



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

**Wednesday, 8th November, 2023**

**At**

**6.30 pm**

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

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



**MEETING:** Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Wednesday, 8th November, 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

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## **S U M M O N S**

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

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

**GRAHAM BRITTEN**  
Monitoring Officer

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**To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:**

Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	Councillor Morag Malvern
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor Haqeeq Dar	Councillor Joshua Reynolds
Councillor Billy Drummond	Councillor Ishrat Shah
Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey
Councillor Wendy Griffith	Councillor Robert Stedmond
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Mike Smith
Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons	Councillor Helen Taylor
Councillor Owen Jeffery	Councillor Simon Werner

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

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Newsham Court  
Pincent's Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

## **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 8 June 2023 (Pages 7 - 18)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 8 June 2023, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

- 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 Chair 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. Recommendations of Committees**

Purpose:

No recommendation of committees were made.

**10. Serious Violence Duty Presentation**

Purpose:

To receive a presentation on Serious Violence Duty.

**11. Members Charter (Pages 19 - 24)**

Purpose:

To approve the Members Charter (Appendix A).

**12. Independent Review of Scheme of Allowances (Pages 25 - 70)**

Purpose:

To note the findings of the Independent Review of Scheme of Allowances by South East Employers, and approve 2024/25 Scheme of Allowances (Appendix C) from effect of 1 April 2024, subject to any future indexation that may be applied.

**13. Pension Board Representative (Pages 71 - 74)**

Purpose:

To approve the appointment of Jim Powell to the Pension Board as an employer representative.

**14. Annual Treasury Management Review 2022/23 and Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2023/24 (Pages 75 - 96)**

Purpose:

To note the Annual Treasury Report for 2022/23, and note Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2023/24.

**15. Forward Plan** (*Pages 97 - 98*)

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**16. Minutes of the Standing Committees**

Recommendation:

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

**17. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 15 February 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL  
BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY**



**Held on Thursday, 8th June, 2023 at 6.30 pm**

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

**Members:**  
*(\*present)*

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| * Councillor Dennis Benneyworth     | Councillor Dave McElroy      |
| * Councillor Tricia Brown           | * Councillor Simon Werner    |
| Councillor Jeff Brooks              | * Councillor Billy Drummond  |
| * Councillor Haqeeq Dar             | * Councillor Peter Frewer    |
| * Councillor Paul Gittings          | * Councillor Wendy Griffith  |
| * Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons | * Councillor Owen Jeffery    |
| * Councillor Morag Malvern          | * Councillor Joshua Reynolds |
| Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle      | * Councillor Ishrat Shah     |
| * Councillor Mike Smith             | * Councillor Robert Stedmond |
| Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey  | * Councillor Helen Taylor    |

- In Attendance:** Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)  
Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)  
Doug Buchanan (Area Manager, Response and Resilience, AM R&R)  
Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)  
Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)  
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)  
Becca Chapman (Data, Performance and Risk Manager, DP&R)  
Jess James (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)  
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)  
Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)  
Jim Powell (Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)  
Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)  
Lukasz Wrona (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

**Action**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE 2023/24 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey opened the meeting as 2022/23 Vice-Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. Before she sought nominations for Chair, she stated she wanted to take this opportunity to remind Members that public expectations for

Member Conduct were high and they rightly expect appropriate standards of behaviour in Authority meetings; that, at its meeting in April 2022, the Authority adopted its revised Code of Member Conduct to incorporate the National Fire Chief Council's Core Code of Ethics to mirror the standards of behaviour expected of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service employees. She added, Members should use meetings such as these, as they would at all times, to demonstrate those values of integrity; treating people with dignity and respect; being positive role models; and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion; and that all Members should treat each other, and officers, with respect during any debate and in asking questions, and maintain high standards of behaviour and conduct in the meeting.

She then requested for nominations for the position of Chair. One nomination was received for Chair. Councillor Werner nominated Councillor Jeff Brooks. Seconded by Councillor Gittings.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Jeff Brooks be elected Chair of the Fire Authority for the 23/24 Municipal Year.

Councillor Jeff Brooks read the following statement, '*I, Councillor Jeff Brooks having been elected to the office of Chair 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*'.

The Chair thanked the Fire Authority for their trust and confidence in him. He stated, this was his second time as elected Chair of the Fire Authority. He was first Chair from 1997 to 2003 and alongside, Councillor Werner was one of the first Members appointed onto the Fire Authority from Berkshire County Council. He stated it was an honour and referring to the eight new Members, he stated they will receive enjoyment and pride. He added there was respect across the organisation and commended the Chief Fire Officer and all staff.

## 2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2023/24 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chair sought nominations for Vice –Chair. One nomination was received. Councillor Brown nominated Councillor Paul Gittings and it was seconded by the Chair.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Paul Gittings be elected Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

The Vice-Chair read the following statement, '*I, Councillor Paul Gittings having been elected to the office of Vice-Chair 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*'.

The Vice-Chair stated it was an honour and privilege to be appointed. In referring to the past year, (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection, Summer Heatwave, threat of Industrial Action) he stated it had been challenging. He added, he will work with the Chair and colleagues over the next year.

### **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Dave McElroy.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest from Members in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct.

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

### **5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2023, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were no petitions and questions from the Public under Standing Orders 19 and 25.

### **7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Welcome to new members**

On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair extended a warm welcome to Councillors Billy Drummond, Peter Frewer, Wendy Griffith, Robert Stedmond, Joshua Reynolds and Helen Taylor.

He welcomed Councillors Owen Jeffery and Ishrat Shah back to the Fire Authority and presented all new members with the Members Handbook and Fire Authority crest.

He sent his best wishes to outgoing Councillors Jo Lovelock, Dexter Smith and Biyi Oloko, as well as Colin Dudley, Tony Linden, Christine Bateson, David Cannon and Sandra Malik who have left the Fire Authority. He asked all Members to join him in wishing them all the best in their future endeavours.

### **New Member Induction**

New Member Induction session will be held next Monday, 12 June, 5.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters.

It will be a fantastic opportunity to meet Wayne Bowcock; Chief Fire Officer, Conor Byrne; Head of Finance and Procurement, and Fayth Rowe; Democratic Support Lead to learn more about the Service and the various Member Development courses that will be on offer during the year.

Outlook invitations have already been sent and should be in calendars.

### **One Team Welcome**

Over the course of the following weeks and months, a series of opportunities to support new Members in getting to know their responsibilities and the Fire Service Team will be made available.

He stated that Officers were mindful that Members have numerous commitments and will likely want to take some time to get to know the Authority and the Service.

He added, Members will also be aware of the fantastic work and ambitions of the Authority and Service and advised of the importance for Members to enable this to continue for the benefit of residents of Berkshire, with as little disruption as possible.

He asked Members to be flexible and accommodating over what will be a busy period in order to support the continued smooth delivery of the Authority's responsibilities.

### **Fire Authority Member Email Addresses – Access**

Due to the increased Cyber Threat Level in the UK, RBFRS has been looking to comply fully with our data processing process. The Service will be implementing RBFRS email accounts and access from existing devices for all Fire Authority Members.

This follows the Government's National Cyber Security Centre recommendation that organisations take immediate steps to enhance their cyber security to manage the risk.

Fire Authority Members will all be provided with training on how to access these accounts from devices and guidance on when these will need to be used for sending sensitive information. Member training sessions will be arranged and held in the coming weeks.

## **New Wholetime Apprentices**

On Friday, 12 May, the Service welcomed 23 new Wholetime Firefighter Apprentices in a Graduation Ceremony at Newbury Fire Station.

The graduates celebrated months of training and hard work with family and friends at the Ceremony.

As part of the apprenticeship, the recruits were asked to organise an event to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. This year did not disappoint as Nearly £15,000 has been raised by the Apprentices who cycled 500 miles, the equivalent distance of Windsor to Balmoral on static bikes at locations in Reading and Bracknell.

This is the highest amount ever raised by a new firefighter cohort – a tremendous effort. He shared his thanks on behalf of the Authority to all those involved.

Following the Graduation Ceremony, the Apprentices took up their station placements across the County. It is anticipated the apprenticeships will be completed within 24 months.

## **Firefighters Memorial Day**

On Thursday, 4 May, staff from across the Service gathered to commemorate Firefighter's Memorial Day.

Firefighters' Memorial Day is an annual commemoration of the dedication, commitment and sacrifices of firefighters across the United Kingdom.

At midday, in accordance with the wishes of The Firefighters Memorial Trust, our on-duty teams held a parade on their station forecourt and staff at Newsham Court gathered at the front of the building to pay their respects during a minute's silence.

The event was an opportunity to honour those who are serving, who have served or who have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect their communities in the fire and rescue services.

## **8. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

There were no issues arising from the 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**

**RESOLVED** that it was noted item 16 (Annual report on Governance) had been a recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee on 28 March 2023.

**12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBERS AND MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2023/24**

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), introduced the report and advised each Political Group had submitted their nominations. He tabled amended nominations received from the Liberal Democrat Group for the appointment of Committees, Lead Members, Member Champions, Honorary Member Champions, Outside Bodies and Working Parties.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.1 and it was seconded by Councillor Drummond.

**RESOLVED** that nominations received from Group Leaders to appoint onto the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee, be approved (Table 5).

The Chair moved recommendation 2.2 and it was seconded by Councillor Werner.

**RESOLVED** that ungrouped Members be appointed (Green and Independent Member) onto the ninth seat of Audit and Governance Committee, and eleventh seat of Management Committee be approved (Table 5).

Table 5

<b>Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)</b>
Cllr Tricia Brown
Cllr Joshua Reynolds
Cllr Morag Malvern
Cllr Billy Drummond
Cllr Owen Jeffery
Cllr Haqeeq Dar
Cllr Dennis Benneyworth
Cllr Robert Stedmond
Cllr Dave McElroy
<b>Management Committee (11 seats)</b>
Cllr Jeff Brooks
Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Cllr Simon Werner
Cllr Mike Smith
Cllr Paul Gittings
Cllr Wendy Griffith
Cllr Peter Frewer
Cllr Pauline Helliari-Symons
Cllr Tina Mckenzie-Boyle
Cllr Ishrat Shah
Cllr Helen Taylor

Two nominations were received for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion, (Councillors Morag Malvern and Robert Stedmond), and two nominations were received for Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion and Member Development Champion (Councillors Owen Jeffery and Pauline Helliari-Symons). The Chair moved recommendation 2.3, and it was seconded by Councillor Gittings.

On being put to the vote respectively, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Councillor Morag Malvern be appointed as EDI Champion;
- 2) Councillor Owen Jeffery be appointed as Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion and Member Development Champion; and
- 3) The nominations received for Special Responsibility Allowance roles in Table 6, be agreed.

Table 6

<b>Lead Members</b>	
<b>Position</b>	<b>Name of Appointee</b>
Budget and Income Generation	Cllr Mike Smith
Community Risk Management Plan	Cllr Paul Gittings
Strategic Assets and Sustainability	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Collaboration	Cllr Simon Werner
Opposition Group Leader	Cllr Paul Gittings
Opposition Group Leader	Cllr Pauline Helliari-Symons

<b>Member Champions</b>	
<b>Position</b>	<b>Name of Appointee</b>
Community Safety	Cllr Wendy Griffith
Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion and Member Development Champion	Cllr Owen Jeffery
Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion	Cllr Morag Malvern
Armed Forces Honorary Champion	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Two nominations were received for Table 9, Local Government Association (LGA) representative (Councillors Jeff Brooks and Pauline Helliar-Symons) and LGA substitute (Councillors Paul Gittings and Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons. The Chair moved recommendation 2.4 and it was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

On being put to the vote respectively, it was **RESOLVED** that nominations received for the appointments listed in Tables 7 – 10 be agreed.

Table 7

Position	
TVFCS Joint Committee (2 seats) *	Cllr Simon Werner (LD) (seat 1)
	Cllr Peter Frewer (seat 2)
Two substitute Members for TVFCS Joint Committee	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey (substitute 1)
	Cllr Tricia Brown (substitute 2)

Table 8

Position	
Member Development Working Group - minimum three Members	Cllr Joshua Reynolds
	Cllr Owen Jeffery
	Cllr Pauline Helliar-Symons
	Cllr Robert Stedmond
	Cllr Paul Gittings
Estates Development and Sustainability Working Group - minimum three Members	Cllr Billy Drummond
	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey
	Cllr Pauline Helliar-Symons
	Cllr Haqeeq Dar

Table 9

Position	
Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative (1 seat) *	Cllr Jeff Brooks
Substitute Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative	Cllr Paul Gittings

Table 10

Position	
Honorary Armed Forces Champion	Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**RESOLVED** that Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members be noted.

**13. ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24**

Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), reported the Annual Plan provided direction for the organisation for the next year within the context of the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2023-27. He stated the Annual Plan was linked to Local Safety Plans and the contents of the report reflected Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) performance management and quarterly performance.

The Chair asked for greater clarification on the targets set out on page 63 of the report. Namely, (2) *Number of non-fatal fire causalities*, (3) *Number of deliberate primary fires*, (4) *Number of deliberate secondary fires*, (7) *Percentage of Very High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within 72 hours* and (8) *Percentage of High Risk Safe and Well Referrals completed within 14 days*.

Paul Bremble explained (2) were non-hospital causalities. The target had been revised to 34 maximum and the Data Performance Team were identifying trends. He stated, (3) this target had been arrived at by looking back five years and it was hoped it would be reduced by 5%. (4) was based on the same rationale as (3).

For targets (7) and (8), Paul Bremble stated the targets were introduced last year which was considered a more realistic target to set. Katie Mills reported targets change for example (7) and (8) were due to some Safe and Well visits were more complex, however Officers were fully committed to timescales.

In referring to the email circulated earlier in the week which explained the rationale to support the targets in the Annual Plan, Councillor Reynolds queried whether Officers should use data from 2021/22, due to COVID, as they were much lower and skewed figures.

Paul Bremble, HCS stated that the Service always looked back and analysed five years of data to conclude a five-year average. In referring to the historic performance for deliberate secondary fires, based on the five-year average, the proposed target would reduce by 5%.

In response to two questions received from Councillor Helliard-Symons, Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D) confirmed Return to Work Interviews were held on every case. She stated there was societal impact following COVID in relation to waiting times in assessments. Processes were being examined.

Jess James, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection (AM P&P), responded to Councillor Helliard-Symons question by reporting the Service uses social media to communicate campaigns, such as Water Safety. He added, his colleagues also supported campaigns by attending school community engagement visits.

Councillor Gittings reported there were three tragic water incidents last year and felt more could be done to prevent water incidents. He stated the location (Slough Fire Station) of where the new water capability will be housed was appropriate. In referring

to page 75, (15) *Percentage of hours where there is adequate crewing on on-call frontline pumping appliances (based on 24/7 crewing)*, he asked why the target was reduced to 50%.

Doug Buchanan, Area Manager, Response and Resilience (AM R&R) reported the Service had historical challenges on on-call targets. He stated 50% was a reasonable target. Each on-call station had their own individual target and assured Members the Service were continually looking to improve on-call availability. He added that at least one on-call appliance was available and when necessary, pre-arranged overtime (PAOT) was used to support.

The Chair informed newly appointed Members that further detail on on-call availability and targets set will be presented at their Member Induction.

In response to a question from Councillor Shah, Doug Buchanan reported the water rescue capability will arrive in Slough by mid-July.

The Chair moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by Councillor Werner.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Annual Plan be approved for publication.

**14. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY (RBFA) LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME REGULATIONS 2013 STATEMENTS OF POLICY ABOUT EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONARY FUNCTIONS**

Becci Jefferies, HHR&L&D reported in November 2021, The Pension Ombudsman partially upheld a case (determination PO-25374), concerning itself with the abatement of a retired firefighter's pension on re-employment. The Ombudsman determined that the application of a blanket policy could be potentially unfair, and the Fire and Rescue Authority did not follow a reasonable process when exercising the discretion under the applicable rule and making the decision to abate the pension.

She reported the track changes to Appendix A had been tabled for ease of reference. The outcome of the case was that a blanket policy would be unfair. Paragraphs 3.5 to 3.8 detail the amendments made to the policy and added the last word in paragraph 3.5 should be read as '*employee*'. Becci Jefferies reported the amended policy would provide flexibility and any case with significant financial implications would be brought back to Management Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the revised Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 Statements of Policy about Exercise of Discretionary Functions; be approved; and
- 2) That it be agreed the review of discretions is amended to reflect revisions periodically as required, and not annually.

**15. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) JOINT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Jim Powell, Area Manager, Collaboration and Policy (AM C&P) presented the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Annual report. He stated TVFCS Joint Committee Annual report will also be presented to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the TVFCS Joint Committee in July.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**16. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE**

Councillor Mike Smith presented the report as outgoing Member Development Champion 22/23. He highlighted the new Audit and Governance Committee course that had been introduced in the last year, and that no formal complaints had been made against Members. He thanked the Monitoring Officer and Independent Persons.

Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services (HCS) took Members through the report. In referring to the new course (Audit and Governance Committee course) introduced at the suggestion of Cllr Smith, he stated in order for new Members to be made aware of performance data, the course will be held prior to the first meeting of Audit and Governance Committee in July.

In the last year, Audit and Governance Committee reviewed Internal Audit Progress Report, which gave assurance in the areas of Value for Money, effective management of pension arrangements, key financial controls and cyber essentials. In addition, the Committee received regular updates on the performance of the Service, Pension Board, Statement of Assurance and emerging challenges which impacted the Service, such as the Summer Heatwave.

He reported the Committee continued its pressure on external auditors, to sign off the Statement of Accounts, albeit the delay was due to reasons beyond their control.

Paul Bremble stated no formal complaints were received against Members and reported the 22/23 Chair of the Committee had thanked Independent Persons and Monitoring Officer for their support over the year.

The Chair moved the recommendations, which was seconded by Councillor Brown.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**17. FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

**18. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

**RESOLVED** that it be noted the Minutes of recent meetings were published on RBFRS website.

**19. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 8 November 2023, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

*(The meeting concluded at 19:35)*

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>MEMBERS CHARTER</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>NIKKI RICHARDS, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS, ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY CHAIR</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 To formalise Royal Berkshire Fire Authority’s (RBFA) commitment and support of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) vision, by the values and behaviours listed in the Members Charter, Appendix A.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **APPROVE** the Members Charter (Appendix A).

**3. REPORT**

3.1 Appendix A, Members Charter was developed at the recent Member and Officer Workshop held on 4 October 2023. Councillor Jeff Brooks, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Chair, requested a document for Fire Authority Members to formally support the strategic direction of RBFRS by listing values and behaviours to achieve a thriving environment for staff in the delivery of services to the community of Royal Berkshire.

3.2 Although Fire Authority Members have supported RBFRS and its vision since it became a Combined Authority following the Berkshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 on 1 April 1988, there was no formal document to affirm Members values, behaviours and support of RBFRS.

## Agenda Item 11

- 3.3 Subject to Members approval in paragraph 2.1, the Members Charter will become a formal agreement to be signed by Councillor Jeff Brooks, RBFA Chair and Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer.
- 3.4 The purpose of the Member's Charter is threefold, aimed at Fire Authority Members, RBFRS staff and the community of Royal Berkshire.
- 3.5 The Committee on Standards in Public Life published a report in January 2023, *'Leading in Practice, A review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life'*<sup>1</sup> sets out a series of questions to help focus public sector leaders to reflect on their own leadership and to consider whether more could be done to embed the Seven Principles of Public Life into their organisation's policies, practices and ways of working.
- 3.6 Appendix A, aims to facilitate the ongoing review on ways in which the Fire Authority will practically embed principles of conduct and behaviour in setting the strategic direction of the service. In addition, Appendix A has been developed to compliment the Members Code of Conduct and should be referred to alongside it.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Prevention: We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention education activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.2 Protection: We will support those with responsibility for premises to understand their duties in ensuring the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Building Safety Act 2022 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, whilst ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.3 Response: We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.4 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.5 Sustainability: We will ensure that we provide a financially sustainable and environmentally friendly service to our communities.
- 4.6 People: We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no legal implications.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no negative Equality and Diversity implications.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The recommendation will have no adverse effect on the conduct or delivery of the Authority's functions.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 Future updates (if required) to the Members Charter will be made with Fire Authority and brought before the Fire Authority for approval.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 Fire Authority Members that attended the Member and Officer Workshop on 4 October 2023 was consulted during the preparation of this report.

10.2 The Senior Leadership Team was consulted during the preparation of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 [Leading in Practice – A review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive [richardsn@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:richardsn@rbfrs.co.uk)

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<sup>i</sup> [Leading in Practice – A review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

**Draft- Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Charter of Support**



The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority fully supports the aims of the Service to deliver all elements of the Services' Vision. We will stand with the Service in creating a safe environment for staff to thrive, providing the best public service possible for the communities of Royal Berkshire.

To support this:

- **We put the interests of our communities first.**
- **We work together to achieve our vision and objectives.**
- **We act with integrity, being open, honest, and consistent in everything that we do.**
- **We are all committed to creating a safe, dignified and trustworthy Service.**
- **We treat everyone with dignity and respect, making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.**
- **We are positive visible role models, continuously demonstrating flexible and resilient leadership.**
- **We are all accountable for our own actions and behaviours, and will challenge behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.**
- **We will prioritise the wellbeing and expertise of staff, since without them we can do none of the above.**

.....  
.....

Signed on Behalf of the Fire Authority- Chair  
Cllr Jeff Brooks

.....  
.....

Signed on Behalf of the Service – Chief Fire  
Officer Wayne Bowcock

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES AND DRAFT SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES 2024/25</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 30 October 2023 received an independent review of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme, in accordance with the *Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003* (SI 1021) ('the 2003 Regulations') as they apply to Combined Fire Authorities (or CFAs), and subsequently noted the report and recommended to the Fire Authority for approval.
- 1.2 The last review was held in 2019, and it was approved by the Fire Authority on 24 October 2019 that the indices were utilised for four years effective from 1 April 2020 (min ref 24), or until the Authority requires a further review, whichever is sooner.
- 1.3 Members may also be aware that the Scheme of Allowances is indexed to the annual local government increase for allowances (Green Book staff). The Fire Authority approved on 15 February 2023 new rates for allowances uprated by 4.04% and was backdated to 1 April 2022.
- 1.4 The report sets out the findings of the Independent Review of Members' Allowances by South-East Employers, and updated Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2024.

## Agenda Item 12

### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the findings of the Independent Review of Scheme of Allowances by South East Employers (Appendix A and B);
- 2.2 **APPROVE** 2024/25 Scheme of Allowances (Appendix C) from effect of 1 April 2024, subject to any future indexation that may be applied.

### 3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 This is the fifth independent review of Members' Allowances for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. The review was commissioned to provide recommendations on the number and level of allowances. In line with good practice, the Authority has chosen once again to seek independent advice that has followed the principles undertaken by the statutory independent remuneration panels (or IRPs) that are required to review the allowances' schemes of the nominating councils at least every 4 years.
- 3.2 South-East Employers was commissioned to undertake the review and their findings are set out in Appendix A and B. South-East Employers held interviews on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with five Members to obtain a qualitative sense of whether those roles and responsibilities had evolved since 2019. Wayne Bowcock; Chief Fire Officer and Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services were also interviewed to obtain background information on the current and future challenges for the Authority and the impact on the workload of Members.
- 3.3 No changes were made to the methodology of the review in comparison to the review made in 2019, except for an increase in Members average workload / minimum time input per year from 18 days in 2019, to 19 days in 2023. This was used, alongside the average gross daily rate of remuneration for full-time employees by place of residence in Berkshire in 2022 to determine the revised basic allowance and special responsibility allowance, as set out in paragraphs 24 to 26 in Appendix A.
- 3.4 Should Members wish to accept the recommendations set out by South-East Employers, Officers have updated the Scheme of Allowances to reflect the recalibrated rates. The draft Scheme of Allowance for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix C.
- 3.5 Subject to Member approval, in line with previous years, the draft Scheme of Allowances for 2024/25 shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year the index is applied to staff.

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

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

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is £97,259. Depending on the allocation of Special Responsibility Allowances, the total amount payable in 2024/25 is estimated to be in the region of £98,496.
- 5.2 Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a newspaper circulating in its area as required under the 2003 Regulations. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £400.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The making or amendment of the Members' Scheme of Allowances is a function reserved to a meeting of the Authority. A scheme must be made by the Authority before the beginning of each year to which it applies and, in so doing, have due regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panels (IRP) of the constituent authorities when considering its own Scheme of Members' Allowances and confirm that it has done so when it gives public notice of the Scheme of Allowances.
- 6.2 An amendment may be made by the Authority in year. Regulation 10(4) of the 2003 Regulations provides that "A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended".

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Authority's Scheme of Members' Allowances does not include any element for meeting costs incurred by a Member who has to arrange care in order to carry out their function as a Member of the Fire Authority. The Local 2003 Regulations exclude CFAs from including such a provision in its Scheme. All RBFA Members have been appointed by one of the six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire and are entitled to claim "dependent carers' allowances" from their appointing authority.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 No risk implications have been identified.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

9.1 Not applicable.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Head of Finance and Procurement and Monitoring Officer were consulted during the preparation of this report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Fire Authority minutes, 24 October 2019 (minute reference 24)

11.2 Item 8, Audit and Governance Committee Agenda papers – Monday 30 October 2023.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 South-East Employers Independent Review – Appendix A

12.2 South East Employers comparable data – Appendix B

12.2 24/25 Draft Scheme of Allowances – Appendix C

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services [bremblep@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:bremblep@rbfrs.co.uk)

13.2 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead [rowef@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:rowef@rbfrs.co.uk)



**The Independent Review**  
**of**  
**Members' Allowances**  
**for the**  
***Royal Berkshire Fire Authority***

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**A Report**

**by**

**South East Employers**

**Mark Palmer**

**September 2023**

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## **Foreword**

This is the fifth independent review of Members' Allowances for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

This review was commissioned to provide recommendations on the number and level of allowances. In line with good practice, the Authority has chosen once again to seek independent advice that has followed the principles undertaken by the statutory independent remuneration panels (or IRPs) that are required to review the allowances' schemes of the nominating councils at least every 4 years.

The recommendations of this Members Allowances Review are evidence based, respond to the current structure and are underpinned by a logical construct that is transparent, easy to understand and that will stand up to scrutiny.

**Mark Palmer**  
**Development Director**  
**South East Employers**

**September 2023**

### Executive Summary

<b>Post</b>	<b>Factor % of Chairman</b>	<b>Numbers Payable</b>	<b>Recommended Allowance (Basic and SRA)</b>
Ordinary Members		20	£2,736
Chairman	100%	1	£13,680
Vice Chairman	50%	1	£6,840
Chair of Committees	30%	1	£4,104
Lead Members	30%	3	£4,104
Opposition Group Leaders	20%	1	£2,736
Member Champions	10%	3	£1,368
<b>Totals</b>			
<b>BA</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>£54,720</b>
<b>SRA</b> s		<b>10</b>	<b>£43,776</b>
<b>Total Payable 2024/25</b>			<b>£98,496</b>

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

#### **It is also recommended that:**

##### **Chairman of Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee (2024/25)**

If an RBFA Member is Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee then the post holder should receive an SRA of £2,736, (20% of the Chair's allowance) subject to any indexation that may be applicable.

##### **RBFA appointees to the Local Government Association (LGA)**

The RBFA Members appointed to the LGA should not receive an SRA.

##### **Confirming the '1-SRA only' rule**

The 1-SRA only rule be maintained and specified in the RBFA Members' Allowances scheme.

##### **Confirming the cap of 10 SRAs payable at any one time (50% of the RBFA Members)**

No more than 10 SRAs should be paid at any one time.

##### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

The maximum rates for which travel, and subsistence allowances can be claimed remain unaltered, subject to any future indexation that may be applicable.

##### **Claiming Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

All Members are required to claim for any relevant travel and subsistence allowances directly from RBFA. It is further recommended that any claims that are received through a Members' nominating council will not be paid.

##### **Approved Duties: Outside bodies and Travel & Subsistence Allowances**

The RBFA Members' Allowances scheme clarifies those outside bodies for which Members can claim directly for travel and subsistence allowances and those for which Members have to claim from RBFA.

##### **Remuneration of the Independent Persons**

When the IP's are called to attend any of the Offices of the RBFA by the Monitoring Officer then they should be paid **£150.32** per meeting, this is also intended to cover any preparation that is required before any meeting.

### **Indexation of Allowances**

The following indices are applied to the specified allowances:

- Basic Allowance, SRAs and IP remuneration:
  - Indexed local Government percentage to be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April each year.
  
- Travel and Subsistence:
  - **Mileage Allowances:**
    - Indexed to HMRC rates
  
  - **Public Transport**
    - Maximum rates payable indexed to the same rates that apply to Officers, unless booked through Members' Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value.
  
  - **Subsistence Allowances:**
    - Maximum rates payable indexed to the same rates that apply to Officers.

It is further recommended that the indices recommended in this review are utilised for four years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, or until the Authority requires a further review whichever is sooner.

**The Independent Review**  
**of**  
**Members' Allowances**  
**for the**  
***Royal Berkshire Fire Authority***

**The Regulatory Context and Paying Regard to Nominating Councils**

1. This independent review of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA or the Authority) Members' Allowances Scheme has been conducted in accordance with the *Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003* (SI 1021) (or 2003 Regulations) as they apply to Combined Fire Authorities (or CFAs). While the 2003 Regulations permit RBFA, like principal councils, to determine its own scheme of allowances, unlike principal councils, it is not required to maintain an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to provide advice.
2. Instead, the 2003 Regulations require that before a joint authority:

*Makes or amends a scheme that authority shall have regard to the recommendations made by any independent remuneration panels in relation to ... [the nominating councils].<sup>1</sup>*
3. In effect, the IRPs for the nominating councils, by acting as proxies, are the means by which the allowances' schemes of joint authorities are derived. Thus, the requirement to pay regard to the recommendations of allowances' reviews in the nominating or appointing councils is taken to mean the actual allowances' schemes that are in place, which in turn arise out of the recommendations of their local remuneration panels.
4. **This review, through its consideration of the wider evidence and in its deliberations, has fulfilled the Authority's regulatory requirement to pay regard to the allowances' schemes arising out of the recommendations of the statutory independent remuneration panels for the nominating councils.**

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<sup>1</sup> *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003* (SI 1021), 19 (2), May 2003.

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### **The Review**

5. The RBFA appointed Mark Palmer, Development Director of South East Employers to undertake this review.
6. The Review was supported and serviced throughout by the following Officers:
  - Wayne Bowcock – Chief Fire Officer
  - Paul Bremble – Head of Corporate Services
  - Fayth Rowe – Democratic Support Lead

### **Terms of Reference**

7. The terms of reference as determined by the Authority for this independent review are to carry out a full review of the Members' Allowances' Scheme for RBFA.
8. Specifically, the review will consider and make recommendations to the Authority on the following:
  - (i) The level of Basic Allowance
  - (ii) The range and levels of the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), taking in to account the full range of duties expected of various post holders, with specific reference to the following posts:
    - a. Chair of the Authority
    - b. Vice Chair of the Authority
    - c. Chairs of Committees
    - d. Lead Members
    - e. Member Champions
    - f. Opposition Group Leaders
    - g. Relevant appointments to outside bodies
  - (iii) The terms and conditions and rates at which Members can claim travel and subsistence allowances
  - (iv) Whether any of the allowances should be indexed and if so, what index should be applicable
  - (v) Implementation, including back dating where appropriate
  - (vi) To provide guidance to the Authority on the remuneration of the statutory role of Independent Persons (IPs)

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

9. The review should also be in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000 and the subsequent 2003 Regulations and accompanying 2006 Statutory Guidance as they apply to joint authorities.
10. Furthermore, in arriving at its recommendations the reviewer has considered:
  - (i) The current structure of the Fire Authority
  - (ii) The views of elected members, both oral and in response to the questionnaire
  - (iii) Members' Allowances' schemes in other comparable fire authorities, particularly those in the South East of England

### **Methodology and Approach**

11. The reviewer undertook the interviews via MS Team on the following dates:
  - 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023
  - 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023
12. The interviews were undertaken to meet and hear from a range of Members and officers including the Chief Fire Officer (CFO). The meeting with the CFO was to obtain briefings and background information on the current and future challenges for the Authority and the impact on the workload of Members.
13. The meetings with Members were to obtain a qualitative sense of their roles and responsibilities and how they have evolved since 2019. The meetings were also used to get the Members' perspective on the impact of the governance structure in respect of individual roles and the overall corporate impact. The interviewer utilised a structured interview process to ensure that a similar range of questions was put to each interviewee. The interviews were also discursive, in that statements and views expressed were taken to their logical conclusion, thus posing not simply questions, but also positions for Members to consider for their validity and robustness.<sup>2</sup>
14. For benchmarking purposes, the allowances' schemes of all CFAs have been reviewed (see Appendix 3 for summary). As per statutory requirements, regard has been paid to the allowances' schemes in nominating councils.

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<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1 for list of all Members and Officers consulted.

## **Key Messages and Comments: Placing the Review in Context**

### **The Key Message from Member Feedback**

15. As in the 2019 review there were a range of views and recommendations from Members. All twenty Fire Authority Members were given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire, 7 responses (35%) were received. An analysis of the questionnaire findings is attached as Appendix 2. The analysis of the questionnaire responses and individual interviews recognised that generally their allowances were fine and there was little desire for fundamental change to both the level of the Basic Allowance and the SRA's.

### **Recognising the current economic context and role of review**

16. The recommendations for 2024/25 need to have the support of the Authority as the Members make the final decision on their scope and levels of remuneration. Consequently, members felt it was important that for the recommendations to be accepted they must stand up to public scrutiny.

### **Recalibrating the recommended Basic Allowance**

17. The Basic Allowance is to recognise the time commitment of all Members. It is paid to recompense for the roles that are common to all Members regardless of whether they hold a position of responsibility or not. It is also intended to cover "incidental costs" that Members incur in carrying out their duties.
18. In the 2009 (1<sup>st</sup>) review the recommended Basic Allowance was arrived at by following methodology, set out in the 2006 Statutory Guidance,<sup>3</sup> which states:

*Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view on the rate at which, and the number of hours for which, councillors ought to be remunerated.*

19. As with IRPs in the nominating councils this guidance was operationalised by determining a value for three distinct variables as a means to arrive at the recommended Basic Allowance, namely the time required to undertake the roles common to all members; the element of that time which is voluntary; the rate at which the remunerated time is paid.

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<sup>3</sup> *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances*, Department of Communities & Local Government, May 2006, paragraph 67.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

#### **Time required to fulfil roles associated with the Basic Allowance**

20. The review in 2023 settled on a time input of 19 days per year as the minimum time necessary to undertake the roles associated with the Basic Allowance. This was not necessarily a precise reflection of members' average workload, but an assessment of the minimum time required to be an effective ordinary Member of the Authority. This has increased from the 18 days in 2019.

#### **The Public Service Discount**

21. In the nominating councils IRPs usually discount a proportion of the time requirement (typically between 30% - 40%) to recognise the voluntary element to be an elected member, often termed the 'public service discount'. However, it is not normal practice to apply a public service discount to the Basic Allowance for members of joint authorities. The Basic Allowance they receive through their nominating councils is already subject to a public service discount.
22. Consequently, no public service discount should be applied to the expected time commitment of 19 days per year.

#### **The Rate of Remuneration**

##### **Basic Allowance for 2024/25**

23. Since 2013 the Basic Allowance has now been calibrated to reflect the current time expectation and daily rate. These continue to be used to calculate what the Basic Allowance should be.

#### **The rate of remuneration**

24. The rate of remuneration utilised is the average gross daily salary for all full-time employees by place of residence in Berkshire in 2022, which is **£144 per day**. This rate of remuneration has the advantage of being related to the median average earnings of the residents represented by RBFA Members and therefore cannot be regarded as unreasonable.

**Table 1: Median Gross Weekly Salary for Full Time Employees in Berkshire 2018 – ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (NOMIS)**

<b>Berkshire Council</b>	<b>Weekly Median</b>
Bracknell Forest UA	£729
Reading UA	£699
Slough UA	£658
West Berkshire UA	£687
Windsor & Maidenhead UA	£759
Wokingham UA	£802
<b>Weekly Mean</b>	<b>£722</b>
<b>Daily Mean</b>	<b>£144</b>

25. Utilising the agreed time input and rate of the remuneration the recalibrated annual Basic Allowance, i.e. by following the approach as outlined in the statutory guidance and used in the previous review, is **£2,736** (19 days multiplied by £144 per day).
26. **RECCOMENDATION: That the annual Basic Allowance (2024/25) should be £2,736, subject to any future indexation that may be applied.**

### **The Chair's SRA**

27. The Chair continues to chair the full authority and the Management Committee, to which reports of all main committees and panels go for comment before being considered by the full Authority. Although it is not in standing orders that the Chair has also be the Chair of the Management Committee, the reality is it is expected the Chair will chair the Management Committee. The Chair also chairs the senior Appointments Panel. This is not a requirement arising out of standing orders but there is an expectation that the Chair should chair this important committee when required.
28. The Chair is the leader of the largest group on the Authority. Although the Authority works on a more collaborative than party political basis, being Leader of the largest group is also recognised as being part of the role of being RBFA Chair and should be recognised as a major aspect of the role.
29. In arriving at the current SRA, the 2009 review adopted a factor approach – which is specifically suggested by the 2006 statutory guidance. It states:

*One way of calculating special responsibility allowances may be to take the agreed level of basic allowance and recommend a*

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

*multiple of this allowance as an appropriate special responsibility allowance for either the elected mayor or the leader.<sup>4</sup>*

30. Although the guidance is referring to Leaders and elected mayors of principal councils the guidance is just as applicable to CFAs. It is a common approach that is readily understood. In 2009 the factor utilised was 5 X the recommended Basic Allowance and the review in 2023 continues to support this factor.
31. Multiplying the recommended BA (£2,736) by a factor of 5 x, the proposed Basic Allowance would lead to an SRA of £13,680.
32. The Chair's role continues to be at a county and national level a strategic role that is required to collaborate with the six unitary councils. The internal leadership role and external role in representing and promoting the Authority and Service as in the 2019 review continues to be a demanding role. Based on the questionnaire and interviews the factor of 5 x the Basic Allowance continues to be regarded as an appropriate factor.
33. **Consequently, the recommendation is for the Chair's SRA to be £13,680 subject to any indexation that may be applied. The calculation is based on a continued factor of 5 x the Basic Allowance. This was the factor recommended in the 2009, 2013, 2016 and 2019 reviews.**

### **The Other SRAs – The Pro Rata Approach**

34. In line with the approach undertaken in the 2019 review and as suggested by the 2006 Statutory Guidance the recommended SRAs have been arrived at by following the following approach:

*A good starting point in determining special responsibility allowances may be to agree the allowance which should be attached to the most time consuming post on the Council (this maybe the elected mayor or the leader) and pro rata downwards for the other roles which it has agreed ought to receive an extra allowance.<sup>5</sup>*

35. This is also known as the 'pro rata' approach. It has the advantage of being simple and readily understood, particularly by Members as it is often an approach adopted by the IRPs in nominating councils.

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<sup>4</sup> See 2006 Statutory Guidance paragraph 76.

<sup>5</sup> See 2006 Statutory Guidance, paragraph 76.

### The Vice Chair

36. In 2019 the Vice Chair's SRA was arrived at by assessing it at 50% of the Chair's recommended SRA. The Vice Chair has an important role and although the post holder does not chair a committee in their own right, is expected to stand in for the Chair when necessary which requires the post holder to "understand and carry out the Chair's job purpose" as set out in the Member Role Descriptions. The Vice Chair is also Vice Chair of the Management Committee.
37. The role of Vice Chair of RBFA is based on the premise that the post holder is not expected to chair any other committee. The Vice Chair will be included when required in the Chair's communications with senior officers and regularly attend the same briefings as the Chair. Moreover, the Vice Chair is there to act as a sounding board for the Chair and provide a strategic view and support for the Chair.
38. **Thus, the recommended annual SRA for the Vice Chair should continue to be 50% of the Chair's allowance (£6,840) subject to any indexation that may apply.**

### Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

39. The Audit and Governance Committee has a key remit including performance review and audit functions, a role that is akin to the scrutiny function in the nominating councils. The role also includes the residual standards functions not otherwise assigned to the Monitoring Officer and statutory post of Independent Person (IP).
40. The allowance for Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee should continue to be at **30%** of the Chair's SRA, which equates to £4,104.
41. **The recommended SRA (2024/25) for the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee should continue to be at 30% of the Chair's allowance (£4,104), subject to any indexation that may apply.**

### Lead Members

42. The current structure has 4 Lead Members to determine and oversee the
- Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)
  - Strategic Assets and Sustainability
  - Budget & Income Generation and
  - Collaboration
43. What do Lead Members do?
- On behalf of the Fire Authority and Management Committee, Lead Members work with relevant Directors and Heads of Service.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

- Lead Members are regularly updated on the progress of their designated business area and are involved on the content of the report to be presented to the Management Committee and/or Fire Authority.
  - The role of Lead Members is not to manage the business area but to provide assurance to the Management Committee and/or Fire Authority that recommendations and decisions arising from the business area are sound and evidence based, have followed appropriate processes, and are aligned to strategic commitments/policy direction.
  - A Lead Member's role is to introduce reports on their area of business to the Management Committee and/or Fire Authority.
44. The Lead Member role has been strategic in focus with accountability to the Management Committee and Fire Authority, including the power to establish Task and Finish Groups. It is recommended that the Lead Member Allowance continues to be at 30% of the Chair's allowance.
58. **The recommended SRA (2024/25) for the four Lead Members to continue to be 30% of the Chair's allowance (£4,104) subject to any indexation that may apply.**

### Leader of the Opposition Group

59. The Leader of the Opposition Group(s) currently receives an SRA that was set at 20% of the Chair's SRA. The nomenclature of "Opposition Group" Leader is somewhat misleading as they don't necessarily replicate the role as normally understood in nominating councils. The nature of a CFA is such that all members have an overriding interest in ensuring the most effective fire safety and protection for the county's residents within the resources available.
60. The Authority is required by Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 to review the basis of allocation of seats amongst the Political Groups either at its Annual Meeting, or as soon as practicable thereafter or following a change of Membership. This leads to more cross party working and collaboration. As a result of this, the Opposition Group Leader(s) sit on the Management Committee and are also involved in briefings with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority when required. A sign of the greater cross-party consensus is the fact that the Authority continues to suspend rules of political proportionality in appointments to working parties to enable groups to allocate seats as they wish and foster a more inclusive environment.
61. No representation was received to indicate that the current SRA for the Leader of the Opposition Group(s) requires any change. **The recommended SRA (2024/25) for Leader of the Opposition Group(s) remains at 20% of the Chair's allowance (£2,736), subject to any indexation that may be applied.**

**Chair of Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee**

62. RBFA, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FA and Oxfordshire County Council (which is responsible for fire services in the county) have for many years established a successful and efficient Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS). The aim is to provide a single joint control centre of all fire services in the member authorities that is more cost effective than having 3 separate control centres.
63. **It is recommended that when a RBFA Member is Chair of the TVFCS Joint Committee then the post holder should continue to receive an SRA of 20% of the Chair's allowance (£2,736), subject to any indexation that may be applicable.**

**Member Champions**

64. Currently, the allowance scheme provides for an SRA payable to Member Champions at 10% of the Chair's allowance. There are currently four Member Champion roles:
- (i) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion
  - (ii) Safety, Health, Wellbeing and Member Development Champion
  - (iii) Community Safety Champion
  - (iv) Armed Forces Honorary Champion (This role is honorary and is not part of the Scheme of Allowances)
65. The role description for Member Champions does lay out activities they are expected to fulfil, with the principal ones being to:
- To promote their area of interest both within and outside the Fire Authority
  - To act as an advocate on their area of business within and outside the Fire Authority
  - To work alongside officers in making contact with local organisations and the community to establish effective and regular consultation arrangements with those organisations.
  - To represent the views of such organisations to the Fire Authority
  - To become familiar with the needs and priorities of the relevant section of the community, or range of activities concerned, and to weigh up interests expressed in order to provide sound advice on the implications of alternative courses of action.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

- To feedback decisions of the Fire Authority and to explain Fire Authority's position on specific areas of concern to relevant organisations and individuals concerned.
  - To attend meetings/conferences related to their area of business on behalf of the Fire Authority
66. The Member Champions have a key role and it is recommended that the Member Champions continue to receive an SRA of 10% of the Chair's allowance.
67. **It is recommended that the SRA (2024/25) for the Member Champions is 10% of the Chair's allowance (£1,368) subject to any indexation that may be applicable.**

### **RBFA appointees to the Local Government Association (LGA).**

68. **It is not recommended that the RBFA Members appointed to the LGA should receive an SRA.**

### **Confirming the '1-SRA only' rule**

69. Currently, the Members' Allowances' scheme specifies that a member who holds more than one remunerated post is eligible to receive one SRA only, normally it would be the higher SRA. While the 2003 Regulations do not prohibit members from receiving more than 1 SRA, it is a condition that is normally placed in Members' Allowances' schemes, dependent on whether they are principal or joint authorities. All six of the nominating councils specify in their Members' Allowances' scheme that regardless of remunerated posts held only 1 SRA is payable (SEE Members Allowance Survey 2023).
70. **It is recommended that the 1-SRA only rule be maintained and specified in the RBFA Members' Allowances scheme.**

### **Confirming the cap of 10 SRAs payable at any one time**

71. Presently, the RBFA Members' Allowances scheme specifies that no more than 50% of members can be paid an SRA at any one time,
72. The 2003 Regulations do not prohibit the numbers or proportion of an authority's membership that may receive an SRA. However, the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) points out that:

*If the majority of members of a council [or joint authority] receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified.*

73. It is difficult to justify a situation whereby a majority of members are deemed “special” through the receipt of an SRA. It is counter intuitive. The cap of 10 SRAs payable for RBFA represents 50% of the membership and is typically known as the “50% rule” where it is specified in members’ allowances schemes.
74. Consequently, **it is recommended that no more than 10 SRAs should be paid at any one time.**

#### **Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

75. **It is recommended that the maximum rates for which travel, and subsistence allowances can be claimed remain unaltered, subject to any future indexation that may be applicable.**

#### **Remuneration of the Independent Persons (IPs)**

76. **It continues to be recommended that when either of the IP’s is called to attend any of the offices of the RBFA by the MO then they should be paid the average daily gross salary for all employees’ resident in Berkshire, £144 per meeting. This is also intended to cover any preparation that is required before such a meeting. However, as this rate has increased since 2019 to £150.32 due to the annual indexation then it is recommended that this continues to be the recommended allowance for the Independent Persons.**

#### **Indexation of Allowances**

77. This review is obliged to fulfil the statutory requirements and recommend whether any indices should apply and if so, which indices should be utilised.
78. **It is recommended that the following indices continue to be applied to the specified allowances:**
- **Basic Allowance, SRAs and IP remuneration:**
    - Indexed to the annual average local government percentage salary increase, (the National Joint Councils agreement) to be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April each year.
  - **Travel and Subsistence:**
    - **Mileage Allowances:**
      - Indexed to HMRC rates.
    - **Public Transport**
      - Maximum rates payable indexed to the same rates that apply to officers, unless booked through Members’ Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix A

- **Subsistence Allowances:**

- Maximum rates payable indexed to the same rates that apply to officers, unless booked through Democratic' Services, which can apply its own judgement on what represents best value.

79. **It is further recommended that as per the 2003 Members' Allowances Regulations the indices recommended in this review are utilised for four years effective from 1 April 2024 or until the Authority requires a further review whichever is sooner.**

**Members and Officers Interviewed**

**Members:**

Cllr Tricia Brown	Audit and Governance Committee Chairman
Cllr Rachel Shepherd-Du Bey	Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead
Cllr Jeff Brooks	Chair of Authority/Management Committee & Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Cllr Paul Gittings	Vice Chair & Labour Group Leader
Cllr Morag Malvern	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion

**Officers:**

Wayne Bowcock	Chief Fire Officer
Paul Bremble	Head of Corporate Services

## Berkshire FRS Members Allowance Review Comparative Data

Authority	Membership	Committees	Basic	Chair	Vice Chair	Committee Chair	Other
Avon	20 + PCC	Performance Review and Scrutiny, Audit, Governance and Ethics, Local Pension Board, People and Culture	2,220	9,543	2,220	2,220	1,776 Group Leader
Bedfordshire	12	Executive (each of the five Members has a special portfolio responsibility), Audit and Standards	3,498.80	13,995.20	5,248.20	1,049.64 Chair of Audit and Standards	1,049.64 Executive Committee Members
Buckinghamshire	17	Executive, Overview and Audit, HR Sub Committee	1,291	12,899	4,323	5,322, 3,486 and 1,745	3,870 Group Leader 3,364 Lead Member
Cheshire	23	Audit, Brigade Managers Pay and Performance, Closure of Accounts, Estates and Property, Governance and Constitution, JCC, Local Pension Board, Performance and Overview, Staffing	4,349.48	14,308.96	7,155.58	1,651.29 or 2,862.23	1,100.86 BC Lead 550.42 Member Champion
Cleveland	16	Executive, Audit and Governance, Local Pension Board	2,238	8,952	4,476	2,797 Audit and Governance	

Derbyshire	16	Standards Committee, Working Groups x6, Pension Board	3,187.50	14,000	8,400	3,000 Working Group	3,000 Group Leader
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Appendix B

Q1 In a typical month how many hours do you spend on Fire Authority business?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	40 - 45	8/23/2023 12:14 PM
2	20	8/1/2023 4:25 PM
3	Dependent on subjects to be considered	7/26/2023 12:58 PM
4	Difficult, because quarterly pattern plus visits, training, representation at BFC, webinar, member discussions, political group discussions... but I think around 25-30	7/26/2023 8:10 AM
5	24	7/25/2023 6:31 PM
6	25	7/25/2023 4:38 PM
7	3	7/25/2023 2:19 PM

Agenda Item 12

Appendix B

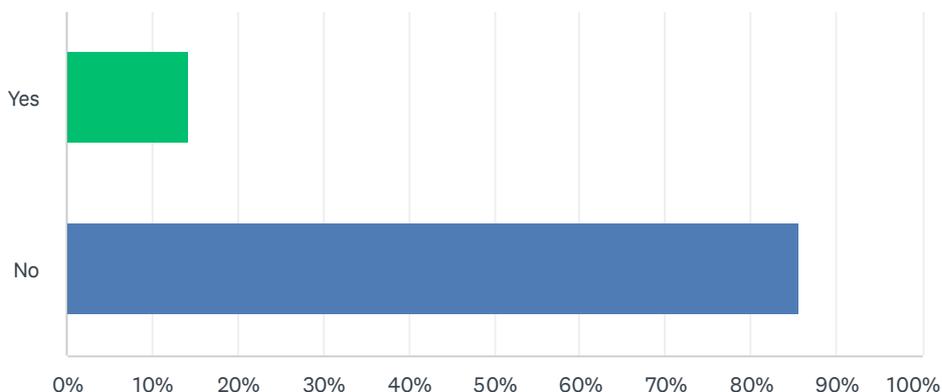
Q2 If you hold a role(s) within the Authority i.e. Chair/ Committee Chair etc., how many hours do you spend in a typical week on Fire Authority business relevant to the role(s). [Please provide details separately for each role if more than one additional role is held.]Please specify specific roles below and hours spent on each role:

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Chair - 8 hours per week	8/23/2023 12:14 PM
2	Committee Chair: A & G - approx 6 or 7 hrs p.m. Vice Chair of Labour Group - approx 2 hrs p.m.	7/26/2023 8:10 AM
3	Minority Group chairman - 10 hours	7/25/2023 6:31 PM
4	10	7/25/2023 4:38 PM
5	0 so far	7/25/2023 2:19 PM

### Q3 Do you incur any significant costs which you believe are not covered by your present allowance?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	14.29%	1
No	85.71%	6
TOTAL		7

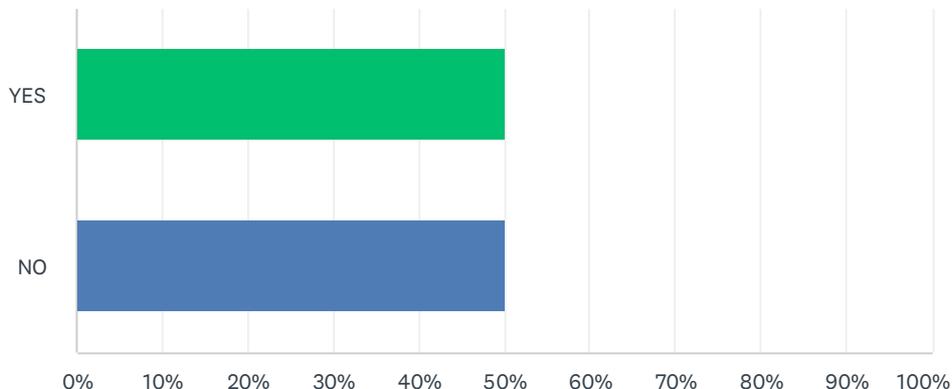
#	IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:	DATE
1	It allowance - my own IT equipment to answer emails and telephone calls. Agenda for minutes online.	8/1/2023 4:25 PM

Agenda Item 12

Appendix B

Q4 The present level of Allowance payable to all Members is £2,701.56. Do you think this is appropriate?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
YES	50.00% 3
NO	50.00% 3
TOTAL	6

#	IF NO, SHOULD IT BE LOWER OR HIGHER? PLEASE GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER:	DATE
1	Higher - see hours expended	8/23/2023 12:15 PM
2	It isn't just the hours spent, but also the reading and thinking time.	7/25/2023 6:33 PM
3	Higher	7/25/2023 4:39 PM

Appendix B

Q5 If you are able to, please indicate an appropriate level £:

Answered: 4 Skipped: 3

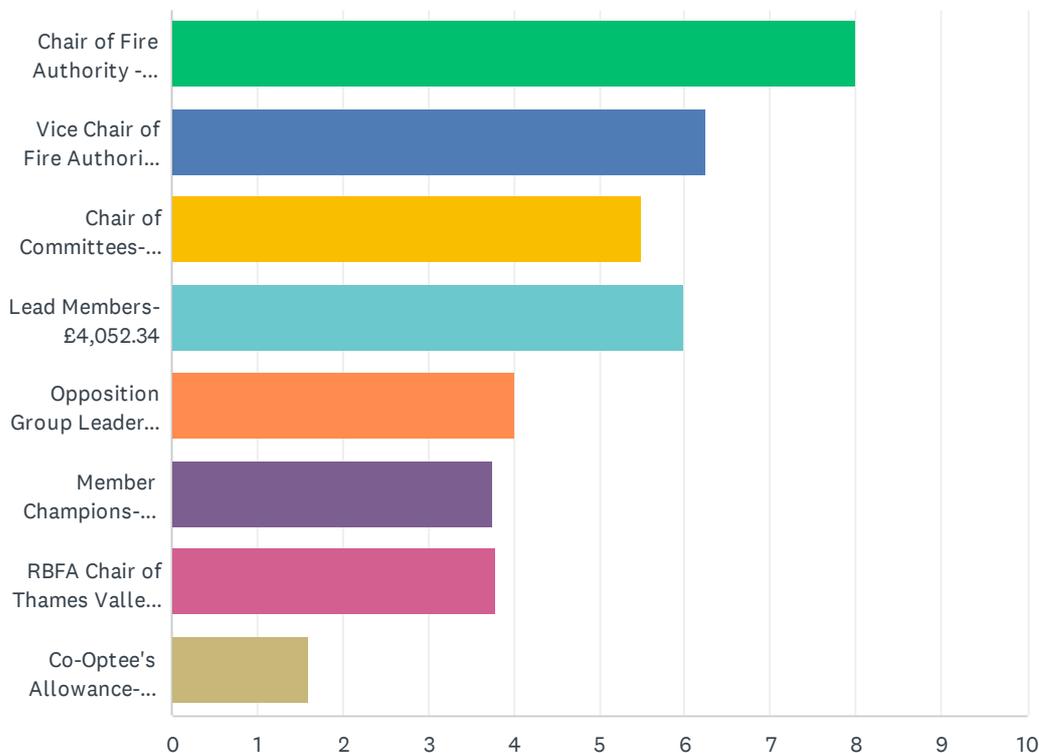
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	£3600	8/23/2023 12:15 PM
2	£3,000-£4,000 appropriate - round number which is inline with smaller non-exec board seats.	8/1/2023 4:26 PM
3	A typical salary, perhaps the minimum wage, because of the responsibility and the importance of the decisions we have to make.	7/25/2023 6:33 PM
4	3000	7/25/2023 4:39 PM

### Agenda Item 12

#### Appendix B

Q6 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) are currently paid as follows: [To assist the development of a consistent group of allowances, please can you score each role / position in respect of importance and impact, with 1 being the most important.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2



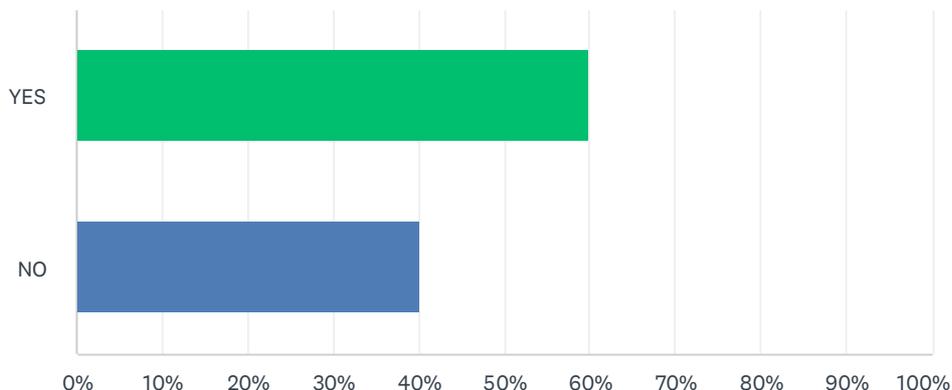
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Appendix B	TOTAL	SCORE	
Chair of Fire Authority - £13,509.94	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	4	8.00						
Vice Chair of Fire Authority- £6,754.97	0.00% 0	75.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	6.25
Chair of Committees- £4,052.34	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4	5.50
Lead Members- £4,052.34	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	6.00
Opposition Group Leaders- £2,701.56	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	4.00
Member Champions- £1,350.78	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 2	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	4	3.75
RBFA Chair of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)- £2,701.56	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	5	3.80
Co-Optee's Allowance- £150.32 per meeting	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	80.00% 4	5	1.60

Agenda Item 12

Appendix B

Q7 Would you like to see any changes made to these allowances?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2



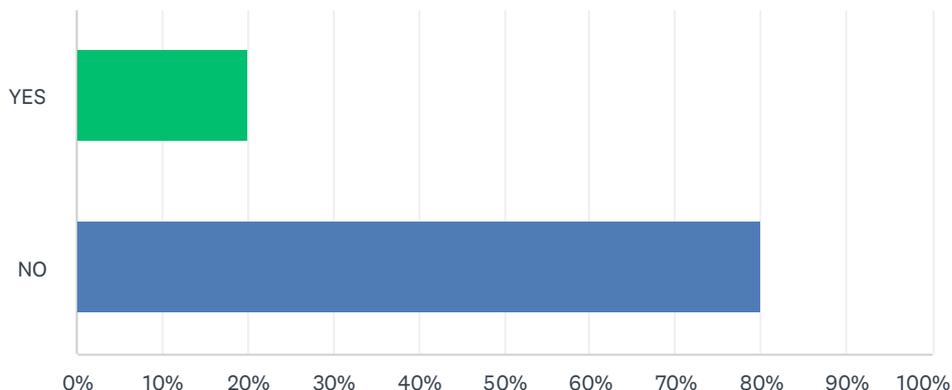
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
YES	60.00% 3
NO	40.00% 2
TOTAL	5

#	IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:	DATE
1	Uplift in line with inflation	8/23/2023 12:16 PM
2	RBFA Chair of TV Joint Committee may need more emphasis... really important to work well with partners.	7/26/2023 8:19 AM
3	They bear no relationship to the degree of responsibility the roles entail, or the importance of making the right decisions for life and death situations.	7/25/2023 6:36 PM

Appendix B

Q8 Would you like to see any new SRAs introduced?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
YES	20.00% 1
NO	80.00% 4
TOTAL	5

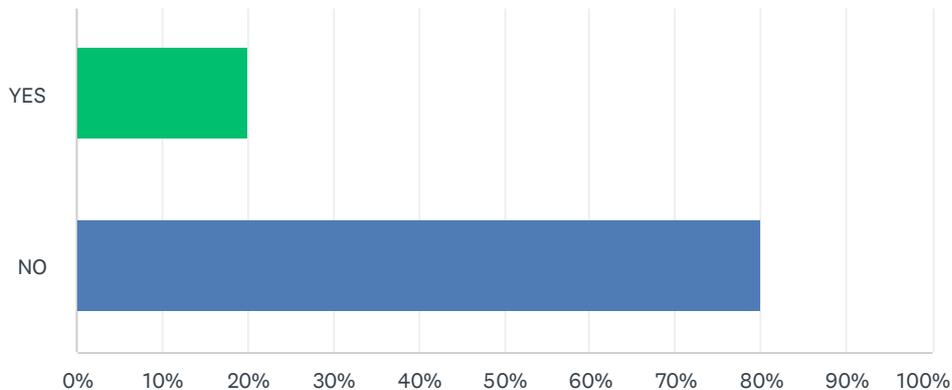
#	IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:	DATE
1	Member champion for education & outreach	8/1/2023 4:29 PM

Agenda Item 12

Appendix B

Q9 The current scheme of travel allowances is based at 45p per mile, HMRC Rates. Do you have any comments on the current scheme for Members?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
YES	20.00% 1
NO	80.00% 4
TOTAL	5

#	IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS:	DATE
1	Works well - online form would be helpful/auto set up for meetings based on home address?	8/1/2023 4:30 PM

Appendix B

Q10 Do You have any other views on the Members Allowance Scheme?:

Answered: 3 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	No	8/23/2023 12:17 PM
2	None, thanks	7/26/2023 8:20 AM
3	No	7/25/2023 4:40 PM

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# SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

April 2024



## **MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

### INTRODUCTION

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, hereby makes the following scheme:

### NAME AND DURATION

- MA1. This scheme may be cited as the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme.
- MA2. **This scheme shall have effect for the financial year 2024/25.** The Scheme may be amended at any time by resolution of the Authority.

### BASIC ALLOWANCE

- MA3. A **Basic Allowance** at a rate of £2,736 per annum shall be paid to each Member in monthly instalments.
- MA4. For the avoidance of doubt, 'Member' in this context means a person appointed to the Authority under the provisions of the Royal Berkshire Fire Service Combination Scheme.
- MA5. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members including calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of Members' homes.
- MA6. Where a Member's term of office does not extend throughout a complete year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists.

## SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

- MA7. A **Special Responsibility Allowance** shall be paid in monthly instalments to those Members who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the Fire Authority, in recognition of the additional duties and time commitment such positions entail. These Special Responsibility Allowances are specified in Schedule 1.

### Schedule 1

Position	Special Responsibility Allowance <sup>1</sup>
Chair of Authority	<b>£13,680</b>
Vice-Chair of Authority	<b>£6,840</b>
Chair of Committees	<b>£4,104</b>
Lead Members	<b>£4,104</b>
Opposition Group Leaders	<b>£2,736</b>
Member Champions	<b>£1,368</b>
RBFA Chair of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)	<b>£2,736</b>
Independent Person Allowance	<b>£150.32 per meeting</b>

- MA8. Where a Member holds one of the above positions for part of a year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days he/she holds that position.
- MA9. A Member may not receive more than one Special Responsibility Allowance at any one time. Therefore, a Member holding more than one of the positions of special responsibility must notify the Monitoring Officer to the Authority in writing which Special Responsibility Allowance he/she wishes to be paid.

## INDEPENDENT PERSONS' ALLOWANCE

- MA10. The Independent Person (s) shall be entitled to receive a payment of **£150.32** per meeting.
- MA11. Independent Persons are entitled to receive only the allowances under this scheme for the duties they undertake on behalf of the Fire Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on 1 November 2022.

## SCHEDULE 2 – APPROVED DUTIES

MA12. Members and the Independent Persons shall be entitled to claim travelling and subsistence allowances for the following duties:

- (1) Meetings of the Authority, committees and task and finish groups formally convened by the Monitoring Officer, including (a) seminars, etc. to which all Members have been invited and (b) cases where a Member is invited and officially notified to attend a meeting of a committee of which they are not a Member;
- (2) formal briefings by the Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive or other officers, provided Members of at least two political groups have been invited to attend;
- (3) on-site inspections or visits authorised in advance by the Authority or a committee;
- (4) official and courtesy visits undertaken by the Chair of the Authority or, in the case of a particular visit, such other Member may ask to represent him/her.
- (5) attendance as an officially appointed representative of the Authority on any other body, including a committee, sub-committee or working party of that body, or a further body to which that body has appointed the representative provided there is a connection with the functions of the Authority;
- (6) attendance at outside conferences, courses, seminars and like meetings, subject to prior approval by the Authority or a committee, or by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive after consultation with the Chair or Vice Chair;
- (7) attendance at medal presentation ceremonies and other events of a public relations nature to which Members of the Authority have been formally invited;
- (8) subject to the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, such other duties for the purpose of or in connection with the discharge of the functions of the Authority as the Authority may from time to time determine;
- (9) attendance at meetings with officers of the Service where a Member has been formally invited in his/her capacity as reference holder;
- (10) visits to Fire and Rescue Service premises undertaken as part of a planned programme;

MA13. The amounts of allowances paid by the Authority are set out in paragraphs MA3 and MA7.

## INDEXATION OF ALLOWANCES

- MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Independent Person (s) Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance increase-agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.
- MA15. The rates of travel allowances shall be the same as those approved by the HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) and shall be adjusted and take effect in line with alterations made from time to time by the HMRC.
- MA16. The rates of subsistence allowances shall be the same as those agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- MA17. The Chief Finance Officer shall have delegated power to approve the adjustment in accordance with paragraphs MA15 and MA16 above.

## RENUNCIATION OF ALLOWANCES REPAYMENT

- MA18. A Member may, by notice in writing given to the Monitoring Officer, elect to forego, assign or transfer all or part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

## CLAIMS

- MA19. Basic, special responsibility and Independent Person (s) allowances do not need to be claimed.
- MA20. Claims for travelling and subsistence must be made on the approved form. Expenses claims should be made monthly. Claims submitted after three months from the date of expenditure occurred will not be accepted, except in exceptional circumstance and approved in writing by the Chief Finance Officer.
- MA21. Where re-imburement of travelling and subsistence is being claimed, receipts should be attached to the claim form.
- MA22. All expenses can be claimed on one form (except Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances which are paid automatically).
- MA23. Time and place of departure may be from work, it does not have to be a home to home journey but claims must show clearly where you are travelling from and to. Completed forms should be sent to Democratic Support who will forward them to the Payments Section following approval.

## Agenda Item 12

### Appendix C

MA24. Allowances are paid at the end of each month. The usual payment date is the last working day of the month. To ensure payment is received by the end of the month, claims should be submitted **by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month**.

## SCHEDULE 3 - TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

MA25. Councillors are entitled to receive payments for travelling and subsistence for the purpose of performing approved duties.

MA26. The cost to the Authority of the use of public transport for medium and long distance journeys may often be less than the cost of a Member's use of a private car. There is an expectation that before making medium or long distance journeys Members will consider the cost to the Authority as well as the convenience of the mode of transport. Where public transport is available, convenient, and cheaper, a Member may choose to use his or her own private vehicle but the total amount claimed for mileage shall not exceed the ordinary standard public transport fare.

MA27. For travel by a Member in his/her own private car or one provided for his/her use, the rate shall be that [approved HMRC](#) (HM Revenue and Customs).

MA28. Claims for expenses should only be made when actually incurred, i.e. rail/bus, taxis, hotel accommodation. Receipts must be provided.

MA29. The rates of subsistence allowances shall be the same of those agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Copies of the rates agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are available from Democratic Support [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)



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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT TO PENSION BOARD</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HR AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DECISION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The local pension board is set up under the auspices of The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and consists of two employer representatives and two member representatives.
- 1.2 The Fire Authority is required to approve the appointment of the employer representative on the pension board.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

The Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the appointment of Jim Powell to the Pension Board as an employer representative.

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 The Local Pension Board is set up under the auspices of The Public Service Pensions Act 2013.
- 3.2 The Board exists to assist the Fire Authority and the Scheme Manager for the various Firefighter pension schemes.
- 3.3 The Board consists of four members: two employer representatives and two member representatives. One of the employer representatives, Mark Arkwell, has stepped down and it is therefore proposed that Jim Powell replace him on the Board, subject to Fire Authority approval.

## Agenda Item 13

- 3.4 Lucy Greenway remains in the other employer representative role. Although occupying a Senior HR Adviser role, work within the HR department is governed to ensure she is not involved in any pension matters that might be subject to scrutiny by the Pension Board. Jim will not make decisions in relation to pension matters during the course of his work, therefore no conflicts of interest arise from this appointment.
- 3.5 Lincoln Ball and Steve Collins are the scheme member representatives on the Pension Board. Both are Fire Brigades Union representatives and their positions are not subject to Fire Authority appointment. Lincoln also occupies the position as Chair of the Pension Board.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

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

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Members of the Pension Board are paid an allowance for each meeting in accordance with the terms of reference for the Board. The Board will meet a minimum of twice a year although additional meetings may be called where determined necessary. A small budget is allocated to support training of board members.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The establishment of the local Pension Board complies with legislative requirements of the Public Services Pension Act 2013 and assists the scheme manager to:
- Secure compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to governance and administration of the scheme, and any connected scheme;
  - Secure compliance with any requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator, and;
  - In relation to any other matter specified in scheme regulations.

### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report. The appointment of individuals to the Pension Board assists the Fire Authority and Scheme Manager manage

risks associated with the firefighter pension schemes and comply with legislation as indicated in 6.1 above.

**9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service continue to work with Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service (BMKFRS) on pension related matters where appropriate.
- 9.2 The procurement of the Pension Administrator was undertaken in conjunction with BMKFRS as was the approach to pension discretions considered by the Fire Authority. The combination of these actions may provide for the opportunity to share pension board arrangements in due course. This matter is kept under review and will be subject to the approval of the Fire Authority if it is to be pursued.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer as nominated Scheme Manager has noted the content of the report.
- 10.2 The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on the contents of the report.
- 10.3 The Chief Finance Officer has noted the content of the report.

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Payment to Pension Board Members – report to Fire Authority 29 April 2019
- 11.2 Establishment of the Pension Board – report to the Fire Authority 23 February 2015.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 None.

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Becci Jefferies  
Head of HR and Learning and Development  
0118 9384670/ 0777 6225975

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>8 NOVEMBER 2023</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2022/23 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2023/24</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>CONOR BYRNE</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNILLOR MIKE SMITH</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To present the Annual Treasury Report for 2022/23 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2023/24, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the Annual Treasury Report for 2022/23.
- 2.2 **NOTE** the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2023/24.

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 Treasury management in local Government during 2022/23 and 2023/24 has been regulated by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
- 3.2 The Annual Treasury Report for 2022/23 is shown as **Appendix A**. Performance is in line with the prudential indicators approved by the Authority in February 2022.

## Agenda Item 14

- 3.3 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2023/24 is shown as **Appendix B**. Again, performance is in line with the approved prudential indicators.
- 3.4 Through close cash-flow management, the Authority has been able to capitalise on the increased rates available to place a number of fixed term deposits during 2023/24 to maximise investment return, whilst ensuring the security of the underlying capital.
- 3.5 Officers continue to monitor liquidity needs, the underlying Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and investment opportunities available that are compliant with our treasury management strategy and the advice of our treasury advisors to maximise investment returns.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

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

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Investment income interest received for the 2022/23 financial year totalled £320,000. Estimated interest income to be received in 2023/24 is £625,000.
- 5.2 The Authority repaid external borrowing of £2m in 2022/23.

### **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.

**10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes (revised December 2017)
- 11.2 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23 approved by the Authority on 15 February 2022.
- 11.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 approved by the Authority on 15 February 2023.

**12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix A – Annual Treasury Report 2022/23
- 12.2 Appendix B – Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2023/24

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 13.1 Conor Byrne – Head of Finance and Procurement  
[byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:byrnec@rbfrs.co.uk)

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# ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

End of year review reflecting performance in 2022/23 and the position as at 31 March 2023.





## Introduction

The 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 2022/23. 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 2022/23 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 15/02/2022)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Fire Authority 19/12/2022)
- 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 have 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.

	<b>2021/22 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>2022/23 Original Planned (£000's)</b>	<b>2022/23 Actual (£000's)</b>
Capital Expenditure	3,522	4,161	1,670
Financed in year	2,552	4,161	1,670
Unfinanced capital expenditure	970	0	0

The original planned expenditure in 2022/23 included £1.4m for the remaining costs of the new community Fire Station in Theale and the ongoing minor capital works programme, £0.5m for fleet, £0.9m for breathing apparatus equipment and £1.4m for ICT. Minor capital works were carried out at Bracknell and Maidenhead fire stations, with feasibility reports also received for Slough and Whitley Wood for which tenders processes will commence in 2023/24. Investment in new fleet has been delayed due to long lead times; a number of vehicles ordered in early 2022/23 will arrive in the first half of 2023/24. The collaborative breathing apparatus project has now been completed with the new equipment becoming operational in Q4 2022/23. Delays were experienced on a number of ICT projects mainly due to third party providers, but the new website and intranet upgrade went live in Q3 2022/23 and the rolling programme to refresh hardware continued.

## **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 (2021/22) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2022/23) 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 2022/23. The table below highlights the Authority's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Authority has complied with this prudential indicator.



	<b>2021/22 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>2022/23 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>2022/23 Actual (£000's)</b>
Gross Borrowing position	10,922	11,807	8,922
CFR	11,470	11,106	10,770

During 2022/23 the Authority repaid borrowing of £2m. There was no new borrowing in 2022/23.

**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 2022/23 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.

	<b>2022/23 (£000's)</b>
Authorised Limit	21,807
Maximum gross borrowing position	11,807
Operational boundary	16,807
Average gross borrowing position	10,878
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	2.41%



## Treasury Position as at 31 March 2023

At the beginning and the end of 2022/23 the Authority's treasury position was as follows:

	<b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 Principal (£000's)</b>	<b>Rate / Return</b>	<b>Average Life (Yrs)</b>		<b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Principal (£000's)</b>	<b>Rate / Return</b>	<b>Average Life (Yrs)</b>
<b>Debt:</b>							
Fixed Rate Funding							
- PWLB	10,922	4.20%	9.9		8,922	4.04%	8.9
<b>CFR</b>	11,470				10,770		
<b>Over / (Under) borrowing</b>	(548)				(1,848)		
<b>Investments:</b>							
Instant Access	4,707	0.01%			4,967	2.88%	
Short Term	2,050	0.45%			6,084	3.73%	
Long Term	638	0.10%			618	2.68%	
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>7,395</b>				<b>11,669</b>		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	<b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 Actual (£000's)</b>
Under 12 months	2,000	0
12 months and within 24 months	0	0
24 Months and within 5 Years	394	991
5 Years and within 10 years	3,378	3,581
10 Years and within 20 Years	2,150	1,350
20 Years and within 30 Years	3,000	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,922</b>	<b>8,922</b>



## The Strategy for 2022/23

### Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment returns picked up throughout the course of 2022/23 as central banks, including the Bank of England, realised that inflationary pressures were not transitory, and that tighter monetary policy was called for.

Starting April at 0.75%, Bank Rate moved up in stepped increases of either 0.25% or 0.5%, reaching 4.25% by the end of the financial year.

The sea-change in investment rates meant local authorities were faced with the challenge of pro-active investment of surplus cash for the first time in over a decade, and this emphasised the need for a detailed working knowledge of cash-flow projections so that the appropriate balance between maintaining cash for liquidity purposes, and “laddering” deposits on a rolling basis to lock in the increase in investment rates.

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 in 2008/09. 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.

Investment balances have been kept to a minimum through the agreed strategy of using reserves and balances to support internal borrowing when possible, rather than borrowing externally from the financial markets. Such an approach has also provided benefits in terms of reducing 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 decreased by £2m in 2022/23, from £10,922k to £8,922k.

During 2022/23, the Authority had 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 initially low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.

A cost of carry generally 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.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served well over the last few years. However, this has been kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this Authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and / or the refinancing of maturing debt.

## Investment Outturn

**Investment Policy** – the Authority's investment policy is governed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Fire Authority on 15 February 2022. 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 2022/23, the Authority had investments totalling £11.7m. 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 investment in a 95 day notice account in 2022/23, and also placed a number of fixed term deposits throughout the year to maximise return. Arrangements for immediate access investments were also reviewed and funds were placed with a new counterparty to take advantage of the enhanced rates that were on offer as the year progressed.

The Authority's long-term investments of £0.6m relate to its 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, and this process commenced in 2022/23 hence the reduction in funds being held.



## **Borrowing Outturn**

The Authority's debt position decreased by £2m in 2022/23, from £10,922k to £8,922k. No debt rescheduling was undertaken.



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# TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mid-year review reflecting  
performance and the position as  
at 30 September 2023





## 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 2021). 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 2023/24 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 2023/24;
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2023/24;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2023/24;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023/24.



In December 2021, 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 activities 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 update on the global outlook and interest rate forecasts. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) maintained Bank Rate at 5.25% in September 2023.

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 the 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.

## Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24 were approved by Fire Authority on 15 February 2023. There are no changes to either strategy; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic and budgetary position.

## 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 provision for 2023/24, and the spend to the end of September 2023.

Capital Expenditure	2023/24 Provision (£000's)	Actual costs as at 30 September 2023 (£000's)
Property	2985	45
Fleet & Equipment	1487	174
ICT	200	133
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,672</b>	<b>133</b>

Training Centre pre-construction design phase is progressing as expected, there is ongoing discussion with BT regarding project implementation of ICT Contract



(Network Refresh). Some of the white fleet that was ordered last year has been delivered and others will be delivered this financial year - the delay is due to long lead times on vehicles. The purchase of 8 Volvo appliances over 3 years period is progressing, the purchase order was raised in July 2023

## Limits to Borrowing Activity

A key control over the treasury activity is the prudential indicator that ensures 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 2023/24 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 September 2023 (£000's)</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised Estimate (£000's)</b>
Debt	9,022	9,022	9,022

The Chief Finance Officer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this prudential indicator. No new external borrowing arrangements have been entered into during 2023/24, and there has been no repayments of debts.

A further prudential indicator sets 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.



<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt</b>	<b>2023/24 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 September 2023 (£000's)</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised Estimate (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,922	8,922
Other long term liabilities	100	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,022</b>	<b>9,022</b>	<b>9,022</b>

The amount under *Other long-term liabilities* is a reflection of the need to reclassify leases under the accounting standard IFRS 16. The adoption of this standard has been delayed several times.

## Investment Portfolio

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice sets out the Authority's investment priorities as being: security of capital, liquidity and yield. The Authority will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity, 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.

The increase in bank rate overseen by the MPC over the course of 2023 has provided the Authority an opportunity to increase return on investments. In recent years, when rates have been historically low, options have been scarce, but in conjunction with our treasury advisors we have placed a number of fixed-term deposits with counterparties.

The Authority continues to closely monitor liquidity needs and all of these fixed-term deposits mature in the current financial year to provide flexibility where needed. The added advantage of this approach is that if bank rate continues to increase as expected then the Authority will be able to benefit from this when placing further investments in the future, and maximise return.

The Authority held investments totalling £13.072m as at 30th September 2023.



	<b>30 Sept 2023 Principal (£000's)</b>	<b>Average Rate / Return</b>
<b>Investments:</b>		
Fixed Term Deposits	10,000	5.68%
Call Account	3,072	5.14%
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>13,072</b>	

The Chief Financial Officer confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2023/24.

The budgeted investment return for 2023/24 is £474,000. With the additional investments made outlined above, the Authority estimates that the total return in 2023/24 will be £625,000. This may increase further, especially if interest rates continue to rise, but this 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 cash flow management procedures.

## **Borrowing Strategy**

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) estimate for 2023/24 is £10,085k. 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.

## **Debt Rescheduling**

No debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

## **Economic Update**

CPI Inflation rose by 6.7% in the 12 months to September 2023.

The MPC voted to maintain Bank Rate at 5.25% in the meeting on the 20 September 2023, although four members wished to increase bank rate by 0.25% to 5.5%.

# Agenda Item 14

## Appendix B

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
ICT Hardware	Management Committee	4.12.23	Ad-hoc	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	4.12.23	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	4.12.23	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Governance Statement	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	24.01.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	24.01.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	24.01.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme - Presentation	A&GC	24.01.24	Bi annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I
Draft Annual Budget 24/25	Management Committee	6.02.24	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Training Centre Redevelopment	Management Committee	6.02.24	Ad-hoc	Note	DCFO	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	6.02.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	6.02.24	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Code of Conduct Consultation	Fire Authority	15.02.23	Annual	Note	MO	N/A	Part I
RBFRS Development Programme	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Ad-hoc	Note	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	15.02.24	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.24	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.24	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	28.3.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	Member Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	28.3.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	28.3.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2024/25	Fire Authority	22.04.24	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	22.04.24	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I