



Agenda
for the Extraordinary Meeting
of the
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Thursday, 12th September, 2024

At

5.30 pm

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

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



MEETING: Royal Berkshire Extraordinary Fire Authority Meeting

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, 12th September, 2024 at 5.30 pm

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Calcot
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

S U M M O N S

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

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

GRAHAM BRITTEN
Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

Councillor Greg Bello	Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	Councillor Wendy Griffith
Councillor George Blundell	Councillor Owen Jeffery
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	Councillor Mohammed Nazir
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Zafar Satti
Councillor Billy Drummond	Councillor Wayne Smith
Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Councillor Helen Taylor
Councillor Peter Frewer	Councillor Lou Timlin
Councillor Harjinder Gahir	Councillor Simon Werner

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

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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of absence received from Councillors Tricia Brown, Tina McKenzie-Boyle and Helen Taylor.

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 09 July 2024 (Pages 7 - 16)

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recoded actions held on 09 July 2024 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

There were no recommendations received from Committees.

10. Appointment to Committees, Lead Member vacancy, and Budget Working Party (Pages 17 - 32)

Purpose:

To appoint nominations received from Group Leaders onto Audit and Governance, and Management Committee, and to appoint a Finance Lead and a Liberal Democrat member onto Budget Working Party.

11. Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Priority 6 and Operational Resource Management Policy (To Follow)

Purpose:

To note Priority 6 of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), the proposed implementation and the intended benefits.

12. Forward Plan (Pages 33 - 36)

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

13. 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/>

14. Date of the next Meeting

Wednesday 13 November 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Tuesday, 9th July, 2024 at 6.30 pm

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

- Members:**
(*present)
- * Councillor Greg Bello
 - * Councillor Dennis Benneyworth
 - * Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
 - * Councillor Jeff Brooks
 - * Councillor Tricia Brown
 - * Councillor Billy Drummond
 - * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
 - * Councillor Peter Frewer
 - * Councillor Paul Gittings
 - * Councillor Wendy Griffith
 - * Councillor Dave McElroy
 - * Councillor Owen Jeffery
 - * Councillor Neel Rana
 - * Councillor Joshua Reynolds
 - * Councillor Zafar Satti
 - * Councillor Wayne Smith
 - * Councillor Helen Taylor
 - * Councillor Lou Timlin
 - * Councillor Simon Werner

- In Attendance:**
- Mark Antell (Senior Communications and Engagement Officer)
 - Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
 - Tom Brandon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R & R)
 - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 - Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
 - Paul Brooks (Head of Assets, HoA)
 - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
 - Katie Mills (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
 - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DChEx)
 - Christian Riley (Communications and Engagement Officer)
 - Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Josh Reynolds MP, Zafar Satti and Peter Frewer.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received 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.

Action

17. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2024, be approved as a true record, and signed by the Chair.

18. 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.

19. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fire Authority Live Streaming

The Chair reported starting from this meeting, Fire Authority meetings will be live streamed on the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) YouTube Channel.

The provision of live streaming is intended to improve access to the Fire Authority, enabling people to follow the meetings remotely in real time. As with previous meetings, subtitling will be added to meeting recordings that are published within five working days.

He requested Members contact Communications and Engagement Team if they had any concerns, who were located at the back of the room.

Welcome to Cllr Rana and Tom Brandon

The Chair, on behalf of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority welcomed Councillor Neel Rana. He stated he looked forward to collaborating with him in the future and extended a warm welcome to Tom Brandon who has joined our Senior Leadership Team.

Tom had joined us from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, having been with them for 18 years. He has held a range of roles within service delivery and will join us as our new Area Manager Response and Resilience, replacing Ben Cairns.

The Chair took the opportunity to say goodbye to Ben Cairns and wished him well in his new role with Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

General Election 2024

Following last week's General Election, the constituencies of Newbury, Wokingham and Bracknell all have new MP's whilst two new constituencies, Earley and Woodley, Reading West and Mid Berkshire, have also been created.

One other constituency also changed hands in this election, and congratulated Fire Authority Member, Joshua Reynolds, on his successful campaign to

become Member of Parliament for Maidenhead. He asked Members to join him on wishing him all the best in his parliamentary career.

The Chair offered his commiserations to Councillor Dave McElroy who, whilst unsuccessful in becoming the MP for Reading Central, ran an incredibly good campaign over the past month.

HMICFRS Workshops

The Service is due to be inspected by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services, or HMICFRS for short, later this year.

This year's inspection will take place from Monday, 7 October to mid-November. Ahead of the inspection, a Member's workshop will be held on HMICFRS Inspection on Thursday, 12 September.

If you would like to find out more about the Inspection process and how the Service has been preparing, please speak to Fayth about signing up for this workshop.

Royal Ascot

In June, staff worked alongside emergency services partners, local authorities, and event organisers at Royal Ascot to help keep thousands of racegoers safe.

Although the event passed without incident, fire crews were called to action when a car fire broke out on Ascot High Street, close to the Racecourse. Firefighters from Mortimer Fire Station equipped with breathing apparatus used two hose reels to quickly extinguish the fire. Within half an hour, the fire was out, and the scene was handed over to Thames Valley Police.

The Chair thanked firefighters from Mortimer, as well as all the other staff who supported the Service and partners at this year's Royal Ascot.

Fire at Broadmoor Hospital

Members might be aware of an incident at the old Broadmoor Hospital that occurred towards the end of June.

At the height of the fire around 40 firefighters from Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey responded to the fire. These crews worked alongside three Officers, Thames Valley Police and Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue to help quickly and effectively extinguish the fire.

The fire was significant and required a large response from our Service and our partners. Although there was substantial damage to the old building, crews worked quickly to contain the fire and prevent it from spreading.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chair thanked everyone involved in the incident for their effective and diligent response to this fire.

Councillor Mckenzie-Boyle requested for further detail regarding the entrance the crews used when attending this incident.

ACFO

Whitley Wood Training Centre

Plans to redevelop the Service's Training Centre in Whitley Wood was recently approved by Reading Borough Council.

The facility was originally scheduled to be redeveloped in 2025 but was brought forward following a significant internal flood in 2022, where the damage to the building was beyond economical repair.

The approved plans will see the demolition of the existing Training Centre and an aging office cabin. These will be replaced by a single two-storey, modular building.

Work on the new Training Centre is due to begin imminently with completion and opening expected in summer 2025.

Disability Confident Leader Status

The Service has maintained its status as a Level Three 'Leader' in the Disability Confident scheme.

The Disability Confident Scheme includes over 20,000-member organisations from across the country and, as a Leader, the Service ranks amongst the top 600 organisations in the Scheme.

Over the past three years, the Service has proven its commitment to disability inclusion by undertaking several initiatives. This certification reflects all the excellent work that our staff have been doing to make our Service more welcoming and inclusive.

Fire Cadet Graduation

Our Fire Cadets will be graduating tomorrow evening at Maidenhead Fire Station. The Chair stated he looked forward to attending on behalf of the Authority and hoped to see Members there to as wish our cadets well.

Wholetime Firefighter Graduation

This week, we are once again accepting applications for a new cohort of wholetime firefighter apprentices.

This new group will follow our previous cohorts, the last of which graduated on Friday, 10 May 2024 where we welcomed 17 new Wholetime Firefighters in a Graduation Ceremony at Maidenhead Fire Station.

It was a pleasure to attend the ceremony, speak to the graduates and take part in an inspection of the new cohort alongside the Chief Fire Officer.

As part of the apprenticeship, the recruits were asked to organise an event to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity. Graduates have raised around £7,000 by collectively cycling 488 miles, the area of Berkshire in square miles, on static bikes at the Lexicon in Bracknell. Following the Graduation Ceremony, the Apprentices have now taken up their station placements across the County.

20. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee.

21. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

22. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

23. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations of Committees.

24. AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS CONSULTATION 2024 - RESULTS AND SUMMARY REPORT

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Paul Gittings introduced this item as Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Lead Member and thanked everyone who had worked on the consultation.

He stated false alarms account for 45% of incidents attended and the majority of these were the result of automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems, of which 99% require no action by the Service. This had caused significant disruption to the delivery of essential services and training. The consultation has ended, and the public have chosen option 2. He reported that the consultation results had indicated Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) staff had opted for option 3.

The Chair suggested the Fire Authority may wish to consider an adjournment after receiving answers to their questions.

Paul Bremble; Head of Corporate Services (HCS), stated the Authority launched a consultation asking people across Berkshire to consider how RBFRS respond to AFAs. Paul Bremble then introduced Tim Readings, Group Manager (CRMP) to present the consultation findings.

Tim Reading apologised for an error in the report and confirmed that it would be amended. In answer to a question from the Chair on the meaning of '*attended by invitation*,' Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) explained this was when a Berkshire appliance is closer to the incident location. Incidents attended by RBFRS in Surrey and Hampshire were by invitation.

Tim Readings Group Manager (CRMP) explained a Member's Task and Finish Group was held to discuss the consultation results and recommended option 3, which proposed fire appliances do not attend fire alarm notifications at category A and B buildings 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. After explaining the definition of category A and B buildings, Tim Readings reassured Members that irrespective of the decision made today there were no plans to change the response to domestic alarms and confirmed the Service will always respond to any call where a fire is present. Tim Readings stated the change would only affect premises that have a commercially installed fire alarm system.

He added, Fire and Rescues Services (FRSs) around the country were also looking at ways they respond to AFAs and went on to explain each consultation option in detail. He provided examples of each option if they had been implemented last year. There were 390 responses to the consultation. It had been recognised a low consultation response had been received from Slough. The public's preferred option was option 2, with option 3 in second place.

Tim Readings confirmed that the Member Task and Finish Group recommended that the Fire Authority consider option 3.

Paul Bremble (HCS) reported the consultation results found that the public preferred Option 2, and Thames Valley Control Service (TVFCS) and RBFRS staff preferred Option 3. He added, to address any concerns, the Service would conduct a comprehensive communication and engagement plan with schools and businesses the change would affect. He reported Oxfordshire County Council agreed their AFA policy following their consultation and Buckinghamshire FRS were in line with option 3, due to be implemented within six months.

The Chair queried how would TVFCS cope with different AFA options amongst Thames Valley FRS partners. Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) reported TVFCS uses Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) to mobilise appliances and each Thames Valley FRS partner has worked on standardising processes and procedures, however the software would recognise policy differences between each Service.

Option 2 would create a 1,000-hour improvement in efficiency, Option 3 a 1,200-hour improvement in efficiency. Any change in hours would be beneficial to a lean organisation like RBFRS and with less appliances on the road attending AFA incidents, road risk and road use would be reduced. Oxfordshire Fire Service took a similar approach to option 3 and this has been in place for

several years, with no known issues. He suggested Members may wish to amend the recommendation if there was concern around schools / option 3.

The Chair expressed the concerns previously made by Members around schools, in particular the disruption caused during COVID and the similar effect to schools if an incident occurred. He suggested an adjournment to the meeting.

In response to Councillor Drummond, Wayne Bowcock (CFO) explained that in his experience there was little press attention regarding reduced attendance to AFAs and that it does not result in an increase of fires.

In response to Councillor Griffith, Wayne Bowcock (CFO) in referring to page 65 of the report stated that RBFRS AFA consultation response rate was higher than London Fire Brigade's 2023 AFA Consultation and advised that this type of consultation does not attract a high response rate.

Paul Bremble, HCS reported that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) had made a positive comment on the way RBFRS deliver its consultations.

Additional questions were received from Councillors Brown, McElroy, Taylor, Benneyworth, Shepherd-DuBey and Bello about the contents of the consultation papers.

The Chair summarised the discussion by stating that the volume of false fire alarms has been an issue for decades, and although a recent policy change was made, it made a minor impact. He added that the Authority were keen to make a difference.

The Vice-Chair stated he was disappointed on the low response from Slough and expressed his belief that Royal Berkshire should align with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service by approving option 3. He added he was interested in the pilot Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was running as he felt this may impact RBFRS. Tim Reading confirmed that Buckinghamshire were trialing for six months prior to the release of their next CRMP process and that the trial is like option 3.

Councillor Benneyworth asked for reassurance around schools.

The Chair thanked all the members for the detailed questions and proposed an adjournment to the meeting, reconvening at 8pm. The adjournment was seconded by the Vice-Chair. (*the time was 7.37pm*).

On returning the Chair proposed option 2 - but in relation to the section '*excluding category B buildings between 6pm to 9am*' schools were to be excluded from this, meaning RBFRS will continue to attend all AFAs at schools 24 hours a day.

The Chair proposed an amendment to the recommendation. After much deliberation on an amendment to the recommendation, the proposed amendment was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Councillors Jeffery, McElroy and Griffith said they felt this was the right approach. Councillor McKenzie-Boyle stated that she expects a comprehensive communication plan to maintain public confidence in the Service and that due diligence had been done to identify the Responsible Person for each premises. Councillor Taylor added she was very relieved and happy that Member concern around schools were highlighted, and she supported the amended recommendation. Councillor Brown agreed with the proposal and suggested the issue be revisited later in the year to ensure the right decision was made.

The Chair confirmed following implementation, the AFA policy will be reviewed and brought back to the Fire Authority in February 2025.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that it be approved *'We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category A when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. We will stop automatically sending a fire engine to an automatic fire alarm notification at buildings in Category B when there is no confirmed fire, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, excluding schools'*.

25. ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Paul Bremble (HCS) outlined the Annual Report summarised the performance of the Service in 2023/24 and highlighted achievements and challenges in delivering services for the people of Berkshire. The report sets out delivery against the Corporate Plan. He listed achievements such as Wholetime Firefighter apprentice numbers joining the Service in May and November, Maidenhead Fire Station refurbishment and enhanced water rescue capability. He also outlined significant incidences in Erleigh Road and Station Hill, Reading and the success in achieving a decarbonisation scheme grant.

In conclusion, Paul Bremble thanked the Authority for their continued support throughout the year. He stated he would include additional clarity in future reporting of incident data following a request from Councillor Brown.

HCS

RESOLVED that the Annual Report 2022/23 be noted.

26. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

27. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

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

28. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13 November 2024, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

Post meeting note – The next meeting will be an Extraordinary meeting on Thursday 12 September 2024, 5.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 &SD.

(The meeting concluded at 8.31pm)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	EXTRAORDINARY FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	12 SEPTEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBER VACANCY, AND BUDGET WORKING PARTY
LEAD OFFICER	GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To appoint Member nominations received for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Committees (Table 5) in accordance with Group Leaders’ wishes, Constitution and the rules relating to political balance.
- 1.2 Since the annual meeting on 24 June 2024, changes to Fire Authority nominations have been made by two Unitary Authorities. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) has made a change following the election of Joshua Reynolds MP following the General Election on 4 July, and Slough Borough Council on 25 July 2024 due to changes to its political balance.
- 1.3 This report is for Members to welcome new Member nominations from Slough Borough Council, Councillors Gahir and Nazir; and from RBWM, Councillor Blundell and appoint them onto the Committees listed in Table 5; and to appoint a replacement Member into the Lead Member role for Finance (Members will be required to vote where more than one nomination is received for that Lead Member position).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPOINT** nominations received from the Group Leaders onto the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee; (**Table 5**);
- 2.2 **APPOINT** ungrouped Member Cllr McElroy (Green) onto the Management Committee;(**Table 5**);

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- 2.3 **APPOINT** one ungrouped Member Cllr Mohammed Nazir (Independent) onto the Audit and Governance Committee;
- 2.4 **APPOINT** a Liberal Democrat member onto the Budget Working Party to replace Joshua Reynolds MP;
- 2.5 **APPOINT** a Finance Lead Member to replace Joshua Reynolds MP and **APPROVE** the special responsibility allowance to be effective from 1 September 2024 (if applicable);
- 2.6 **APPROVE** Councillors Gahir and Nazir basic allowance is backdated from 1 August 2024.
- 2.7 **APPROVE** Councillor Blundell's basic allowance is backdated from 1 September 2024.
- 2.8 **NOTE** Councillor Neel Rana stepped down from the Authority and his membership ended on 31 July 2024;
- 2.9 **NOTE** Joshua Reynolds MP stepped down from the Authority and his membership ended on 31 August 2024.

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Since the Fire Authority Annual meeting on 24 June 2024, Joshua Reynolds was elected as Member of Parliament (MP) following the General Election on 4 July 2024. In addition, the political balance of Slough Borough Council changed following its Council meeting on 25 July 2024. The change in the political balance of Berkshire Councils has affected the political make-up of the Fire Authority. This report is seeking the Authority to appoint Members onto the Audit and Governance and Management Committees.
- 3.2 Councillor Neel Rana (Conservative) has stepped down from the Fire Authority and two new Members have been nominated from Slough Borough Council, Councillors Gahir (Labour) and Nazir (Slough Independent Member). They will join Councillor Zafar Satti (Conservative) from Slough Borough Council.
- 3.3 Councillor Blundell has been nominated by RBWM to replace Joshua Reynolds MP. Table 1 shows the number of Fire Authority seats per Unitary Authority. The Fire Authority has 20 Members and as from 25 July 2024 are comprised of 7 Liberal Democrats, 6 Labour, 4 Conservative, 2 Independents (ungrouped) and 1 Green Member. Due to the political balance change in Slough Borough Council, the Conservative Group has lost one seat on the Fire Authority.

Table 1

Unitary Authority	Seats
Bracknell	3
Reading	3
Slough	3
RBWM	3

West Berks	4
Wokingham	4
Total	20

- 3.5 **Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 15(3)** Duty to allocate seats to political groups: “Where at any time the representation of different political groups on a body to which this section applies falls to be reviewed under this section by any relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority, it shall be the duty of that authority or committee, as soon as practicable after the review, to determine the allocation to the different political groups into which the members of the authority are divided of all the seats which fall to be filled by appointments made from time to time by that authority or committee.”
- 3.6 **Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 16(1)** Duty to give effect to allocations: “Where any relevant authority or any committee of a relevant authority have determined the allocation to different political groups of the seats on a body to which section 15 above applies, it shall be the duty of that authority or committee so to exercise their power to make appointments to that body as to give effect—(a) ...as soon as practicable after the determination... to such wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on that body which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group. ”
- 3.7 **Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Schedule 1, paragraph 3(2)** “Regulations under this paragraph may make provision modifying the provisions of sections 15 and 16 of this Act in relation to any case in which some of the members of a relevant authority fall to be treated as members of one or more political groups and the others do not.”
- 3.8 **Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 (SI 1990/1553), Regulation 16(1)** “In relation to any such case as is described in paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 1 to the 1989 Act, the provisions of sections 15 and 16 of the 1989 Act shall be modified as mentioned in paragraphs (2) and (3).
“(2) Section 15(3) of the 1989 Act shall have effect as if for the words from "to determine" to the end there were substituted the words "to determine the allocation to each of those groups of such of the seats which fall to be filled by appointments made from time to time by that authority or committee as bear to the total of all of those seats the same proportion as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority."
“(3) Section 16 of the 1989 Act shall have effect as if, after subsection (2), there were inserted the following subsection-"(2A) Where appointments fall to be made to seats on a body to which section 15 applies otherwise than in accordance with a determination under that section, it shall be the duty of the authority or the committee, as the case may be, so to exercise their power to make appointments as to secure that the persons appointed to those seats are not members of any political group.”
- 3.9 Set out below are tables which indicate the overall allocation of Fire Authority places per Political Group and the total number of places, each group would be

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allocated subject to confirmation that all of the political groupings remaining affiliated by political party and assuming that the Green and Independent Members remain ungrouped.

Table 2

Total number of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members

	Number of seats on RBFA	% of seats on RBFA
Liberal Democrats	7	35%
Labour	6	30%
Conservative	4	20%
Independent (s) (ungrouped)	2	
Green (ungrouped)	1	
	20	

3.10 Table 2 reflects the revised political make up of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

Table 3

Total number of places on Management Committee

	Number of seats on RBFA	% of seats on RBF A	unrounded	Seats Management Committee
Liberal Democrats	7	35%	3.85	4
Labour	6	30%	3.3	3
Conservative	4	20%	2.2	2
Independent (s)	2			1
Green	1			1
	20			11

3.11 Table 3 – (above) There are 11 seats on the Management Committee. The first cut of figures gives an entitlement of seats to 3 Liberal Democrats, 3 Labour and 2 Conservative (with the ninth seat going to the Liberal Democrats). It is recommended that the tenth and eleventh seats go to an Independent and the Green Member (ungrouped).

3.12 Table 4 – (below) There are 9 seats on Audit and Governance Committee (A&GC). First cut of the figures gives an entitlement of seats to 3 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour, and 1 to Conservative Member. Entitlement to the seventh and eighth seat goes to Labour and Conservative Members. The ninth seat goes to the Independent Member.

Table 4

Total number of places on Audit and Governance Committee

	Number of seats on RBFA	% of seats on RBFA	unrounded	Number of seats Audit and Governance Committee
Liberal Democrats	7	35%	3.15	3

Labour	6	30%	2.7	3
Conservative	4	20%	1.8	2
Independent (s)	2			1
Green	1			0
	20			9

Table 5

Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Cllr Owen Jeffery (LD) 2.Cllr Lou Timlin (LD) 3.Cllr Billy Drumound (LD) 4.Cllr Tricia Brown (Lab) 5.Cllr Greg Bello (Lab) 6. Cllr Harjinder Gahir (Lab) 7. Cllr Dennis Benneyworth (Con) 8. Cllr Zafar Satti (Con) 9. Cllr Mohammed Nazir (Independent)
Management Committee (11 seats)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Jeff Brooks (Lib Dem) 2. Cllr George Blundell (Lib Dem) 3. Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Lib Dem) 4. Cllr Simon Werner (Lib Dem) 5. Cllr Paul Gittings (Lab) 6. Cllr Wendy Griffith (Lab) 7. Cllr Peter Frewer (Lab) 8. Cllr McKenzie-Boyle(Con) 9. Cllr Wayne Smith (Con) 10.Cllr Helen Taylor (Independent) 11. Cllr Dave McElroy (Green)

3.13 Table 5 shows highlighted in bold and yellow nominations received for vacant seats available on each committee per political group.

3.14 The report is requesting approval to backdate Councillors Nazir and Gahir basic allowance be effective from 1 August 2024 and Councillor Blundell basic allowance be effective from 1 September 2024, following their nominations received from Slough Borough Council and RBWM respectively. The Scheme of Allowances is attached as Appendix A.

3.15 A Member Induction course (aimed at the newly appointed Members, via Microsoft TEAMS) will be held on Thursday 19 September 2024 at 5.30pm and all Members will be encouraged to book onto relevant Member Development courses during the municipal year. Democratic Support will contact Fire Authority Members to book Members onto courses.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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4.1 Not applicable.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is in accordance with Members Scheme of Allowances.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

The Authority is required by the above Regulations 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 in its Membership. In making its review, the Authority is required, so far as reasonably practicable, to comply with the following principles:

- (i) Not all seats on each Committee are to be allocated to the same Group.
 - (ii) The majority of seats is to be allocated to a particular Group if the number of persons belonging to that Group is a majority on the Authority.
 - (iii) Subject to the above paragraphs, the number of seats on the Committees allocated to each Group should bear the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the Committees as that borne by the number of Members of that Group to the Membership of the Authority.
 - (iv) Subject to paragraphs (i) to (iii) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to different political groups bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
- 6.2 The modifications to these principles in respect of the presence of ungrouped Members is set out in the body of the report.
- 6.3 Appointments to the TVFCS Joint Committee are exempt the political balance rules under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as it is a joint committee appointed by two or more authorities under section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 but to which the Authority appoints fewer than three members.
- 6.4 The Authority is required to make appointments to committees and outside bodies in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Groups.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no risk management implications.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 Not applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 Chief Fire Officer

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

10.2 Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Finance Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.

10.3 Monitoring Officer

Report sponsor.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 RBFA Member Allowance Review - 2024

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Member Scheme of Allowance – Appendix A

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead) 07500 991975

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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 £2,842 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 ¹
Chair of Authority	£14,211
Vice-Chair of Authority	£7,105
Chair of Committees	£4,263
Lead Members	£4,263
Opposition Group Leaders	£2,842
Member Champions	£1,421
RBFA Chair of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)	£2,842
Independent Person Allowance	£156 per meeting

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 **£156** 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.

¹ Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on 1 November 2023.

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-imbursment 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.

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Appendix A

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 7th 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

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ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Culture Development Update	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note	CFO	Chair	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q1	Management Committee	08.10.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q1	Management Committee	08.10.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Workwear Project	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	Strategic Assests and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Productivity and Efficiency Plan	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	Budget Lead	Part I
Fleet and Equipment Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Sustainability Strategy	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Industrial Action Resilience - Fire Crews	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	DCFO	N/A	Part II
Industrial Action Resilience - Call Handling	Management Committee	08.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	DCFO	N/A	Part II
External Audit report	A&GC	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 22/23	A&GC	21.10.24	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Q1 Performance Report	A&GC	21.10.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Constitutional update	A&GC	21.10.24	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Annual	Note	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Constitutional update	Fire Authority	13.11.24	Ad-hoc	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	12.12.24	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Lease changes	A&GC	30.01.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 23/24	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Governance Statement 22/23	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HCS	N/A	Part I
Gender, Ethnicity and Equality Pay Gap	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	30.01.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
AFA update	Management Committee	10.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	AM C&P		Part 1
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	10.02.25	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Approve	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 24/25, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Annual	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Quarterly Performance Report/Budget Monitoring	TVFCS Joint Committee	17.03.25	Bi annual	Note	AM C&P and HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	24.03.25	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	Member Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances / Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	24.03.25	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	24.03.25	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
CRMP 6 evaluation	Management Committee	07.04.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	ACFO	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Agree	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	17.04.25	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I

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