



**Agenda
for the Meeting
of the
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority**

Tuesday, 2nd November 2021

At

6.30 pm

**Theale Community Fire Station
Wigmore Lane
Theale
RG7 5HH**

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: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting
DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 at 6.30 pm
VENUE: Theale Community Fire Station
Wigmore Lane
Theale RG7 5HH

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 light buffet will be provided.

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

GRAHAM BRITTEN
Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

Councillor Anne Chadwick	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Councillor Avtar Cheema	Councillor Christine Bateson
Councillor Harjinder Minhas	Councillor Colin Dudley
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons
Councillor David Cannon	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor Tony Linden	Councillor Angus Ross
Councillor Jo Lovelock	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey
Councillor Garth Simpson	Councillor Dexter Smith
Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale	Councillor Simon Werner

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 30 June 2021 (Pages 7 - 20)

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the meeting and any recoded actions held on Wednesday, 30 June 2021, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Petitions and Questions from the Public under Standing Orders 19 and 25

Purpose:

To receive any questions from members of the public, in accordance with Standing Orders 19 and 25.

5. Receipt of Announcements

Purpose:

To receive any announcements from the Chairman or the Chief Fire Officer.

6. Issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee

Recommendation:

That it be noted that no reports have been referred by the Audit and Governance Committee.

7. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

8. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

9. Built Environment Presentation

Recommendation:

To receive an update on the Built Environment Programme.

10. Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation (Pages 21 - 42)

Purpose:

To agree to commence a 10 week public consultation in January 2022, and to agree the draft consultation document.

11. Appointment of External Auditor (Pages 43 - 52)

Purpose:

To agree to opt into the national scheme for appointing an external auditor.

12. Annual Treasury Management Review 2020/21 and Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2021/22 (Pages 53 - 80)

Purpose:

To receive for note the Annual Treasury Report for 2020/21, and the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2021/22.

13. Lead Member and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Six Month Update Reports (Pages 81 - 100)

Purpose:

To note the six month update report from Lead Members and TVFCS.

- a) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member – Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
- b) Collaboration Lead Member – Councillor David Cannon
- c) Community Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Councillor Dexter Smith
- d) Strategic Assets Lead Member – Councillor Angus Ross
- e) TVFCS – Councillor Angus Ross

14. Forward Plan (*Pages 101 - 102*)

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

15. Minutes of the Standing Committees

Recommendation:

To note that the minutes of the following meetings were published on RBFRS website <http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/about-us/fire-authority/fire-authority-meetings/>

16. Date of the Next Meeting

Tuesday, 15 February 2022, at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

17. Exclusion of the Public (*Pages 103 - 104*)

To Resolve that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following Agenda Items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the said Act indicated and is exempt information if, and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Categories of 'Exempt Information' under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

18. Consideration of Flexible Retirement Request (*Pages 105 - 118*)

Purpose:

To agree the flexible retirement request as outlined in the report.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Wednesday, 30th June, 2021, at 6.30 pm

Crowne Plaza Reading East, Eskdale Road, Winnersh Triangle,
Reading, Berkshire, RG41 5TS

Members: (*present)	*	Councillor Christine Bateson		Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	*	Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	*	Councillor Tony Linden
		Councillor Jeff Brooks		Councillor Jo Lovelock
	*	Councillor Tricia Brown	*	Councillor Harjinder Minhas
	*	Councillor David Cannon	*	Councillor Angus Ross
	*	Councillor Anne Chadwick	*	Councillor Dexter Smith
	*	Councillor Avtar Cheema	*	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
	*	Councillor Colin Dudley	*	Councillor Garth Simpson
		Councillor Paul Gittings	*	Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale
	*	Councillor Pauline Helliarsymons		Councillor Simon Werner

In Attendance: Mark Antell (Communication and Engagement Officer, C&EO)
 Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer Designate, CFOD)
 Joanna Bromham (Communication and Engagement Lead, C&EL)
 Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 Alex Brown (Head of Property Capital Projects and Estates, HPCP&E)
 Doug Buchanan (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
 Tom Carvell (Senior IT Technical Support Officer)
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
 Helen Finan (Business Support Officer, BSO)
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
 Katie Mills (Director of Corporate Services, DCS)
 Jess James (Area Manager, Resource and Resilience, AM R&R)
 James Pinchin (Business Support Lead, BSL)
 Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
 Hannah Sheehan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
 Tregear Thomas (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
 Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Helliarsymons nominated Councillor Colin Dudley as Royal

Action

Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Ross.

On there being no further nominations for Chairman, it was;

RESOLVED that Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Colin Dudley read the following statement, *'I Councillor Colin Dudley having been elected to the office of Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability'. He thanked Members for placing their confidence in him and stated that it was an honour and privilege to lead the Fire Authority'*.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chairman nominated Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons as Vice – Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Ross.

On there being no further nominations, it was;

RESOLVED that Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons read the following statement, *'I Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons having been elected to the office of Vice-Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability'*.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Brooks, Gittings, Lovelock and McKenzie-Boyle.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, Councillors Ross and Cannon declared a personal interest as 2020/21 Members of the TVFCS Joint Committee.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2021

Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning Development (HHR&L&D), confirmed that the action to correct the inconsistency outlined in minute item 67 was made.

RESOLVED that the minutes and actions of the meeting held on 24 March, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDERS 19 AND 25

There were no petitions and questions from members of the public under Standing Orders 19 and 25.

7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements.

Appointment of New Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock

I am very pleased to welcome our new Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock. Wayne has joined us having served as Chief Fire Officer of Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service and worked for a number of other fire and rescue services during his career, including Nottinghamshire, Devon & Somerset and Staffordshire.

Wayne has an outstanding record of public service, with over 27 years' service, he will bring a wealth of experience and skill to the role and he will be well-placed to lead the Service on the next stage of its journey in delivering excellence for our communities.

Welcome to New Members and Farewell to Councillor Hulme and Councillor Howe

I would like to welcome Councillors Avtar Cheema from Slough Borough Council, a returnee to the Fire Authority, and Anne Chadwick from Wokingham Borough Council, as our new Members for 2021/22.

I would like to present you both with the Members Handbook and Fire Authority crest, which have been left for you on your seats this evening.

We sadly say goodbye and send best wishes to Councillor Christine Hulme and Councillor Graham Howe who stood down from the Fire Authority in May 2021.

Death of Paul Fuller CBE, Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Next some sad news Members, we recently paid our respects to Paul Fuller CBE, the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service who sadly passed away on Monday, 7 June, after a short illness.

On behalf of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, I would like to send our deepest condolences to Paul's family, friends and colleagues. We pay tribute to his dedicated life of public service, and we commemorate everything that he has achieved during the 19 years that he served as the Chief Fire Officer of Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - One Year on from the Murder of George Floyd

One year on from the tragic murder of George Floyd, I feel that it is appropriate to reflect on the commitments that our Service made at the time of George Floyd's death.

Our Authority and Service is committed to continue to listen and learn from anyone who is affected by prejudice, and we work to make Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service the most inclusive and diverse organisation possible.

The Service has launched new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pages on the intranet which include a specific 'resources and learning' page featuring videos and links to articles which educate visitors to the site about racism and other prejudices.

We have also strived to educate the workforce about the issue of prejudice by including at least one article in The Shout each month since August 2020 which focusses on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This has included topics such as micro-incivilities, historic prejudice in Berkshire, launching our Trans Equality Policy and remembering forgotten war heroes.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Service has agreed a pilot internship programme called the Chairman's Internship which will target young people from under-represented groups in Berkshire. The intention is that we will welcome our first interns in 2022.

I'd like to place on record my thanks to all those who are furthering our work in this area, to help make the Service truly inclusive and representative of the community we serve.

Virtual Awards Ceremony

I am pleased to announce that our Service's Awards Ceremony was held virtually for the first time on Tuesday, 18 May.

Although we could not celebrate the awards in person this year, the virtual ceremony recognised all those who had been nominated for or won an award for

their work spanning from the end of July 2019 to 31 December 2020, and also allowed us to celebrate everyone who has completed 20 years of service.

I would like to place on record my congratulations to anyone who was nominated for or won an award, and I would also like to recognise everyone who received their Long Service and Good Conduct Medal or Long Service Award. Well done to everyone and we look forward to the possibility of an in person celebratory event later in the year.

Fire Safety Fine for Restaurant in Cookham

A restaurant in Cookham has been fined £85,000 for six breaches of fire safety duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority brought the prosecution following a serious fire that broke out Malik's Restaurant, Cookham in Maidenhead.

The defendant company, Beta UK Limited, pleaded guilty to six charges and was sentenced to a financial penalty of £85,000, and the Authority was awarded the prosecution costs.

Beta UK Limited appealed the conviction and the appeal was heard in May, but the Court upheld the financial fine, and awarded the prosecution costs.

Thank you to everyone that supported this successful prosecution, which has sent a clear message that the consequences of failing to comply with fire safety legislation are serious.

Arrival of New Fire Engines

I am very pleased to announce that four fire engines have been deployed at fire stations in Royal Berkshire, as part of the Authority's ongoing Strategic Asset Investment Programme.

Bracknell, Ascot and Wokingham Road are the latest fire stations to receive a new Volvo fire engine.

The fire engines have been purchased as part of a joint procurement process project between our Service, Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire County Council Fire and Rescue Service.

The Volvo fire engine previously based at Langley Fire Station has also been replaced. The previous vehicle is now being used for training and firefighter development.

I was delighted to take part in the official handover of the new fire engines which took place in line with COVID guidelines at Wokingham Road on Friday, 14 May and Bracknell and Ascot on Friday, 21 May.

Local authority remote meetings: Call for evidence

Members, on behalf of the Fire Authority, I have worked with officers to submit a

response on the Government's call for evidence on remote meetings for local authorities, including Combined Fire Authorities.

The call for evidence sought to understand the experience of local authorities regarding remote meetings. In responding, we set out the benefits that remote meetings offered during the pandemic and that we should be able to decide for ourselves which meetings are held remotely, and in what circumstances they are held.

I will keep Members informed of any updates related to the Call for Evidence.

Firefighters' Memorial Day

As a Service, we took the time to commemorate the dedication, commitment and sacrifices of firefighters on Firefighters' Memorial Day, which took place on Tuesday, 4 May.

Our operational teams honoured the wishes of The Firefighters Memorial Trust by holding parades on their station forecourt at midday, and staff across the Service held a minute's silence as a mark of respect to all those who are serving, who have served, or who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect their communities.

Farewell to Trevor Ferguson and Steve Foye

Tonight we say farewell to Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Ferguson, and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Foye, who are retiring after long and distinguished careers serving their communities.

Steve Foye joined the fire and rescue service in May 1991, rising to the rank of Station Manager with London Fire Brigade before moving to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, where he went on to become Area Manager.

Steve then joined our Service in May 2017, as our Deputy Chief Fire Officer, taking over the role following Trevor's appointment as Chief Fire Officer.

We are immensely grateful to Steve for all his efforts in helping us to achieve such high standards as a Service.

I am grateful that Steve, who has now retired, has been able to join us this evening and would now like to invite him to the front to receive his ceremonial axe.

Trevor first joined the fire and rescue service in March 1990, working for Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. During this time Trevor made his way up the ranks to the position of Area Commander.

He transferred from Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in October 2014, firstly as Deputy Chief Fire Officer, before assuming the role of Chief Fire Officer in April 2017.

On behalf of the Fire Authority, I want to express my sincere thanks to Trevor for everything that he has achieved in the role over the last four years.

I would now like to invite Trevor to the front to receive his ceremonial axe in recognition of his service.

8. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Audit and Governance Committee.

9. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

To note agenda Item 15 (Amended Fire Authority Terms of Reference) and Item 16 (Annual Report on Governance) has been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee held on 31 March 2021.

12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBERS AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2021/22

Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO) introduced the report and advised that each Political Group Leader submitted their nominations for the appointment of Committees, Lead Members, Member Champions, Honorary Member Champions, Outside Bodies and Working Parties which had been tabled.

In referring to recommendation 2.2, he advised that Members were also required to nominate a substitute for Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee representatives.

The Chairman moved recommendations 2.1 and 2.5 as set out in the report and this was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

As set out in Table 7 of the tabled nomination forms, Graham Britten advised that he received more than one nomination for two substitute Members of the Thames Valley Fire Control Joint Committee. The nominations were Councillors

Shepherd-DuBey, Brooks, Gittings and Brown. Councillor Brown seconded Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, Councillor Shepherd-DuBey seconded Councillor Brooks, Councillor Brown seconded Councillor Gittings and the Chairman seconded Councillor Brown.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Shepherd-DuBey received 11 votes and Councillor Gittings received 14 votes.

In addition, as set out in Table 9 of the tabled nomination forms, Graham Britten advised he had received three nominations from Councillors Helliard-Symons, Gittings and Shepherd-Dubey for Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative. They were seconded by the Chairman and Councillor Brown respectively. On being put to the vote, Councillor Helliard-Symons received 13 votes, Councillor Gittings received 3 votes and Shepherd-DuBey received 1 vote.

For the LGA Fire Commission representative substitute position, Graham Britten reported he received two nominations, who were Councillors McKenzie-Boyle and Shepherd-DuBey. They were seconded by the Chairman and Councillor Smith respectively. On being put to the vote, Councillor McKenzie-Boyle received 12 votes and Councillor Shepherd-DuBey received 4 votes.

The table below outline the nominations agreed.

Table 5

<p>Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)</p>	<p>(Con) Councillor Tina MCKENZIE-BOYLE (Con) Councillor Tony LINDEN (Con) Councillor Christine BATESON (Con) Councillor Jane STANFORD-BEALE (Con) Councillor Garth SIMPSON (Con) Councillor Anne CHADWICK (Lab) Councillor Harjinder MINHAS (Lab) Councillor Avtar CHEEMA (Lib Dem) Councillor Simon WERNER</p>
<p>Management Committee (11 seats)</p>	<p>(Con) Councillor Colin DUDLEY (Con) Councillor Pauline HELLIARD-SYMONS (Con) Councillor Angus ROSS (Con) Councillor Dexter SMITH (Con) Councillor David CANNON (Con) Councillor Dennis BENNEYWORTH (Lab) Councillor Paul GITTINGS (Lab) Councillor Jo LOVELOCK</p>

	Action
(Lab) Councillor Tricia BROWN (Lib Dem) Councillor Rachelle SHEPHERD-DUBEY (Lib Dem) Councillor Jeff BROOKS	

Table 6

Opposition Leaders	Labour Group Opposition Leader Councillor Paul GITTINGS Liberal Democratic Opposition Leader – Councillor Rachelle SHEPHERD-DUBEY
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Lead Member	Budget and Income Generation Lead – Councillor Dennis BENNEYWORTH Community Risk Management Plan Lead – Councillor Dexter SMITH Strategic Assets Lead – Councillor Angus ROSS Collaboration Lead – Councillor David CANNON
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Member Champion	Community Safety Champion – Councillor Christine BATESON Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion – Councillor Christine BATESON Organisational Development Champion – Councillor Pauline HELLIAR-SYMONS
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Table 7

TVFCS Joint Committee (2 seats)	TVFCS Joint Committee representative Councillor Angus ROSS
	TVFCS Joint Committee representative Councillor David CANNON
Two substitute Members for TVFCS Joint Committee representatives	Councillor Rachelle SHEPHERD-DUBEY Councillor Paul GITTINGS

Table 8

<p>Collaboration Working Group – minimum three Members</p> <p>Councillor David CANNON Councillor Paul GITTINGS Councillor Rachelle SHEPHERD-DUBEY</p>	
<p>Member Development Working Group – minimum three Members</p> <p>Councillor Pauline HELLIAR-SYMONS Councillor Anne CHADWICK Councillor Tony LINDEN Councillor Tina MCKENZIE-BOYLE Councillor Paul GITTINGS</p>	
<p>Property Development Working Group – Minimum three Members</p> <p>Councillor Angus ROSS Councillor Tony LINDEN Councillor Pauline HELLIAR-SYMONS Councillor Dexter SMITH Councillor Paul GITTINGS Councillor Jo LOVELOCK Councillor Jeff BROOKS Councillor Simon WERNER</p>	

Table 9

<p>Appointments to outside bodies</p>	<p>LGA Fire Commission representative (nominations to be put to the FA to vote) Councillor Pauline HELLIAR-SYMONS</p>
	<p>LGA Fire Commission representative’s substitute Councillor Tina MCKENZIE-BOYLE</p>

Table 10

<p>Honorary Member Champion</p>	<p>Armed Forces Champion – Councillor Angus ROSS Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion – Councillor Tina MCKENZIE-BOYLE</p>
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RESOLVED that:

- The nominations received for the appointment of Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee listed in **Table 5** be agreed;
- The nominations received for the appointments for Special Responsibility Roles, Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Representatives, TVFCS Joint Committee substitutes and Working Groups listed in **Tables 6 – 8** be agreed;
- The appointment of the Local Government Association (LGA) representative and LGA substitute representative in **Table 9** be agreed;
- The nominations received for the appointments of Armed Forces and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Honorary Member Champion in **Table 10** be agreed; and
- The updated Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members be agreed (attached as Appendix A).

13. ANNUAL PLAN 2021/22

Katie Mills, Director of Corporate Services introduced the report and stated the Annual Plan had been drafted to take into account the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

Becca Chapman; Data, Performance and Risk Manager, reported that the Annual Plan 2021/22 set out the Service's annual objectives, detailing corporate measures and targets. It also sets out how the Service will manage risk. The draft Annual Plan is usually considered by Audit and Governance Committee prior to being recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.

She reported that the sector is now referring to Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), previously known as Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which has been reflected throughout the report.

In answer to a question from the Vice-Chairman in relation to the percentage of commercial respondents satisfied with the overall Service. Becca Chapman stated that the percentage outlined in the report (95%) were targets the Service had set itself to achieve.

In response to a request from the Vice-Chairman, Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Service monitor near misses and that data is shared with each Head of Service on a monthly basis.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by the Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED that the Annual Plan 2021/22 be approved for publication.

14. CORPORATE CALENDAR

Katie Mills presented the Corporate Calendar of meetings for 2021/22. She reported the dates of the Thames Valley Fire Control (TVFCS) Joint Committee had subsequently changed from the published agenda pack, and that those meetings had been rescheduled to be held on Monday 12 July, and Thursday 16 December 2021.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Benneyworth.

RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Corporate Calendar be agreed.

15. AMENDED FIRE AUTHORITY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Katie Mills reported that the Fire Authority Terms of Reference had been amended to formally include the appointment of Honorary Member Champions for Armed Forces and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission and Thames Valley Fire Control Joint Committee representatives. In addition an amendment was made to Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), formally known as Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and a small clarification point in the language used in point (h).

RESOLVED that the amended Fire Authority Terms of Reference (Appendix A) be agreed.

16. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

Katie Mills presented the Annual Report on Governance which set out Members Allowances and Member attendance at meetings from June 2020 – May 2021.

In referring to Member attendance during the year, the Chairman thanked Members for attending meetings throughout such a difficult year.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Linden.

RESOLVED that:

- The Members' Allowances received for the period of June 2020 – May 2021 be noted; and
- The 2020/21 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members for the same period be noted.

17. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Jim Powell; Area Manager Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P) presented the report and highlighted the Service's response to COVID-19 and that minimum crewing levels were maintained during the year.

In referring to page 100, paragraph 3.4 of the report, Councillor Brown commended the combined savings of over £15 million and asked if the Service had received any comment from the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Jim Powell responded by reporting the savings had demonstrated collaboration between the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services) and that HMICFRS had recognised the contribution.

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded by Councillor Ross.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report be noted.

18. LEAD MEMBER AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairman requested the Lead Member and Member Champion Annual Reports to be taken en-bloc.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

19. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

20. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, 2 November 2021, at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

(The meeting concluded at 7.24pm)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	2 NOVEMBER 2021
SUBJECT	AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM CONSULTATION
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS; DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND JIM POWELL; AREA MANAGER COLLABORATION AND POLICY
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DEXTER SMITH
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Through the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) sets out how it proposes to deliver services, meet the Strategic Objectives contained in the Corporate Plan and seeks to drive continuous improvement. This journey of improvement has been supported by the inspection programme of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- 1.2 False Alarms make up a significant proportion of the incidents RBFRS attend and this was noted by HMICFRS who concluded that *"the service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals')."*
- 1.3 A robust action plan has been put in place to consider and make improvements in this area, including how the service responds to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).
- 1.4 Research shows that there are significant potential benefits in making changes to the way RBFRS provides this service, enabling more effective use of Service Delivery capacity in managing community risk.
- 1.5 As these changes represent a variation to the way we deliver our response, the service should consult publicly on any proposals. This paper sets out that proposal, presenting a draft consultation paper (Appendix A) and seeking agreement to take the proposal forward to public consultation.

Agenda Item 10

- 1.6 For the avoidance of doubt, this consultation proposal covers only our response to the Automatic Fire Alarms specified within the consultation document. We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **AGREE** to commence a 10 week public consultation in January 2022, at a date to be confirmed at the Chief Fire Officers discretion, to inform a future decision on how it responds to Automatic Fire Alarms;
- 2.2 **AGREE** the draft consultation document subject to delegating responsibility for any minor amendments to the consultation document to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Fire Authority and CRMP Lead Member.

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Whilst RBFRS received a 'good' rating for effectiveness in the 2018/19 HMICFRS report, it also suggested an area for improvement - "*the service should ensure it addresses effectively the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').*" – noting that there had been a 33% increase in attendance at false alarms between 2014 and 2018.
- 3.2 This supported the services understanding and provided additional focus to ongoing work in this area.
- 3.3 The service attends around 2,400 alarm related incidents each year with over 99% being false alarms. Each incident takes an average of approximately 30mins.
- 3.4 The evidence suggests that by changing the way we respond to some of these incidents, those which occur in occupied premises where the occupants cannot confirm the presence of fire, the service could save up to approximately 1,300 hours of firefighter time.
- 3.5 This will create capacity for other work such as delivering Safe and Well visits to our most vulnerable people or undertaking risk critical training on fire stations, as well as ensuring more fire engines are available for emergency incidents.
- 3.6 The proposal and associated information is captured in the draft consultation document at Appendix A.
- 3.7 The proposal was considered by members at a CRMP task and finish group on 19 October 2021. This was attended by Cllr Colin Dudley, Cllr Dexter Smith, Cllr Rachelle Shepherd DuBey and Cllr Paul Gittings. The group supported the proposal and recommended it go forward to Fire Authority.

- 3.8 Officers will continue to refine the document ahead of starting the consultation and the recommendation at 2.2 will enable good governance and sign off whilst supporting ambitious delivery timelines.
- 3.9 In order to ensure RBFA can make the best possible decisions, it is necessary to consult publicly on any changes it makes to its Service Delivery arrangements.
- 3.10 RBFRS is in a position to build on the positive consultation experiences of recent years and ensure we are able to reach 'seldom heard' groups within our communities as well as focusing on key stakeholders by conducting a thorough equality assessment and stakeholder analysis.
- 3.11 The service will utilise all its existing and embedded communication channels and provide focused community engagement through the Service Delivery Hubs to ensure we maximise involvement across Royal Berkshire.
- 3.12 The service intends to commence the consultation on 10 January 2022. The recommendation at 2.1 provides some flexibility on this date should it be required however it is expected that any change in start date would be minimal.
- 3.13 A full report would be presented to Fire Authority on 28 April 2022, to enable members to conscientiously consider the views of residents when making a decision.
- 3.14 Following the consultation, should members take a decision in April 2022 to change the way we respond to AFAs, the service will conduct a thorough review to evaluate the intended benefits, seeking to capture any findings that would support future action or improvements, reporting back to Fire Authority as appropriate.
- 3.15 It is important to reiterate that this consultation proposal covers only our response to the Automatic Fire Alarms specified within the consultation document. We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will provide advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- 4.3 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.4 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no additional financial burdens in delivering the consultation identified at this time. There are likely to be some incidental expenditures,

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such as printing costs, however this can be made available from existing budgets.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is a legal requirement under Section 7(2)(c) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to “make arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel”, in order to discharge its obligations under section 7(1) to extinguish fires in its area, and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area.

6.2 The legal obligations concerning the requirement to consult and how consultation should be conducted are set out in the ‘Legal obligations’ section of the consultation document. It defines the requirement to consult on CRMP matters as set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England and describes the common law framework set out in the four Gunning Principles (R v London Borough of Brent [1985] 84 LGR 168).

6.3 Undertaking a public consultation will support the Fire Authority in determining that any future decision is proportionate, appropriate and reasonable.

7. EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As described at 3.10, a full stakeholder analysis and equality impact assessment will be conducted prior to the launch of the consultation and any resultant actions will inform the consultation plan.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The analysis of any implications are outlined in the consultation document at Appendix A. Essentially this change represents a very low risk to the public and as stated at 3.4 will enable more time for other risk mitigation activity to occur, such as Safe and Well visits.

8.2 This proposal will not change the fundamental position that RBFRS will always mobilise resources where there is a confirmed fire.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 AFA mobilisations are managed and delivered by Thames Valley Fire Control Service. Currently RBFRS and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) have the same mobilisation protocols.

9.2 Officers are working with partners in OFRS and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to understand the appetite to work towards an aligned policy for mobilising to AFAs.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 Chief Fire Officer

- 10.2 Chief Finance Officer
- 10.3 Clerk and Monitoring Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – AFA consultation document

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Katie Mills millsk@rbfrs.co.uk 07831812131
- 13.2 Jim Powell powellj@rbfrs.co.uk 077742156644

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS
CONSULTATION - FINAL DRAFT



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Appendix A



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» **FOREWORD**

Thank you for reading this consultation paper on our proposal on how we could change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms (AFAs). An automatic fire alarm is a system that warns people when smoke and/or fire are detected. These types of alarm sound automatically, alerting the occupants of the premises, who should manage the response to the alarm. It may also notify a remote Alarm Receiving Centre depending on the local arrangements, who will contact the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the premises.

The proposals in this consultation paper relates only to automatic fire alarms in lower risk occupied commercial (non-residential) properties (likely to be during normal working hours for the premises). It focuses on 999 calls made to Thames Valley Fire Control Service by those calling to inform the Service that an automatic fire alarm has been activated. Our data tells us that over 99% of the automatic fire alarm calls notified to Royal Berkshire end up being false alarms. Therefore, we are asking you to consider the following two options:

Option A – When there is a report of a fire from an automatic fire alarm with an alarm panel, we will ask the premises to confirm the cause of the alarm. As part of Option A in this consultation, if the premises is unable to confirm the cause of the alarm, no further action will be taken based on the premises being an occupied lower risk building. This is a change to our current policy.

OR

Option B – We continue applying our current policy and do not change the way we respond to AFAs. This would mean that when there is a report of a fire from an automatic fire alarm with an alarm panel, we will send a fire engine to occupied lower risk buildings, even when the premises is unable to confirm the cause of the alarm.

More detail about the specifics options are available under the ‘Options for Consultation’ section on page 9. We would value your thoughts and feedback on these options in light of the information in this consultation document. Your comments will help inform the decision by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on which proposal to adopt. The consultation will run for 10 weeks from 10 January until 21 March 2022. The results of the consultation are scheduled to be presented to the Authority for conscientious consideration on 28 April 2022.



Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority



Wayne Bowcock
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service



» HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Automatic Fire Alarm consultation will run from 10 January 2022 until 21 March 2022.

Over the next few pages, we will be outlining the proposed changes to the way in which we respond to AFAs.

No decisions have been made. We want to hear your views on our consultation proposals, which will assist in the decision-making that follows.

We are committed to providing all members of our local communities with the opportunity to provide us with their feedback. Should you require help with accessing the information in a different format or language, please contact us using any of the methods below.

You can get in touch by:



Responding to the consultation on our website: www.rbfrs.co.uk



Writing to us with your comments, ideas or views at:

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Consultation, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 7SD



Emailing us at consultations@rbfrs.co.uk



Phoning: 0118 938 4331



Following us on social media on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn



» ABOUT US

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for an area of around 486 square miles, from Slough and Langley in the east to Lambourn and Newbury in the west. It employs more than 600 members of staff, who serve a population of approximately 917,000 people.

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

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

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

 **24 hours a day**
 **7 days a week**
 **365 days a year**

486
square miles of land are covered
in Royal Berkshire



We are responsible for Slough and Langley in the East, to Lambourn and Newbury in the West

 **17**
fire stations across
the County

917,000
we serve a diverse
cultural population 

Over 600
members of staff in total
Over 450
are on a shift pattern



In our Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2019-23, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority set RBFRS six public facing commitments:

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

For 2020-21, RBFRS set an additional four objectives:

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





» OUR LEGAL AND STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, provides the statutory instrument that requires fire and rescue services to have due regard for the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework provides guidance on integrated risk management planning and that a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) should:

“Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all stages review with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners.”

In carrying out the consultation, RBFRS aim to be aware of the four Gunning Principles (R v London Borough of Brent [1985] 84 LGR 168), which govern how public bodies should consult. They specify that:

- Consultations should be carried out when proposals are at the formative stage.
- Sufficient information is provided for intelligent consideration.
- Adequate time is given for response.
- Responses are conscientiously taken into account.

We strongly recommend that you read this document in full, in order to provide informed feedback about our proposed changes to the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).





» WHY ARE WE CONSULTING?

As part of our decision making process about how we respond to AFAs, we would like your feedback on the two options we will present in this consultation paper. **This consultation only applies to automatic fire alarms in lower risk occupied buildings** (likely to be during normal working hours for the premises). We will present information about how we currently respond to AFAs, the issues we are considering and give clear information about the two options we would like you to give your feedback on.

What is an Automatic Fire Alarms?

An Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) is an alarm that, when it sounds, will automatically alert the occupants of the premises, who should manage the response to the alarm. It may also notify a remote Alarm Receiving Centre depending on the local arrangements, who will contact the Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of the premises.

Different premises have their own procedure for responding to AFAs:

- In some premises, if there is a person onsite, they may investigate the source of the alarm before deciding whether they need to call 999 for the Fire and Rescue Service. This may be because the AFA is not linked to an Alarm Receiving Centre.
- In other cases, the Alarm Receiving Centre may ask the premises to investigate the source of the alarm before deciding whether to make contact with the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room on a designated emergency phone line.
- Where a building is unoccupied, the Alarm Receiving Centre will call through the report to the Fire and Rescue Service Control Room that there is a fire alarm activating.

How do we currently respond to Automatic Fire Alarms?

Our current policy on whether we send a fire engine to a report of a fire from an AFA activating is:

- We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in high-risk occupied buildings (including buildings, such as care homes, hotels and other properties that are presumed to be occupied).
- We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in dwellings (a house, a high rise block, or other place of residence).
- We will attend all reports of automatic fire detection in unoccupied buildings (including buildings that are presumed to be unoccupied).



- We will call-challenge all reports of automatic fire detection in lower risk buildings that are, or are reasonably assumed to be, occupied and only attend if contact has not been made after 20 minutes.

When a call comes in to the Fire and Rescue Service stating there is a report of an alarm sounding from an AFA, our Fire and Rescue Service Control Room already has procedures in place that can ‘filter’ some of the calls by asking the premise to confirm if there is a fire or not. When these calls are challenged, if the cause of the alarm is confirmed not to be a fire, a fire engine is not be sent because there is no requirement for it.

Why are we consulting on AFAs?

We would like to consider a new way to respond to AFAs. This is because we think that there is an opportunity to reduce the number of false alarm calls we attend with a fire engine. By reducing the default fire engine response to an automatic fire alarm call when the cause of the alarm is not confirmed by the premises, we would be able to make sure engines and crews more available for other emergencies across the County where lives are at risk, as well as create more resource for other fire and rescue priorities in our communities as detailed in the below section.

The benefits of attending fewer AFA calls

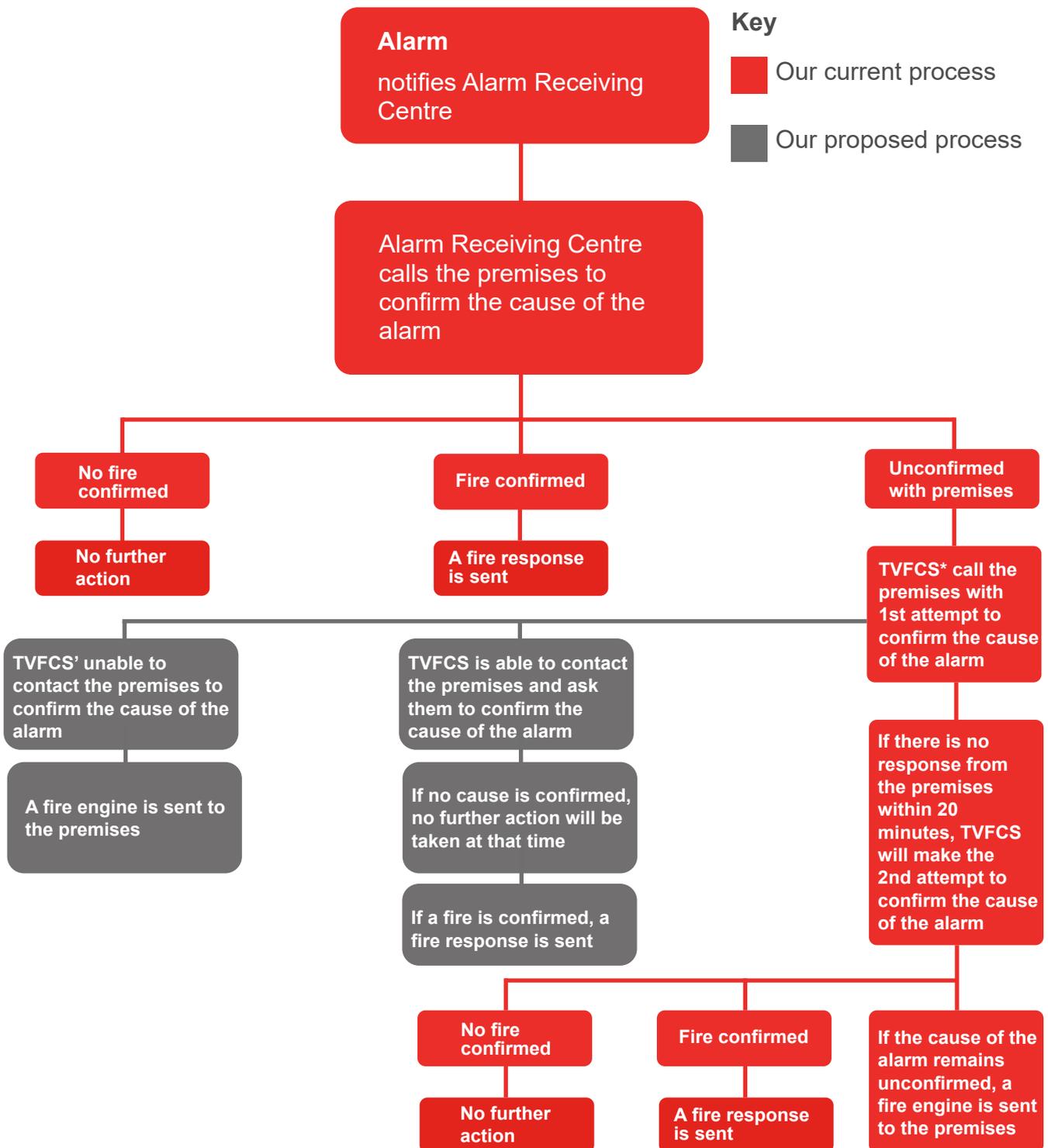
We attend about 2,200 automatic fire alarm incidents each year, an average of just over one fire engine attends each incident. This adds up to significant time and expense spent on automatic fire alarm calls. If we were to change the way we respond to AFAs, then we would end up challenging approximately 650 incidents per year, which could mean that we don’t require an attendance there, leading to this time being used for other priority work, such as:

- Prevention work in the community;
- Risk-critical training activities;
- Other operational preparedness activities such as familiarisation visits; and
- More fire engines would be available for the other emergency incidents.



» OUR CURRENT PROCESS VERSUS OUR PROPOSED PROCESS

This consultation proposal covers **only** our response to the Automatic Fire Alarms specified in lower risk occupied buildings (likely to be during normal working hours for the premises). **We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls.**





» THE IMPACT OF AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

In order to provide informed feedback about our proposed changes to the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs), we analysed five years of data, which established the below headlines:

- Our data tells that over 99% of automatic fire alarm calls to Royal Berkshire end up being false alarms.
- There were over 2,900 automatic fire alarm calls on average per year.
- We attend about 2,200 automatic fire alarm incidents on average per year.
- If we were to change the way we respond to AFAs, then we would end up challenging approximately 650 incidents per year under the consultation (Option A) to change the way we respond to automatic fire alarms. This could mean that we don't require an attendance there, leading to this time being used for other priority work.
- We spend an average of around 30 minutes dealing with each of these incidents, so by reducing our call outs to false AFAs, this could lead to a saving of up to 1,300 hours of firefighter time each year which could be spent on prevention and protection activities.
- Over the last five years, of the automatic fire alarms that we would have challenged under Option A, there were 17 incidents in total that were confirmed fires.
- Of these 17 incidents, three required firefighting action. Of these three fires, there were no casualties and they were put out using a fire extinguisher. These incidents may still have been attended through an alternative route if this consultation is approved, as this consultation proposal covers only our response to the Automatic Fire Alarms specified within this consultation document. We will still always maintain our emergency response to 999 calls.

Methodology Statement

Five years of data was analysed to give the yearly averages, in line with our standard reporting process for AFAs. The 650 AFA calls per year likely to require confirmation before attending was calculated by assessing the alarm type and the time of the call, and using this information to classify the data as "Occupied" or "Unoccupied." This value was used to calculate the potential maximum savings alongside the following; the average time spent attending an AFA call calculated at around 30 minutes from the five years data; the average number of appliances in attendance of an AFA is one which will have four firefighters aboard. To assess the potential impact if Option A if the consultation was agreed, the data was classified as "Occupied" or "Unoccupied" for AFA incidents that ended up being confirmed fires. This returned 17 incidents, which were then assessed manually to identify whether any firefighting activities were carried out, of which three incidents were identified. This is the total for the five-year period. A full version of the methodology can be made available upon request.



» OPTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

We would like you to look at the two options below and to choose which one you prefer, so that we can better understand your thoughts and views, which will support the Fire Authority to make a decision about **how we respond to AFAs in lower risk occupied buildings** (likely to be during normal working hours for the premises).

Option A - Change the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms

When there is a report of a fire from automatic fire alarm with an alarm panel, **we will send a fire engine where one or more of the following conditions apply:**

- There is a known fire in the premises.
- the building is known or presumed to be unoccupied.
- The premises is a dwelling.
- The premises has a sleeping risk including all domestic premises, halls of residence and hotels.
- The premises is a high-rise building with the top floor over 18 metres above access level.
- The premises is a known or presumed high-risk premises due to the characteristics of the occupants or the processes within the building.
- Where the mobilising officer has reasonable doubt or cause for concern and chooses to use discretion.

Option B - Keep the way we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms the same

When there is a report of a fire from automatic fire alarm with an alarm panel, **we will only send a fire engine where one or more of the following conditions apply:**

- There is a known fire in the premises.
- The building is known or presumed to be unoccupied.
- The premises is a dwelling.
- The premises has a sleeping risk including all domestic premises, halls of residence and hotels.
- The premises is a high-rise building with the top floor over 18 metres above access level.
- The premises is a known or presumed high-risk premises due to the characteristics of the occupants or the processes within the building.
- Where the mobilising officer has reasonable doubt or cause for concern and chooses to use discretion.

If we changed the policy it would mean:

For occupied lower risk buildings, if the occupier is unable to confirm the cause of the alarm, no further action will be taken by the fire and rescue service unless the presence of a fire is confirmed.

The current policy means:

For occupied lower risk buildings, if the occupier is unable to confirm the cause of the alarm AND if after 20 minutes has elapsed and the premises is still unable to confirm the cause of the alarm, a fire engine will be sent to the premises.



» QUESTIONS

The below shares our core question set for the proposed consultation. Ahead of going to consultation, we will ask a few additional questions to ensure we offer equal opportunity to respond to the consultation by meeting the needs of people across our diverse communities.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service should change the way they respond to AFAs as outlined in Option A.					
2.	Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service could make better use of the resources currently used to respond to AFA					
3.	The current policy (Option B) for responding to AFAs in Royal Berkshire should not change					
4.	Changing the way in which Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service respond to AFAs would create a disproportionate risk to the public					

5. Please chose your preferred option

Option A

Change the way we respond to the automatic fire alarms detailed within the consultation, with the aim of freeing up more time for firefighters to be available for other community or operational work.

OR

Option B

Do not change how we respond to automatic fire alarms detailed within the consultation and continue responding in the same way we do now.

6. Why have you chosen the option you selected?

7. Do you have any other suggestions or comments about this consultation?



» NEXT STEPS

The flow chart below illustrates the Automatic Fire Alarm Consultation timeline we are working towards. This includes:

- **Consultation period** – The 10-week consultation and engagement with residents, staff and key stakeholders begins. The consultation will run from 10 January 2022 until 21 March 2022.
- **Consultation closure** - Consultation closes and work begins on analysing and compiling the responses into a summary report for decision makers.
- **Conscientiously consider the results** - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority meeting to conscientiously consider the results of consultation and make decisions on the options.
- **Implement decision** - Implementation of chosen options commences.



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Appendix A

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	2 NOVEMBER 2021
SUBJECT	APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR
LEAD OFFICER	CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DENNIS BENNEYWORTH
EXEMPT INFORMATION	N/A
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek agreement to opt into the national scheme for appointing external auditors.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **AGREE** to opt into the national scheme for appointing an external auditor.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 PSAA (Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd) has issued its formal invitation (**Appendix A**) to the Authority to opt into the national scheme to appoint external auditors. This will provide external audit arrangements for five years commencing 1 April 2023.
- 3.2 In relation to appointing its external auditors, the Authority has the option to arrange its own procurement should it not wish to join the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.
- 3.3 PSAA's first appointing period ran for five years from 1 April 2018. The procurement exercise to appoint firms to deliver audits over this period attracted very competitive bids.
- 3.4 However, soon after this process was completed, a series of financial crises and failures in the private sector gave rise to questions about the role of auditors and the focus and value of their work. At the same time, audit firms

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were experiencing growing recruitment and retention challenges which have led to delays in the publication of audited financial statements.

- 3.5 PSAA has stated that one of its key aims for the next procurement exercise is to encourage market sustainability. Firms will be able to bid for a variety of differently sized contracts so that they can match their available resources and risk appetite to the contract for which they bid. They will be required to meet appropriate quality standards and to reflect realistic market prices in their tenders.
- 3.6 In summary, given the current challenging market conditions, it appears that opting into the PSAA's sector-led scheme provides the best chance to solve the current issues with our external audit service.
- 3.7 Audit and Governance Committee met on 20 October 2021 and considered this matter. The Committee recommended that the Fire Authority should opt into the national scheme.

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 Based on prior experience, it seems that the most likely way to secure competitive arrangements in a suppliers' market is to tender collectively through the PSAA.
- 5.2 PSAA will seek to encourage realistic fee levels and to benefit from the economies of scale associated with procuring on behalf of a significant number of bodies.
- 5.3 PSAA will also continue to seek to minimise its own costs (which represent approximately 4% of overall scheme costs).
- 5.4 As PSAA is a not-for-profit company any surplus funds will be returned to scheme members. For example, in 2019, £3,170 was refunded to this Authority.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the relevant statutory regulations, a decision to opt into the national scheme must be taken at a meeting of the full Authority on the recommendation of its 'audit panel'.
- 6.2 In July 2016, the Secretary of State specified PSAA as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies for audits under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015.
- 6.3 PSAA is responsible for appointing auditors and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme.

It is also responsible for overseeing issues of auditor independence and monitoring contractual compliance by auditors.

6.4 The Authority must notify PSAA of its decision to opt into the national scheme by 11 March 2022.

6.5 An eligible body that does not accept the opt-in invitation but subsequently wishes to join the scheme may apply to opt in only after the appointing period has commenced, that is on or after 1 April 2023. In accordance with the regulations, as the appointing person, PSAA must: consider a request to join its scheme; agree to the request unless it has reasonable grounds for refusing it; and notify the eligible body within four weeks of its decision with an explanation if the request is refused. Where the request is accepted, PSAA may recover its reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor from the opted-in body.

6.6 Section 8 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act') requires the Authority to consult its auditor panel and take its views into account when selecting and appointing an auditor. To support transparency of the appointment, section 8 of the Act also requires the Authority to publish a notice on its website within 28 days of making the appointment that: states it has made the appointment; who the appointed auditor is; sets out the auditor panel's advice; and if that advice has not been followed, the Authority's reasons for not following it.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The current delays in signing off our financial statements is extremely troubling, creating disruption and reputational damage to the Authority. Unfortunately, there are no easy solutions to fixing this issue but it is hoped, that by opting into the national scheme, PSAA will be able to exert more pressure on audit firms to conclude audits within the timeframe set out in Regulations.

8.2 There is a risk that PSAA's procurement exercise fails to attract sufficient capacity to enable auditor appointments to every opted-in body. To mitigate against this risk, PSAA has fall-back options to extend one or more existing contracts for 2023/24 and also 2024/25.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 The recommended course of action is a national procurement exercise which should deliver best value for the Authority.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

10.2 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted.

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11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None.

12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A - Invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments.

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

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

22 September 2021

To: Mr Bowcock, Chief Executive
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Copied to: Mr Byrne, S151 Officer
Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, Chair of Audit Committee or equivalent

Dear Mr Bowcock,

Invitation to opt into the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023

I want to ensure that you are aware the external auditor for the audit of your accounts for 2023/24 has to be appointed before the end of December 2022. That may seem a long way away but, as your organisation has a choice about how to make that appointment, your decision-making process needs to begin soon.

We are pleased that the Secretary of State has confirmed PSAA in the role of the appointing person for eligible principal bodies for the period commencing April 2023. Joining PSAA's national scheme for auditor appointments is one of the choices available to your organisation.

In June 2021 we issued a draft prospectus and invited your views and comments on our early thinking on the development of the national scheme for the next period. Feedback from the sector has been extremely helpful and has enabled us to refine our proposals which are now set out in the [scheme prospectus](#) and our [procurement strategy](#). Both documents can be downloaded from our website which also contains a range of useful information that you may find helpful.

The national scheme timetable for appointing auditors from 2023/24 means we now need to issue a formal invitation to you to opt into these arrangements. In order to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations, we also attach a form of acceptance of our invitation which you must use if your organisation decides to join the national scheme. We have specified the five consecutive financial years beginning 1 April 2023 as the compulsory appointing period for the purposes of the regulations which govern the national scheme.

Given the very challenging local audit market, we believe that eligible bodies will be best served by opting to join the scheme and have attached a short summary of why we believe that is the best solution both for individual bodies and the sector as a whole.

I would like to highlight three matters to you:

1. if you opt to join the national scheme, we need to receive your formal acceptance of this invitation by Friday 11 March 2022;

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Appendix A

2. the relevant regulations require that, except for a body that is a corporation sole (e.g. a police and crime commissioner), the decision to accept our invitation and to opt in must be made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole e.g. Full Council or equivalent. We appreciate this will need to be built into your decision-making timetable. We have deliberately set a generous timescale for bodies to make opt in decisions (24 weeks compared to the statutory minimum of 8 weeks) to ensure that all eligible bodies have sufficient time to comply with this requirement; and
3. if you decide not to accept the invitation to opt in by the closing date, you may subsequently make a request to opt in, but only after 1 April 2023. We are required to consider such requests and agree to them unless there are reasonable grounds for their refusal. PSAA must consider a request as the appointing person in accordance with the Regulations. The Regulations allow us to recover our reasonable costs for making arrangements to appoint a local auditor in these circumstances, for example if we need to embark on a further procurement or enter into further discussions with our contracted firms.

If you have any other questions not covered by our information, do not hesitate to contact us by email at ap2@psaa.co.uk. We also publish answers to [frequently asked questions](#) on our website.

If you would like to discuss a particular issue with us, please send an email also to ap2@psaa.co.uk, and we will respond to you.

Yours sincerely

Tony Crawley
Chief Executive

Encl: Summary of the national scheme

Why accepting the national scheme opt-in invitation is the best solution

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA)

We are a not-for-profit, independent company limited by guarantee incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014.

We have the support of the LGA, which in 2014 worked to secure the option for principal local government and police bodies to appoint auditors through a dedicated sector-led national body.

We have the support of Government; MHCLG's Spring statement confirmed our appointment because of our "strong technical expertise and the proactive work they have done to help to identify improvements that can be made to the process".

We are an active member of the new Local Audit Liaison Committee, chaired by MHCLG and attended by key local audit stakeholders, enabling us to feed in body and audit perspectives to decisions about changes to the local audit framework, and the need to address timeliness through actions across the system.

We conduct research to raise awareness of local audit issues, and work with MHCLG and other stakeholders to enable changes arising from Sir Tony Redmond's review, such as more flexible fee setting and a timelier basis to set scale fees.

We have established an advisory panel, which meets three times per year. Its membership is drawn from relevant representative groups of local government and police bodies, to act as a sounding board for our scheme and to enable us to hear your views on the design and operation of the scheme.

The national scheme for appointing local auditors

In July 2016, the Secretary of State specified PSAA as an appointing person for principal local government and police bodies for audits from 2018/19, under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015. Acting in accordance with this role PSAA is responsible for appointing an auditor and setting scales of fees for relevant principal authorities that have chosen to opt into its national scheme. 98% of eligible bodies made the choice to opt-in for the five-year period commencing in April 2018.

We will appoint an auditor for all opted-in bodies for each of the five financial years beginning from 1 April 2023.

We aim for all opted-in bodies to receive an audit service of the required quality at a realistic market price and to support the drive towards a long term competitive and more sustainable market for local audit. The focus of our quality assessment will include resourcing capacity and capability including sector knowledge, and client relationship management and communication.

What the appointing person scheme from 2023 will offer

We believe that a sector-led, collaborative, national scheme stands out as the best option for all eligible bodies, offering the best value for money and assuring the independence of the auditor appointment.

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The national scheme from 2023 will build on the range of benefits already available for members:

- transparent and independent auditor appointment via a third party;
- the best opportunity to secure the appointment of a qualified, registered auditor;
- appointment, if possible, of the same auditors to bodies involved in significant collaboration/joint working initiatives, if the parties believe that it will enhance efficiency;
- on-going management of any independence issues which may arise;
- access to a specialist PSAA team with significant experience of working within the context of the relevant regulations to appoint auditors, managing contracts with audit firms, and setting and determining audit fees;
- a value for money offer based on minimising PSAA costs and distribution of any surpluses to scheme members - in 2019 we returned a total £3.5million to relevant bodies and more recently we announced a further distribution of £5.6m in August 2021;
- collective efficiency savings for the sector through undertaking one major procurement as opposed to a multiplicity of smaller procurements;
- avoids the necessity for local bodies to establish an auditor panel and undertake an auditor procurement, enabling time and resources to be deployed on other pressing priorities;
- updates from PSAA to Section 151 officers and Audit Committee Chairs on a range of local audit related matters to inform and support effective auditor-audited body relationships; and
- concerted efforts to work with other stakeholders to develop a more sustainable local audit market.

We are committed to keep developing our scheme, taking into account feedback from scheme members, suppliers and other stakeholders, and learning from the collective post-2018 experience. This work is ongoing, and we have taken a number of initiatives to improve the operation of the scheme for the benefit of all parties.

Importantly we have listened to your feedback to our recent consultation, and our response is reflected in [the scheme prospectus](#).

Opting in

The closing date for opting in is 11 March 2022. We have allowed more than the minimum eight-week notice period required, because the formal approval process for most eligible bodies is a decision made by the members of the authority meeting as a whole [Full Council or equivalent], except police and crime commissioners who are able to make their own decision.

We will confirm receipt of all opt-in notices. A full list of eligible bodies that opt in will be published on our website. Once we have received an opt-in notice, we will write to you to request information on any joint working arrangements relevant to your auditor appointment, and any potential independence matters which may need to be taken into consideration when appointing your auditor.

Local Government Reorganisation

We are aware that reorganisations in the local government areas of Cumbria, Somerset, and North Yorkshire were announced in July 2021. Subject to parliamentary approval shadow elections will take place in May 2022 for the new Councils to become established from 1 April 2023. Newly established local government bodies have the right to opt into PSAA's scheme under Regulation 10 of the Appointing Person Regulations 2015. These Regulations also set out that a local government body that ceases to exist is automatically removed from the scheme.

If for any reason there is any uncertainty that reorganisations will take place or meet the current timetable, we would suggest that the current eligible bodies confirm their acceptance to opt in to avoid the requirement to have to make local arrangements should the reorganisation be delayed.

Next Steps

We expect to formally commence the procurement of audit services in early February 2022. At that time our procurement documentation will be available for opted-in bodies to view through our e-tendering platform.

Our recent webinars to support our consultation proved to be popular, and we will be running a series of webinars covering specific areas of our work and our progress to prepare for the second appointing period. Details can be found on [our website](#) and in [the scheme prospectus](#).

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	2 NOVEMBER 2021
SUBJECT	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2020/21 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2021/22
LEAD OFFICER	CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DENNIS BENNEYWORTH
EXEMPT INFORMATION	N/A
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present the Annual Treasury Report for 2020/21 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2021/22, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE the Annual Treasury Report for 2020/21 and**
2.2 **NOTE the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2021/22.**

3. REPORT

- 3.1 Treasury management in local Government during 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been regulated by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
- 3.2 The Annual Treasury Report for 2020/21 is shown as Appendix A. Performance is in line with the prudential indicators approved by the Authority in February 2020.
- 3.3 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2020/21 is shown as Appendix B.

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3.4 Historically, the Authority had not borrowed any money since March 2010, and had been setting aside funds annually to repay these loans, so the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) had reduced to a level lower than the total borrowing held. However, this position reversed in 2020/21 when the Authority moved to a position where it was under borrowed, and the CFR exceeded the level of borrowing held. This was due to the repayment of some of these historical loans and the need to fund the ongoing cost of capital projects.

3.5 Additional borrowing arrangements of £3 million were put in place in Quarter One (Q1) 2021/22 to align the position alongside ongoing cash flow needs, and the position is being closely monitored by officers.

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 Investment income interest received for the 2020/21 financial year totalled £23,000. Estimated interest income to be received in 2021/22 is £10,000.

5.2 The Authority repaid external borrowing of £1.75m in 2020/21 and was able to use internal cash reserves to fund capital expenditure for the whole of 2020/21.

5.3 However, at the start of Q1 2021/22, the Authority cash balances were insufficient to fund ongoing capital expenditure so additional borrowing of £3m was arranged through the PWLB.

5.4 Investment rates continue to be extremely low reflecting the movement in the Bank of England base rate to record low levels. Officers continue to monitor this area closely in line with the ongoing cash flow needs, but opportunities are extremely limited in the current market.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The money invested with Oxfordshire County Council is governed by the legal agreement in place for the Thames Valley Fire Control Service arrangement (TVFCS).

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Authority's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles.

- 8.2 The Authority works closely with our Treasury Advisors to ensure that these principles are adhered to, and risk is monitored closely as part of this.
- 8.3 Whilst a small proportion of the investment portfolio is managed by Oxfordshire County Council, their legal status as a public body leads us to believe they are our lowest counterparty risk.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 The sum held for us by Oxfordshire County Council is in relation to the renewals fund for TVFCS. This is invested by them in line with their treasury management policies and procedures as set out in the TVFCS legal agreement.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer
- 10.2 Head of Finance and Procurement

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes (revised December 2017)
- 11.2 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 approved by the Authority on 14 February 2020.
- 11.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 approved by the Authority on 17 February 2021.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Annual Treasury Report 2020/21
- 12.2 Appendix B – Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2021/22

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Ryan Maslen – Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement – 0118 938 4722

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ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

End of year review reflecting performance in 2020/21 and the position as at 31 March 2021.





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Appendix A



Introduction

This Authority is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2020/21. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2020/21 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Fire Authority should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Fire Authority 14/02/2020)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Fire Authority 16/11/2020)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Authority's policies previously approved by members.

The Authority's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Authority undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Authority's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.



The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

	2019/20 Actual (£000's)	2020/21 Original Planned (£000's)	2020/21 Actual (£000's)
Capital Expenditure	4,036	8,407	6,512
Financed in year	4,036	2,802	1,034
Unfinanced capital expenditure	0	5,605	5,478

The original planned expenditure in 2020/21 was agreed by Members prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated issues that had a significant impact throughout 2020/21. The timescales and profiling for some of the capital projects had to be amended during 2020/21 and this spend will now be incurred in future financial years.

The Authority's Overall Borrowing Need

The Authority's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Authority should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2019/20) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2020/21) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Authority is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Authority some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2020/21. The table below highlights the Authority's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Authority has complied with this prudential indicator.

	2019/20 Actual (£000's)	2020/21 Budget (£000's)	2020/21 Actual (£000's)
Gross Borrowing position	8,842	10,693	7,092
CFR	5,022	10,693	10,500



During 2020/21 the Authority repaid long-term borrowing of £1.75m. Whilst the Authority had budgeted for an expectation of borrowing an additional £3.6m in 2020/21 to fund capital expenditure, this was not deemed necessary in year due to the level of cash balances. However, the Authority did take out an additional loan of £3 million in April 2021.

The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Authority does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2020/21 the Authority has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Authority during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

	2020/21 (£000's)
Authorised Limit	13,193
Maximum gross borrowing position	8,842
Operational boundary	10,793
Average gross borrowing position	8,789
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	2.28%



Treasury Position as at 31 March 2021

At the beginning and the end of 2020/21 the Authority's treasury position was as follows:

	31 st March 2020 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)	31 st March 2021 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)
Debt:						
Fixed Rate Funding						
- PWLB	8,842	4.59%	8.7	7,092	4.31%	7.7
CFR	5,022			10,500		
Over / (Under) borrowing	3,820			(3,408)		
Investments:						
Instant Access	4,253	0.53%		2,218	0.01%	
95 Day Notice Accounts	6,548	0.97%		2,042	0.40%	
Long Term	534	0.99%		587	0.40%	
Total Investments	11,335			4,847		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31 st March 2020 Actual (£000's)	31 st March 2021 Actual (£000's)
Under 12 months	1,750	1,170
12 months and within 24 months	1,170	0
24 Months and within 5 Years	0	394
5 Years and within 10 years	2,672	3,378
10 Years and within 20 Years	3,250	2,150
Total	8,842	7,092



The Strategy for 2020/21

Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment returns which had been low during 2019/20, plunged during 2020/21 to near zero or even into negative territory. The expectation for interest rates within the treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was that Bank Rate would continue at the start of the year at 0.75 % before rising to end 2022/23 at 1.25%. This forecast was invalidated by the Covid-19 pandemic bursting onto the scene in March 2020 which caused the Monetary Policy Committee to cut Bank Rate in March, first to 0.25% and then to 0.10%, in order to counter the hugely negative impact of the national lockdown on large swathes of the economy. The Bank of England and the Government also introduced new programmes of supplying the banking system and the economy with massive amounts of cheap credit so that banks could help cash-starved businesses to survive the lockdown. The Government also supplied huge amounts of finance to local authorities to pass on to businesses. This meant that for most of the year there was much more liquidity in financial markets than there was demand to borrow, with the consequent effect that investment earnings rates plummeted.

While the Authority has taken a cautious approach to investing, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the financial crisis. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.

In light of the challenging economic climate described above, investment balances have been kept to a minimum using reserves and balances to support internal borrowing, rather than borrowing externally from the financial markets. External borrowing would have incurred an additional cost, due to the differential between borrowing costs and the significantly reduced investment rates. Such an approach has also provided benefits in terms of reducing the counterparty risk exposure, by having fewer investments placed in the financial markets.

Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

The Authority's debt position reduced by £1.75m in 2020/21, from £8,842k to £7,092k. No rescheduling of long term debt was done during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.

During 2020/21, the Authority moved to an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully



funded with loan debt, as cash supporting the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as investment returns were very low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.

A cost of carry remained during the year on any new long-term borrowing that was not immediately used to finance capital expenditure, as it would have caused a temporary increase in cash balances; this would have incurred a revenue cost – the difference between (higher) borrowing costs and (lower) investment returns.

Investment Outturn

Investment Policy – the Authority's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Fire Authority on 14 February 2020. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Authority had no liquidity difficulties.

Investments held by the Authority – at the end of 2020/21, the Authority had investments totalling £4.85m. The Authority regularly reviews its cash flow requirements over the forthcoming period to ensure liquidity, whilst also looking to maximise return by investing sums for longer periods where possible. The Authority maintained its investments in 95 day notice accounts in 2020/21 to maximise return whilst also enabling short term access to the funds when necessary for capital purposes.

The Authority's long-term investments of £0.6m relate to our share of the TVFCS Renewals Fund. The fund is managed by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the three partners. The Fund has been earmarked to replace IT assets where necessary.

Borrowing Outturn

The Authority's debt position reduced by £1.75m in 2020/21, from £8,842k to £7,092k. No additional borrowing or rescheduling was undertaken during the year.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mid-year review reflecting
performance and the position as
at 30 September 2021





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Appendix B



Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017). The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full Fire Authority of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Authority of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first part of the 2021/22 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Authority's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Authority's investment portfolio for 2021/22;
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2021/22;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2021/22;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2021/22.



In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

A report setting out our Capital Strategy is presented to Fire Authority annually as part of the budget setting papers each February.

The Authority operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Authority's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Authority, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure the Authority can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Authority risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

Economic Update

The last section of this report provides an in depth update on the global outlook and interest rate forecasts. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept Bank Rate unchanged in August.

Movements in the Bank rate agreed by the MPC affect the Authority in two ways. Firstly, the yield we are able to generate from our investment portfolio will have a



direct link to the Bank Rate. As the rate increases, the investment rates we are able to access, and therefore return we generate, should also increase.

In a similar way, the rates we are able to access for borrowing purposes will also reflect movements in the Bank Rate. The capital strategy developed by the Authority in recent years outlines borrowing requirements in future financial years to fund the Strategic Asset investment Framework, and the associated financing costs to do this will also increase as Base Rate changes.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22 were approved by Fire Authority in February 2021. There are no changes to either strategy; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

Authority's Capital Position and Prudential Indicators

This part of the report is structured to update:

- The Authority's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

The table below shows the capital expenditure budget agreed for 2021/22, and the spend to the end of September 2021.

Capital Expenditure	2021/22 Budget as per SAIF (£000's)	Actual costs as at 30 September 2021 (£000's)
Property	3,179	2,032
Fleet & Equipment	2,738	494
ICT	758	156
TOTAL	6,675	2,682



Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2021/22 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Authority has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

	2021/22 Original Estimate (£000's)	Position as at 30 September 2021 (£000's)	2021/22 Revised Estimate (£000's)
Debt	12,830	9,354	12,422
Other long term liabilities	100	100	100
Total	12,930	9,454	12,522

The Chief Finance Officer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this prudential indicator. A new external borrowing arrangement for £3m was entered into in April 2021, with borrowing totalling £1.17m due for repayment prior to the end of this financial year. With some small slippage now expected on the approved capital spend in 2021/22 of £6.68m, the estimated outturn debt position for the year has reduced slightly.

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised Limit for External Debt	2021/22 Original Estimate (£000's)	Position as at 30 September 2021 (£000's)	2021/22 Revised Estimate (£000's)
Debt	17,830	17,830	17,830
Other long term liabilities	500	500	500
Total	18,330	18,330	18,330



Investment Portfolio

In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it is the Authority's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Authority's risk appetite. In the current economic climate it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the suggested creditworthiness approach provided by our treasury advisors.

As shown by the interest rate in the table below, it is now impossible to earn the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as all short-term money market investment rates have only risen weakly since Bank Rate was cut to 0.10% in March 2020. Given this environment and the fact that Bank Rate may only rise marginally, or not at all, before the second half of 2023, investment returns are expected to remain low.

The Authority held investments totalling £2.63m as at 30th September 2021.

	30 Sept 2021 Principal (£000's)	Average Rate / Return
Investments:		
95 Day Notice Accounts	2,046	0.40%
Long Term	587	0.40% *
Total Investments	2,633	

** Long term investments relate to our share of the TVFCS renewals fund which is held and invested by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of TVFCS partners. Rate of return shown is that achieved in 2020/21.*

The Chief Financial Officer confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2021/22.

The budgeted investment return for 2021/22 is £10,000, and the Authority estimates that this will be achieved based on the current investment position. However, this forecast is reliant on domestic and global political actions and the subsequent impact on the bank rate set by the Monetary policy Committee in the UK. This area is closely monitored as part of standard cashflow management procedures.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) estimate for 2021/22 is £13,349k. The CFR denotes the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Authority may borrow from the PWLB or the



market (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. The Authority borrowed £3m in April 2021 as part of its strategy to fund ongoing capital investment. It is anticipated that there will be a requirement for further additional borrowing of £3.5m in 2021/22

Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate and following the various increases in the margin added to gilt yields which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

Detailed Economic Update

Global Outlook from Link Asset Services

UK. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to leave Bank Rate unchanged at 0.10% and made no changes to its programme of quantitative easing purchases due to finish by the end of this year at a total of £895bn; only one MPC member voted to stop these purchases now to leave total purchases £45bn short of the total target.

While that was all very much unchanged from previous MPC decisions over the last year, there was a major shift from indicating no expected tightening any time soon to now flagging up that interest rate increases were now on the horizon. There was disagreement among MPC members, some of whom felt that the forward guidance that the MPC won't tighten policy until inflation "is achieving the 2% inflation target sustainably", had already been met. Although other MPC members did not agree with them, they did all agree that "some modest tightening of monetary policy over the forecast period was likely to be necessary to be consistent with meeting the inflation target sustainably in the medium term".

The MPC was more upbeat in its new 2-3 year forecasts so whereas they had expected unemployment to peak at 5.4% in Q3, the MPC now thought that the peak had already passed. (It is to be noted though, that the recent spread of the Delta variant has damaged growth over the last couple of months and has set back recovery to the pre-pandemic level of economic activity till probably late 2021.)



EU. The slow role out of vaccines initially delayed economic recovery in early 2021 but the vaccination rate has picked up sharply since then. After a contraction of - 0.3% in Q1, Q2 came in with strong growth of 2.2% which is likely to continue into Q3, though some countries more dependent on tourism may struggle. There is little sign that underlying inflationary pressures are building to cause the ECB any concern.

CHINA. After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1 2020, economic recovery was strong in the rest of the year; this enabled China to recover all the initial contraction. Policy makers both quashed the virus and implemented a programme of monetary and fiscal support that was particularly effective at stimulating short-term growth. At the same time, China's economy benefited from the shift towards online spending by consumers in developed markets. These factors helped to explain its comparative outperformance compared to western economies during 2021. However, the pace of economic growth will fall back after this initial surge of recovery from the pandemic. China is also now struggling to contain the spread of the Delta variant through sharp local lockdowns which will damage economic growth. There are also questions as to how effective Chinese vaccines are proving.

JAPAN. After declaring a second state of emergency on 7th January, which depressed growth in Q1 2021, the economy was expected to make a strong recovery to pre-pandemic GDP levels in the rest of the year as the slow role out of vaccines eventually gathers momentum. However, the Delta variant has now raised questions as to whether lockdowns will be needed to contain it and to protect the health service from being overwhelmed.

WORLD GROWTH. Further progress on vaccine rollouts, continued policy support, and the re-opening of most major economies should mean that global GDP growth in 2021 will grow at its fastest rate since 1973. The spread of the Delta variant poses the greatest risk to this view, particularly in large parts of the emerging world where vaccination coverage is typically lower than in advanced economies. Continued strong recovery will be accompanied by higher inflation. While most of the arithmetic and commodity price effects boosting inflation in recent months are behind us, goods shortages will last well into 2022 as order backlogs are worked through and inventories are replenished. What's more there is mounting evidence that rapid re-opening of economies generates labour shortages, which could exert further upward pressure on firms' costs. So, global inflation is unlikely to drop back until next year.



Interest Rate Forecasts

The Authority’s treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, has provided the following forecast:

Link Group Interest Rate View		10.8.21									
	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24
BANK RATE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50
3 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.50
6 month ave earnings	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.20	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.50
12 month ave earnings	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.30	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.70
5 yr PWLB	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.40	1.40	1.40	1.50	1.50
10 yr PWLB	1.60	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.90	1.90	2.00	2.00
25 yr PWLB	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.20	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.50
50 yr PWLB	1.70	1.80	1.90	2.00	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	2.30

The coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March 2020 to cut Bank Rate to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings, although some forecasters had suggested that a cut into negative territory could have happened prior to more recent months when strong recovery started kicking in. However, the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee in February 2021 made it clear that commercial banks could not implement negative rates within six months; by that time the economy would be expected to be recovering strongly and so there would be no requirement for negative rates. As shown in the forecast table above, one increase in Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% has now been included in quarter 1 of 2023/24 and another increase to 0.50% in quarter 4 of 23/24, as an indication that the Bank of England will be starting monetary tightening during this year.

The balance of risks to the UK

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is now to the upside though there are still residual risks from COVID variants - both domestically and their potential effects worldwide, and from various shortages.
- There is relatively little domestic risk of increases in Bank Rate exceeding 0.50% in the next two to three years and, therefore, in shorter-term PWLB rates.

Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates currently include:

- Mutations of the virus render current vaccines ineffective, and tweaked vaccines to combat these mutations are delayed, resulting in further national lockdowns or severe regional restrictions.



- MPC acts too quickly in unwinding QE or increasing Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth, and increases in inflation, to be weaker than we currently anticipate.
- The Government implements an austerity programme that suppresses GDP growth.
- Labour and material shortages do not ease over the next few months and further stifle economic recovery.
- The lockdowns cause major long-term scarring of the economy.
- UK / EU trade arrangements – if there was a major impact on trade flows and financial services due to complications or lack of co-operation in sorting out significant remaining issues.
- A resurgence of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis. The ECB has taken monetary policy action to support the bonds of EU states, with the positive impact most likely for “weaker” countries. In addition, the EU agreed a €750bn fiscal support package which has still to be disbursed. These actions will help shield weaker economic regions in the near-term. However, in the case of Italy, the cost of the virus crisis has added to its already huge debt mountain and its slow economic growth will leave it vulnerable to markets returning to taking the view that its level of debt is unsupportable. There remains a sharp divide between northern EU countries favouring low debt to GDP and annual balanced budgets and southern countries who want to see jointly issued Eurobonds to finance economic recovery. This divide could undermine the unity of the EU in time to come.
- Weak capitalisation of some European banks, which could be undermined further depending on the extent of credit losses resulting from the pandemic.
- German minority government & general election in September 2021. In the German general election of September 2017, Angela Merkel’s CDU party was left in a vulnerable minority position dependent on the fractious support of the SPD party, because of the rise in popularity of the anti-immigration AfD party. Subsequently, the CDU has done badly in state elections, but the SPD has done even worse. Angela Merkel has stepped down from being the CDU party leader but remains as Chancellor until the general election in 2021. Her appointed successor has not attracted wide support from voters and the result of the general election could well lead to some form of coalition government, though there could be a question as to whether the CDU will be part of it which, in turn, could then raise an issue over the tenure of her successor. This then leaves a question mark over who the major guiding hand and driver of EU unity will be.
- Other minority EU governments. Austria, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium also have vulnerable minority governments dependent on coalitions which could prove fragile and, therein, impact market confidence/economic prospects and lead to increasing safe-haven flows.



- Major stock markets e.g., in the US, become increasingly judged as being over-valued and susceptible to major price corrections. Central banks become increasingly exposed to the “moral hazard” risks of having to buy shares and corporate bonds to reduce the impact of major financial market selloffs on the general economy.
- Geopolitical risks, for example in China, Iran or North Korea, but also in Europe and other Middle Eastern countries, which could lead to increasing safe-haven flows.

Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates

- Longer term US treasury yields rise strongly and pull UK gilt yields up higher than forecast.
- Vaccinations are even more successful than expected and eradicate hesitancy around a full return to normal life, which leads into a stronger than currently expected recovery in UK and/or other major developed economies.
- The Bank of England is too slow in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflationary pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a later rapid series of increases in Bank Rate faster than we currently expect.

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	2 NOVEMBER 2021
SUBJECT	LEAD MEMBER AND THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORTS
LEAD OFFICER	N/A
LEAD MEMBER	LEAD MEMBERS AND TVFCS CHAIRMAN
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	TO NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To note six month update reports received from Lead Members and Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To **NOTE** the reports.

3. REPORT

3.1 The attached appendices A-E detail the six month update reports from the following Lead Members and TVFCS Joint Committee:

- a) Budget and Income Generation – Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
- b) Collaboration – Councillor David Cannon
- c) Community Risk Management Plan – Councillor Dexter Smith
- d) Strategic Assets – Councillor Angus Ross
- e) TVFCS – Councillor Angus Ross

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 1- We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
- 4.2 Commitment 2- We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies.
- 4.3 Commitment 3- We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.4 Commitment 4- We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda.
- 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 to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Please refer to individual reports as to whether there are any financial implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Please refer to individual reports as to whether there are any legal implications.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Please refer to individual reports as to whether there are any equality and diversity implications.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Please refer to individual reports as to whether there are any risk implications.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Please refer to individual reports.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None for the purpose of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A - Budget and Income Generation- Councillor Dennis Benneyworth

- 12.2 Appendix B - Collaboration – Councillor David Cannon
- 12.3 Appendix C - Community Risk Management Plan – Councillor Dexter Smith
- 12.4 Appendix D - Strategic Assets – Councillor Angus Ross
- 12.5 Appendix E – TVFCS – Councillor Angus Ross

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Budget and Income Generation – Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) 0118 938 4720
- 13.2 Collaboration – Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) 0118 938 4800
- 13.3 Community Risk Management Plan – Katie Mills (Director of Corporate Services) 0118 938 4605
- 13.4 TVFCS – Jim Powell (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy) 07774 215664

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Budget and Income Generation

Review

Over the last few years, Members have seen increasing volatility in relation to the Authority's income streams coupled with growing cost pressures around pay, pensions and the necessity to undertake more Protection work.

Since this year's Revenue Budget was set in February 2021, there have been two major developments that will affect the base budget going forward.

The first relates to staff pay awards. When the Authority set its budget, it was on the basis of a pay freeze for 2021/22. This was in line with Government policy, although it was acknowledged at the time that pay negotiations for both grey and green book staff sit outside of direct Government control.

Since then, pay negotiations for grey book staff have been concluded with an agreed pay award of 1.5% effective from July. This will result in a forecast overspend on pay of around £240,000.

Pay negotiations for green book staff are on-going with the latest offer of 1.75% having been rejected. A pay award of 1.75% would result in an additional pressure on the budget of £132,000.

The other major development relates to an increase in funding compared to the budgeted figure. At the time of budget approval, business rates income from one unitary authority was still unknown. Having since received notification, the actual amount that we will receive for the year is £159,000 higher than the estimate used in the Budget.

In addition, and subsequent to budget approval, notification of actual s31 grants means that general government grant income is also above budget. It is also anticipated that there will be substantial business rates rebates going back over several years which will markedly improve the outturn position for the current year.

Given the importance that the Authority places on its Protection work, it is essential that RBFRS continues to build on the foundations that have been put in place over

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the last few years. As part of the Government's commitment in this area, it is continuing to provide specific grants to the Authority to build resilience and expertise. RBFRS continues to deliver against its own action plan but the Authority has welcomed the additional funding which, while not sufficient, is allowing further progress to be made in this critical area.

Looking Forward

Unbudgeted pay awards, rising inflation and great uncertainty around funding streams mean that the funding position for the next financial year and beyond is precarious. Whilst the Government has provided financial support in the immediate term to offset the impacts of Covid-19, there will undoubtedly be impacts on our funding as this support unwinds.

Faced with this huge level of uncertainty, we are working on a range of scenarios and continue to lobby Government through the NFCC and our local MPs to alert them to the deleterious effects of funding reductions on the provision of our service to the public. Having already made over £7m of savings since 2010, cuts in funding would certainly impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of our Service.

Cllr Dennis Benneyworth, Budget and Income Generation Lead

Collaboration

Review

Emergency Services have a duty to collaborate under the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The Thames Valley Collaboration Group continues to drive activity in this area and much of the collaboration activity is coordinated via the Collaboration Steering Group with political and non-executive leadership representation from across the three Fire and Rescue Services, Thames Valley Police (TVP) and the South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and I continue to represent RBFA as lead member in this forum.

Whilst the previous year had been focused on the impact of Covid-19, the last six months, as in most areas of the service, have been considering how we move forward in a life with Covid and ensure we can continue on the journey we started more than four years ago. However it is important to look back at our achievements and in October I was privileged to attend an event at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire to celebrate the success of some of our operational alignment work and the joint procurement of new fire engines, aerial appliances and personal protective equipment (fire kit) which means services in the Thames Valley were able to not only benefit from the efficiencies joint procurement brings but also continue to improve interoperability across our borders.

This important operational alignment work has continued throughout this year. In my previous report I informed members that a joint procurement project was underway to deliver standardised Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment for all Thames Valley FRS, which is a key enabler to maximise interoperability between services, and the tender process has now concluded with the contract award taking place in October. In parallel to this, services are also developing the same procedures and training, aligned to industry best practice National Operational Guidance, which will mean that by mid-2023 all three services will be able to operate seamlessly at incidents.

The three TVFRS are also engaged in a project with Thames Valley Police to deliver a solution to providing Fire Investigation, specifically where the investigation may lead to criminal prosecution, in light of significant changes to the way that activity will

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need to be accredited. This change presents additional complexity and challenge to the way we deliver this service but with the aim of ensuring a high level of consistency and quality for investigations that may result in criminal convictions. The project team has developed a collaborative model that will be implemented over the next two years with the aim of meeting the 2023 accreditation timeline.

Ongoing and looking forward

The focus into the next municipal year is to continue this programme of work that will demonstrate how our political leadership is ensuring compliance with our statutory duty under the Act.

RBFRS will be the first of the three services to 'go live' with the new Breathing Apparatus equipment towards the end of 2022. This rollout will be supported by a jointly delivered training programme, ensuring that frontline staff across the Thames Valley are working to the same standard.

Work at a strategic level will focus on how we build on our success by developing a business plan that will support identification of areas for future collaboration that will enable all partners to continue deliver benefits to the communities we serve through improvements to efficiency and effectiveness.

Cllr David Cannon, Collaboration Lead Member

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)

Review

I am grateful to have this opportunity to update the Fire Authority on the progress on Community Risk Management Planning, since my last update in April 2021. As has been the case with my previous reports, we have continued with his work in challenging circumstances due to the pandemic, which has significantly impacted on our programme of activity over the last 18 months. This impact was unavoidable and has been taken into account in the setting of our 2021/22 plans. I am pleased to have this opportunity to report on the progress that has been made since April.

Firstly, Quarter One has seen above target performance in relation to both Safe and Well Visits and Fire Safety Audits. Our targets for this Quarter had been set on the expectation that COVID-19 restrictions would mean similar levels of activity to Quarter Four in 2020/21. In Quarter One, the Service carried out 1,174 Safe and Well Visits which was an increase from 492 in the previous Quarter. Fire Safety Audits rose from 66 in Quarter Four to 239 in Quarter One. Given the ongoing challenges, I am pleased to report this positive performance against two vitally important CRMP commitments.

Secondly, I reported in my last update that we responded to emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 78.2% of occasions in 2020/21. Despite the challenges faced since the COVID-19 restrictions have been in place, we have been meeting and exceeding our Response Standard commitment to the people of Royal Berkshire. Our target is to respond to emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions. In Quarter One of 2021/22, we continued to fulfil this CRMP commitment with our crews responding within 10 minutes on 76.1% of occasions.

Members will be aware of the action the Fire Authority took in the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and the subsequent establishment of the Service's Built Environment Programme, to respond to our changing understanding of risk posed by the built environment. I'm pleased to report that the first Built Environment progress report has been published and provides an update on the Service's progress against the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One recommendations and our protection activity

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within our High Rise Residential Building Project. The report, available on the Service's website, provides an excellent summary of how the Authority and Service has taken action and provides assurance to our communities that our response has been comprehensive. Moving forward, six monthly progress updates will be published and available publicly.

Alongside this, positive progress is being made in the development of our Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure we are identifying and targeting our fire safety resources at the areas of highest risk, in line with our Protection Strategy.

A number of Strategic Asset projects form part of the Community Risk Management Plan. Further detail will be provided on these by the Lead Member for Strategic Assets. However, I'm pleased to note the positive progress of a number of key projects, critical to the management of local risk, including the arrival of the Aerial Ladder Platform, the 4x4 utility vehicles, new appliances and the impressive development of Theale Community Fire Station. In September, our crews began to serve the community from the new station, which marks a significant milestone in the delivery of our Community Risk Management Plan. The site was identified during a search to optimise the locations of our fire stations, with the new station providing improved emergency response access to the M4 and A4 corridors.

We continuing to actively shape and lead work at a national level through the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) Community Risk Programme. This programme aims to provide fire and rescue services with a set of standardised tools which will enable consistent identification, assessment and mitigation strategies for community risk. Nikki Richards, Director of Support Services, is the Project Executive of the NFCC CRMP Guidance Project and continues to lead this national work which has included creating a Standard for fire and rescue services on CRMPs. In June, the CRMP Fire Standard was published and I welcome its arrival.

Ongoing and looking forward

Following its publication, officers are undertaking a gap analysis to ensure our local arrangements for CRMP are consistent with the Fire Standard. As I have reported previously, I firmly believe our Risk Methodology can be held up as best practice and

whilst I look forward to receiving the outcome of the review, I have no doubt we will be well placed to meet the requirements of the Standard moving forward.

Lastly, I am pleased that this Fire Authority meeting will include a recommendation to undertake a CRMP consultation on Automatic Fire Alarms, to ensure we are efficiently managing our resources for the people of Royal Berkshire, targeting local risk as effectively as possible. I do not intend to duplicate the detail of the Automatic Fire Alarm report, which forms a separate item on the Fire Authority agenda, except to say that should the recommendation be agreed, a 10 week consultation will be undertaken from January, a significant undertaking for the team. As part of this consultation, I am committed to building on our previous positive approach to consultation, ensuring we are able to reach 'seldom heard' groups within our communities as well as focusing on key stakeholders by conducting a thorough equality impact assessment and stakeholder analysis.

For the next six months, our focus will remain on the delivery of the CRMP commitments that have been made in the Prevention, Protection and Response Strategies, and outlined in the Annual Plan for 2021/22.

Cllr Dexter Smith, Integrated Risk Management Lead Member

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Strategic Assets

As Lead Member, I am delighted to support this wholly 'good news' report and commend the work undertaken by staff to achieve all this in these difficult and different Covid times.

Cllr Angus Ross, Strategic Asset Lead Member

Facilities, Fleet and Equipment

Review

The first six months of the 2021-2022 financial year has seen several successes as we continue to deliver against the Fire Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF). Following some delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have now taken delivery of 16 new vehicles into the Service.

In April, four new main pumping appliances became operational at Langley, Wokingham Road, Bracknell and Ascot fire stations. The arrival of these four vehicles mean that all whole-time fire stations have now received a Volvo fire appliance. Of the next batch of appliances, two new appliances are now operational and have been deployed to Caversham Road and Maidenhead fire stations, with the remaining two to be deployed to Slough fire station in early November following final commissioning. This strategic foresight and continued investment by the Fire Authority has meant a rapid transformation of the front line fire appliance fleet. Since 2017, nineteen new Volvo appliances have been brought into Service. This has enabled RFBRs to continue to dispose of their oldest vehicles and cascade newer vehicles to support other areas of the organisation such as training centre, on-call and fire cadets.

April also saw six 4x4 utility vehicles come in to Service. Primarily to be used to support on-call stations and provide additional resilience for spate weather conditions, five of these vehicles were deployed to Hungerford, Mortimer, Crowthorne, Lambourne and Maidenhead fire stations. The sixth vehicle has been deployed to support the water rescue unit at Caversham Road fire station.

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To conclude the busy month of April, the new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) arrived in Service. The 45m Bronto Skylift on a Volvo chassis will provide additional height and reach capabilities at incidents and demonstrates the Fire Authority's continued support and investment in new fleet to ensure crews and the residents of Berkshire have new, modern and fit for purpose fleet and equipment. After a period of acceptance testing, the ALP was available for driver and operator training before going fully operational in August. The collaborative working between the fleet and equipment team, ICT team, personnel at Whitley Wood fire station and the ALP instructors should be recognised as a major factor to the success of this project ensuring that the ALP became fully operational. Lastly, we have also taken delivery of the replacement 4x4 appliance for Maidenhead. This vehicle came into Service in September and is in the final stages of commissioning before driver and operator training can commence. This vehicle supports Maidenhead cover specific risks around the Cockmarsh area and it is anticipated that the vehicle will be fully operation in the New Year.

In February, Fire Authority approve spend to purchase new white fleet vehicles. Initial orders have been placed for some light commercial vehicles and specifications are being finalised for further orders which will include hybrid and electric vehicles.

The Thames Valley collaborative procurement project to replace the Service's Breathing Apparatus sets is well underway. After a robust tender process and equipment trial, a contract has now been awarded to the preferred supplier. This planned equipment replacement in line with the intent set out in the SAIF and approved at Management Committee in April, will continue through 2022 with RBFRS expected to 'go-live' with the new equipment in November 2022 with our partner Thames Valley FRS' following on soon after.

Ongoing and looking forward

As we continue to emerge following the Covid-19 pandemic, the facilities team have been working to ensure our buildings remain compliant and safe, giving all staff an option to return to the workplace following the lifting of restrictions. Further work and learning will be on-going in the medium to long term to continually develop a

workplace that enables RBFRS to support flexible working principles. In addition to this, the facilities team have been supporting the Capital Projects team in the Minor Capital Works programme, the upcoming disposals and decommissioning of Dee Road, Pangbourne and Wargrave fire stations as well as the commissioning of the new tri-service station at Theale.

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Property Capital Projects

Review

It is difficult to contemplate that since the last Lead Member Update in April, where the discussion was around celebrating the virtual 'topping out' ceremony at Theale, the brand new Theale tri-service wholetime station has now been delivered, on time and on budget despite the twin challenges of Covid-19 and Brexit. We are in the final stages of this project and will be reporting the project closedown to Members in due course. Five years of work by the Capital Projects team have culminated in delivering this state of the art facility that the Fire Authority can be rightly proud of. The station crews moved into their new location from Dee Road on Wednesday 29th September and were fully operational ahead of the target date of 1st October. Following months of site visits and inductions, the actual move was relatively calm and the crews have quickly settled into their new environment. Whilst this project was lead and managed by the Capital Projects team, it is right that we also recognise the work and assistance of every other department in the Service who all helped in the success of this project. The next challenge over the following few months is to continue the phased move of other departments and blue light partners into their allocated space. Following that, we can look forward to the official opening ceremony on the 18th March 2022.

Whilst the main focus of the capital projects team has clearly been Theale, other areas of work has continued to progress. In the last few weeks, the Minor Capital Works programme has taken significant steps forwards with the completed tender of the first package of works at Slough. The successful tender matched our pre-tender estimate which is very encouraging given the significant challenges being seen in the construction industry. Costs are rising in this sector way in excess of inflation which are coupled with post-Brexit supply chain issues, so experienced project management and efficient and attentive contract management will be key to attempting to deliver the entirety of the identified works within this programme to budget, to time and to quality.

Lastly, it was a great pleasure to be able to formally celebrate the re-opening of Crowthorne Fire Station on Friday 15th October after its complete re-build. The event was well attended and well received by all and showcased the Authority's continuing vision of fire stations in the heart of communities with all three blue light services working collaboratively for the benefit of the local residents.

Ongoing and looking forward

Over the next two quarters, tenders will be released for further packages of works at Slough, plus the agreed packages of works at Bracknell, Maidenhead and Caversham Road; followed soon after by the tenders for Wokingham Road and lastly Newbury. As always, regular reporting to Members via the Property Development Working Group will be maintained throughout this project.

The Asset Release programme for Wargrave, Pangbourne and Dee Road is well advanced and Members have already seen the positive outcome of the Wargrave sale process. Over the coming weeks, recommendations for the sale of Pangbourne and Dee Road will be placed in front of Members of Management Committee for consideration and approval.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Review

Progress continues on several fronts across the ICT landscape, with perhaps the highlight being the implementation and migration to Microsoft Teams as the first major Microsoft 365 rollout carried out within RBFRS. Teams has replaced Cisco Webex as the remote meeting tool, but also introduces presence awareness, better integration with Outlook Calendar, the establishment of an ad-hoc audio/video calling capability, instant messaging, and group collaboration tools for document and content sharing. This deployment also brings us in line with our Thames Valley partner FRSs, who are established Microsoft 365 users.

Progress has been made in our Network refresh programme, with purchase orders being placed for a comprehensive refresh of wide area, local area and wireless

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networks, following Management committee approval of the contract earlier in the year. The refresh is essential in providing a more resilient and higher capacity network as more services and functions move to the cloud over time.

During the first half of the year, RBFRS successfully recruited Cath Dukes into the vacant Information Governance Manager role. Cath brings significant experience in information security ICT leadership to the BIS organisation and is being tasked with driving forward improvements in RBFRSs information and knowledge management systems and processes.

The service underwent a full IT Health check during the summer, which resulted in a very detailed report containing a number of recommendations for action. This is to be expected as the nature of the Cyber Security landscape is constantly changing. Officers within ICT are currently working through the action plan with a view to completing the implementation of any high priority actions during Q3.

To support increased use of hybrid meetings in a post pandemic workplace, RBFRS is using government grant funding to equip all meeting spaces across the estate with integrated audio and camera equipment that will allow a better meeting experience for both local and remote attendees, and quicker and easier meeting room set up. Purchase orders for equipment and installation and deployment have been raised and we expect the rollout to be completed in Q3.

Ongoing and looking forward

As well as starting the network refresh implementation, and deploying enhanced hybrid meeting technology, the focus over the next six months will be on expansion in use of other elements of the Microsoft 365 suite of services, including onedrive (personal cloud storage for employees), exchange online (cloud based email infrastructure), sharepoint (shared group collaboration spaces, and workflow automation tools. Taking the step-by-step approach will help avoid major disruption to the organisation as far as possible and ensure a smooth transition to a more collaborative set of software tools.

Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS)

Review

During the first 6 months of 2021/22, TVFCS activity has continued to be heavily focused on the need to respond to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Work has largely focused on maintaining the core service delivery functions of the Control room, navigating the challenges of working with self-isolation protocols.

This was a major factor during the early summer as a result of staff being required to isolate after being identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, either by NHS Test and Trace or through the Government COVID app. Due to the relatively high number of TVFCS staff who are fully vaccinated (85% of staff), this pressure began to ease after 16 August 2021 when Government guidance changed.

These issues were compounded by non COVID-19 related absences that are often experienced within a relatively small staff group. However despite these challenges, the enhanced resilience arrangements put in place at the beginning of the pandemic have meant that TVFCS has continued to provide expected service levels throughout the majority of this period.

In May 2021, the Home Office published the first of a suite of Control Room National Operational Guidance. TVFCS have been involved in the creation of this guidance and form part of the national peer review arrangements. Control room National Operational Guidance will, for the first time, provide all UK FRS Control rooms with information allowing a consistent national approach to be adopted. National Operational Guidance will also recommend best practice in relation to Control room command structures and the approach to managing incidents which generate a high volume of calls that can overwhelm the capacity of any single control room.

The adoption of Control Room National Operational Guidance, which requires policies and training programmes to be refreshed and revised, is being carefully planned to manage the additional burden this places on the limited capacity of the TVFCS management team. They will be able to draw on the support and expertise of

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TVFRS teams who have been working on operational alignment over the last three years. The NFCC will also be providing a national implementation team to support the rollout and adoption of new guidance.

TVFCS has continued to perform well against the existing measure for how quickly calls are answered during the year, with the target met in every month and comfortably exceeded on the majority of occasions.

The budget for TVFCS is set at the December meeting of the Joint Committee each year. The budget set for TVFCS for 2021/22 is £2,410,447. Currently, it is forecast that an overspend of approximately £20,000 will be required by the end of the 2021/22 financial year as a result of the unanticipated pay award for Grey book staff announced in July 2021 and higher than forecast overtime costs as a result of the challenges to ensure frontline crewing was maintained.

Ongoing and looking forward

Members and officers will be closely monitoring the outcome of the sale of Capita Secure Solutions and Services (SSS), the company that supplies the mobilising system that TVFCS, and 60% of UK FRS, use to mobilise fire engines to incidents. It is expected that Capita will announce the new owners by the end of 2021.

This development comes at a key point for TVFCS and members have participated in a number of workshops this year to consider a range of strategic options on the long term future of these contracts, alongside exploring key decisions on refreshing and upgrading control technology to ensure it can continue to provide a first class call handling service to the communities of Royal Berkshire. These important decisions will be taken over the coming year.

Cllr Angus Ross, TVFCS Joint Committee Chairman

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	07.12.21	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	07.12.21	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Pension Update	Management Committee	07.12.21	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Capital Projects Update	Management Committee	07.12.21	Ad-hoc	Note	HCP&E	Strategic Assets Lead	Part II
TVFCS Quarterly Performance Report	TVFCS Joint Committee	16.12.21	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Proposed Budget 2022/23	TVFCS Joint Committee	16.12.21	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Presentation on Control National Operational Guidance	TVFCS Joint Committee	16.12.21	Ad-hoc	Note	AM (C&P)	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance	A&GC	24.01.22	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Constitutional Review : Member/Officer Protocol	A&GC	24.01.22	every four years	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I
Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England)	A&GC	24.01.22	Ad-hoc	Agree	DSS	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	24.01.22	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Assumptions	A&GC	24.01.22	Annual	Note and Recommend	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Pension Update / Pension Board Six Month Update	A&GC	24.01.22	Bi-annual	Note	HHR&L&D and Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	24.01.22	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	24.01.22	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit report	A&GC	24.01.22	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	24.01.22	Quarterly	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme- Presentation	A&GC	24.01.22	Bi annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	03.02.22	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	03.02.22	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	03.02.22	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	15.02.22	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 22/23	Fire Authority	15.02.22	Annual	Agree	MO	N/A	Part I
Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England)	Fire Authority	15.02.22	Ad-hoc	Agree	DSS	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 22/23, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	15.02.22	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Statement of Assurance	Fire Authority	15.02.22	Annual	Agree	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	23.03.22	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	23.03.22	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Gender Pay Gap	A&GC	23.03.22	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	23.03.22	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	Organisational Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	23.03.22	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Plan 2022/23	A&GC	23.03.22	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	23.03.22	Quarterly	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2021/22	Fire Authority	28.04.22	Annual	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Members Annual Reports	Fire Authority	28.04.22	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Built Environment Presentation	Fire Authority	28.04.22	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	N/A	Part I
Member Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	28.04.22	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Member Champions	Part I
Annual Plan 2022/23	Fire Authority	28.04.22	Annual	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I

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

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

Qualifications:

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

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in disclosing the information.

Interpretation:

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

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Appendix A

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