The solution that won the bid for our project gives RBFRS the baseline to grow, to make further productivity, functionality and process improvements.

Key - Priority Programme Project Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start



CRMP

RBFA is required to publish a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP – formerly known as an Integrated Risk Management Plan). In 2018, we consulted on and published an [IRMP for 2019-23](#), which reflects the priorities and requirements of the [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#).

The below shows progress against our CRMP (IRMP) commitments published in our 2022-23 Annual Plan.

Project 1: Risk Analyses						
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Review our Risk Methodology and data requirements to inform our new CRMP, ensuring our risk analysis supports equality of access to our services for all the communities of Royal Berkshire.	BAU	A	A	G		
Deliver our action plan to align our analysis to the Fire Standard for Community Risk Management Plans.	New	A	G	G		
Develop and consult on a new Community Risk Management Plan to start in 2023.	New	A	A	G		
Provide a mapping capability to support local risk analysis.	New	A	A	G		
Analyse information about fire casualties to determine risk factors.	New	NS	NS	G		
Continue to engage with and drive the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) work to develop national best practice in risk analysis.	G	G	G	G		
Project 2: Prevention						
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Continue to work in collaboration with our Berkshire partners to identify the most vulnerable people in our society, increasing the numbers of Safe and Well Visits resulting from Referrals.	A	G	G	G		
Deliver and evaluate our new programme of follow up Safe and Well Visits to the most vulnerable.	G	G	G	G		
Focus our activities in support of Children and Young People through our road and water safety education programmes, Fire Cadets and FireSafe.	A	A	A	A		
Carry out targeted road safety activity, including for motorcyclists and around smart motorways.	G	G	G	G		
Further develop local safety initiatives, campaigns and events to target risk at a local level and evaluate their effectiveness.	G	G	G	G		
Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Prevention activities.	A	G	G	G		
Carry out a risk based review of Safe and Well Visit provision to be aligned with the development of our new CRMP.	New	NS	A	A		



Project 3: Protection					
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to develop and embed our new risk-based inspection programme to ensure that we are identifying and targeting our resources at the areas of highest risk, in line with our Protection Strategy.	G	G	G	G	
We will implement the learning from the phase one Grenfell Tower inquiry.	G	G	G	G	
Ensure a high standard of service through the quality assurance of our Protection activities.	R	G	G	G	
Project 4: Response Resource Deployment					
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to evaluate future developments in housing and infrastructure to ensure that our resource deployments match predicted future demands.	A	G	G	G	
As set out in our Response Strategy, continue the review of our specialist water rescue capabilities to be aligned to local risk and reflect national best practice.	A	G	G	A	
Improve and evaluate our ability to respond to risk in the West of the county through effective targeting of our Prevention and Protection activity.	New	G	G	G	
Undertake incident support and technical capability reviews as part of the risk analysis element of the development of the new CRMP.	New	NS	A	A	
Project 5: Response Safe Systems of Work Development					
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to clarify and prioritise next steps in the digital transformation journey as part of our Technology roadmap.	New	G	G	G	
Work with the NFCC and other key stakeholders to adopt new technologies, which support effective and efficient safe systems of work.	G	G	G	G	
Continue our investment of resource and expertise in the Thames Valley Breathing Apparatus Replacement project, conducting an effective and efficient joint procurement prior to implementation.	G	G	G	G	



People Strategy

The purpose of our [People Strategy 2018-2021](#) is to support RBFRS staff to become the best public servants they can be, creating a workforce that can deliver 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.

Objective 1: Recruit, train and develop people to ensure we create a safe, professional and capable workforce, who can provide a fit for purpose service, 24/7, 365 days a year						
	End 21/22		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Undertake Fire Fighter recruitment using Apprenticeships	G		G	G	C	
Expand on alternative ways of delivering learning and development through improved use of technology	G		G	G	C	
Objective 2: Increase the diversity of our workforce to better represent and therefore serve our local communities						
	End 21/22		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Continue to support the Leonard Cheshire Change 100 programme to work with disabled graduates on a 100-day intern programme.	G		G	G	C	
Review and consult on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and deliver associated actions, including taking positive action to ensure job and career opportunities in our service are accessible to all individuals and groups in our communities	G		G	G	G	
Develop and implement the Chairman's Internship which will target young people from under-represented groups in Berkshire	G		G	G	G	
Objective 3: Develop people and recruit talent to take personal responsibility for leadership in the organisation to ensure a public service ethos, support collaboration and effectively deliver service improvement						
	End 21/22		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Integrate and embed our behavioural competency framework and values at all levels of the service	G		G	G	G	
Deliver a framework for coaching and mentoring	G		G	A	A	
Objective 4: Develop a diverse and inclusive 'one team' culture where everyone's contribution is valued and positive behaviours are used to describe how we work together						
	End 21/22		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop a Communications and Engagement strategy	G		G	G	G	
Continue to develop the Fire Authority Member Development Programme	G		G	G	C	
Develop and deliver a programme of staff engagement to inform our People Strategy, policies, processes and improvements	G		G	G	C	



Objective 5: Change policies, processes and systems to ensure they enable and support the delivery of a fit for purpose, efficient and effective service to the community						
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
We will explore the options for use of digital resources for our Protection services	A	A	A	A		
Objective 6: Continue to support both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our people.						
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Learn and adapt to different ways of working during and after the COVID-19 pandemic	A	G	G	C		
Deliver the requirements of the 2021/22 mental health action plan	G	G	G	G		



Strategic Asset Investment Framework

The Strategic Asset Investment Framework sets out how we will maintain and renew the vital capital assets, necessary to support our services. Our capital assets include our fire stations and HQ, fleet and equipment and our ICT systems. All together, they represent a major capital investment.

Buildings						
		Status				
		End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Minor Capital Works Programme	On Track	G	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
Fleet and Equipment						
		Status				
		End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Fleet: Special Appliances	On Track	A	A	A	A	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
Fleet: Other Ancillary Vehicles	On Track	G	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
Equipment	On Track	G	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
ICT						
		Status				
		End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Hardware	On Track	A	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
Software	On Track	G	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
Networks	On Track	A	A	A	A	
	On Budget	G	G	G	A	
Services	On Track	G	G	G	G	
	On Budget	G	G	G	G	
ESMCP	On Track	A	A	R	R	
	On Budget	A	A	R	R	



Built Environment Programme – High Rise Residential Project

The HRRB (High Rise Residential Building) project was initiated to undertake fire safety audits of 198 identified high rise premises within Royal Berkshire over a 6 month period. Phase 1 of the project was completed in Quarter 1 2021/22. Phase 2 of the project concluded at the end of Q3 with all HRRB work being passed back as Business as Usual to the relevant Hub areas.

At the conclusion of the HRRB Project:

- 23 buildings had completed their remediation projects
- 8 buildings were in the process of having remediation work done expecting to complete by Spring/Summer 2023
- 3 buildings were still completing work but had significantly improved fire safety of buildings including completing internal compartmentation works and the implementing of permanent fire alarm systems
- 4 buildings remained further remediation work was required and further monitoring needed

Phase 2 HRRB Project Objectives:						
1. Perform a Fire Safety revisit for each of the 97 identified HRRBs within Royal Berkshire that received an unsatisfactory audit during Phase 1.						
2. Perform regular site visits of Interim Measures Buildings where frequency is based upon risk.						
	End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
HRRB Revisits: Good progress towards the goal of completing return visits on the 97 premises identified with fire safety issues during phase 1 continues.	G	G	G	C		
Interim Measures Premises: Operational crews continue to perform monthly visits on HRRBs in Interim Measures. The HRRB team have performed a site visit on each of the 33 HRRB's in interim Measures in order to provide assurance to RBFRS that Interim Measures remain sufficient to mitigate the risk. Visits to premises in interim measures continue with a 14 having been removed from IM following remediation.	G	G	G	C		



Quadrant Four – Assurance

Risk Register

RBFRS has a comprehensive Organisational Risk Management Policy, along with a framework for monitoring and managing risks and uncertainties to ensure that organisational objectives can be achieved. Strategic Risks and those with a current score of 17 or above, are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register and monitored monthly by the Senior Leadership Team. Each risk has 3 risk scores:

- Inherent Score – the risk score at the risk’s initial assessment
- Current Score – the risk score as of this current moment in time
- Treated Score – the risk score we expect to reach once the treatments have been completed and have mitigated the impact or likelihood of the risk.

Risk Movement Highlights

This section highlights organisational risks which have been added, closed or substantially changed risk score over the course of Quarter 3. To ensure the most up to date picture for risk, the updates include information about progress since the end of the quarter.

Key - Classification of Risk Scores and Risk Movement

20 - 25	Outside assumed Risk Appetite and requires mitigation to proceed
19	Inside Risk Appetite only because of extremely low probability. Mitigate if necessary and possible, accept only if no further action can be justified
17 & 18	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so - discuss with a Director
7-16	Inside Risk Appetite. Mitigate further if cost effective to do so
1-6	Inside Risk Appetite and unlikely to need further mitigation
↑	Risk increasing
↔	No risk movement
↓	Risk decreasing



Key Risk: Industrial Action – ability to delivery statutory services impact (Risk: 875)				
Risk Owner: Chief Fire Officer				
	End of Q2 Risk Score	End of Q3 Risk Score	Direction of travel	Risk score as at Feb 23
<p>Risk Description: If the Fire Brigades Union elect to take national industrial action as a consequence of the ongoing pay award negotiations for Grey Book Staff, then we can expect there to be a significant impact on our ability to deliver our statutory services, which we must seek to mitigate through best endeavours and business continuity arrangements.</p>	N/A	24	N/A	24
<p>This risk, as well as Industrial Action – financial impact (Risk: 876) and Industrial Action – Culture Impact (Risk: 884), were new risks in Q3 2022/23. These risks capture the challenge of ensuring statutory service provision during potential future Industrial Action as well as the financial and organisational cultural impacts of any potential Industrial Action.</p>				
Current Mitigations	Progress on Mitigations			
Review Contingency Fire Arrangements developing a concept of operations for potential industrial action	Fire Contingency work stream established with agreed objectives and outputs. Securitas contracts provides baseline fire contingency arrangement. Contract has been reviewed and enhanced to create additional resilience.			
Review Business Continuity arrangements in preparation for potential industrial action	Business Continuity work stream established with agreed objectives and outputs. Business Continuity Plans reviewed by Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Industrial action delivery plans in place for Prevention and Protection activities and Facilities management.			
Explore options for Mutual Aid in the event of industrial action	Mutual Aid work stream established with agreed objectives and outputs. Deep dive review taken place, majority of objectives completed, remaining actions in hand.			
Explore options to increase operational staffing resilience during industrial action and assure human resources arrangements for managing potential industrial action	Staffing work stream established with agreed objectives and outputs. Emergency Fire Crews (EFC) and Resilience Contracts advertised to enhance Fire Contingency arrangements. EFC provision not achieved post 2 x recruitment and training course.			
Review and assure Operational Support Room arrangements	Operational Support Room Review established with agreed objectives and outputs. Review of Operational Support Room arrangements underway. Deep dive review taken place, majority of objectives completed, remaining actions in hand.			
Review and assure Call Handling Contingency Arrangements	Call handling work stream established with agreed objectives and outputs. Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services maintain a contract with Securitas for the provision of a			



Key Risk: Industrial Action – ability to delivery statutory services impact (Risk: 875)	
Risk Owner: Chief Fire Officer	
	Contingency Call Handling Service. Deep dive review taken place, majority of objectives completed, remaining actions in hand.
Manage preparations for potential industrial action via Resilience Critical Event Management Team (CEMT) ensuring that records of decisions and actions demonstrating best endeavours to meet Royal Berkshire Fire Authority’s target duties	Governance decision-making structure agreed to review and manage resilience arrangements. Multiple workstream deep dive sessions scheduled throughout Jan 23. Deep dive sessions now complete. Progress on track awaiting potential announcement of strike details.
Work proactively with the fire and rescue sector, National Fire Chiefs Council and Home Office in preparation for potential industrial action	Major incident protocol now received, local negotiations taking place to establish detailed arrangements. Thames Valley business continuity meetings take place monthly.
Working with neighbouring Fire & Rescue Services in understanding resilience arrangements in support of Over The Boarder (OTB) resource	Monthly Thames valley strategic meetings now in place. Deputy Chief Fire Officer met with Hampshire & Isle of White, London Fire Brigade, Surrey, Dorset & Wiltshire and will continue dialogue. Single Thames Valley strategic objectives document approved. Royal Berkshire liaising with neighbours via South East Operational Regional Group and London Fire Bridge meetings. Continue contact with national resilience.



Key Risk: Climate Change Operational Response (Risk: 885)				
Risk Owner: Assistant Chief Fire Officer				
	End of Q2 Risk Score	End of Q3 Risk Score	Direction of travel	Risk score as at Feb 23
<p>Risk Description: If we do not consider the impact of a changing climate on our operational response, we may fail to effectively mitigate risk within our communities for which we have statutory responsibility and be suitably prepared to respond to operational incidents in changing conditions, which could have implications for the for the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.</p>	N/A	21	N/A	21
<p>This risk was a new risk in Q3 2022/23. It captures the challenge of mitigating the risk posed by changing climate, both in terms of changing incident profile and increasing risk to the wellbeing of our staff.</p>				
Current Mitigations	Progress on Mitigations			
Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) - CRMP to be informed by consideration of climate change and associated risk to inform response model	New treatment			
Operational Learning	RBFRS wildfire tactical advice produced a post heatwave report, this fed into return to NFCC wildfire debrief on 9 th Jan. Further review required to explore recommendations and actions aligned to priority 1 on CRMP 2023-27			
Undertake a debrief on the summer period to ensure operational learning is captured	National Operational Guidance (NOG) project closed down and transitioned to business as usual. Further work required to evaluate learning and develop action plan aligned to CRMP. Chair of Local Resilience Forum (LRF) wildfire working group developing multi agency plan. Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service will commission work to deliver against CRMP, aligned to NOG and linked to LRF plan.			



Key Risk: Grenfell Phase 1 (Risk: 651)				
Risk Owner: Deputy Chief Fire Officer				
	End of Q2 Risk Score	End of Q3 Risk Score	Direction of travel	Risk score as at Dec 23
<p>Risk Description: If we do not respond to the recommendations made within the Grenfell Inquiry phase 1 report which is becoming increasing likely given the additional changes/information being received through a number of channels then we can expect potential impact to the safety of our staff and members of the public which is significant in respect to our public reputation and managing our community risk.</p>	18	15	Reduced	Closed
<p>This risk decreased in risk score by 3 points during Q3 2022/23 and has since closed. This risk captures the challenge of ensuring implementation of the recommendations of Phase 1 of the Grenfell Inquiry.</p> <p>Our HRRB (High Rise Residential Building) project was initiated to undertake fire safety audits of 198 identified high rise premises within Royal Berkshire over a 6 month period. As shown in Quadrant 3 with the HRRB update, the project concluded at the end of Q3 2022/23, with all HRRB being passed back as Business as Usual to the relevant Hub areas.</p>				
Current Mitigations		Progress on Mitigations		
Closed		Closed		



Corporate Risk Register risks as at 15th February 2023

Strategic Risks

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
417	Firefighter Safety	If we do not maintain the safety, health and wellbeing of our operational staff through effective training; operational policy and guidance; safe systems of work and; means to capture and respond to operational learning, we risk a significant firefighter injury or fatality, a failure to comply with our legal duty and an undermining of the operational effectiveness and competence of our staff. This could significantly impact the effectiveness of our operational response, have a long term impact on staff welfare and damage our public reputation and trust levels.	25	19	19
418	ESMCP	If we do not make sufficient provision of resources and budget to support the development, transformation to and implementation of ESMCP products and capabilities at a Service level, then we will not be a part of the proposed Emergency Services Network and we will be out of step with national and regional partners across the three emergency services. This could significantly impact on the effectiveness of our operational mobilization and response and limit access and use of operational technology to support incident command and joint emergency services interoperability. Consequently this could impact negatively on our collaborative and partnership working and our public and political reputation.	18	23	10
506	Volatility of funding	If RBFRS fails to receive sufficient funding, which is becoming more likely given the level of national debt, the Government's fiscal policy, increasing volatility in local funding and increasing budget pressures, we can expect to face further reductions in service delivery and a loss of public trust, which will severely impact on our ability to deliver our statutory duties and strategic objectives.	24	21	16



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
629	Management of Cyber Security	If we fail to ensure compliance with Cyber Security best practices and guidelines, which is increasingly likely due to ongoing evolution in the sophistication of attack methodologies, we may be exposed to operational degradation, financial loss and/or reputational damage due to reduced availability, integrity or currency of our data and systems.	21	21	12
663	Capital Projects - Effective Estate Management	If we fail to effectively manage our property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and in the right locations, which may become increasingly likely given the funding challenges and the increasing age of our fire stations, then we can expect our revenue expenditure to increase, our services to be less effective and our stations to further decline which would be significant in respect to our strategic objectives; to ensure value for money and ensure fire stations are suitable and accessible for our own staff and the communities they serve.	23	17	10
681	WDS Operational Availability, Crewing and Capabilities	If we do not maintain the necessary numbers, skills and knowledge requirements of WDS personnel, which requires constant attention with our lean operating model, we may see adverse impacts on the provision of appliance availability, delivery of our response standard and our wider service plans and this could significantly impact community safety and our organizational reputation.	23	21	12
682	On-Call Operational Availability, Crewing and Capabilities	If we do not sustain activity to ensure our on-call provision has the appropriate numbers of personnel with the necessary skills, knowledge and availability then we risk undermining organisational resilience in our response capability and this could impact community safety and organizational reputation.	21	16	12



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
699	Command Unit effectiveness	If we fail to assure the effectiveness and resourcing of our command support units, we are likely to attend an incident in which the command unit would be unavailable or operating sub-optimally which could impact our operational response, and affect the safety of our staff and members of the public	18	18	10
737	Fire Transformation	If the fire transformation programme brings significant change within the sector, which is becoming increasingly likely with the Government's fire reform agenda, then we face a period of increasing uncertainty which may affect the organisation's strategic direction.	21	21	11
742	Management of premises risk information	If we do not manage the capture, processing, storage and access of premises risk information which is increasingly likely due to the quantity and complexity of the data involved, staff may be unaware of hazards within the built environment or be presented with inaccurate or out of date information which may result reduced staff safety and or a breach of GDPR.	18	15	12
774	Comms Resource	If we fail to resource the Communications and Engagement Team adequately, in line with our current and anticipated work demands, then this could significantly impact the effectiveness of the support provided across the Service and risk delivery against our strategic objectives as set out in the Annual Plan and Corporate Plan	21	15	15



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
798	Environmental/Sustainability	If RBFRS fails to develop, fund and implement an environmental and sustainability plan, then we can expect an increase in financial pressure with rising energy costs, and RBFRS' reputation as a public sector organisation to be negatively impacted through being out of alignment to wider societal progress towards creating a more sustainable future which will significantly impact our ability to deliver our statutory duties and strategic objectives.	23	21	6
831	Service Delivery Policy	If we do not develop, deliver and maintain coherent service delivery policy and guidance, which is likely given existing legacy arrangements, we can expect to have contradictory, duplicated, erroneous or out of date policy which is significant in respect of supporting staff to provide a safe and effective Response service, aligned to our statutory duties.	16	10	6
833	Fire Investigation - Collaboration	If we are unable to provide the support and resource required to deliver a multi-service approach to ISO 17020 accreditation, which is becoming increasingly likely due escalating costs and increasing complexity and demand, then we can expect to encounter issues in supporting criminal prosecutions which is significant in respect of public safety and the reputation of RBFRS	21	18	12
842	Volatility of operational staff numbers	If Prevention, Protection and Response staff turnover increases, which may become more likely with changes in pension rules and recruitment of neighbouring services, then we can expect to have a challenge in retaining required levels of PP&R staff, which may affect our ability to meet our strategic commitment to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.	25	23	15



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
843	Proportion of operational staff in development	If PP&R staff turnover increases, which may become more likely with changes in pension rules and recruitment of other services, then we can expect to have a greater number of new members of staff who will be in development being recruited to replace experienced leavers, which may affect our ability to meet our strategic commitment to ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies and impact corporate memory.	25	23	15
844	Cost of living rise impact on staff	If the cost of living continues to increase, which is very likely with the rate of inflation expected to continue at high levels, then we can expect to see our staff members struggling financially, which would reduce staff wellbeing and increase the risk of industrial action. This risk may affect our ability to meet our strategic commitment to 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.	18	18	13
875	Industrial Action – ability to deliver statutory services impact	If the Fire Brigades Union elect to take national industrial action as a consequence of the ongoing pay award negotiations for Grey Book Staff, then we can expect there to be a significant impact on our ability to deliver our statutory services, which we must seek to mitigate through best endeavours and business continuity arrangements.	24	24	19
876	Industrial Action – financial impact	If the Fire Brigades Union elect to take national industrial action as a consequence of the ongoing pay award negotiations for Grey Book Staff, then we can expect there to be a significant financial impact on the Service due to the requirement to make best endeavours to mitigate the impact through its business continuity arrangements.	24	24	19



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
879	Organisational Capacity	If RBFRS does not effectively align its organisational resource capacity to priority areas, which is becoming increasingly likely given internally and externally driven demand within an environment of greater spending restriction, then we can expect reduced delivery of core services, negatively impacting on the wellbeing and retention of staff, which will significantly impact our ability to deliver all our annual objectives.	23	23	13
884	Industrial Action - Culture Impact	If the Fire Brigades Union elects to take national industrial action as a consequence of the ongoing pay award negotiations for Grey Book Staff, then we can expect there to be a potentially significant impact on the organisation's culture, which we will seek to mitigate through maintaining positive working relationships locally	22	22	19
885	Climate Change Operational Response	If we do not consider the impact of a changing climate on our operational response, we may fail to effectively mitigate risk within our communities for which we have statutory responsibility and be suitably prepared to respond to operational incidents in changing conditions, which could have implications for the for the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.	21	21	15
891	FDO numbers, skills & knowledge	If we do not maintain the necessary numbers, skills and knowledge requirements of Flexi Duty Officers personnel, which requires constant attention with our lean operating model, we may see adverse impacts on the provision of incident command and specialist capability, which could significantly impact community safety, firefighter safety and our organizational reputation.	23	13	12



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
892	MEN Arena Inquiry	If we do not evaluate and respond to the recommendations made within the Manchester Arena report which is becoming increasingly likely given current demands on capacity then we can expect potential impact to the safety of our staff and members of the public which is significant in respect to our public reputation and managing our community risk.	17	17	10
893	National Power Outage planning	If we do not have appropriate business continuity arrangements in place for a widespread power outage, which is increasing likely due to gaps in current Business Continuity Planning processes, then we can expect severe and critical impacts on service delivery and our staff, which is significant in meeting our statutory duties and impacts on community safety	21	18	12



Service Plan Risks

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
664	Management of Budget Pressures	If we fail to accurately capture budget pressures over the medium term, which is becoming more likely given the volatility in the macro-economic environment, then resource allocation will become sub-optimal, impacting negatively on our ability to deliver an efficient and effective service to the public.	24	22	16
685	Pensions Case Law	If we do not keep informed of pension case law and prepare records and establish adequate arrangements to meet the expected changes to pension regulations and ensure the Pensions Administrator undertakes the necessary action; which is becoming increasingly difficult due lack of understanding and clear direction, the technical complexity associated with changes and competing demands, then we can expect to be in breach of the regulations, subject to potential legal challenge and adversely impact employees and pensioners, which are significant in respect to our financial security, employer duties and our reputation.	24	22	18
686	Pensions Governance	If we do not employ an effective pension governance, management and administration strategy; which is becoming increasingly important given the complexity and changes made to pension regulations, limited pensions expertise and capacity within the HR department, then we can expect to fail in our employer duties, breach regulations, be subject to legal challenge and scrutiny from The Pensions Regulator resulting in potential for enforcement and penalty notices, which are significant in respect to our financial security, statutory duty and our reputation.	21	21	15



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
743	Business Continuity	If we do not appropriately plan and resource delivery of business continuity activity, which is likely given current demand and capacity in R&RS, then we can expect to have reduced resilience across the organisation which is significant in respect of delivering services and meeting our statutory obligations	18	18	12
767	TVFCS staffing resilience	If we do fail to develop and implement resilient TVFCS staffing arrangements, which is becoming likely due to the impacts of crewing deficiencies on managerial capacity, then we can expect to experience impacts on service delivery in the control room and the health and wellbeing of our staff, which is significant in respect of FRS delivering their statutory duties.	18	18	12
852	Fire Investigation Internal	If we are unable to effectively investigate fires within RBFRS which is possible due to a reliance on a 1 month notice period contract with West Midlands FRS for all Tier 2 fire investigations then we can expect to be unable to determine the cause and origin of significant fires both deliberate and accidental which is significant in respect of public safety and the reputation of RBFRS.	21	18	12
853	IBIS capability and limitations	If we are unable to record and access timely and accurate data in relation to Prevention and Protection activities which is likely due to the bespoke, 'in-house' nature of IBIS software then we can expect an impact on the accuracy of our identification and prioritisation of risk and our ability to comply with legislative requirements which is significant in respect of public safety and the reputation of RBFRS.	21	21	12



Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
861	Hydrant Inspection and Repair	If we fail to appropriately resource and fund the hydrant inspection and repair programme, which is increasing likely given financial restrictions and difficulty recruiting personnel, then we can expect to see an increase in hydrant failure rates, already noted through operational feedback, which is significant in respect of Firefighter safety and providing an effective response to incidents.	21	21	12
867	Training Centre Refurbishment/Renewal	If RBFRS does not provide appropriate training centre facilities following a severe flooding incident, then we can expect operational training activities to be severely impacted leading to staff being unable to train and or maintaining competence of skills, which will significantly impact our ability to deliver our front line services and strategic objectives.	23	18	12
882	Building Safety Regulator	If the BSR were to require RBFRS to provide fully qualified FSIs to support its function from October 2023 which is increasingly likely given the national shortage of qualified FSIs across England FRS and given the powers granted to the HSE under the Building Safety Act RBFRS may have insufficient qualified FSIs to discharge our legal duties in relation to enforcement and regulation which is significant because these are statutory requirements.	18	18	12



Project Risks

Risk ID	Risk Short Name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Current Score	Treated Score
675	Handling FSG calls simultaneously	If we are unable to process large volumes of Fire Survival Guidance calls simultaneously then we can expect callers not to be able to speak with us and /or be diverted to other control rooms whereby they may not receive the Fire Survival Guidance advice required. This will impact on the safety of residents within these buildings and our operational response	18	18	12



Audit Plan

Audits provide assurance that the Service is run properly and in ways that have been agreed by our Officers and Members. They demonstrate that the business is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation, government expectations, good practice and organisational policy.

Our Audit Programme is agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee at the start of the year. Progress against all actions open at the start of Quarter 3, or opened during the quarter, is detailed below.

Key - Project or Action Plan Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start

Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
Risk and Governance 26/05/2022	2022: RAG:1 The Performance Management Framework will be updated to clearly outline that the SLT is the main group responsible for review of the Corporate Risk Register.	01/03/2023	Low	G	Open
Progress: Performance Management Framework to be reviewed and updated later in 2022-23					
Risk and Governance 26/05/2022	2022: RAG:3 RBFRS will review how the strategic risks can be clearly linked to strategic objectives.		Low	C	Closed
Progress: Performance Management Framework to be reviewed and updated in early 2023. Learning Management System training already teaches the use of meta-language for Risk Descriptions, which includes linking strategic risks to strategic objectives. Considered linking of service plan and project risks to strategic objectives but not adopting this change in policy.					
Risk and Governance 26/05/2022	2022: RAG:5 RBFRS will assign a refresher timeframe to key staff for the Learning Management System Risk Management training, compliance and compliance will be monitored.		Low	C	Closed
Progress: Learning Management System training is implemented and compliance is being monitored. 2 years has been agreed as the refresher timescale.					



Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:1 We will introduce a procedure for chasing new starters who have not finished their Health and Safety training within four weeks of their start date. Furthermore, policy documents will be updated to reflect time periods in which staff are required to complete training		Medium	C	Closed
<p>Progress: Context: All new starters are issued with a health and safety induction pack. Once the pack has been worked through with the Line Manager, a sign off sheet evidencing that all of the required sections have been completed must be returned to the HR Department. From the sample audited, it was found that this did not happen on all occasions.</p> <p>Action taken: The health and safety induction pack has been updated and it now specifies a 4 week completion date. The HR Department monitor submission of the sign off sheets, and if they have not been submitted within the 4 weeks, they now escalate this to the Health and Safety Department, who will follow up with the Line Manager. The HR team have updated their new starter action sheet to this effect.</p>					
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:2 We will review all managers who have been with the Service for more than three years and ensure that health and safety refresher training has been provided in a timely manner.		Medium	G	Open
<p>Progress: Context: RBFRS policy is that all grey book managers and some specific green book managers complete an IOSH Managing Safely course. A refresher course after 3 years is recommended but not mandatory. From the sample audited, it was found that a number of staff had not completed refresher training within the recommended 3 years.</p> <p>Action proposed: A review of the requirements and arrangements for health and safety refresher training will be undertaken in conjunction with the Resourcing and Development Team.</p>					
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:3 We will integrate the review of the Workplace Safety Inspection policy within a formal meeting such as the Health and Safety Wellbeing Committee who will approve future changes		Low	G	Open
<p>Progress: Context: Minor updates had been made to the Workplace Health and Safety Inspection Policy, but it did not go through any formal consultation process (e.g. SLT, representative bodies). This is standard practice for minor amendments and in accordance with the Document Management Policy. The auditors felt that this might lead to a lack of oversight by SLT.</p> <p>Proposed action: Starting with Q1 23/24, a summary of any updated health and safety policies which do not require full consultation will be presented to the quarterly Health, Safety and Wellbeing meeting, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, and attended by several SLT members.</p>					



Audit title and date	Audit Action	Date due (revised where applicable)	Priority	Status	Open / Closed
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:4 We will review the process for updating Fire Safety Risk Assessments to better streamline the procedure		Low	C	Closed
<p>Progress: Context: Fire Risk Assessments are completed by our Fire Safety Inspectors. A separate action plan is produced, and reviewed and updated (where relevant) every 6 months by Workplace Managers as part of the scheduled 6 monthly workplace inspection. Both documents are published on Siren in our library of risk assessments. From the sample of fire risk assessments audited, it was found that some appeared to be out of date, and not subject to review for some time. This is because the full assessment was not updated when the action plan was reviewed, giving the appearance that the fire risk assessments had not been reviewed.</p> <p>Action taken: The separate action plan document has been withdrawn. Workplace Managers are now required to review, update and re-publish the full fire risk assessment document, to evidence that it is being reviewed every 6 months.</p>					
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:5 We will ensure that future Incident Reports will be completed by the H&S team noting if they are RIDDOR reportable or not, alongside the date of the review and a signature. In addition, we will report all RIDDOR reportable incidents within their required timeframe.		Medium	C	Closed
<p>Progress: Context: Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), some safety events have to be reported to HSE within specified time scales. From the sample audited, it was found that not all RIDDOR events were reported within the required timescales.</p> <p>Action taken: Regardless of the information on the initial safety event report, all personal injury events are now checked with the Line Manager to verify that the information is correct in relation to the type of injury and whether any sickness has been reported. All injuries are then monitored to ensure that trigger dates are not missed.</p>					
Health & Safety 13/12/2022	2023: HS:6 We will introduce lessons learned in the quarterly meetings to the Health and Safety Committee and cascade the information to employees.		Low	G	Open
<p>Progress: Context: Quarterly and annual safety event reports are presented to Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The reports include the total number of injuries, injuries by type, severity of injury, working days lost, RIDDOR events and near misses. Brief details of each event are given, along with the status of the investigation (complete or pending). A comparison is made with the same quarter in the previous year. For the annual report, a comparison is made with the previous 5 years.</p> <p>Proposed action: Starting with Q1 23/24, the quarterly reports will also include lessons learned.</p>					



HMICFRS ACTION PLAN

The HMICFRS report for RBFRS was published in 2019 rating us good in each of the three areas of effectiveness, efficiency and people. Improvements were identified within the report and the actions to address these are being tracked through this report. Our latest HMICFRS report was published in January 2023 and will trigger an update of the existing areas for improvement.

Key - Project or Action Plan Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start

Section One: Effectiveness						
Improvement	Delivered via	Status				
		End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prevention evaluation to better understand benefits	Service Plans (Service Delivery & Collaboration and Policy)	A	A	G	G	
Prevention quality assurance	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A	G	C	C	
Protection quality assurance	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A	G	C	C	
Addressing the burden of false alarms	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	G	G	C	C	
Keeping the public informed during ongoing incidents	Corporate Services Service Plan	G	G	G	C	
Effective system to use for learning and debriefs	Collaboration and Policy Service Plan	A	G	C	C	
Section two: Efficiency						
Improvement	Delivered via	Status				
		End 21/22	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Best use of available technology	ICT Strategy	G	G	G	G	



Section three: People							
Improvement	Delivered via	Status					
		End 21/22		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Values and behaviours understood and demonstrated	HR & L&D Service Plan	G		G	G	G	
Effective use of competence recording system	HR & L&D Service plan	G		G	A	C	
Effective grievance procedures in place	HR & L&D Service plan	C					
Staff are confident in using feedback mechanisms	Corporate Services Service plan	G		G	G	C	
Process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders	HR & L&D Service plan	A		A	A	A	



Fire Standard Implementation Tracking

Updated 9th January 2023

Key - Project or Action Plan Status

C	Project complete
G	Project on Track
A	There are issues with the project but these are being managed
R	Issues are having an impact on delivery
NS	Project not yet due to start

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		Fire Standard	Owner	Project Manager	FS consultation	FS publication date	Gap analysis	SLT Review	Action Plan progress	Commentary
Standards in progress	1	Emergency Response Driving	Becci Jefferies		C	Feb-21	C	C	A=	Department at full strength and progressing well against individual development/qualification requirements. Progress to be mapped against the standard following activities undertaken within the department and a review of the actions in the implementation tool will be undertaken over Q4 to establish any additional actions and update progress.
	2	Operational Response -	Doug Buchanan		C	Feb-21	C	C	A=	Review across Ops Competence, learning and preparedness needed to establish priorities. Majority of actions

Appendix A
Agenda Item 9



		Preparedness								covered in competence and learning fire standards. Work still required to confirm where actions not covered and progress.
3	Operational Response - Competence	Becci Jefferies		C	Feb-21	C	C	G =		Action plan in place and being worked to. Review across Ops Competence learning and preparedness underway. Further meetings scheduled following disruption due to IA prep. These meetings will further help to prioritise and co-ordinate actions..
4	Operational Response - Learning	Jim Powell	Steve Leonard	C	Feb-21	C	C	C		Action plan completed. Review across Ops Competence, learning and preparedness underway, further meetings scheduled to prioritise and co-ordinate actions. 17/01/23 -No further update, evaluation to be planned in 23/24.
5	Code of Ethics	Nikki Richards	Lucy Greenway	C	May-21	C	C	G =		Action plan in place and being worked to
6	Community Risk Management Planning	Nikki Richards	Tim Readings	C	May-21	C	C	G =		Action plan in place and being worked to
7	Fire Protection	Trig Thomas		C	Sep-21	A =	NS	NS		Gap analysis being completed by GM P&P Policy for submission to SLT in Q3. Minor Changes made to Fire Standard and republished.
8	Prevention	Trig Thomas		C	Jul-21	A =	NS	NS		Gap analysis being completed by GM P&P Policy for submission to SLT in Q3.



	9	Safeguarding	Jim Powell	Liz Warren	C	Jan-22	C	C	G =	Action plan in place, good progress being made towards full alignment on Q1 23/24.
	10	Fire Investigation	Trig Thomas	Jess James	C	Apr-22	A=	NS	NS	Fire standard published and gap analysis to be started.
	11	Emergency Preparedness and Resilience	Jim Powell	Alison Hazelton	C	May-22	A ↓	NS	NS	Work delayed due to addressing priority tasks in Ops Risk improvement plan. Plan in place to conduct Gap analysis which is planned for completion by the end of April 2023.
	12	Data management	Nikki Richards	Becca Chapman	C	Aug-22	G =	NS	NS	GAP analysis has been started, currently awaiting NFCC guidance to come out to finalise, Standard also crosses over with CRMP Standard. No current date to take to SLT.
	13	Leadership and People	Becci Jefferies		C	Dec-22	NS	NS	NS	Standard published in December 2022 - session to begin gap analysis scheduled for March
	14	Leading the Service	Becci Jefferies		C	Dec-22	NS	NS	NS	Standard published in December 2022 - session to begin gap analysis scheduled for March
	16	Fire Control	Jim Powell	Simon Harris	G	Mar-23				
	17	Communication and Consultation Engagement	Paul Bremble	Jo Watson	G	Mar-23				



Not published	15	Workforce Management	Becci Jefferies			Aug-22					
	18	Commercial and Procurement	Conor Byrne			Sep-23					Appendix A
	19	Finance and Assurance	Conor Byrne			Sep-23					
	20	Asset Management				Sep-23					

Agenda Item 9



Appendix A – Additional Data

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data

Measure		Q1 Actual	Q2 Actual	Q3 Actual	Q4 Actual	2022/23 YTD	Q3 21/22	Authorised establishment at the end of Q2 2022/23 (Number of authorised posts)
STAFF IN POST	Wholetime	360	368	361		361	366	361
	Retained	68	70	66		66	59	65
	Control	41	39	38		38	40	40
	Green Book	171	175	172		172	172	170
	Total Number of	640	652	637		637	637	636
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/23 YTD	Q3 21/22	
STAFF TURNOVER	Wholetime	13	6	6		25	10	
	Retained	0	3	4		7	5	
	Control	2	3	3		8	2	
	Green Book	6	17	7		30	9	
	Total Number of	21	29	20		70	26	
	Staff in Post (SIP)	640	652	637		643	637	
	Percentage of	3.28%	4.45%	3.14%		10.88%	4.08%	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/23 YTD	Target	YTD Q3 21/22
FEMALE STAFF	Wholetime	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%		5.2%	4%	5.5%
	Retained	16.2%	14.3%	13.6%		13.6%		16.9%
	Control	73.2%	74.4%	71.0%		71.0%		70.0%
	Green Book	56.7%	55.4%	55.81%		55.81%		56.4%
	Total	24.4%	23.8%	23.7%		23.7%		24.3%
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2022/23 YTD	Target	YTD Q3 21/22
ETHNICITY FIGURES	Wholetime	4.4%	4.3%	4.4%		4.4%	5%	4.1%
	Retained	4.4%	4.3%	3.0%		3.0%		1.7%
	Control	7.3%	7.7%	7.9%		7.9%		5.0%
	Green Book	14.0%	14.2%	14.0%		14.0%		12.8%
	Total	7.19%	7.06%	7.06%		7.06%		6.3%



Staff Turnover at the end of this quarter is 3.14% (predicted out-turn at year end is 10.88%. There were 20 leavers and 5 new starters this quarter. 29 individuals currently hold more than one role (Dual Contract).

Exit surveys continue to be offered face to face or virtually and this quarter 63% of those offered an exit survey took place or the individuals responded in writing. This is a decrease from last quarter where we achieved 78%. Of the 19 offered 7 declined an interview or didn't return their form at the end of the reporting period.

The number of employees from an ethnic minority background has decreased from 46 to 45 this quarter. The percentage has remained the same as last quarter 7.06%. This is due to three individuals leaving, two joining RBFRS and staff in post figures reducing. Compared to this quarter last year we are 0.76% higher. Overall performance stands at the end of the quarter is 7.06%

The number of female firefighters employed at the end of this quarter has reduced from 29 to 28 this quarter. One female on a dual contract left her On-Call Firefighter role but

Staff Ethnicity Profile

Ethnicity	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
White British	345	64	35	148	592
Other Ethnicity	16	2	3	24	45
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Total	361	66	38	172	637

Ethnicity	Number of Staff
Asian or British Asian: Indian	4
Asian or British Asian: Other	3
Black or Black British African	4
Black or Black British Caribbean	4
Chinese	1
Mixed White and Asian	1
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	3
Other	1
Other Mixed	3
White British	592
White Irish	3
White Other	17
Asian or British Asian: Pakistani	1
Grand Total	637



Staff Age Profile

Age Group	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	Grand Total
25 and Under	14	8	6	16	44
26 - 35	90	25	13	31	159
36 - 45	136	19	7	38	200
46 - 55	108	10	11	48	177
56 - 65	13	4	1	32	50
66 and Over	0	0	0	7	7
Grand Total	361	66	38	172	637

Staff Gender Profile

Gender	Wholetime	Retained	Control	Green Book	All Staff
Female	19	9	27	96	151
Male	342	57	11	76	486
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	361	66	38	172	637



Appendix B – 2022-23 Annual Objectives

- 1) We will provide education and advice on how to prevent and mitigate the impacts of fires and other emergencies.
- 2) We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
- 3) We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4) We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 5) We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money, and is financially and environmentally sustainable, whilst ensuring Equality of Access for the public.
- 6) We will continue to work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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.
- 9) 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.
- 10) We will explore collaboration opportunities to ensure we deliver effective and efficient services to the people we serve.



Appendix C – 2022-23 Performance Measures and Definitions

Service Provision

ID	Measure	Definition
1	Number of fire deaths	The number of deaths that occur as the result of a fire, even when the death occurs weeks or months later.
2	Number of non-fatal fire casualties	The number of non-fatal casualties that occur as a result of a fire. This includes any injuries or medical attention which are attributed to the fire.
3	Number of deliberate primary fires	<p>The total number of primary fires that have been started deliberately.</p> <p>Primary fires are potentially more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property and meet at least one of the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures• any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues• any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances
4	Number of deliberate secondary fires	<p>The total number of secondary fires that have been started deliberately.</p> <p>Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping</p>



		appliances attended, in which case they become primary fires.
Prevention		
5	Increase the number of Referrals for Safe and Well visits received from our partners	RBFRS receive referrals from other agencies for individuals at risk from fire in their homes. These referrals are a high quality source of information about those at risk in our communities.
6	Percentage of Safe and Well referrals, where there has been a threat or incidence of arson, completed within 48 hours.	When RBFRS are made aware of the threat or an incidence of arson against an individual(s) a Safe and Well Visit should be conducted, wherever possible, within 48 hours.
7	Percentage of Very High and High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	Safe and Well Referrals are risk assessed, with each category of risk having a target time for completion. Very High risk referrals have a target time of 72 hours and High risk referrals have a target time of 14 days.
8	Percentage of Medium Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within target time	Safe and Well Referrals are risk assessed, with each category of risk having a target time for completion. Medium risk referrals have a target time of 21 days.
Protection		
9	Proportion of Fire Safety Audits conducted against premises identified as High or Very High Risk in our Risk Based Inspection Programme	A Fire Safety Audit is carried out to enforce the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2005. Our Risk Based Inspection Programme targets the riskiest premises in the county for inspection. Fire Safety Audits can also result from complaints, or can be carried out after an incident or for training purposes. This measure allows us to monitor how our resources are being targeted at risk.
10	Percentage of Fire Safety Audits with a 'Broadly Compliant' result.	The percentage of completed Fire Safety Audits carried out in commercial premises, where the result was 'Broadly Compliant'



		(satisfactory) and no further action or follow-up was required.
11	Percentage success when cases go to court.	RBFRS prosecute serious cases following Fire Safety Audits. A successful outcome at court is a finding or admission of guilt.
12	Percentage of statutory fire consultations completed within the required timeframes.	Statutory fire consultations have a legally defined timeframe in which they must be completed. Types of consultation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing • Building regulations
13	The number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received.	Automatic Fire Alarm calls are calls from Alarm systems and have a higher likelihood of being a false alarm. Reducing the number of these types of calls makes us more efficient.
14	Percentage of Automatic Fire Alarm calls where RBFRS did not attend	This is the number of Automatic Fire Alarm calls received where we did not attend. In some circumstances we are able to seek confirmation before attending, enabling us to be more efficient.
Response		
15	Percentage of occasions where the first fire engine arrives at an emergency incident within 10 minutes from time the emergency call was answered	This is our Response Standard, and looks at the time taken from when the Fire Control Room Operator answers the phone until the time the first fire engine (appliance) arrives at the scene of the emergency incident. We aim to attend 75% of these incidents in under 10 minutes.
16	Percentage of wholetime frontline pumping appliance availability	This measure shows the percentage of time that our wholetime pumping appliances are available for mobilisation. Reasons for unavailability include mechanical defects and crewing.



17	Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)	This is the percentage of hours where there are sufficient minimum qualified firefighters on on-call pumping appliances (fire engines) to enable the appliance to be available. On-call fighters are ready to leave their place of work or home and attend emergencies from the local retained station, when they receive the call.
Resilience		
18	Percentage of visits to Very High, High and Medium Operational Risk sites completed in timescale	Operational Risk sites are those locations with particular characteristics (e.g. use, location) that pose a specific or unusual risk to our firefighters and the surrounding communities. Regular familiarisation visits by crews and support staff are required to ensure understanding of the risk is up to date.
19	Number of Service Delivery Hub exercises completed	Service Delivery Hub-level operational exercises are an important part of ensuring RBFRS is prepared for incidents that might occur through testing our planning assumptions, guidance and site specific response plans.
Customer Experience		
20	Percentage of domestic respondents satisfied with the overall service	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to those who have experienced a dwelling fire asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
21	Percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall service	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to business owners/ managers who have experienced a fire in their commercial premises asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
22	Percentage of respondents satisfied with the services with regards to Fire Safety Audits	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to business owners/ managers who have



		had a full fire safety audit, asking about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
23	% of domestic respondents satisfied with the service regards their Safe and Well Visit	A customer feedback questionnaire is sent to a sample of individuals who have received a Safe and Well Visit and asks about their satisfaction and experience with the service they received from RBFRS.
24	Number of complaints received	The number of complaints made to RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.
25	Number of compliments received	The number of compliments received by RBFRS about any aspect of our service or staff.



Corporate Health

ID	Measure	Definition
Human Resources and Learning & Development		
26	Percentage of working time lost to sickness across all staff groups	This measure looks at sickness across the whole organisation and the percentage of time lost, based on the number of working hours available to the organisation.
27	Percentage of eligible staff with Personal Development Reviews	This measure reflects the percentage of eligible employees who have had a Personal Development Review meeting. Eligible staff are those who have completed their initial probation period, before the end of the PDR period and who have not been absent for over 50% of the reporting period. Employees moving within the Organisation to new roles on trial or probation periods will still be eligible for a PDR.
28	Number of formal grievances	The number of formal grievances raised by staff under the Grievance, Bullying and Harrassment Policy.
Health and Safety		
29	Number of RIDDOR accidents and diseases	RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) are more serious injury accidents and diseases.
Finance and Procurement		
30	Percentage of spend subject to competition	This measure looks at all items of expenditure over £10k as RBFA must obtain quotes or tenders for all these purchases. This excludes statutory payments such as local authority charges or HMRC.
31	Compliant spend as a percentage of overall spend	This measure calculates the supplier spend that is in a compliant contract as a percentage of the total spend to external bodies and suppliers (as per RBFA contract regulations).
Freedom of Information		



32	Number of Information Commissioner assessments finding that the Service has breached Information Rights Legislation (Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Regulations or Data Protection Legislation)	RBFRS are required to conform to Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation. The Information Commissioner is responsible for determining compliance and issuing advice or penalties. This measure includes only incidents where there is a finding of a breach (not complaints which are subsequently dismissed).
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Appendix D – Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning	Context
ACFO	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	
AFA	Automatic False Alarms	
AIO	Accident Investigation Officers	
ALP	Aerial Ladder Platform	
AM	Area Manager	
APB	Additional Pensionable Benefit	
AR3	Animal Rescue Level 3	Officer or team specialising in animal rescue
ARA	Additional Responsibility Allowance	
ARP	Adults at Risk Programme	
ARU	Animal Rescue Unit	
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour	
AWE	Atomic Weapons Establishment	
BA	Breathing Apparatus	
BAU	Business As Usual	
BCF	Behavioural Competency Framework	
BFBC	Bracknell Forest Borough Council	
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	
BMKFRS	Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire & Rescue Service	
BPI	Business Process Improvement	
CAFS	Compressed Air Foam System	Most appliances have this for extinguishing small fires quickly
CEMT	Corporate Emergency Management Team	
CFO	Chief Fire Officer	
CM	Crew Manager	
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards	Top tier and low tier sites throughout Berkshire. High risk sites.
CRP	Community Risk Programme	
CS	Community Safety	
CSA	Community Safety Adviser	
DAPs	Development Assessment Pathways	
DCFO	Deputy Chief Fire Officer	



DIM	Detection Identification Monitoring	Mobilised from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
DPA	Data Protection Act	
DRA	Dynamic Risk Assessment	One of the methods for identifying risk in the workplace and recording it for legal reasons
DSS	Director of Support Services	
DVR	Digital Voice Recorder	
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity	
EIR	Environmental Information Regulations	
EPM	Emergency Planning Manager	One for each of the six Unitary Authorities
EPO	Emergency Planning Officer	Some of the EPM's have a EPO, such as Reading Borough Council
ESMCP	Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme	
ESN	Emergency Services Network	
FARRG	Fire and Rescue Risk Group	
FBU	Fire Brigades Union	
FCP	Forward Control Point	A nominated point area where resources can be deployed from to meet the needs of an incident
FDO	Flexi Duty Officer	
FF	Firefighter	
FI	Fire Investigation	
FIO	Fire Investigation Officer	A nominated Officer with the skills to assess what caused a fire and why
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act	
FPS	Firefighters' Pension Scheme	
FRIC	Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company	
FRSA	Fire and Rescue Service Association	
FS	Fire Safety	Green/Grey book personnel carrying out inspections within buildings and events
FSG	Fire Survival Guidance	
FSIOs	Fire Safety Inspecting Officers	
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	
GM	Group Manager	
HERU	Hazardous Environmental Response Unit	
HFRS	Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service	
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle	



HMEPA	Hazardous Materials Environmental Protection Advisor	Was known as a Hazmat Officer. Specialist Officer with the skills to deal with chemical incidents.
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services	
HMO	House of Multiple Occupancy	
HoS	Head of Service	
HRRBs	High Risk Residential Buildings	
HRU	Heavy Rescue Unit	Attends road traffic collisions of 3 or more cars HGVs
HR and L&D	Human Resources and Learning and Development	
HSE	Health and Safety Executive	
IBIS	Incident & Building Information System	The ICT system where all incident and building information is held.
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office	
ICT	Information Communication Technology	
ICU	Incident Control Unit	Large bus mobilised on 7 pump or more incidents
IEC	Immediate Emergency Care	
IRMP	Integrated Risk Management Plan	
IRS	Incident Recording System	
ITHC	Information Technology Health Checks	
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles	
JO	Junior Officer	
JY	Juliet Yankee	RBFRS call sign in Control for all appliances
L&D	Learning and Development	
L1	Level 1 Officer	Incident Command Level - Crew and Watch Manager
L2	Level 2 Officer	Incident Command Level - Station Manager/Group Manager A
L3	Level 3 Officer	Incident Command Level - Group Manager A & B
L4	Level 4 Officer	Incident Command Level - Area Manager and Principal Officer
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme	
LGV	Light Goods Vehicle	
LMS	Learning Management System	
LPP	Light Portable Pump	



LRF	Local Resilience Forum	Multi-agency partners collaborate to fulfil their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
LSP	Local Safety Plan	
MAC	Media Advisory Cell	
MAPS	Multi-Agency Problem Solving	
MDT	Mobile Data Terminal	
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government	
MORRG	Management of Road Risk Group	
MRV	Multi Roll Vehicle	
MSK	Musculoskeletal-(sickness)	
NAG	Neighbourhood Action Group	
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council	
NILO	National Interagency Liaison Officer	
NOG	National Operational Guidance	
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification	
OFRS	Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	
OiC	Officer in Charge	
OJEU	Official Journal of the European Union	
ONR	Office for Nuclear Regulations	
OPAS	Operational Policy and Support	
OQP	Operational Qualifications Planner	
OSEP	Operational Support and Emergency Planning	
OSR	Operational Support Room	
OSU	Operational Support Unit	
OTB	Over the Border	
OTP	Officer Training Programme	
P2P	Purchase to Pay	
PDA	Pre-determined Attendance	
PDI	Personal Development Interview	
PDR	Personal Development Review	
PFI	Post Fire Inspection	
PID	Project Initiation Document	The formal document used to define project objectives, deliverables, costs and timescales for approval



PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	
PPV	Positive Pressure Ventilation	
PQA	Personal Qualities and Attributes	
PRF	Personal Record File	
PSAA	Public Sector Audit Appointments	
PSO	Programme Support Office	
QCF	Qualifications Credit Framework	
WBDC	West Berkshire District Council	
RA	Risk Assessment	
RBFA	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	
RBWM	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	
RDS	Retained Duty System	
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations	
RMS	Remotely Managed Stations	
RRT	Risk Reduction Team	
RTC	Road Traffic Collision	
RTW	Return To Work	
S&W	Safe and Well visit	
SAG	Safety Advisory Group	
SAIF	Strategic Asset Investment Framework	
SCAS	South Central Ambulance Service	
SCC	Strategic Command Centre	
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group	
SDMT	Service Delivery Management Team	
SECTU	South East Counter Terrorism Unit	
SJCC	Staff Joint Consultative Committee	
SLT	Senior Leadership Team	
SM	Station Manager	
SPB	Strategic Performance Board	
Stn 1	Station 1 – Caversham Road	Wholetime
Stn 10	Station 10 – Wokingham	Wholetime
Stn 11	Station 11 – Mortimer	Retained (On Call)



Stn 14	Station 14 – Ascot	Satellite Station (operates from 0900-1800 hours daily)
Stn 15	Station 15 – Crowthorne	Retained (On Call)
Stn 16	Station 16 – Bracknell	Wholetime
Stn 17	Station 17 – Slough	Wholetime
Stn 18	Station 18 – Langley	Wholetime
Stn 19	Station 19 – Maidenhead	Wholetime
Stn 2	Station 2 – Wokingham Road	Wholetime
Stn 20	Station 20 – Whitley Wood	Wholetime
Stn 21	Station 21 – Windsor	Satellite Station (operates from 0900-1800 hours daily)
Stn 3	Station 3 – Dee Road	Wholetime
Stn 4	Station 4 - Newbury	Wholetime
Stn 5	Station 5 - Hungerford	On Call (Retained)
Stn 6	Station 6 - Lambourn	On Call (Retained)
Stn 7	Station 7 – Pangbourne	On Call (Retained)
Stn 9	Station 9 – Wargrave (closed September 2020)	On Call (Retained)
ToA	Threat of Arson	
TCG	Tactical Coordinating Group	
TCR	Training Course Request	
TIC	Thermal Image Camera	
TVFCS	Thames Valley Fire Control Service	
TVP	Thames Valley Police	
UA	Unitary Authority	
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue	
WAH	Working at Height	
WDS	Wholetime Duty System	
WM	Watch Manager	
WRT	Water Rescue Team	
WT	Wholetime	
WYPF	West Yorkshire Pension Fund (from context)	

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Income Generation Review	Management Committee	03.04.23	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
TVFCS Contract Award - ICCS	Management Committee	03.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Agree	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Corporate Plan and CRMP Consultation Results	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
LFB Culture Review - Audit (Gap analysis)	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	CFO	N/A	Part I
The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	CFO	N/A	Part I
Contaminants presentation	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Note	DChEx	Healthy and wellbeing champion	Part I
Serious Violence Duty presentation	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Note	AM C&P	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Annual Plan 2023/24	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Annual	Agree	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Annual	Note	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
On-call strategy - presentation	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Ad-hoc	Note	AM R &R	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Committees, Lead Members and Member Champions and Outside Bodies 2023/24	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chairman / Vice-Chairman 2023/24	Fire Authority	08.06.23	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Outturn	Management Committee	17/07/23	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q4 Appliance Availability	Management Committee	17/07/23	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme- Presentation	A&GC	25/07/23	Bi annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
HMICFRS Action Plan	A&GC	25/07/23	ad-hoc	note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	25/07/23	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Annual Governance Statement 22/23	A&GC	25/07/23	Annual	Note	Programme Office and Inspection Manager	N/A	Part I
Pensions Board Annual update	A&GC	25/07/23	bi annual	Note	HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	25/07/23	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	25/07/23	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Q4 Performance Report	A&GC	25/07/23	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
RBFRS Annual Report 21/22	A&GC	25/07/23	Annual	Note	DChEx	N/A	Part I