



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

Wednesday, 13th November, 2024

At

6.30 pm

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

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



MEETING: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, 13th November, 2024 at 6.30 pm

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

S U M M O N S

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

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

GRAHAM BRITTEN
Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

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

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

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Calcot
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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of absence received from Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

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 12 September 2024 (Pages 7 - 16)

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 12 September 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

Purpose:

To note agenda item 15 has been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 28 March 2024.

10. Cultural Development Presentation

Purpose:

To receive a presentation on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) Cultural Development.

11. Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings Consultation (Pages 17 - 36)

Purpose:

To agree the establishment of a cross-party task and finish group to respond to the Government's Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority meetings, agree delegated Authority be given to the Chair on the final consultation response, and to note the Fire Authority's response to the consultation will be brought back to the Fire Authority in February 2025.

12. Productivity and Efficiency Plan (Pages 37 - 50)

Purpose:

To note an update on the Productivity and Efficiency Plan.

13. Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report (Pages 51 - 70)

Purpose:

To note the Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report.

14. Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24 *(Pages 71 - 76)*

Purpose:

To note the contents of the TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2023/24.

15. Annual Report on Governance *(Pages 77 - 88)*

Purpose:

To note the report, Members Allowances and Member attendance from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024.

16. Forward Plan *(Pages 89 - 92)*

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

17. 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/>

18. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19 February 2025, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

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MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Thursday, 12th September, 2024 at 5.30 pm

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

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

- In Attendance:**
- Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 - 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)
 - 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)
 - Jo Watson (Communications and Engagement Lead)
 - Lukasz Wrona (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence received from Councillors Wendy Griffith, Dave McElroy and Helen Taylor.

Councillors Tricia Brown and Tina McKenzie-Boyle attended the meeting virtually.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Action

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.

31. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 09 JULY 2024

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2024, be approved as a true record, and signed by the Chair.

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

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

33. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome New Members

On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair welcomed Councillor George Blundell from Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and Councillors Mohammed Nazir and Harjinder Gahir from Slough Borough Council.

Councillor George Blundell had been appointed to replace Joshua Reynolds MP as he has stepped down from the Fire Authority.

The Chair also informed Members that Councillor Neel Rana from Slough Borough Council who had also stepped down from the Fire Authority and wished him all the best in future endeavours.

Incident in Hungerford

On Friday, 16 August, our crews responded to a devastating fire at a house on Priory Avenue, Hungerford.

A large response was sent to the scene, including two crews from Newbury Fire Station, the Aerial Ladder Platform and crews from Dorset and Wiltshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Firefighters found a fire at a two-storey semi-detached house, with the fire on the first floor. One man was located and rescued from the building, however, he sadly passed away shortly afterwards, as a result of his injuries.

On behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair gave his deepest condolences to the man's friends and family at this extremely difficult time.

Following the incident, our Prevention teams have been out in Hungerford offering Safe and Well Visits, which provide valuable safety advice to residents. The local Fire Authority Member, Councillor Benneyworth has also helped to arrange for us to give a presentation to Hungerford Town Council on 4 November, to help us promote Safe and Well Visits to the wider community.

Slough Apartment Block Incident

In the early hours of 22 August, our crews responded to a fire at MOSAIC apartments in central Slough.

Many of you will be aware that this involved a high rise with cladding and there has been some media interest around it, so I felt it would be useful to share an update.

On the night of the incident, our crews arrived in under 5 minutes of the first call and made the swift decision to evacuate all the residents to ensure their safety. Due to this rapid and decisive action and working in conjunction with Thames Valley Fire Control to provide advice to residents, we evacuated nearly 300 residents with no casualties reported. The fire was effectively contained which prevented it from spreading more significantly. At the height of the incident 12 fire appliances, the Aerial Ladder Platform and the Incident Command Unit were in attendance.

The fire investigation is underway and will examine the way the fire developed and to what extent the cladding contributed to the spread of the fire. From initial findings, we do not believe that the fire was started deliberately. It is a complex investigation, which we estimate may take several weeks to complete.

As a Service, our teams continue to robustly engage with the person responsible for the building to ensure appropriate fire safety measures are in place for those remaining in their homes. This has included supporting them to implement additional fire safety measures, such as providing extra staff to continually patrol the building and a change in evacuation strategy to simultaneous evacuation. These additional fire safety measures will remain in place until remediation works are complete.

Additionally, our teams have been out offering fire safety advice to those who remain in their homes and we will return again once the people directly affected by the fire have returned home.

We are continuing to work with Slough Borough Council to support the safe return of residents to their property.

As with all incidents, it remains a priority to ensure that we continue to identify appropriate learning and implement this across the Service. To support this, we have been carrying out an assurance exercise internally. There are also debriefs

planned, including our internal operational one and a multi-agency debrief through the Local Resilience Forum.

The safety of residents remains of paramount importance to us. We will continue to keep Members updated in relation to this incident.

Grenfell Phase 2 Report

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report was published on Wednesday, 4 September 2024.

The 72 people who lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower Fire are at the forefront of our minds and our thoughts are with their families and loved ones, and all those who continue to be affected by this tragedy.

As a Service, we will need to take time to consider and understand the report in full, and each of the recommendations, to give them our full consideration and share an update as appropriate in due course.

English Veterans' Awards

We delighted and humbled to have been shortlisted as a finalist in the English Veterans' Awards, in the 'Employer of the Year' category.

This is a fantastic recognition of our efforts to create established pathways for transition from the Armed Forces to the fire and rescue service.

We are proud to support those who serve, and who have served, and their families.

The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony, taking place at De Vere, Wokefield Estate near Reading on 23 October.

Ultra Marathon Challenge for the Fire Fighters Charity

Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, has recently completed a gruelling challenge to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity.

He has ran three ultra marathons – totalling more than 250 kilometres, which he completed earlier this year.

An ultra marathon is any run longer than a typical marathon, but in Mark's case he ran 58km, 106km and 115km in three different races. Two of Mark's runs were on the Serpent Trail in West Sussex and the other was up in the Scottish-highlands.

To date, more than £1,300 has been raised for the charity and there is still time to donate.

For those of you not familiar with the Fire Fighters Charity, it provides a fantastic range of services to support the fire and rescue service community.

I am sure all Members will congratulate Mark on a fantastic achievement, and we will share a link to Mark's fundraising page should you wish to donate.

Effective Business Continuity Arrangements Implemented in TVFCS

Last night, Thames Valley Fire Control Service experienced issues with receiving 999 emergency calls. This was due to a national outage on one of BT's systems, which affected a number of emergency services.

In light of this, the team worked incredibly quickly and effectively to implement our business continuity arrangements, whilst 999 calls were routed to Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Control in line with our contingency arrangements.

Thanks to the quick and decisive action taken, business as usual resumed in TVFCS within 25 minutes of the initial reported issue.

Thank you to Red Watch for remaining so calm under pressure, to Station Manager Laura Clark and Group Manager Simon Harris for their quick response and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Mark Arkwell for his prompt support provided.

This highlighted how effectively our arrangements were put in place to continue to provide a seamless 999 service to our communities across the Thames Valley despite the challenges faced.

34. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

36. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

37. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations of Committees.

38. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBER VACANCY, AND BUDGET WORKING PARTY

In outlining the report was to appointment new Members onto Committees, the Chair moved recommendations 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.6 – 2.9 be voted upon en bloc. This was seconded by Councillor Billy Drummond.

The Chair proposed Councillor George Blundell (recommendation 2.4) be appointed onto Budget Working Party. This was seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey.

Councillor Owen Jeffery proposed the Chair, Councillor Jeff Brooks be appointed as Finance Lead Member (recommendation 2.5). This was seconded by Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey. The Chair informed Members they were saving the Fire Authority one additional special responsibility allowance by appointing him as Finance Lead Member.

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

- 1) The nominations received from the Group Leaders be appointed onto the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee;
- 2) The ungrouped Member Councillor Dave McElroy (Green) be appointed onto the Management Committee;
- 3) The one ungrouped Member Councillor Mohammed Nazir (Independent) be appointed onto the Audit and Governance Committee;
- 4) Councillor George Blundell (Liberal Democrat member) be appointed onto the Budget Working Party to replace Joshua Reynolds MP;
- 5) Councillor Jeff Brooks be appointed as Finance Lead Member to replace Joshua Reynolds MP;
- 6) It be approved Councillors Harjinder Gahir and Mohammed Nazir basic allowance is backdated from 1 August 2024.
- 7) It be approved Councillor George Blundell's basic allowance is backdated from 1 September 2024.
- 8) It be noted Councillor Neel Rana stepped down from the Authority and his membership ended on 31 July 2024;
- 9) It be noted Joshua Reynolds MP stepped down from the Authority and his membership ended on 31 August 2024.

<p>Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Owen Jeffery (LD) 2. Cllr Lou Timlin (LD) 3. Cllr Billy Drummond (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)
<p>Management Committee (11 seats)</p>	<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)

39. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) PRIORITY 6 AND OPERATIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), presented the report and firstly apologised to Members for receiving the ‘*To follow*’ item late. He went on to provide an overview of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Priority 6 (P6) via a presentation.

The Chair reported Fire Authority Members recently received communication from the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) regarding the implementation of P6, and explained the presentation was to ensure all Members were informed as 10 new Members had been appointed since the Fire Authority approved CRMP in April 2023. He stated P6 was due to be implemented in April 2024 but had been delayed twice in response to concerns raised by the FBU. The Fire Liaison Group (FLG), meeting between Fire Authority Group Leaders, FBU and Directors) met regularly with the last meeting held as recent as Tuesday 10

September 2024. The Chair stated this was an opportunity for Members to ask questions.

In discussing the rationale for implementing P6, Mark Arkwell, DCFO listed the following:

- It would align **resource to evidence-based risk** in meeting the RBFA's duties and public commitments
- It would improve **resilience and reliability** of base line response model (14 fire engines) that is not over reliant on voluntary use of over time.
- It would support **investment** into the longer-term stability and sustainability of responses resource. E.g. 10 additional firefighter roles
- It would protect **speed of response** (<0.6% impact on Response Standard)
- It would improve **recognition and value** of the on-call system
- It would safeguard the **welfare of staff**, whilst recognising the importance of PAOT

He stated Pre-arranged Overtime (PAOT) had increased to £1.4m and P6 is anticipated to reduce the amount spent on pre-arranged overtime by circa £150,000 in the revenue budget, which would be immediately reinvested into 10 additional firefighter posts.

Mark Arkwell, DCFO discussed the cultural and health (mental health and physical health) benefits on whole-time colleagues in terms of additional working hours. He highlighted the policy was reviewed and changed to the following:

*'We will **not** pay pre-arranged overtime to crew above 13 wholetime appliances on occasions when the following applies:*

- **We have 14 fire engines or more in Berkshire (Minimum of 1 on-call)**
- *It on a night shift when average incident rates per hour are lower*
- **There is no known or foreseeable increase in risk profiles – as determined by local managers**

We have revised our degradation plans to ensure that no wholetime fire station should be left without at least one fire engine at night, as a result of P6.'

The Response Standard impact based on a 5-year average was 75.3%.

The Vice-Chair stated he felt Mark Arkwell had addressed the points made from the email Members received from the FBU. He stated that there were budget pressures and felt the Authority's decision around P6 was around the effective use of resources. In referring to paragraph 3.33 of the report, he stated local managers were enabled to pay PAOT if they believed the risk profile in Berkshire to be at a heightened state. The Vice-Chair also proposed an amendment to the recommendation for an update report be brought back to the Authority in three months.

The Chair echoed the proposal for a report to be brought back to either Management Committee or Fire Authority in the New Year. He also stated Directors will be looking at the data daily following the implementation of this policy.

Councillor Lou Timlin thanked Mark Arkwell for the presentation and stated that she understood the Authority must make difficult decisions. In response to her question on whether the 0.6% impact include 10 additional Firefighters, Mark Arkwell replied it was based on predicted modelling if the Fire appliance came off the run.

The Chair proposed the amended recommendation, which was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

On being put to the vote, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the implementation of Priority 6 through amendments to the Operational Resource Management Policy be noted, and it be agreed that an update of the policy be brought back to Management Committee or Fire Authority in the New Year.

40. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted and an update on CRMP 6 be included to a Management Committee or Fire Authority in three months.

DSL

41. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

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

42. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

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

(The meeting concluded at 18:37)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	13 NOVEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS CONSULTATION
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS, RBFA CHAIR
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	AGREE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To establish a cross-party working group to respond to the Government’s Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority meetings.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **AGREE** the establishment of a cross-party task and finish group of no more than 7 Members to respond to the Government’s Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority meetings by 19 December 2024.

2.2 **AGREE** delegated Authority be given to the Chair on the final consultation response on behalf of the Fire Authority.

2.3 **NOTE** that Royal Berkshire Fire Authority’s response to the consultation will be presented at the next Fire Authority meeting in February 2025.

3. REPORT

3.1 Members may be aware the Deputy Prime Minister announced at the LGA Conference in October 2024 that the Government intends to amend the law to introduce provisions for remote attendance at local authority meetings. It is also considering the option of proxy voting for members. The closing date for this consultation will be on 19 December 2024.

3.2 The Local Government Act 1972 require local authority committees to be held in-person. During national lockdown and COVID-19, the Government introduced remote

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meetings in April 2020 under emergency legislation to enable councils to make critical decisions, however ceased this legislation in May 2021.

- 3.3 The introduction of legislation proved successful, with councils highlighting an increase in participation from both elected members and residents due to better equity of access and an increase in the transparency of decision-making processes.
- 3.4 Currently all Fire Authority and Committee meetings are held in-person. Some Members do attend meetings virtually, however, are unable to vote on decisions. This report is seeking the establishment of a cross-party task and finish group to respond to this important consultation by the closing date.
- 3.5 The consultation document is attached at Appendix A.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.2 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.3 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 None identified.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None identified.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None identified.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None identified.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 None identified.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.
- 10.2 The Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted during the preparation of this report.

- 10.3 The Monitoring Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.
- 10.4 The Chair, Councillor Jeff Brooks was consulted during the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972
- 11.2 [LGA: Give councils flexibility to offer virtual meeting options and open-up local democracy to all](#)
- 11.3 [Impact of in-person council meetings survey 2021](#)
- 11.4 [LGA response to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government remote meetings call for evidence, 10 June 2021](#)

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A - Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead rowef@rbfrs.co.uk

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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Open consultation

Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings

Published 24 October 2024

Applies to England

Contents

Scope of this consultation

Basic information

Ministerial foreword

Who we would like to hear from

The proposal for remote attendance

Proxy voting

About this consultation

Annex A: Personal data

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Appendix A



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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings/enabling-remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting-at-local-authority-meetings>

Topic of this consultation

This short consultation seeks views on the detail and practical implications of allowing remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings in England.

Scope of this consultation

Government is consulting on introducing powers for local authority members to apply to the relevant authority for a dispensation to attend formal council meetings remotely and vote by proxy in certain circumstances.

If any changes to legislation are made as a result of this consultation would apply to England only local authorities meaning:

- a county council
- a unitary authority
- a London borough council
- a district council
- the Common Council of the City of London
- the Greater London Authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- a parish council
- a joint board continued in being by virtue of section 263(1) of the 1972 Act
- a parish meeting constituted under section 13 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Transport for London, Para.5 of Schedule 10 of the GLA 1999 allows the GLA to regulate its own procedures and committees
- an authority established under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint authority established under Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint committee constituted to be a local planning authority under section 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

- a combined county authority established under section 9 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- a fire and rescue authority constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies, or created by an order under section 4A of that Act
- a National Park authority as referenced at section 184 of the LGA 1972 and/or established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995
- the Broads Authority established by section 1 of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988
- a conservation board established under section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- a police and crime panel established under section 28 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Geographical scope

The questions in this consultation apply to all relevant local authorities in England as defined above.

They do **not** apply to authorities in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Impact assessment

If any policy changes are made following this consultation they will be subject to appropriate assessment. No impact assessment has been conducted at this time.

Basic information

This is an open consultation. We particularly seek the views of individual members of the public; prospective and current local authority members/representatives; all relevant local authorities defined above; and those bodies that represent the interests of local members/representatives at all levels.

Body/bodies responsible for the consultation

The Local Government Capability and Improvement Division in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for conducting this consultation.

Duration

This consultation will last for 8 weeks from 24 October 2024.

Enquiries

For any enquiries about the consultation please contact:
remoteattendanceconsultation@communities.gov.uk

How to respond

You can only respond to this consultation through our online consultation platform, Citizen Space. [Respond via Citizen Space \(https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting\)](https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting).

Ministerial foreword

The government has set out its intention to reset the relationship between central and local government as partners in delivering better outcomes for the communities we collectively represent. Key to this is supporting the sector to modernise democratic engagement, raise standards and widen the range of candidates standing for council by removing unnecessary barriers.

The attendance of elected members at local authority meetings is a core part of the democratic process at the local level and is integral to members carrying out their functions effectively. In addition to the value of members coming together to debate and discuss the issues which impact the lives of the people they represent; it is also important that local residents have the

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Appendix A
opportunity to engage directly with the people they have elected to take key decisions on their behalf.

At the same time, the government recognises that there are circumstances in which it may not always be possible for members to attend council meetings in person. It is with this in mind that the government intends to amend the law to introduce provisions for remote attendance at local authority meetings.

The intent is that this increased flexibility will strike the balance between the principle that significant in-person engagement remains vitally important, and a recognition that there will sometimes be a need to accommodate members' requirements to attend council meetings remotely. We hope it will encourage a wider diversity of people willing and able to stand and actively participate in local democracy by creating improved conditions where meetings are accessible and inclusive.

In addition, we are seeking views on the possible introduction of proxy voting for those occasions when an elected member, due to personal circumstances, may be unable to attend even remotely, for example during maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

In line with the government's commitment to working with local government to establish partnerships built on mutual respect, genuine collaboration, and meaningful engagement, this short consultation seeks your views on the detail and practical implications of this proposition to inform our ongoing policy development.

Who we would like to hear from

Responses are invited from local authority elected members, all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. We are also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

Question 1

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as:

a) an elected member – if so please indicate which local authority type(s) you serve on

- Town or Parish Council

- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

b) a council body – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

c) a member of the public

d) a local government sector body – please state

The proposal for remote attendance

The government intends to legislate to give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely. We believe that this modernising measure of providing broad flexibility to enable remote attendance will have the dual positive impacts of diversifying the representation of those willing and able to stand for elected office and enhance the resilience of local authorities in the face of local or national emergencies.

The intent is that this legislative change would give local authorities the flexibility to allow members to attend remotely.

Question 2

Do you agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings?

Yes/No

If you answered No to the above question please go directly to question 4.
Appendix A

Question 3

If you answered Yes to the above question, do you think that there should be specific limitations on remote attendance?

Please tick all the options below that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

a) Any formal meeting allowing remote attendance should have at least two thirds of members in physical attendance.

b) Members should only be able to attend council meetings remotely in exceptional circumstances, such as those who are medically or physically unable to attend, or for reasons of local or national emergencies.

c) There should be no limitations placed upon councils with regard to setting arrangements for remote attendance of council meetings, up to and including full remote attendance.

d) [Free text box]

Question 4

If you are an elected member can you anticipate that you personally may seek to attend some of your council meetings remotely?

- yes
- no
- I am not an elected member

Question 4a

If you answered No please use the free text below

[Free text box]

Question 4b

If you answered Yes, could you indicate below which of the following options best describes your likely pattern of attending meetings remotely

- very occasionally
- from time to time

- regularly but not always
- all the time

Question 5

If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of a council as a whole, what proportion of the council's current elected members are likely to seek to attend council meetings remotely over the course of a year?

- less than 10%
- more than 10% but less than 50%
- more than 50% but less than 90%
- most of them 90% to 100%

Question 6

The government recognises that there may be cases in which it is necessary for councils to hold meetings fully remotely. Do you think there should be limitations placed on the number of fully remote meetings councils should be able to hold?

- a) Councils should be able to allow full remote attendance at up to half of council meetings within a twelve-month calendar period.
- b) Councils should only have the flexibility to change a meeting from in-person to online, or vice versa, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances.
- c) Councils should not have the flexibility to conduct fully remote meetings to ensure there is always an in-person presence.
- d) [Free text box]

Question 7

Do you think there are there any necessary procedural measures that would help to ensure a remote or hybrid attendance policy is workable and efficient?

Please tick all the options that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

- a) Councils should be required to publish a list of attendees joining the meeting remotely and give notice if a meeting is being held with full remote attendance.

b) Councils should be required to ensure that standard constitutional arrangements are followed for hybrid and fully remote meetings.

c) Councils should be required to make arrangements to ensure restricted items (where a council decision is taken in private to protect confidentiality) are managed appropriately and to require remotely attending members to join from a private location.

d) Other [Free text box]

Question 8

Do you think legislative change to allow councillors to attend local authority meetings remotely should or should not be considered for the following reasons?

Tick all the statements below that apply to your point of view.

Should be considered because

Should not be considered because

It is a positive modernising measure.

Councillors should be physically present at all formal meetings.

It would likely increase the diversity of people willing and able to stand for election in their local area, making councils more representative of the communities they serve.

It could lead to a significant number of councillors habitually attending remotely and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of councils.

Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance.

It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues, and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings.

Free text box – please state any other reasons

Free text box – please state any other reasons

Question 9

In your view, would allowing councillors to attend formal local authority meetings remotely according to their needs particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit members
- it would disadvantage members
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

[Free text box]

Proxy voting

Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to another representative to enable a vote in their absence.

It is possible some members may find that, due to their personal circumstances, they are temporarily unable to participate in meetings even if remote attendance provisions are in place. Provisions for proxy voting could provide additional flexibility to those who really need it on a time-limited basis, allowing affected members to indirectly exercise their democratic duty, participate in their local authority's governance, and ensure that their views are taken into consideration. In the context of local authorities, the representative would have to be another elected member of the local authority.

Question 10

In addition to provisions allowing for remote attendance, do you consider that it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting?

- yes
- no
- unsure

Question 11

If yes, for which of the following reasons which may prohibit a member's participation in council meetings do you consider it would be appropriate?

Please select all that apply:

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- physical or medical conditions
- caring responsibilities
- parental leave or other responsibilities
- other [Free text box]

Appendix A

Question 12

Are there circumstances in which you feel proxy voting would not be appropriate?

[Free text box]

Question 13

If you think proxy voting is appropriate, are there any limitations you think should be placed upon it?

[Free text box]

About this consultation

This consultation has been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, as a public authority, the Department is bound by the Freedom of Information Act and may therefore be obliged to disclose all or some of the information you provide. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic

confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

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Appendix A

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the law and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included at Annex A.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed the Consultation Principles? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact us via the [complaints procedure](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>).

Annex A: Personal data

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018. Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the consultation.

1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotection@communities.gov.uk

2. Why we are collecting your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the consultation process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for

3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data

The Data Protection Act 2018 states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a consultation.

4. With whom we will be sharing your personal data

We use a third-party platform, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance, your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based servers.

5. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.

Your personal data will be held for 2 years from the closure of the consultation.

6. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a) to see what data we have about you
- b) to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c) to ask to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d) to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> (<https://ico.org.uk/>), or telephone 0303 123 1113.

7. Your personal data will not be sent overseas

8. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making

9. Your personal data will be stored on a secure government IT system

Your data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible after the consultation has closed, and it will be stored there for the standard 2 years of retention before it is deleted.

OGI

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	13 NOVEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY PLAN UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the progress against delivering the commitments set out on the Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2024-27, as agreed by Fire Authority in February 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **NOTE** the progress against delivery the commitments made in the Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2024-27, and the use of the Transformation Fund to support the delivery of this programme.

2.2 **AGREE** that six monthly progress updates against the Authority’s Efficiency and Productivity Plan updates be provided to the Management Committee.

3. REPORT

3.1 The Fire Authority agreed the Efficiency and Productivity (E&P) Plan 2024-27 in February 2024. The E&P Plan was drawn up with the express purpose of maximising the resources available to support the Fire Authority’s purpose and vision, as set out in the Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan. The projects identified in the Plan seek to improve ways of working through business process improvement, better utilisation of resources and effective use of technology.

3.2 The E&P Plan sets out an efficiency target of £535k for 2024/25, alongside identified areas of focus to support the delivery of productivity gains. The identified efficiencies are intended to enable the release of resources to be reinvested into frontline service delivery, for example, through funding of 10 additional wholtime firefighters. Progress against the efficiency target will be reported via the budget monitoring reports to Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

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3.3 To support the delivery of the E&P Plan, a Productivity Programme has been established to oversee delivery of business improvement and transformational change projects. The Programme for 2024/25 consists of the following projects:

3.4 Understanding Organisational Productivity

3.4.1 The purpose of this project is to better understand data requirements for assessing current levels of productivity within the Service. The project is reviewing current data sets and identifying opportunities to improve our understanding of organisational capacity.

3.4.2 As part of this project we are carrying out time and motion studies across the Service to better understand where staff are losing time to inefficient business processes and systems. The project will identify ways in which we can release capacity in support of organisational priorities such as the training and development of our operational staff. The time and motion studies will also be key to understanding whether we have realised the intended 'time saving' benefits of our E&P Plan projects.

3.4.3 The project has recently trialled time and motion studies in four stations and is in the process of analysing the findings. The findings will be used to inform future projects as part of the Productivity Programme. We are shortly due to commence similar time and motion studies in Prevention and Protection.

Further information on the objectives and expected benefits of this work is contained in **Appendix A**.

3.5 Better use of Microsoft 365

3.5.1 Significant progress has been made by the Service in its adoption of Microsoft 365. We have been focusing on employing the Microsoft 365 toolset more widely across the Service, to improve our ways of working through automation and augmentation by artificial intelligence. To continue this journey, we have recruited a Microsoft 365 and Process Improvement Specialist, utilising the Transformation Fund, to continue to drive the adoption, consolidation and automation of activities within the Microsoft 365 ecosystem and create a pathway for all staff to improve their skills within the platform.

3.5.2 A project has been commissioned to deliver business process improvement through the use of Microsoft 365. The objectives of this project are to:

- **Improve data management:** The establishment of a clear governance structure will ensure data integrity and security through Microsoft 365.
- **Improve management information:** Introducing digital solutions will make the data more consistent, visible and reportable.
- **Increase efficiency:** Optimising the utilisation of SharePoint and Microsoft Productivity apps will provide team members with the tools they need to work more efficiently.

- **Better Knowledge Management:** Enforcing a single source of truth for all organisational data, reducing confusion.
- **Streamlined Request and Prioritisation Process:** Creating a clear request and prioritisation tool for visibility and tracking will streamline workflows and allow customers to see that the service is investing in making the process of delivering efficiencies more streamlined and transparent.
- **Standardising knowledge:** introduction of training sessions both for existing and new employees will improve adoption to Microsoft.

3.5.3 In addition to a project looking broadly at the use of Microsoft 365, a separate project has been commissioned to introduce the use of **Microsoft Power Bi**, a data visualisation platform, to the Service. Power Bi will enable staff to visualise and analyse data to support business intelligence and enable more effective management of services. Currently, the process for accessing performance information is time consuming and can be, for a non-specialist user, inaccessible and challenging to analyse.

3.5.4 The integration of Power Bi will release management time and enable greater access to live performance information, through integration with data held in our existing systems, into a single management platform. This work has started and we are currently developing Power Bi with information related to our operational risk visits to test our use of the system, with an anticipated go live date for this information of January 2025.

3.5.5 A presentation will accompany this report at the Fire Authority to provide a selection of case studies to demonstrate how work undertaken to date is already achieving efficiency savings and productivity gains for the Authority, particularly in relation to the use of Microsoft 365.

3.6 Protection and Prevention Improved Ways of Working

3.6.1 The Service has identified a need to replace its IBIS system, which effectively acts as a database for the risk information held by the Service and is used in support of risk-critical Service Delivery activity.

3.6.2 The system was built in-house for Fire Safety and Incident Data and has grown exponentially over the years to hold a vast amount of data and information. IBIS continues to be maintained, developed and supported in-house and requires specialist support. As a result of its specialist nature and the criticality of the system in supporting the delivery of Protection and Prevention activity its ongoing use has been identified as a Corporate Risk (Risk 955).

3.6.3 Critical to the system is the 'Addressbase' data which is used to identify premise information, to identify community risk and operational risk information. The Service has identified improvements that can be made to our management of this data and the business processes that support its use (Corporate Risk 954).

3.6.4 The replacement of IBIS, underpinned by improved management and use of data, is a significant project that will span multiple years. To support the delivery of the project, we are recruiting a specialist Business Analyst using Transformation

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Funding to produce and analyse current processes and data flows. The Business Analyst will use this information to identify, implement and evaluate improvements and new ways of working, ensuring robust processes and governance is in place to maintain accurate data and specify the requirements of a system replacement for IBIS.

- 3.6.5 Following the recruitment to this post, we will be scoping the project further and developing a Project Initiation Document.
- 3.7 Assets and Standard Checks Digitisation Pilot
 - 3.7.1 We require a fully integrated system in which to effectively capture assets whilst enabling the accurate tracking of their value. This project will result in us reviewing and automating business processes to enable auditing of equipment on appliances. This will enable us to reduce the effort taken to perform standard equipment checks by crews, whilst improving our physical and financial management of assets.
 - 3.7.2 The automation of the 'equipment checking' process, where firefighters manually check their appliances to ensure all items are present, was identified as a potential opportunity to deliver productivity gains on station. This new process would comprise of placing coded labels on each item of equipment to be scanned by the user. This would result in a quick inventory checking mechanism via RBFRS' core operational system Firewatch (FW) as opposed to staff manually scribing and uploading the information. It would also ensure any new items purchased by Stores are tracked and included on budgetary reporting where appropriate and that there is a record of decommissioning and disposal of items. Maintenance information and the ability to report defects will also be accessible via the coding. It will flag to the user when equipment tests are due or when it is due for decommissioning. Effectively this will result in complete management of assets throughout their life cycle.
 - 3.7.3 Time and motion studies will be used to support understanding of time saved by crews. The project team estimates standard checks account for 240 hours per annum. The pilot anticipates a 66% saving in time spent on this activity post automation.
 - 3.7.4 We are currently trialling the automation of this process with stations via the Firewatch system. The pilot is expected to be evaluated against set criteria by April 2025. Further information on the objectives and expected benefits of this work is contained in **Appendix B**.
- 3.8 Staff Development System Replacement
 - 3.8.1 RBFRS operates a range of electronic systems and manual processes to facilitate and manage staff development and the performance management of individuals and teams. The processes and systems are not integrated and their fitness for purpose is increasingly in question. This project will support improved usability and accessibility for managers and staff, to reduce time and capacity associated with procuring, managing, administering, and using multiple systems, and to improve data intelligence and reporting to support organisational growth, development, and performance.

- 3.8.2 The project is targeting implementation of the new solution by September 2025. The project is currently at a procurement stage. Further information on the objectives and expected benefits of this work is contained in **Appendix C**.
- 3.9 Finance System Replacement
- 3.9.1 With our current financial system at end of life and support ceasing in December 2024, the Finance System Replacement Project will procure and implement a new and modern finance system.
- 3.9.2 The project will review and refresh processes and procedures, introducing new ways of working in Finance and Procurement, and automation where possible. The project aims to introduce a modern cloud solution enabling improved integration, providing a functionally richer system minimising manual tasks, introducing data visualisations, and reducing organisational risk. This results in improved productivity and produces cost efficiencies in the longer term.
- 3.9.3 The project is currently at a procurement stage. Further information on the objectives and expected benefits of this work is contained in **Appendix D**.
- 3.10 Further to projects identified above, a number of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) priorities also support the delivery of the E&P Plan including the recent changes to the Automatic Fire Alarms Policy and Priority Six and the provision of 14 appliances through the utilisation of on-call and wholetime resources. The Service is in the process of establishing and resourcing a project to deliver Priority Three of the CRMP which sets out that we will develop our response model to ensure that we are providing the most effective response to incidents within Berkshire, ensuring that it is aligned to the risks identified, sustainable and provides value for money. Additional resources to support the delivery of this work has been enabled via the Transformation Fund.
- 3.11 The E&P Plan also has interdependencies with the delivery of the Strategic Assets Investment Framework. As well as addressing immediate pressures in the revenue budget, it is essential that we plan to reduce future pressures. To this end, over the medium-term, the Authority has devoted a proportion of its capital expenditure to invest-to-save projects that will not only lower utility costs but also reduce our carbon emissions. Projects that are being progressed over the medium term are set out in the Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework. In support of these commitments, the Authority recently approved the Sustainability Strategy with the Chair and Chief Fire Officer signing the Sustainable Development Policy Statement.
- 3.12 Further to the specific projects identified with the E&P Plan, the Head of Business Information and Systems is currently developing a new ICT Strategy to build on previous iterations. The 2024-2029 ICT Strategy will harness the best available technology, to enhance service delivery, operational efficiency and resilience. Building on the progress made during 2019-2024 this Strategy will address emerging public sector trends and will incorporate advancements in ICT and data, including artificial intelligence, to future-proof the organisation's capabilities. The new Strategy has been drafted and is intended to build further upon our use of Microsoft 365 and will be key to identifying future projects to support the delivery of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan.

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- 3.13 The Fire Authority has allocated £900k to a Transformation Fund to support improved ways of working within the Service. Whilst this Fund is not exclusively allocated to the E&P Plan (as organisational transformation extends beyond this programme of work) a significant amount of this funding has been set aside to resource the delivery of the projects associated with this Plan. Table 1 includes all funding that has been allocated to-date.
- 3.14 As Table 1 sets out, most of this funding has now been allocated. Whilst this funding has enabled a good deal of progress, the potential for future change and improvement is vast and as we identify opportunities for business improvement and better use of technology, our ability to deliver against this programme may be limited by existing capacity and capabilities.

Table 1 – Transformation Fund

Description	Period	Funding Allocated
Asset Management Project Assistant	18 Months	33,320
M65 and Business Process Improvement Specialist	2 Years	93,938
Business Analyst – Prevention and Protection	18 Months	105,000
Technical Project Manager	2 Years	136,210
Community & Risk Analyst	18 Months	58,743
CRMP Priority Three Group Manager Change and Improvement	2 Years	148,867
CRMP Priority Three Station Manager Change and Improvement	2 Years	128,606
Organisational Development Project Manager*	12 Months	93,150
Learning and Development Project Manager*	12 Months	80,730
Unallocated		21,436
Allocated		878,564

*These posts are in place to support the delivery of the Service's Culture Plan and People Strategy and do not form part of the E&P Plan.

- 3.15 As part of the Efficiency and Productivity Programme, we have developed a range of tools to support both the prioritisation of future work, alongside the tracking of benefits associated with our commissioned work. In future reports to Management Committee, we will be reporting on the prioritisation of our work plans, as well as the benefits realised through these workstreams and the return on investment in transformational change by the fire Authority.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 The priorities set out in the E&P Plan is supports the delivery of all six Strategic Commitments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report sets out the use of the Transformation Fund to support the delivery of the current projects within the E&P Plan.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Fire Authority has a statutory duty to manage its budget and spend money properly and appropriately and ensure the efficient and effective use of their resources, pursuing all feasible opportunities to keep costs down while discharging their core duties effectively.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 All projects within the Efficiency Productivity Programme are equality impact accessed.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Corporate Risk: A number of the projects identified within the E&P Plan, directly contribute to managing and mitigating identified Corporate Risk.
- 8.2 Transformation Funding: The identification of future improvements and transformation may be limited by existing capacity and capabilities.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 In the development of all projects, the Service will consider the opportunities to collaborate in support of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Senior Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2024-2027
- 11.2 Corporate Plan and Community Risk Management Plan 2023-2027
- 11.3 Strategic Asset Investment Framework

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12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A: Understanding Organisational Capacity

12.2 Appendix B: Asset and Standard Checks Digitisation

12.3 Appendix C: Staff Development System

12.4 Appendix D: Finance Replacement System

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Katie Mills, Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Service Delivery

Understanding Organisational Capacity

Objectives:

- Understand the data requirements for assessing current levels of productivity / efficiency across the Organisation. This project will only cover data that is pertinent to improving productivity of our workforce.
- Build understanding of our Capacity Vs What we do, through the Utilisation Survey, Time and Motion Studies, current data sets and other data sources.
- With a focus initially on Response, moving to Protection and Prevention and then the Wider Service. Produce a detailed analysis and recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Enhance our productivity metrics to demonstrate how the organisation measures productivity.
- Make recommendations for the utilisation of new applications and processes to contribute towards continuous improvement.
- Satisfy the HMICFRS area for improvement linked to the efficiency pillar as described above.
- Identify an appropriate resource to establish and implement a benefits tracker to monitor Productivity and Efficiency gains.
- The sector is continually developing in this area. This project will consciously maintain a close link into the wider sector and where appropriate will consider whether what the sector is establishing would be beneficial for RBFRS to adopt.

Benefits:

- New opportunities to improve the data quality in relation to the productivity of its workforce.
- Improved understanding of the capacity of its workforce with a view of recommending some changes to improve productivity.
- Reinvestment of staff capacity to support the delivery of organisational priorities.
- The improvements provided by this project will ensure RBFRS is able to meet the requirements as set out by HMICFRS in the efficiency area of an inspection.
- Better understanding of technology that is required to improve productivity.
- With a high proportion of the Operational workforce being in development, it is envisaged that this project, using the data available, will ensure sufficient time is being spent on training and development.

Assets and Standard Checks Digitisation

Pilot Objectives:

- Assess operational equipment data on Firewatch to ensure it has consistent terminology and is up to date on a locker-by-locker basis for pumping appliances selected for the trial
- To set up a comprehensive taxonomy that can categorise all equipment items, locker by locker for pumping appliances on the trial stations
- Test the proposed scanning concept from equipment tagging to data capture
- To fully engage the operational user group on the trial stations to gain buy in and gather improvement suggestions
- Provide provision of reports to assist with the process and for appreciation of managers
- To replicate the scanning process for special appliances on completion of the pumping appliances

Benefits:

- Efficiencies in inventory checking by station staff
- Improved quality of recorded equipment data by eliminating the need to manually update an Excel spreadsheet
- Enable full audit trail for entire life cycle of all operational items
- Efficiencies in returning equipment after swap over at an incident

Staff Development System

Objectives:

- To implement a transparent, integrated, intuitive HR information and learning management system to facilitate organisational growth, development, and performance.
- Provide staff with a user friendly and intuitive system to drive their own development and performance.
- Facilitate managers in robustly managing the development and performance of individual staff members and teams.
- Simplify and negate the use of multiple electronic and manual systems, digitising these processes and the overly complex and time-consuming administration procedures being used currently.
- Improve integration of systems and processes, to provide a one stop shop, to achieve time saving and capacity efficiencies for managers and staff.
- Improve the relevance, accuracy, and usefulness of data. Ability to interrogate data, and improve trend identification, analytics, data intelligence and reporting to provide a better evidence base for decision making and risk management.
- Provide accessibility from a range of devices, meeting accessibility standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - WCAG).
- Improve the resilience of our development, support and performance capability by partnering with a supplier who can host the new solution and provide industry experts to help evolve the application moving forward, therefore providing a future proof solution.
- Provide data storage, with streamlined and improved archiving and destruction processes, supporting compliance with GDPR and ease of access to information for reporting.

Benefits to be Delivered

- The new system will release time and capacity across the Service in creating an improved and intuitive user experience.
- The solution may improve organisational capacity, staff development timeframes, lack of experience in the operational cohort and data compliance, reducing risk in these areas.
- Improved data storage and reporting will aid decision making and risk management and assist compliance with audits and external verifiers.
- The streamlining of systems will improve the ability to comply with Equality Act and General Data Protection Regulations and Data Subject Access Requests as information will be more accessible and contained in one place.
- Ability to progress talent management, succession planning and identification of potential through greater visibility of staff development and performance outcomes.

Measures of success and benefits realisation need to be further defined once the new solution is procured and understood.

In addition, non-monetary benefits are as follows.

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- Time and capacity burden for all staff and managers reduced as:
 - Data for performance management and staff development held in one place.
 - Ability to manage concurrent development and performance activity from one place managed through dashboards.
 - Current manual processes digitised (e.g. PDR).
 - Course bookings switch to self-service.
 - Reduces training burden and upskilling requirements – only need to know how to use one system.

- Time and capacity burden for managers/central teams (R&D, HR, BIS, Procurement) reduced as:
 - Minimises volume of procurement processes required.
 - Minimises volume of contract management requirements.
 - System development, ongoing administration and support reduced from 3-5 systems to one system.
 - Additional reporting functionality.

- Improved accessibility going forward as:
 - System available across a range of devices.
 - WCAG compliance.
 - Information not currently digitised will be accessible.
 - New opportunities for data intelligence to inform decision-making and risk management.
 - Integration with other RBFRS systems (e.g. Firewatch and MS 365).

- Security improvements.
 - Security improvements, including single sign on.
 - Compliance with GDPR records and data in one place, with more effective storage, interrogation, and destruction of data.

- Future focused/future proof solution.
 - Solution fit for the future.
 - Solution provides the foundation for future developments and enhancements.

Finance System Replacement

Objectives:

Phase 0:

- Procurement of new solution, via framework. **(November)**

Phase 1, by October 2025:

- Introduce a new finance solution, providing core finance capability, with minimum disruption to existing users and the day to day running of organisation.
- Identify and deliver process efficiencies through automation and new ways of working.
- Comprehensive training and support to existing and new users, in preparation for rollout.
- Provide accessible reporting, including the ability to collate reports using non-financial information from other RBFRS systems, e.g. headcount data
- Implement budget forecasting.
- Proof of concept for Contracts Management module.
- Ensure appropriate level of support is available from the Finance Systems Manager and IT.
- Resolve basic level user issues in-house.

Full implementation of the Budget Module, to support budget setting, and full utilisation of the Contracts Module, will follow the initial October implementation (date TBC).

Any additional future phases will be subject to an approved business case. Future phases could include:

- Fixed Assets module.
- Stock Inventory module.
- Expenses module, to replace Certify.
- Payroll, to replace Dataplan.

Benefits:

- Reduces financial risk due to reconciliation.
- Mitigates the risk of working on an unsupported system.

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- Better user experience/ users happier to engage with processes. Measure – user feedback/survey.
- Non-financial, real-time data to be held and used in a finance system e.g. establishment.
- Better assurance of the finance function thereby proving, to the Fire Authority, that RBFRS is providing value for money
- Increased process automation and less manual intervention leading to fewer mistakes.
- Increased efficiency in financial activities.
- Removal of old server and associated costs.

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	13 NOVEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2024/25
LEAD OFFICER	CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT
LEAD MEMBER	COUNILLOR JEFF BROOKS, CHAIR AND FINANCE LEAD
EXEMPT INFORMATION	N/A
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present the Annual Treasury Report for 2023/24 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2024/25, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the Annual Treasury Report for 2023/24.
2.2 **NOTE** the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2024/25.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 Treasury management in local Government during 2023/24 and 2024/25 has been regulated by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
3.2 The Annual Treasury Report for 2023/24 is shown as **Appendix A**. Performance is in line with the prudential indicators approved by the Authority in February 2023.

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- 3.3 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2024/25 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 high rates available to place a number of fixed term deposits during 2024/25 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 2023/24 financial year totalled £786,000. Estimated interest income to be received in 2024/25 is £737,000.

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 2023/24 approved by the Authority on 15 February 2023.
- 11.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 approved by the Authority on 15 February 2024.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Annual Treasury Report 2023/24
- 12.2 Appendix B – Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2024/25

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Irene Kema Onyeri – Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement
kemai@rbfrs.co.uk

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ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

End of year review reflecting performance in 2023/24 and the position as at 31 March 2024.





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 2023/24. 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 2023/24 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 15/02/2023)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Fire Authority 19/12/2023)
- 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.



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

	2022/23 Actual (£000's)	2023/24 Original Planned (£000's)	2023/24 Actual (£000's)
Capital Expenditure	1,670	4,672	1,079
Financed in year	1,670	4,672	1,079
Unfinanced capital expenditure	0	0	

The 2023/24 original planned expenditure included £2.9m for Training Centre rebuild and Slough Fire Station refurbishment, Training Centre main upgrade for the Decant was completed in Q4 and phase 2 commenced in Q2 of 24/25. Slough Station ground floor works was handed to the station in Q1 2024/25, and the first-floor works was completed in Q2 2024/25. Investment in new fleet were delayed much longer than previously anticipated due to long lead times; vehicles ordered in early 2022/23 were delivered in Q1 and Q2 of 2024/25. MDT Refresh, DCS implementation (SanH) projects were completed in Q4, whilst Station End Refresh and Hardware- Laptops project was completed in Q1 of 2024/25

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 (2022/23) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2023/24) 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 2023/24. The table below highlights the Authority's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Authority has complied with this prudential indicator.

	2022/23 Actual (£000's)	2023/24 Budget (£000's)	2023/24 Actual (£000's)
Gross Borrowing position	8,922	8,922	8,922



CFR	10,770	10,085	9,750
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There was no new borrowing in 2023/24.

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 2023/24 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.

	2023/24 (£000's)
Authorised Limit	14,422
Maximum gross borrowing position	8,922
Operational boundary	9,022
Average gross borrowing position	8,922
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	1.95%



Treasury Position as at 31 March 2024

At the beginning and the end of 2023/24, the Authority's treasury position was as follows:

	31 st March 2023 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)	31 st March 2024 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)
Debt:						
Fixed Rate Funding						
- PWLB	8,922	4.4%	8.9	8,922	4.4%	7.9
CFR	10,770			9,750		
Over / (Under) borrowing	(1,848)			(828)		
Investments:						
Call accounts	4,967	2.88%		10,662	3.57%	
Short Term	6,084	3.73%		4,222	5.46%	
Long Term	618	2.68%		364	5.75%	
Total Investments	11,669			15,248		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31 st March 2023 Actual (£000's)	31 st March 2024 Actual (£000's)
Under 12 months	0	0
12 months and within 24 months	0	394
24 Months and within 5 Years	991	597
5 Years and within 10 years	3,581	3,581
10 Years and within 20 Years	1,350	1,350
20 Years and within 30 Years	3,000	3,000
Total	8,922	8,922



The Strategy for 2023/24

Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment returns remained steady throughout the course of 2023/24 as the Bank of England's MPC monetary policy was set to meet the 2% inflation target in order to sustain growth.

In May 2023, Bank Rate increased by 0.25% to reach 4.5%, in June Bank Rates moved up again by 0.5% and 0.25% in September reaching 5.25% 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 in 2023/24, is £8,922k

During 2023/24, 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.

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 2023. 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 –the Authority had investments totalling £15.25m at the end of 2023/24, 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 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 several counterparties 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.

Borrowing Outturn

The Authority’s debt position in 2023/24, is £8,922k. No debt rescheduling was undertaken.

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Appendix A

TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mid-year review reflecting
performance and the position as
at 30 September 2024





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 2024/25 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 2024/25.
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2024/25.
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2024/25.
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2024/25.



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% in September 2024.

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 decreases, the investment rates we are able to access, and therefore the return we generate, should also decrease.

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 2024/25 were approved by Fire Authority on 15 February 2024. 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 expected outturn for 2024/25, and the spend to the end of September 2024.

Capital Expenditure	2024/25 Expected Outturn (£000's)	Actual costs as at 30 September 2024 (£000's)
Property	4525	944
Fleet & Equipment	1397	657
ICT	1788	295
TOTAL	7,710	1,896

Training Centre phase 2 contract commenced with ground breaking on the 26th of July 2024 and demolition work on the 5th of August 2024. Slough refurbishment was



completed in August 2024. The modifications to Slough Fire Station to accommodate the water rescue facility were also completed. LED Lighting contract was awarded, and the project is anticipated to commence in the third quarter.

White fleet (including EV Vehicles) ordered were delivered: a Fiat Ducato was delivered in the first quarter; three Skoda vehicles were delivered in July 2024 and one Ford Ranger was delivered in August 2024. The purchase of six additional light vehicles in 2024/25 has been approved.

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 2024/25 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

	2024/25 Original Estimate (£000's)	Position as at 30 September 2024 (£000's)	2024/25 Revised Estimate (£000's)
Debt	8,922	8,922	8,922

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 2024/25, 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.



Authorised Limit for External Debt	2024/25 Original Estimate (£000's)	Position as at 30 September 2024 (£000's)	2024/25 Revised Estimate (£000's)
Debt	11,535	11,535	11,535
Other long-term liabilities	5,000	0	0
Total	16,535	11,535	11,535

The amount under *Other long-term liabilities* reflects the reclassified leases under the accounting standard IFRS 16. Subsequent work has identified that there are no other long-term liabilities relating to IFRS 16.

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 2024 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 several 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 remains high, the Authority will continue to benefit from this when placing further investments in the future and maximise return.

The Authority held investments totalling £17.229m as at 30th September 2024.



	30 Sept 2024 Principal (£000's)	Average Rate / Return
Investments:		
Fixed Term Deposits	7,000	5.25%
Call Accounts	10,229	4.88%
Total Investments	17,229	

The Chief Financial Officer confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2024/25.

The budgeted investment return for 2024/25 is £460,000. With the additional investments made outlined above, the Authority estimates that the total return in 2024/25 will be £737,000. This area is closely monitored as part of standard cash flow management procedures.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) estimate for 2024/25 is £9,535k. 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

At the 18 September 2024 meeting, The MPC voted by a majority of eight members-one to maintain Bank Rate at 5%. One member voted to reduce Bank Rate by 0.25% to 4.75%.

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Appendix B

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	13 NOVEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) JOINT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 23/24
LEAD OFFICER	JIM POWELL, AREA MANAGER COLLABORTION AND POLICY
LEAD MEMBER	COIUNCILLOR PETER FREWER, COUNCILLOR SIMON WERNER
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	TO NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To provide a high-level summary of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) activity during the year 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Fire Authority **NOTE** the report.

3. REPORT

3.1 An annual report is produced each year by RBFA members who form part of the Thames Valley Fire Control Joint Committee. In 2023/24 RBFA was represented by Cllr Simon Werner and Cllr Peter Frewer.

3.2 This report will provide a high-level overview of control room activity and any progress made in relation to service plans and performance, including a look at staffing and a summary of the financial position at year end. Finally, it will provide a look forward to 2024/25 and the key areas of work required to continue making improvements to TVFCS on behalf of the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (FRS).

3.3 TVFCS continues to be the flagship of collaboration in the region since going live in April 2015. The control centre handles calls and mobilises resources for the three Thames Valley FRS.

3.4 Governance of TVFCS is undertaken by elected members, two from each contributing authority, who form the TVFCS Joint Committee. Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) from each TV FRS form the Joint Coordinating Group (JCG) and

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support the control manager to monitor and manage performance, reporting into the Joint Committee.

- 3.5 The service utilises a single employer model with a single mobilising system, which has delivered significant cost efficiencies to all three authorities. Increased resilience, efficiency and improved performance will result in collective savings of over £1 million a year over a 15-year period up to 2030.

PERFORMANCE

- 3.6 TVFCS is measured against a set of targets agreed by Joint Coordinating Group and endorsed by the Joint Committee and these are reviewed as part of the scrutiny of performance reporting. During the last year, a new set of measures and approach to reporting has been developed by the Joint Coordinating Group in response to feedback from Committee members which highlight key performance metrics, staff attendance and activities where TVFCS provide added value to the communities of the Thames Valley.
- 3.7 TVFCS has performed well against the existing measure for how quickly calls are answered during the year, with the target exceeded on the majority of occasions.
- 3.8 The measures used to monitor the speed with which TVFCS mobilise fire appliances in response to calls were revised in 2022/23 and have been reviewed on a monthly basis over the course of the year. It has been identified that further information is required to enable the TVFCS management team to identify the causes of lower than expected performance levels for specific types of incidents. New reports have been commissioned to support this, with the information captured to be included in TVFCS performance reporting for the 2024/25 financial year.

STAFFING

- 3.9 TVFCS staff turnover has reduced compared with the previous financial year, but still remains higher than the levels experienced prior to the Covid19 pandemic. This is an issue that has been experienced nationally across most Fire Control rooms in the United Kingdom, and an NFCC working group has been established to look at improving staff recruitment and retention, which TVFCS are engaged with. The TVFCS Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) and management team are reviewing leaver data and working together to identify local solutions.
- 3.10 It has continued to be possible to fill internal vacancies for Supervisory and Middle Management roles with internal candidates, demonstrating the progress that has been made in terms of staff development and succession planning.
- 3.11 Levels of sickness absence have been higher than anticipated in the second half of the last year, with a notable increase in staff absent as a result of longer-term sickness. The TVFCS management team are working with the RBFMS Health and Wellbeing Manager to identify ways in which we can positively impact the health and wellbeing of TVFCS staff.

NOTABLE ACTIVITY

- 3.12 Whilst the Thames Valley did not experience the extreme summer weather conditions experienced in 2022, the wetter than normal weather experienced in January caused an increase in demand, with call volumes being over 20% higher than would normally be expected.
- 3.13 In September, TVFCS completed a hardware refresh of the Vision Command & Control system. This is a challenging activity, as it involves the migration of the service from the old hardware onto the new, whilst maintaining business as usual levels of service. Close co-operation between TVFCS, the 3 Fire & Rescue Services and the system supplier meant that the works were completed with only minimal disruptions to operational activity.
- 3.14 In October, TVFCS commenced work to migrate the service from the legacy 'SAN H' connection to the national Airwave radio network onto the replacement 'DCS' connection. This was a complex piece of work, requiring coordination between our systems supplier, NEC, Airwave and TVFCS. The final elements of the work were completed during Q4. This key piece of work will allow TVFCS to continue to connect to the Airwave network for the remainder of its operational life and will also allow a connection to ESN when this is eventually delivered.
- 3.15 In December, TVFCS delivered another key piece of technical work to replace the legacy system used by supervisory managers to monitor Control room operators whilst handling emergency '999' calls. These works were completed ahead of schedule and the new, improved system has been well received by TVFCS Control room staff.
- 3.16 Following the appointment of a temporary Watch Manager in September 2023, TVFCS have begun to make good progress in the adoption of National Operational Guidance for Fire Controls. Full adoption of this guidance will align TVFCS with accepted industry best practice and will form the basis of a new maintenance of knowledge and skills system for TVFCS staff.

LOOKING FORWARD

- 3.17 In Q3 2024/25, TVFCS are expecting to complete a hardware refresh of the Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS), which handles all radio and telephone calls made by or to TVFCS. This will be the final technical refresh of TVFCS systems during the current contract and will provide TVFCS with a stable platform which complies with ICT security requirements until the end of the contract term.
- 3.18 TVFCS expect to adopt Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) technology during the course of the coming year. Adoption of this national initiative will enable TVFCS to exchange incident details with other Fire Control rooms across England electronically without the need for a telephone or radio call, which will improve efficiency and reduce the possibility of errors in the exchange of information. Area Manager Jim Powell (RBFRS) is the strategic lead for MAIT for the National Fire Chiefs Council.
- 3.19 The Joint Coordination Group will continue to progress work to improve the staffing resilience of TVFCS.

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4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.3 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.4 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 The budget for TVFCS is set at the December meeting of the Joint Committee each year. The budget for TVFCS for 2023/24 was £2,639,306. At year end, the actual expenditure was £2,696,706 creating a variance of £57,400 (2.17%). The principal cause being pay awards in both 2022 and 2023 being higher than forecast.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report conforms to the requirements of the TVFCS Inter Authority Agreement.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no risk implications directly associated with this report. Risks relating to future activity are captured in the TVFCS risk register and reviewed regularly by the SROs.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 TVFCS is an existing collaboration between RBFA, BMKFA and OCC.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer.
- 10.2 Chief Finance Officer.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 None.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Area Manager Jim Powell powelli@rbfrs.co.uk

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	13 NOVEMBER 2024
SUBJECT	ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE
LEAD OFFICER	PAUL BREMBLE, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR TRICIA BROWN
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To receive the recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 28 March 2024 to note the Annual Report on Governance detailing Member Attendance and Allowances in 2023/24.
- 1.2 Appendices A and B (Members Allowances and Attendance) are shown from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the report;
- 2.2 **NOTE** Members' Allowances received from 1 June 2023 – 31 May 2024; and
- 2.3 **NOTE** the 2023/24 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members from 1 June 2023 – 31 May 2024.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 At the beginning of 2023/24 municipal year, Audit and Governance Committee was presented with 12 Areas For Improvement (AFI) that were identified following the graded judgment of 'Good' by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

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inspection in January 2023. Workforce planning on the AFI action plan on areas of effectiveness, efficiency, and people has commenced. An example being the number of Firefighter Apprentice recruitment campaigns held in the last year and initiatives made to create positive action opportunities to increase the diversity of the Service.

- 3.2 We received a positive annual report from the Pension Board and learnt of the complexities associated with the age discrimination remedy to the McCloud and Matthews cases. We were reassured to hear from the Head of Human Resources and Learning Development (HHR&L&D) that the Service was working hard to ensure they were on top of resolving matters within the allocated timeframe to Firefighters Pensions.
- 3.3 We were also informed that regular contract meetings were held with Pension Administration providers, Pension Board Chair and HR Advisers to review performance targets.
- 3.4 RSM (Internal Auditor's) 2022/23 audit for Governance and Risk Management found consistent controls within Governance and Risk Management. The overall audit opinion was positive, and their annual report detailed the Service as having an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance, and internal control. There was a low management action on Member Development skill-based questionnaires. The auditors found only 11 members had completed the skills questionnaire and identified this as a risk that group leaders may not be able to match appropriate skills and interests ahead of Fire Authority annual meeting and equally, Democratic Support Team would be unable to signpost members to specific training. However, the onus is on all Fire Authority Members in assisting Group Leaders and Democratic Support Team by completing this form (skills-questionnaire).
- 3.5 The 2023/24 Governance and Risk audit gave another positive audit opinion and stated, overall, the review found there were well-designed and consistently applied controls regarding key areas of risk and governance. RSM identified the Service had a Corporate and Annual Plan in place alongside a Performance Management Framework to support the achievement of strategic objectives, minutes and papers from key governance forums displayed clear discussion and scrutiny in line with their respective Terms of Reference, and mechanisms were in place to support Member development.
- 3.6 The 2020/21 Statements Accounts were signed off by Audit and Governance Committee in October 2023 following delays in Deloitte's audit of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund along with a change in calculation of property valuations. The Committee has continued to seek regular updates from our External auditors (Ernst and Young (EY)) on the additional delay of signing off 2021/22 and 22/23 Statement of Accounts. The Committee has acknowledged that this Authority is not alone, and as of 30 October 2023, 475 local authorities were also affected and only five authorities' 2022/23

Statement of Accounts were audited by the required deadline of 30 September 2023.

- 3.7 The Quarterly Performance reports highlighted fire risks associated with e-bike scooters, progress made against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives, road and water safety education programmes and the cost-of-living crisis identified as part of the Corporate Risk Register, to name but a few. We learned that the Erleigh Road fire incident in Reading impacted the target of zero fire deaths. The positive news following this tragedy was the Service were able to reach over 600 members of the community and gathered 43 referrals for Safe and Well visits.
- 3.8 The Service has made a good start against our six priorities of our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) commitments published in our 2023/24 Annual Plan. A series of staff conferences were held in quarter two to launch the Service's purpose and vision as well as engaging staff in Active Bystander training.
- 3.9 In January 2024, an internal audit update confirmed that over half of the audits have now been finalised. The low statistic for the completion of the Protecting Information by all staff is a concerning 53%. Although this has since increased, it is still way off 100%. All staff need to complete this training asap to ensure our security measures are as robust as possible. Fire Authority Members are also required to demonstrate they have read relevant policies around Protecting Information, of which at the time of writing, all Members have confirmed. This is an annual requirement; therefore, it will not be too long before Members are requested to complete this task again.
- 3.10 An in-depth report of the Pay Policy Statement and Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap report was provided during the year. This showed there is a lack of diversity within the Service, however in referring to paragraph 3.1, it was pleasing to hear of the many ways the Service are actively looking to improve this.

Governance

- 3.11 No formal complaints have been received against Members this year. It is reassuring that the Authority have potentially six Independent Person (s) on standby, should we need them to investigate complaints against Members, alongside our Monitoring Officer, Graham Britten.

Member Allowances

- 3.12 During the year (from 1 November 2023) Members Allowances were increased following National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services pay agreement for Green Book staff. Members Allowances are indexed to Green Book pay conditions. Allowances were increased to 3.88% and this percentage was backdated to 1 April 2023.

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- 3.13 In addition, Audit and Governance Committee recommended the Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances to the Fire Authority which was approved on 8 November 2023 (minute reference 31). The Independent Review recommended an increase of the average day spent on Fire Authority business from 18 to 19 days per year, therefore a small increase will be made to allowances from 1 April 2024.
- 3.14 Member Allowances for the period of 1 June 2023 – 31 May 2024 are shown in **Appendix A**. The increase in allowances recommended by the Independent Review is reflected in Appendix A.

Member Attendance

- 3.15 The attendance record of Members in 2023/24, is shown in Appendix B of this report. The Appendix include all meetings up to the 31 May 2024. Member attendance has been good with no meetings being inquorate, and all business being able to be conducted. Committee meeting absences have often been due to Unitary Authority meeting clashes, and apologies, when received, have generally been in good time.
- 3.16 Meeting clashes with Unitary Authority committees are unavoidable, however the Democratic Support Team liaise annually with their counterparts in each of the six Councils to ensure Fire Authority meetings do not clash with respective full Council meetings.
- 3.17 Appendix B details Committee meeting attendance only (meetings which have been held in public) and does not include Member attendance at Member briefings and events held during the year. These include Working Groups, Fire Liaison Group meetings, briefings, Armed Forces meetings, Thames Valley Collaboration Steering Group meetings and Member Development courses.

4 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no risk implications in this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 None for the purpose of this report.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Audit and Governance Committee meetings in 2023/24.

11.2 Fire Authority – 8 November 2023 agenda and minutes.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Members’ Allowances.

12.2 Appendix B – Members’ Attendance.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead rowef@rbfrs.co.uk

13.2 Michaela Smith, Democratic Support Assistant smithmj@rbfrs.co.uk

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Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - Member Allowances and Travel Expenses 2023/24

Member Payments **1 June 2023- 31 May 2024**

<u>SURNAME</u>	<u>FORENAME</u>	<u>2023/24 Basic Member Allowance</u>	<u>2023/24 Special Responsibility Allowance</u>	<u>2023/24 Travel Expenses</u>	<u>Total Paid to 31/05/24</u>
Benneyworth	Dennis	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Brooks	Jeff	£2,812.64	£14,017.72	192.28	£17,022.64
Brown	Tricia	£2,812.64	£4,218.53		£7,031.17
Dar	Haqeeq	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Drummond	Billy	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Gittings	Paul	£2,812.64	£7,031.70		£9,844.34
Griffith	Wendy	£2,812.64	£1,406.31		£4,218.95
Frewer	Peter	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Helliar-Symons	Pauline	£2,812.64	£2,812.64	293.95	£5,919.23
Jeffery	Owen	£2,812.64	£1,406.31		£4,218.95
Malvern	Morag	£2,812.64	£1,406.31		£4,218.95
McElroy	Dave	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
McKenzie-Boyle	Tina	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Reynolds	Joshua	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Shah	Israt	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Shepherd-DuBey	Rachelle	£2,812.64	£4,218.53		£7,031.17
Smith	Mike	£2,812.64	£4,218.53	44.90	£7,076.07
Stedmond	Robert	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Taylor	Helen	£2,812.64			£2,812.64
Werner	Simon	£2,812.64	£4,218.53		£7,031.17
					101,739.04

No more than 10 Special responsibility allowances were paid.

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Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Billy Drummond	8	7	87.50%	1	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Dave McElroy	8	7	87.50%	1	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected, virtual
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected, virtual
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	8	4	50.00%	4	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Apologies
Councillor Haqeeq Dar	8	7	87.50%	1	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Helen Taylor	9	5	55.56%	3	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Absent
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Councillor Ishrat Shah	9	7	77.78%	2	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected, virtual
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Apologies

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Jeff Brooks	9	9	100.00%	0	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Joshua Reynolds	8	7	87.50%	1	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Councillor Mike Smith	9	9
Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Councillor Morag Malvern	8	8	100.00%	0	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Councillor Owen Jeffery	8	8
Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected					
Councillor Paul Gittings	9	9	100.00%	0			
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons	9	6	66.67%	3	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Peter Frewer	12	10	83.33%	1	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	17/07/23 14:00	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	14/12/23 14:00	Absent
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	18/03/24 14:00	Present, as expected
Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey	9	9	100.00%	0	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected, virtual
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Robert Stedmond	8	4	50.00%	4	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Apologies
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Apologies
Councillor Simon Werner	12	8	66.67%	4	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	17/07/23 14:00	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	14/12/23 14:00	Present, as expected
					Thames Valley Fire Control Service Joint Committee	18/03/24 14:00	Apologies

Username	Total Expected	Present	% Present	Apologies	Meeting	Meeting Date	Attendance
Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle	9	6	66.67%	3	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
Councillor Tricia Brown	8	6	75.00%	1	Audit and Governance Committee	24/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	30/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	24/01/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Audit and Governance Committee	28/03/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Apologies
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Absent
Councillor Wendy Griffith	9	9	100.00%	0	Management Committee	11/07/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	16/10/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	04/12/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	06/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Management Committee	09/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/06/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	08/11/23 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	15/02/24 18:30	Present, as expected
					Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	22/04/24 18:30	Present, as expected

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
External Audit report	A&GC	27.11.24	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	27.11.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Internal assessment of effectiveness within discipline	A&GC	27.11.24	Ad-hoc	Agree	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Annual Governance Statement	A&GC	27.11.24	Annual	Agree	Programme Office Mgr	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	27.11.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q1 Performance Report	A&GC	27.11.24	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	04.12.24	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Sustainability Programme Phase 1 Uplift	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HoA	Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Sustainability Strategy Programme Overview	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HoA	Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead	Part I
Langley Refurbishment	Management Committee	04.12.24	Ad-hoc	Note	HoA	Strategic Assets and Sustainability 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
Call Handling Contract Tender	TVFCS Joint Committee	12.12.24	Ad-hoc	Note and Recommend	AM C & P	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Proposed Budget	TVFCS Joint Committee	12.12.24	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Lease changes	A&GC	30.01.25	Ad-hoc	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	A&GC	30.01.25	Ad-hoc	Note and recommend	HF&P	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Statement of Assurance 22/23 and 23/24	A&GC	30.01.25	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	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
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
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Agree	HF&P	N/A	Part I
CRMP 6 evaluation	Fire Authority	19.02.25	Ad-hoc	Note	ACFO	CRMP Lead	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

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
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
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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