



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

Wednesday, 15th February, 2023

At

6.30 pm

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

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



MEETING: Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, 15th February, 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

S U M M O N S

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

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

GRAHAM BRITTEN
Monitoring Officer

To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:

Councillor Christine Bateson	Councillor Jo Lovelock
Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	Councillor Sandra Malik
Councillor Tricia Brown	Councillor Morag Malvern
Councillor Jeff Brooks	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
Councillor David Cannon	Councillor Biyi Oloko
Councillor Hageeq Dar	Councillor Mike Smith
Councillor Colin Dudley	Councillor Dexter Smith
Councillor Paul Gittings	Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey
Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons	Councillor Dave McElroy
Councillor Tony Linden	Councillor Simon Werner

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

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, 15th February, 2023 at 6.30 pm

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

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Purpose:

To receive declarations of interest from Councillors relating to items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Local Code of Conduct, and any from Officers.

- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2022 (Pages 7 - 18)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 19 December 2022, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

- 4. 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.

- 5. 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.

- 6. Receipt of Announcements**

Purpose:

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

7. Recommendations of Committees

Purpose:

To note item 12 has been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 23 January 2023, and items 11 and 13 were recommended from Management Committee on 7 February 2023.

8. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

9. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

10. HMICFRS Inspection Report (Pages 19 - 68)

Purpose:

To note the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services report on the performance of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service 2021/2022.

11. Annual Budget 23/24, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget (To Follow)

Purpose: To note the Annual Budget 23/24, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget

12. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 (Pages 69 - 88)

Purpose:

To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 (Appendix A) for publication.

13. 2023/24 Member Scheme of Allowance Review (Pages 89 - 108)

Purpose:

To approve the 2023/24 Scheme of Allowance Review, and note the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) to their respective councils.

14. Emergency Services Sustainability Charter *(Pages 109 - 114)*

Purpose:

To agree to sign up to the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Charter.

15. Built Environment Programme Close Down Report *(Pages 115 - 158)*

Purpose:

To receive for note the Built Environment Programme close down report.

16. Industrial Action Update *(To Follow)*

Purpose:

To receive for note an update on Industrial Action.

17. Forward Plan *(Pages 159 - 160)*

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

18. Minutes of the Standing Committees

Recommendation:

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

19. Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday 27 April 2023, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

20. Exclusion of the Public *(Pages 161 - 162)*

Recommendation:

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

21. Part II Minutes of Meeting on 4 October and 19 December 2022 (Pages 163 - 166)

Purpose:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 4 October and 19 December 2022, be confirmed as a correct recorded and signed by the Chair.

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



Held on Monday, 19th December, 2022 at 6.30 pm

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

Members:
(*present)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Councillor Christine Bateson | * Councillor Jo Lovelock |
| * Councillor Dennis Benneyworth | * Councillor Sandra Malik |
| * Councillor Tricia Brown | * Councillor Morag Malvern |
| * Councillor Jeff Brooks | Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle |
| Councillor David Cannon | * Councillor Biyi Oloko |
| * Councillor Haqeeq Dar | * Councillor Mike Smith |
| Councillor Colin Dudley | * Councillor Dexter Smith |
| * Councillor Paul Gittings | * Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey |
| * Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons | * Councillor Dave McElroy |
| * Councillor Tony Linden | * Councillor Simon Werner |

In Attendance: Mark Antell (Communication and Engagement Lead, C&E Lead)
 Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
 Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
 Paul Bremble (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
 Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
 Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
 Marcus Edgar (Senior Communications and Engagement Officer, SC&EO)
 Abdifatar Hassan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
 Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
 Tim Readings (Group Manager CRMP)
 Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, Dep ChEx)
 Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
 Tregear Thomas (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)

Action

38.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Tina Mckenzie-Boyle, David Cannon and Colin Dudley.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Members or Officers.

39. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 OCTOBER 2022

There were no recorded actions.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2022, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

40. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements.

Firefighter Pay Offer Rejected

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) announced the decision of its membership, in line with its executive council recommendation, to reject the offer of a pay increase of 5 per cent effective from 1 July 2022.

The FBU has now started a ballot of its members seeking support for industrial action which will run until Monday, 30 January 2023.

While this ballot is carried out, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to put arrangements in place to meet our legal duties under the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act, to ensure as far as possible, the safety and protection of the communities we serve.

Members will continue to receive update on any developments over the coming weeks.

Awards Ceremony

On Tuesday, 1 November 2022, the Service's Annual Awards ceremony took place at the Coppid Beech Hotel in Bracknell.

The original event was due to take place on 10 September at Welford Park. However, this was postponed due to the sad passing of Her Late Majesty the Queen.

Awards were presented in 13 categories, followed by a Long Service Award, and Long Service Good Conduct Medals, for 20 years' service.

This year three recipients also received a 30 year Long Service Good Conduct clasp, to be worn on the ribbon of recipient's existing 20 year medals.

You can find out more about the Award winners and medal recipients on the RBFRS website but I'd like to take this time to congratulate them all on their achievements. I would also like to express my gratitude to the events team who worked so hard to make the event a success.

Consultation

We are currently running a public consultation on the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct document outlines the standards and behaviours elected councillors are required to adhere to, on their appointment as a Fire Authority Member.

Please encourage others to take part by visiting www.rbfrs.co.uk/haveyoursay. The consultation is until 9am on Monday, 9 January 2023.

Chairman's Internship Project Recognised

Finally, I am delighted to announce that our Chairman's Internship scheme was the winner of the Positive Action Award at the Asian Fire Service Association (AFSA) Awards, which took place on 23 November 2022.

The Scheme was also shortlisted for Project of the Year at the Excellence in Fire and Emergency Awards.

The Project Team worked to design and shape the internship from scratch, organising planned activities, hosting engagement days, advertising and carrying out numerous interviews and assessment centres. Members of the Project Team all brought their own knowledge and expertise to contribute to the Scheme, making it what it is today.

Well done to all involved and congratulations on being recognised for all of the time and energy you invested in the scheme.

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

Many of you will be aware of the publication of the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (LFB) by Nazir Afzal OBE, which has been widely reported in the media.

The Review contains distressing information about the culture and professionalism of fire and rescue service staff, and recommendations for improvement, which have been accepted in full by LFB.

While this Review applies to LFB, we recognise the sector wide importance of the report. Therefore, in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council, we want to make it clear that there is no place for harassment, bullying or discrimination in the fire and rescue service.

As a Service, we have begun a thorough gap analysis of the recommendations contained within the report, which will be coordinated through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum.

Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), has also written to all staff outlining his response to the report and the approach that we will take to ensure that we have a truly inclusive working environment in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition to the above, the CFO stated station visits and staff meetings will be held to encourage open dialogue and debate. A gap analysis was completed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Co-ordinator and she was challenged to be robust in her analysis. Out of the 23 recommendations highlighted in the Culture review report, the EDI Coordinator had identified:

- Five green areas
- 12 amber areas – further action had been identified
- Six red areas – work required to move in the right direction

The gap analysis will be taken to the EDI Steering Group. He stated the gap analysis was the last task of the EDI Coordinator, due to she will be starting a new role in another organisation and thanked her for her service. In response to Councillor Linden, Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development stated the EDI Coordinator role will go out to advert in the New Year.

Councillor Werner stated he commended the Service for responding to the LFB Culture Review report so promptly.

41. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Audit and Governance Committee.

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

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

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

44. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

45. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

There were no Recommendations of Committees.

46. CORPORATE PLAN AND COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Chair, Councillor Paul Gittings, in his capacity as Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Lead Member explained the purpose of the CRMP was to inform the public how the Service will manage or reduce risk in Berkshire. The CRMP is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The CFO reported the proposed Corporate Plan and CRMP was his first, since his appointment in early 2021. He stated a lot has changed since then and the CRMP will have to reflect those changes. New Strategic Commitments reflect the Services statutory duties around Prevention, Protection, Response, Resilience, Sustainability and People. He reiterated the proposed CRMP was draft for Member debate, and subject to Member approval, it would go out for public consultation. The consultation results would be presented back to the Fire Authority for conscientious decision.

Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services (HCS) introduced the report. He stated the proposed consultation was due to commence on 9 January 2023 for 10 weeks and was based on the amended evidence document attached as Appendix B. Members and Senior Leadership Team had received briefing workshops during the preparation of the document.

Tim Readings, Group Manager CRMP delivered a presentation on the methodology of the CRMP document and showed a video which would be published on social media platforms and rbfcs website, to inform the public of the CRMP consultation.

In answer to a question from Councillor Lovelock, Paul Bremble reported a communication strategy had been put together to ensure the consultation reached the community. In addition, the Service will use its resources e.g. Fire Stations for community engagement sessions.

Councillor Helliars-Symons thanked all those involved in the preparation of the consultation document and asked the following questions in relation to Safe and Well visits. 'How efficient were the six Unitary Authorities (UA) in making referrals to vulnerable people, was there a named person from each UA which made referrals and whether the service could provide the name of individuals for referrals'?

Tregear Thomas, Area Manager, Prevention and Protection reported the current process was for the service to identify the most vulnerable for Safe and Well visits. Referrals were made by Adult Referral Programme, social services and

meals on wheels. He added that the Service had to operate within General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Regulations, in relation to the referral agencies had to ask for consent.

In response to Councillor Helliar-Symons request to include referrals from UA's as part of the consultation document, the CFO reported this would be looked at as part of the consultation and also referred to the chart on page 40, Appendix A. The Chart illustrated the processes in place to help gather learning and assist the ongoing development of our CRMP.

In answer to a question from Councillor Bateson, Tregear Thomas reported the Risk Based Inspection Programme might identify ways on how the Service can further support people that live in high rise buildings.

Councillor Brooks asked how the Service will measure the consultation success, and whether there were a benchmark. He also asked who were the members of the Strategic Performance Board (SPB)?

Nikki Richards, Deputy Chief Executive (DcHX) confirmed the service used a benchmark to measure the success of the consultation and stated she would circulate to Members for information. In addition, she reported the Senior Leadership Team were members of SPB and the performance results at these meetings also were presented to Audit and Governance Committee.

DcHX

Councillor Dexter Smith queried the reason why Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) was not included in the CRMP consultation document, in terms of the impact to the recent change of policy had reduced the number of times appliances were mobilised.

The CFO reported Members had agreed at Fire Authority meeting in February 2022, for a 12 month review on AFA to be presented, due in January 2023. He also stated priority 5 of the CRMP consultation would also address the impact.

Councillor Linden stated a new high rise building was planned in the town of Newbury, as well as existing high rise buildings in Reading, Slough and Maidenhead. He reported London aerial ladder platform had a considerable higher reach and queried whether the Service would consider a second aerial ladder platform. In addition, he stated, he felt the CRMP document had missed out state on state risk, such as terrorism and cyber crime.

In response, Tim Readings, Group Manager CRMP, reported that national security risk assessment and Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register has been taken into account. He stated he would be happy to look over the CRMP's assessment for threats, in particular around Counter Terrorism.

In response to Councillor Linden's question, the CFO reported the Fire Authority recently purchased a 45 metre ALP, as a result of risk analysis, including the height of buildings and the nature of incidents in Berkshire. He explained ALPs were predominately used as water towers instead of rescue platforms.

Councillor Oloko asked whether ethnic diversity was reflected in the draft CRMP document and how do Officers plan to engage with communities.

Paul Bremble, HCS, reported the data identified from Safe and Well visits recognise there were areas in Slough that were hard to reach. He referred to Priority 2 of CRMP, which details how the Service will target most vulnerable.

Nikki Richards, DcHX, added that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been created for every project taken forward and analysed data and recommendations on various community groups, produced by National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) and National Fire Standard.

In response to Councillor Brown's query on whether the Service had considered using local radio and speaking with Slough MP Tan Dhesi on promoting the consultation to the community, Nikki Richards reported that a meeting with MP Tan Dhesi had already taken place.

In response to comments from Councillor Brooks on water incidents – flooding from water, minimum provision of 14 appliances and his views on the consultation video, the Chair stated his views would be taken on board. The Chair also stated that the Fire Authority wanted the community of Berkshire to respond to the consultation, reflect climate change in the document and empower On-Call stations to be used more, particularly at night. He moved the recommendations which was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That the proposed Corporate Plan & CRMP for public consultation meets the requirements set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018, be agreed;
- 2) That 4 years is a suitable timeframe for the proposed Corporate Plan & CRMP, be agreed;
- 3) That the Evidence Base represents a suitable and sufficient assessment of risk to support the priority recommendations of the CRMP, be agreed;
- 4) The restated purpose of the Fire and Rescue Authority, be agreed;
- 5) The strategic commitments of RBFA, be agreed;
- 6) The Corporate Plan & CRMP priority actions are appropriate and suitable measures to mitigate fire and rescue related community risk in Royal Berkshire, be agreed;
- 7) That it be agreed to commence a 10 week public consultation in January 2023, on a date to be confirmed at the Chief Fire Officers discretion, to inform a future decision on the adoption of the proposed Corporate Plan & CRMP and consequently, RBFRS' response to managing risk in the

community for the proceeding four years.

For a copy of the presentation, please contact committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

47. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer represented the report and stated the background was set out in the minutes of the Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting held on 4 October 2022. The amended Standing Orders set out in SO9, the Vice-Chair would preside at Annual Fire Authority meetings and for annual committee meetings, SO107B, a Member would be elected to preside describes the process that follows on any event if there were an equality of votes.

Councillor Bateson queried recommendation 2.2 and asked the reason for the change of Chairman to Chair and Vice-Chairman to Vice-Chair. The Chair, Councillor Gittings responded the proposed change was in relation to modernity and equality.

A debate was held on recommendation 2.2. The Chair moved the recommendation which was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Recommendation 2.1 was put to the vote. 14 For and two abstained.

Recommendation 2.2 was put to the vote. 13 For and three against.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The amended Standing Orders, Appendix A be approved;
- 2) All references to Chairman and Vice-Chairman is changed to Chair and Vice-Chair in all documents within the Members Handbook, and it is re-published on rbfrs website.

48. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY (RBFA) FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME - ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development (HHR&L&D) reported Officers had reviewed the strategy document provided by the Firefighters' Pensions (England) Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) and recommend the RBFA Firefighters' Pension Scheme Administration, Management and Governance Strategy set out in Appendix A for approval.

Councillor Oloko queried the reason why paragraph 7.1 of the report stated there were no equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) implications. Becci Jefferies stated there were no EDI implications as to the Strategy sets out the governance arrangements and formalises the structures in place. The discretions utilised in

relation to pension cases, provide for relevant consideration of EDI matters.

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

RESOLVED that the RBFA Firefighters' Pension Scheme Administrative, Management and Governance Strategy be approved.

49. ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY (RBFA) FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME - DISCRETION STATEMENTS

Becci Jefferies, HHR&L&D, reported the Pension Ombudsman partially upheld a case concerning itself with the abatement of a retired firefighter's pension on re-employment. The Ombudsman determined the application of a blanket policy could be potentially unfair. The case has necessitated a review of the Scheme Manager Discretions attached in appendices A, B and C. The wording has been changed to individual cases to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

In referring to paragraph 5 (Financial Implications) of the report, Councillor Brooks queried whether there was a way Officers could determine an average financial impact or whether the Fire Authority could be presented with a potential financial implication when they arose, on a case by case basis?

Becci Jefferies stated that updates would be brought to the Fire Authority when Officers were aware of progress on the legislative cases (Saregent and Matthews) and where there were updates on specific cases where discretion was applied relating in significant costs..

HHR&L&D

In response to Councillor Brown, Becci Jefferies confirmed update reports will be presented with a process document, where this is appropriate, in order to be transparent.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) 2015 Scheme Manager Discretions Statement (Appendix A) be approved; and
- 2) The Firemen's Pension Scheme Order 1992 Scheme Manager Discretions Statement (Appendix B) be approved; and
- 3) The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (England) Order 2006 Scheme Manager Discretions Statement (Appendix C) be approved.

50. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2021/22 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2022/23

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), presented the Annual

Treasury Report for 2021/22 and Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2022/23.

He stated in line with the Capital Strategy, the Authority had borrowed money for the first time in 2021/22 since 2009/10, taking advantage of the low interest rates. The new loan was £5m. The Authority repaid external borrowing of £1.17m in 2021/22. The Authority is due to repay £2m in March 2023.

In relation to the Investment Strategy, the Authority estimates that the total return in 2022/23 will be £301,000, due to the increase of interest rates.

Councillor Linden queried whether the Authority were still lobbying MPs on additional funding. The CFO reported the Funding Assessment was recently announced and confirmed extra flexibility had been given around the revenue budget.

Councillor Brooks stated the Authority had a number of in-year financial pressures and made reference to the £800,000 deficit. He also stated 2022/23 would be challenging and that the Authority will consult the public on £5 for fire in the New Year.

In referring to the Investment Strategy, Councillor Oloko stated there were little returns from the Authority's investment and asked whether the £5m borrowed was at a high interest rate.

In response, Conor Byrne reported in line with the Treasury Management Policy, the Authority has ensured it has enough cash for Capital and Revenue budgets. He added, based on Capital Expenditure Programme, investments were short-term to ensure there was cash flow for the Revenue budget.

Councillor Smith reported the Chancellor recently announced an increase in precept cap for Local Authorities and queried the percentage.

Conor Byrne stated the increase had worked out as 6.8% and reported it was previously capped at 2.99%. This meant Local Authorities can increase its precept by £5.

Councillor Brooks moved the recommendations and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Annual Treasury Report for 2021/22 be noted; and
- 2) It be noted the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2022/23.

51. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

52. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that Minutes of Standing Committees be noted.

53. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 15 February 2023, 6.30pm at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD.

54. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

55. RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS: INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO), reported that the Service has had to continue preparing for a number of scenarios for possible Industrial Action (IA). He reported the latest Fire Brigade Union (FBU)'s position was a ballot for strike action, had commenced. He referred to the range of planned resilience arrangements and the recommendations outlined in the report.

Councillor Linden queried whether the Authority would have military aid during possible IA and referenced incidences that may involve high rise buildings and specialist vehicles.

Mark Arkwell reported that the Service would make all reasonable endeavours to provide the resources required at incidences during IA. Participation in a nationally coordinated Military Aid request had not been discounted, but details remained unclear at this time. He advised the ballot closed on 30 January 2023 and IA could commence as early as 13 February 2023.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Linden, Mark Arkwell confirmed the Service had prepared a comprehensive communications plan to alert the community on the event of IA.

A discussion was held on the arrangements and provision during possible IA. The Chair moved the recommendations which was seconded by Councillor Helliard-Symons.

Councillor Brooks discussed the likelihood of IA and stated that Firefighters were not well paid, however referred to the cost to the taxpayer in order for the Service to provide resilience arrangements. He added, the Service's communication strategy would almost be informing the public to be careful at those times.

The CFO confirmed Tregear Thomas, Area Manager Prevention and Protection was preparing a prevention letter to raise awareness and to inform the public of targeted prevention activities. Subject to IA, fortnightly Member briefings will be held.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) It be noted the range of planned resilience measures available in order to make reasonable endeavours to fulfil its statutory duties.
- 2) It be agreed to transfer funding from the Development Fund reserve to a new Industrial Action reserve for the purposes of covering the potential costs associated with providing contingency provision during anticipated periods of industrial action.

(The meeting concluded at 20:43)

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	15 FEBRUARY 2023
SUBJECT	HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (HMICFRS) INSPECTION REPORT OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (RBFRS)
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR PAUL GITTINGS
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of the report is to receive the recommendation from Management Committee to note the findings of the recent inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in June 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **NOTE** the findings of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services report on the performance of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service 2021/22.

3. REPORT

3.1 In April 2021, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was commissioned by the Home Secretary to commence a third round of inspection of the fire and rescue services in England. RBFRS first inspection was held in 2018/19, and a second inspection on the Services response to the COVID-19 pandemic was held in 2020.

Agenda Item 10

- 3.2 In June 2022, HMICFRS commenced their inspection of RBFRS. Inspecting the Service on the following areas:-
- How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
 - How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?
- 3.3 HMICFRS published their report on the 20th January 2023. The findings, attached at **Appendix A**, state “Overall, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing a good service to the public. It is effective in preventing fires and protecting the public through enforcement and fire safety audits. It has good response standards and knows the areas in which it can make improvements. We look forward to returning to the service for its future inspection.
- 3.4 HMICFRS place a judgment on the three areas inspected. Categories of graded judgment are:
- outstanding;
 - good;
 - requires improvement;
 - inadequate.
- Good is the expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services.
- 3.5 RBFRS has been given a grade of “Good” in all three areas inspected, Effectiveness, Efficiency and People. This means RBFRS has continued to provide a service as expected by HMICFRS, having received the judgement grade of “Good” in all three areas when first inspected in 2019.
- 3.6 The report has highlighted areas of improvement for RBFRS, which we acknowledge and welcome. These findings will be considered and plan of action will be produced and presented at the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.7 HMICFRS also published the national report on the England FRS, “State of Fire: Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Service in England 2022”. The report outlines areas of improvement for the Services, as well as good practices that they have seen during inspections.
- 3.8 It should be noted that RBFRS has been sighted in the “State of Fire: Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Service in England 2022” **see background paper 11.1**, report for three areas of good practice in the culture of the service, best use of resource to achieve strategic priorities and public consultation practices.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No financial implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 HMICFRS has powers of inspection under the Fire and Rescue Act 2004, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017. As outlined in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, all fire and rescue authorities must cooperate with the inspectorate and its inspectors to enable them to deliver their statutory function.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 No equality and diversity implications as a result of this report

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 No risk implications as a result of this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 No implications with our duty to collaborate as a result of this report.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 No implications to consult on this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)
[State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2022](#)

Agenda Item 10

12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Fire and Rescue Service 2021/22

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Paul Bremble, Head of Corporate Services bremblep@rbfrs.co.uk

Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22

Effectiveness, efficiency and people

An inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service



Contents

About this inspection	1
Overview	2
Service in numbers	5
Effectiveness	7
<hr/>	
How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?	8
Summary	8
Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies	9
Preventing fires and other risks	11
Protecting the public through fire regulation	14
Responding to fires and other emergencies	17
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	20
Efficiency	23
<hr/>	
How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?	24
Summary	24
Making best use of resources	25
Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future	28
People	31
<hr/>	
How well does the service look after its people?	32
Summary	32
Promoting the right values and culture	33
Getting the right people with the right skills	35
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	37
Managing performance and developing leaders	40

About this inspection

This inspection is from our third round of inspections of fire and rescue services in England. We first inspected Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in January 2019. We published a report with our findings in June 2019 on the service's effectiveness and efficiency and how it looks after its people. Our second inspection, in autumn 2020, considered how the service was responding to the pandemic. This inspection considers for a second time the service's effectiveness, efficiency and people.

In this round of inspections of all 44 fire and rescue services in England, we answer three main questions:

1. How effective is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
2. How efficient is the fire and rescue service at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks?
3. How well does the fire and rescue service look after its people?

This report sets out our inspection findings for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

What inspection judgments mean

Our categories of graded judgment are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

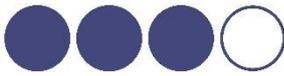
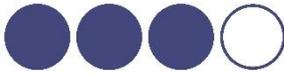
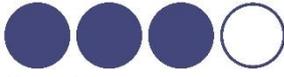
Good is our expected graded judgment for all fire and rescue services. It is based on policy, practice or performance that meet pre-defined grading criteria, which are informed by any relevant [national operational guidance](#) or standards.

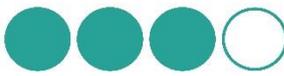
If the service exceeds what we expect for good, we will judge it as outstanding.

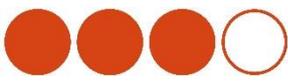
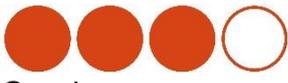
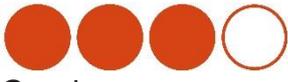
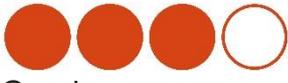
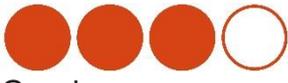
If we find shortcomings in the service, we will judge it as requires improvement.

If there are serious, critical or systemic failings of policy, practice or performance of the fire and rescue service, then consideration will be given to a graded judgment of inadequate.

Overview

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Effectiveness	 Good	Good
Understanding fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Preventing fires and other risks	 Good	Good
Protecting the public through fire regulation	 Good	Good
Responding to fires and other emergencies	 Good	Good
Responding to major and multi-agency incidents	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 Efficiency	 Good	Good
Making best use of resources	 Good	Good
Future affordability	 Good	Good

Question	This inspection	2018/19
 People	 Good	Good
Promoting the right values and culture	 Good	Good
Getting the right people with the right skills	 Good	Good
Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity	 Good	Requires improvement
Managing performance and developing leaders	 Good	Good

HM Inspector's summary

It was a pleasure to revisit Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, and I am grateful for the positive and constructive way that the service engaged with our inspection.

I am pleased with the performance of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service in keeping people safe and secure from fires and other risks. For example, it continues to make effective use of its resources and responds quickly to fires and other emergencies.

We were pleased to see that the service has made progress since our first inspection in 2019, working effectively to address areas for improvement in quality-assuring its prevention and protection activity. It has made sure that learning from incidents is shared across the service and the public is public informed of ongoing incidents. It has made sure that its staff record their maintenance of competency consistently. The service has also made sure positive values and behaviours are accepted by everyone across the service. It has developed a positive feedback culture and effective grievance procedures.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

My principal findings from our assessments of the service over the past year are as follows:

- The service understands the risk and demand in its area. It has evaluated the way it mitigates risk using its prevention, protection and response teams. It has revised its risk-based inspection programme (RBIP) and is now more focused on the highest risk. This makes sure it can keep the communities of Royal Berkshire safe from fire and other risks.
- The service is facing challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures raised through pension changes make workforce planning difficult for the service. It should continue to assess innovative ways to mitigate this risk.
- The service has improved its work in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and its workforce demonstrates positive values and behaviours. The service seeks feedback and challenge from its workforce and the community. This supports it to make decisions based on the needs of both.

Overall, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is providing a good service to the public. It is effective in preventing fires and protecting the public through enforcement and fire safety audits. It has good response standards and knows the areas in which it can make improvements. We look forward to returning to the service for its future inspection.



Matt Parr

HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Service in numbers



Response

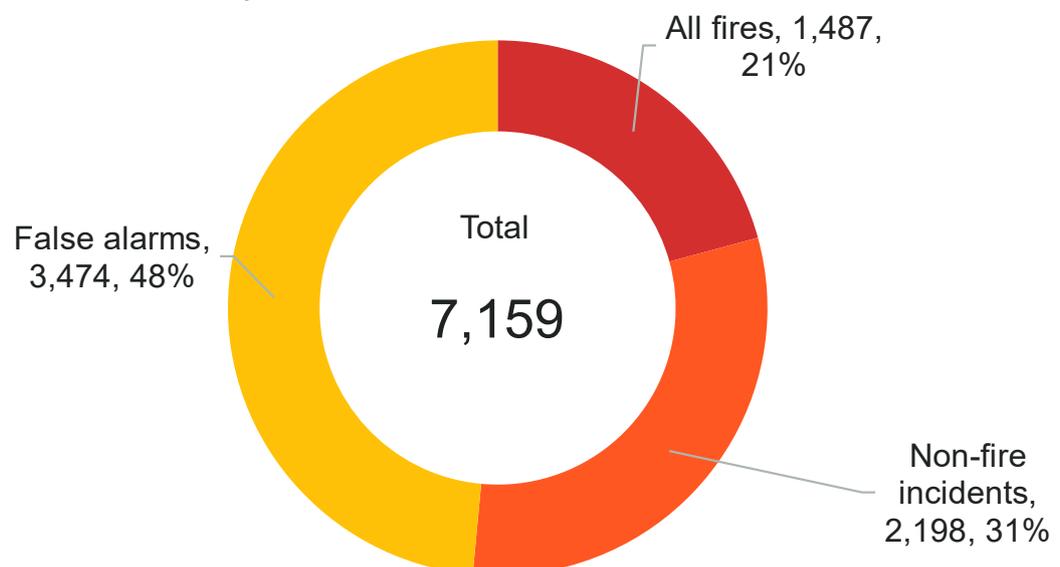
	Berkshire	England
Incidents attended per 1,000 population Year ending 31 December 2021	7.80	9.82
Home fire safety checks carried out by fire and rescue service per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	2.20	4.47
Fire safety audits per 100 known premises Year ending 31 March 2021	0.95	1.70
Average availability of wholetime pumps Year ending 31 March 2021	96.8%	86.4%



Cost

Firefighter cost per person Year ending 31 March 2021	£18.23	£25.02
--	--------	--------

Incidents attended in the year to 31 December 2021

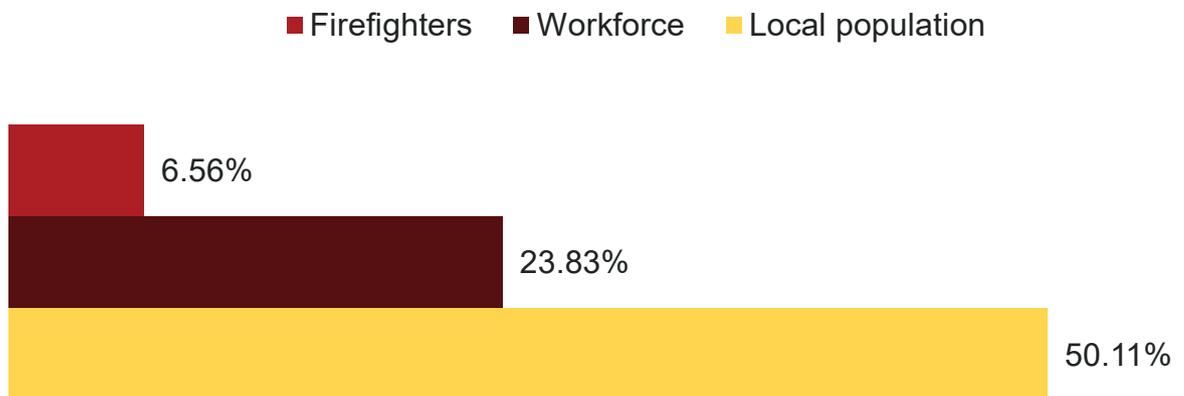




Workforce

	Berkshire	England
Five-year change in total workforce 2016 to 2021	4.05%	-1.60%
Number of firefighters per 1,000 population Year ending 31 March 2021	0.47	0.62
Percentage of firefighters who are wholetime Year ending 31 March 2021	82.9%	64.4%

Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are female as at 31 March 2021



Percentage of population, firefighters and workforce who are from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2021



For more information on data and analysis throughout this report, please view the [‘About the data’ section of our website](#).

Effectiveness



How effective is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An effective fire and rescue service will identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks its community faces. It should target its fire prevention and protection activities to those who are at greatest risk from fire and make sure fire safety legislation is being enforced. And when the public calls for help, it should respond promptly with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall effectiveness is good.

The service has identified and assessed a range of fire and rescue-related risks to its communities. It has used a range of information and consulted widely, to produce a comprehensive community risk management plan (CRMP), formerly known as its [integrated risk management plan \(IRMP\)](#). The consultation is well planned and supports the service to include the public in its decision-making.

The service continues to be good at preventing fires and providing the public with advice and guidance about fire safety. It also protects the public by ensuring it enforces fire safety regulation proportionately.

The service responds well to fires and other emergencies despite a reduction in its fire engine availability. Its incident commanders are well trained and prepared for major and multi-agency incidents, working well with other fire and emergency services.

Since our previous inspection in 2019, the service has addressed several of the areas for improvement that we highlighted. These include improving its operational debrief process, introducing quality assurance in its prevention and protection work and improving information provided to the public about incidents.

But there is still some work to do. The service should continue to evaluate its prevention and protection work to make sure it meets the needs of the community. And it should monitor its response standards and fire engine availability to make sure it continues to resource to risk.

Understanding the risk of fire and other emergencies



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at understanding risk.

Each fire and rescue service should identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks that could affect its communities. Arrangements should be put in place through the service's prevention, protection and response capabilities to prevent or mitigate these risks for the public.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure it gathers and records relevant and up-to-date site-specific risk information, to clear its backlog and help protect firefighters, the public and property during an emergency.

Innovative practice: The service undertakes constructive and continuous public consultation

The service has consulted with communities and its own staff, the six local authorities, third-sector organisations and other emergency services to both understand local risks and explain how it intends to mitigate them.

The service gives information and a range of change options for the public to choose from. This has supported the service to adapt its approach to unwanted fire signals. It has also helped the service to have constructive conversations with the public about the decision to close a station.

The service has also collated the data from all its public consultations and uses this to inform decision-making.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service understands the risks it faces

The service has assessed an appropriate range of risks and threats after a thorough CRMP process. When assessing risk, it has considered relevant information collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and data sets. This includes analysis and validation of the last six years of its own, regional, and national incident data, flooding incident data, NHS Safer data, ONS data and Experian Mosaic data.

When appropriate, the service has consulted and had constructive dialogue with communities, its own staff, the six local authorities, third-sector organisations and other emergency services to both understand the risks and explain how it intends to mitigate them.

The service gives information and a range of change options for the public to choose from. This has supported the service to adapt its approach to unwanted fire signals. This has also helped the service to have meaningful conversations with the public about the decision to close a station.

The service has also collated the data from all its public consultations and uses this to inform decision-making.

The service is good at planning its resources to reduce risk

After assessing relevant risks, the service has recorded its findings in a CRMP that is easy to use. This plan describes how prevention, protection and response activity is to be effectively resourced to mitigate or reduce the risks and threats the community faces, both now and in the future. For example, the service has identified areas that sit outside its planned ten-minute response time and is targeting prevention and protection activity in these areas to reduce the likelihood and impact of an incident.

The service gathers, maintains and shares a good range of risk information

The service routinely collects and updates the information it has about the people, places and threats it has identified as being at greatest risk. This includes the reinspection of high-risk sites every two years at premises including high-rise residential buildings, commercial buildings and hospitals.

This information is readily available for the service's prevention, protection and response staff, which helps it to identify, reduce and mitigate risk effectively. For example, the service recently minimised the risk in a hotel that provided temporary support for Afghan refugees. The service gave advice about physical fire safety measures and checked that their use was understood by both the hotel staff and residents. The service's hub model promotes monthly risk analysis between prevention, protection and response teams. Where appropriate, risk information is passed on to other organisations, such as the local authority private-rented sector and housing teams.

The service builds its understanding of risk from operational activity

The service records and communicates risk information effectively. It also routinely updates risk assessments and uses feedback from local and national operational activity to inform its planning assumptions. For example, learnings identified in a recent incident on the new all-lane running motorway have resulted in a change to operational procedure and a quicker response for the public.

The service is improving risk information following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

During this round of inspections, we sampled how each fire and rescue service has responded to the recommendations and learning from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has responded positively and proactively to learnings from this tragedy. The service assessed the risk of each high-rise building in its service area by the end of 2021.

It has carried out a fire safety audit and collected and passed relevant risk information to its prevention, protection and response teams about buildings identified as high risk and all high-rise buildings that have cladding similar to the cladding installed on Grenfell Tower.

Preventing fires and other risks



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at preventing fires and other risks.

Fire and rescue services must promote fire safety, including giving fire safety advice. To identify people at greatest risk from fire, services should work closely with other organisations in the public and voluntary sector, and with the police and ambulance services. They should provide [intelligence](#) and risk information with these other organisations when they identify vulnerability or exploitation.

Area for improvement

The service should evaluate its prevention work, so it understands the benefits of its safe and well targeting approach better.

Area for improvement

The service should develop a clear process for post incident prevention activity.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service's prevention strategy is reducing risk

The service's prevention strategy is clearly linked to the risks identified in its CRMP. The key aim for the service is to reduce the number of people injured or killed by fires occurring in the home. In the year ending March 2021, over 80 percent of its completed [safe and well visits](#) were carried out for those identified as being more vulnerable to fire and other risks.

The service's teams work well together and with other relevant organisations on prevention. It also shares relevant information when needed. Information is used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's prevention, protection and response functions. For example, staff moved between hubs to reduce a backlog of safe and well visits. Local station plans align to hub plans and the service's CRMP.

The service adapted its prevention activity during the pandemic

We considered how the service had adapted its prevention work during our COVID-19 specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its public prevention work appropriately. Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service continues to triage its referrals over the phone and has resumed face-to-face safe and well visits. The service gives training and education both in person and virtually.

The service has changed its approach to targeting activity

Prevention activity is clearly prioritised using a risk-based approach towards people most at risk from fire and other emergencies. For example, all referrals received by the service are triaged and those of highest risk are visited promptly.

Following feedback from its staff, the service has recently changed its approach to targeting its safe and well visits. The previous approach took account of a broad range of information and data to identify households that could be at risk. As we established in our previous inspection, this meant that the service conducted a higher number of visits overall, but they knew some were lower risk.

The service has decided to focus on increasing the number of referrals for safe and well visits it receives from partner organisations such as community mental health teams and local authorities. It is training professionals in these organisations to support this focus. The service needs to make sure it is also taking a balanced approach and visiting people most at risk from fire based on local needs and intelligence, which might not be known to other organisations.

The service should also review its process for giving post-incident prevention activity. We reviewed several incidents where we would have expected a safe and well visit to have been carried out but there were no records of a visit.

Staff are well trained to provide safe and well checks

Staff told us that they have the right skills and confidence to make safe and well visits. These checks cover an appropriate range of hazards that can put [vulnerable people](#) at greater risk from fire and other emergencies. This includes things like mobility, smoking and other health-related concerns. The service also signposts people to other organisations that may be better able to meet their needs.

We were pleased to see that the service has developed an approach to quality-assuring its safe and well visits. This was an area for improvement identified in 2019. The service has identified both individual and [organisational learning](#) through this process and we look forward to seeing further progress in this area.

The service is good at responding to safeguarding concerns

Staff we interviewed told us about occasions when they identified [safeguarding](#) problems. They told us they feel confident and trained to act appropriately and promptly. When staff raise a concern, they are given feedback on the progress, when appropriate. The service has made an increasing number of safeguarding referrals through its strong partnership with local safeguarding boards.

The service collaborates well with others to prevent fires and other emergencies

The service works with a wide range of other organisations, such as the local authorities, Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service and the Canal & River Trust to prevent fires and other emergencies.

The service routinely exchanges information with other public sector organisations about people and groups at greatest risk. It uses the information to challenge planning assumptions and target prevention activity. For example, a co-ordinated approach to campaigns raises awareness for water or road safety.

The service is good at tackling fire-setting behaviour

The service has a range of suitable and effective interventions to target and educate people of different ages who show signs of fire-setting behaviour. This includes training staff in providing FireSafe, an intervention to educate children and young people. Crews will also conduct local visits to areas in the community when intelligence suggests there could be increased [anti-social behaviour](#).

Where appropriate, the service routinely shares information with other relevant organisations, including Thames Valley Police, to support the prosecution of arsonists. A joint approach between the emergency services is increasing the number of accredited and trained staff in fire investigation.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service has developed its approach to evaluation

While the service has made some progress in developing evaluation tools, the following area for improvement identified in 2019 remains. The service should continue to evaluate its prevention work, so it better understands the benefits of its safe and well targeting approach.

These tools measure how effective the service's work is. This helps it to know what works and make sure that its communities get prevention activity that meets their needs. For example, the service has decided to carry out ongoing, follow-up safe and well visits for those they identified as very vulnerable within the last year.

Protecting the public through fire regulation



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at protecting the public through fire regulation.

All fire and rescue services should assess fire risks in certain buildings and, when necessary, require building owners to comply with fire safety legislation. Each service decides how many assessments it does each year. But it must have a locally determined, risk-based inspection programme for enforcing the legislation.

Area for improvement

The service should ensure it monitors and evaluates its revised approach to the burden of false alarms (termed 'unwanted fire signals').

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service's protection strategy is aligned to its risk management plan

The service's protection strategy is clearly linked to the risk it has identified in its CRMP. Staff across the service are involved in this activity, with information effectively exchanged as needed. For example, crews and protection staff complete joint visits to improve staff awareness of building construction and safety measures. Information is then used to adjust planning assumptions and direct activity between the service's protection, prevention and response functions. This means resources are properly aligned to risk. For example, as well as staff based in its local delivery hubs, the service has a dedicated built environment project team to review the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations. It also has a separate enforcement hub to keep people safe and secure from the risk of fire.

The service adapted its protection activity during the pandemic

We considered how the service had adapted its protection activity during our COVID-19 specific inspection in October 2020. At that time, we found it had adapted its protection work well. Since then, we are encouraged to find that the service has resumed face-to-face audits. It has also digitised some of its processes and revised its RBIP.

The service has improved its approach to identifying risk

The service's risk-based inspection programme is focused on the service's highest-risk buildings. It has recently reviewed its methodology for identifying risk and explained that it has reduced the number of very high and high-risk premises from over 12,000 to 5,616. The service aims to have visited all its 518 very high-risk premises by March 2023. We look forward to seeing the progress the service makes with this target.

Audits of high-rise buildings with interim measures continue

Audits have been carried out at all high-rise buildings the service has identified as using similar cladding to that installed on Grenfell Tower. Information gathered during these audits is made available to response teams and control operators, enabling them to respond more effectively in an emergency. The service continues to monitor and advise on buildings with interim measures.

The service has developed a quality-assurance process for fire safety audits

We reviewed a range of audits of different premises across the service. This included audits as part of the service's RBIP; after fires at premises where fire safety legislation applies where [enforcement action](#) had been taken; and at high-rise, high-risk buildings. Not all the audits we reviewed were completed in a consistent and systematic way, or in line with the service's policies.

Following the area for improvement identified in 2019, the service has very recently introduced a quality-assurance approach for protection audits. The service identified that it isn't consistently recording and completing audits in the buildings it has targeted in the timescales it has set. Individual and organisational learning from the new quality-assurance approach has been included in an improvement plan. We look forward to the progress the service makes with this approach.

The service evaluates its revised RBIP

The service has good evaluation tools in place to measure the effectiveness of its activity and to make sure all sections of its communities get appropriate access to the protection services that meet their needs. We look forward to the service completing further evaluation of its revised RBIP.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service takes appropriate enforcement action

The service consistently uses its full range of enforcement powers and, when appropriate, prosecutes those who don't comply with fire safety regulations. The service was pursuing a prosecution at the time of inspection. Operational crews are notified of enforcement activity in their station area to maintain a good understanding of risk.

In the year to 31 March 2021, the service issued:

- 4 alteration notices;
- 158 informal notifications;
- 30 enforcement notices;
- 4 prohibition notices; and
- undertook 2 prosecutions.

It completed 8 prosecutions of offences in the 5 years from 2016 to 2021.

The service has well-trained staff in protection

The service has enough qualified protection staff to meet the requirements of the service's revised RBIP. It has secured funding for an additional 10 protection staff and has plans to help its built environment audit work to become business as usual from 2023. This helps the service to provide the range of audit and enforcement activity needed, both now and in the future.

Staff get the right training and work to appropriate accreditation. For example, the service has invested in staff completing master's qualifications in fire engineering.

The service works well with others to share information

The service works closely with other enforcement agencies to regulate fire safety and routinely exchanges risk information with them. This includes organisations such as the Office of Rail and Road, Trading Standards, Ofsted, Care Quality Commission and local councils. The service is also agreeing a memorandum of understanding with local authorities to share information and conduct joint enforcement activity in houses of multiple occupation.

The service has improved its response to building and licencing consultations

The service responds to most building consultations on time. As such, it meets its statutory responsibility to comment on fire safety arrangements at new and altered buildings. The response rate has improved since 2019, but we found that staff were having to extend the time frames due to high workloads.

The service provides useful information to businesses

The service proactively engages with local businesses and other organisations to promote compliance with fire safety legislation. The service’s web pages hold information about compliance and fire safety, which staff can direct responsible people and business owners to via a QR code.

The service has made some progress to reduce unwanted fire signals

The service has made some progress to reduce the burden of unwanted fire signals. However, the following area for improvement identified in 2019 remains: The service should make sure it monitors and evaluates its revised approach to the burden of false alarms (termed ‘unwanted fire signals’).

To March 2021, 48 percent of incidents attended (3,243) were false alarms. This is higher than the national rate of 42 percent. In addition, 63 percent of the false alarm attendances were due to faulty apparatus. This means that engines may be unavailable to respond to genuine incidents because they are attending false alarms. It also creates a risk to the public if more fire engines travel at high speed on roads to respond to these incidents.

Responding to fires and other emergencies



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to fires and other emergencies.

Fire and rescue services must be able to respond to a range of incidents such as fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies in their area.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure its [mobile data terminals](#) are reliable so that firefighters can readily access up-to-date risk information.

Area for improvement

The service should monitor and review its response model with reduced availability of its fire engines and in line with its community risk management plan.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service’s performance in this area.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service response strategy is based on an understanding of risk

The service's response strategy is linked to the risks identified in its CRMP. Its fire engines and response staff, as well as its working patterns, are designed and located to help the service to respond flexibly to fires and other emergencies with the appropriate resources. For example, its new station at Theale has been located to provide a better response for communities in the west of the county.

The service consistently meets its response standards

There are no national response standards of performance for the public. The service has set out its own response standards in its CRMP. The service aims to respond to incidents within 10 minutes on 75 percent of occasions.

The service consistently meets its standards. Home Office data shows that in the year to 31 March 2021, the service's response time to [primary fires](#) was 7 minutes and 41 seconds. This is in line with the average for predominantly urban services. The service responded to incidents within 10 minutes on 78.2 percent of occasions. It has a low response time compared to other services, of 7 minutes and 3 seconds, to dwelling fires.

We are pleased that the service continues to meet its standards and provides a good response to incidents. However, it does this with reduced availability of its fire engines. The service should continue to monitor and review its response to efficiently meet the aims of its CRMP.

Fire engine availability isn't in line with the service's targets

To support its response strategy, the service aims to have:

- 100 percent of wholetime fire engines available on 100 percent of occasions; and
- on-call fire engines available on 60 percent of occasions.

The service doesn't always meet this standard. In the year to 31 March 2021, data shows that wholetime fire engine availability was 96.8 percent. On-call fire engine availability was 54.5 percent.

The service has well-trained incident commanders

The service has trained incident commanders who are assessed properly at the relevant level every two years. An online system has recently been introduced for staff to log their ongoing learning in the command of incidents and at exercises. This helps the service to safely and effectively manage the full range of incidents that it could face; from small and routine incidents to complex multi-agency incidents.

As part of our inspection, we interviewed incident commanders from across the service. The incident commanders we interviewed are familiar with assessing risk, decision-making and recording information at incidents in line with national best practice and the [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#).

Control is included in all aspects of the service

Thames Valley Fire Control is a joint [control room](#) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services. This means control operators can deploy resources promptly and effectively across the three services' borders.

We are pleased to see the service's control staff are integrated into Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's command, training, exercise, debrief and assurance activity. Staff described taking part in recent high-rise exercises. Their feedback has supported the development of new processes.

The service is developing the way it handles multiple fire survival guidance calls

The control room staff we interviewed are confident they could give fire survival guidance to many callers simultaneously. This was identified as learning for fire services after the Grenfell Tower fire. Staff interviewed described recent training exercises and the use of back-up control systems to support multiple fire survival guidance calls should this type of incident occur.

Control has good systems in place to exchange real-time risk information with incident commanders, other responding partners, such as ambulance and police services, and other supporting fire and rescue services. Maintaining good situational awareness helps the service to communicate effectively with the public, providing them with accurate and tailored advice.

Risk information is easily understood, but not always quickly available

We sampled a range of risk information on the service's mobile data terminals, including what is in place for firefighters responding to incidents at high-risk, high-rise buildings and what information is held by fire control.

The information we reviewed was up to date and detailed. It could be easily accessed and understood by staff on the mobile data terminals. The introduction of an electronic quick reference sheet to view information briefly has been well received by staff.

However, we found that there are problems with the slow functioning speed of the mobile data terminals that provide firefighters with the information needed.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service has improved the way it evaluates operational performance

As part of the inspection, we reviewed a range of emergency incidents and training events. These include the service's structured incident debriefs. We are pleased to see that the service routinely follows its policies to assure itself that staff command incidents in line with operational guidance. This was an area for improvement identified in our previous inspection in 2019.

Internal risk information is updated with the information received from site visits, protection audits and structured debriefs. Staff can give immediate risk updates by email and contribute to the assurance process through an electronic feedback form. The service's dedicated operational assurance team monitors all incident feedback and the structured debrief process. Staff are well trained in facilitating debriefs and can identify relevant learning. This information is exchanged with other interested partners such as other fire and rescue services, Thames Valley Police and the [local resilience forum \(LRF\)](#) partners.

The service learns from local and national incidents

The service has responded to learning from incidents to improve its service for the public. For example, the service completes joint operational information notes to align policies and procedures across the Thames Valley fire and rescue services.

We are encouraged to see that the service is contributing towards, and acting on, learning from other fire and rescue services or operational learning gathered from other emergency service partners. This includes giving feedback about a fault on a fire engine that is widely used in the United Kingdom.

The service is good at keeping the public informed about incidents

The service has made improvements in the way it informs the public about ongoing incidents following the area of improvement identified in 2019. The service now has good systems in place to help keep the public safe during and after incidents. This includes having an arrangement in place with the LRF's warn and inform group, which helped prompt messages to be sent during the period of hot weather in July 2022. The service has trained staff in social media use and can provide an out-of-hours response.

Responding to major and multi-agency incidents



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

All fire and rescue services must be able to respond effectively to multi-agency and cross-border incidents. This means working with other fire and rescue services (known as intraoperability) and emergency services (known as interoperability).

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service is well prepared for major and multi-agency incidents

The service has effectively anticipated and considered the reasonably foreseeable risks and threats it may face. These risks are listed in both local and national risk registers as part of its CRMP. For example, the service has highlighted the potential impact of seasonal disruption. Risks include hot weather resulting in increased wildfires or water-related incidents, or high rainfall resulting in wide-area flooding.

The service is also familiar with the significant risks that could be faced by neighbouring fire and rescue services that it might reasonably be asked to respond to in an emergency. Firefighters have access to risk information from neighbouring services within 10 km of the border via their mobile data terminals.

The service can respond to major and multi-agency incidents

We reviewed the arrangements that the service has in place to respond to different major incidents, including wide-area flooding, marauding terrorist attacks and high-rise fires.

The service has good arrangements in place, which are well understood by staff. For example, an e-learning package has been completed by operational staff about the response expected should a marauding terrorist attack occur.

The service works well with other fire services

The service supports other fire and rescue services responding to emergency incidents. It shares a control room with the other Thames Valley fire services. This means that the nearest fire engine to an incident is [mobilised](#) independent of which service it comes from. The three Thames Valley services often jointly respond to incidents across their borders, using their aligned equipment and fire engines. It is intraoperable with these services and can form part of a multi-agency response.

Staff take part in cross-border exercising

The service has a cross-border exercise plan with neighbouring fire and rescue services so they can work together effectively to keep the public safe. The plan includes the risks of major events at which the service could foreseeably provide support or request help from neighbouring services. We were encouraged to see that feedback from these exercises is used to inform risk information and service plans. Staff described being part of recent high-rise exercises with surrounding fire and rescue services.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

Incident command training is aligned to JESIP

The incident commanders we interviewed had been trained in and were familiar with JESIP. The service gave us strong evidence that it consistently follows these principles. This includes the regular use of the JESIP mobile application by incident commanders. The service also suggested and volunteered to chair a new strategic JESIP subgroup in the LRF.

The service is actively working with other partners

The service has good arrangements in place to respond to emergencies with other partners that make up the Thames Valley LRF. These arrangements include preparing multi-agency response plans for high-risk sites, short-term events and major incidents. A critical event management team and operational support room are actioned at short notice. These were enacted to plan for and respond well to the demands placed on the service by the hot weather in July 2022.

The service is a valued partner and attends most of the 13 subgroups of the LRF, including the executive board; the training, learning and exercise group; and a newly established wildfire group. The service takes part in regular training events with other members of the LRF. It uses the learning to develop planning assumptions about responding to major and multi-agency incidents.

The service uses national and joint organisational learning to plan for incidents

The service keeps itself up to date with [national operational learning](#) updates from other fire services and [joint organisational learning](#) from other organisations, such as the police service and ambulance trusts. This learning is used to inform planning assumptions that have been made with other local councils.

Efficiency



How efficient is the service at keeping people safe and secure?



Good

Summary

An efficient fire and rescue service will manage its budget and use its resources properly and appropriately. It will align its resources to the risks and priorities identified in its CRMP. It should try to achieve value for money and keep costs down without compromising public safety. It should make the best possible use of its resources to achieve better results for the public. Plans should be based on robust and realistic assumptions about income and costs. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's overall efficiency is good.

The service has good financial management arrangements in place and a range of assurance measures to keep control of its spending. Scenario planning is used effectively so that strategic plans are robust.

The service is making effective use of [benchmarking](#) opportunities to improve its value for money. It knows it still has buildings within its estate that need to be improved.

The service is collaborating well with other organisations to increase efficiency. Where possible, the service continues to work with other organisations to procure equipment to make sure the Thames Valley's response to emergency incidents is consistent.

The service has made better use of technology to assist its operational effectiveness, an area of improvement identified in our previous inspection. It could improve further by assuring its workforce's time is spent productively and through better integration of its systems.

Making best use of resources



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making best use of its resources.

Fire and rescue services should manage their resources properly and appropriately, aligning them with the services' risks and statutory responsibilities. Services should make best possible use of resources to achieve the best results for the public.

The service's budget for 2022/23 was £38.5m. This is a 7.5 percent increase from the previous financial year.

Area for improvement

The service should have effective measures in place to assure itself that its workforce is productive and that its time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the community risk management plan.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service's plans support its objectives

The service's financial and workforce plans, including allocating staff to prevention, protection and response, continue to reflect and are consistent with the risks and priorities identified in the CRMP. It divides its service area into three hubs, which are resourced according to local risk and demand. Station plans reflect the hub plans and both align activity with the service's CRMP. Every three months, each hub reports progress against the service's objectives to the strategic performance board. Through this regular review of performance, the service adjusts its resource allocation to meet changes in demand, risk or priorities.

Plans are built on sound scenarios. They help make sure the service is sustainable and are underpinned by financial controls that reduce the risk of misusing public money. The strategic performance board and the [fire authority](#) provide overview and scrutiny of the service's budget performance both quarterly and annually. This regular review means the service can act when it risks not meeting its financial targets. This is supported by both internal and external audits, which haven't found any areas of concern with the service's financial management.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service could increase staff productivity

We are pleased to see that the service's arrangements for managing performance clearly link resource use to the CRMP and strategic priorities. For example, the service identified the need to focus more prevention resources in the west of the county in response to a backlog of [safe and well visits](#) following the pandemic.

Firefighters carry out some prevention and protection activity, including safe and well visits, safety education events and joint fire safety audits. The service hasn't yet identified the contribution it will make towards the national productivity target (using an extra 3 percent of national [wholetime firefighter](#) capacity to carry out additional prevention and protection work).

The service should do more to make sure its workforce is as productive as possible. This includes considering new ways of working. Some staff told us that they had unmanageable workloads, while others felt they had spare capacity when compared to others. Staff have completed building improvement work while on shift as opposed to activity that would support prevention or protection work. Some systems and processes can be complex, which makes it harder for the service to ensure that staff are being as productive as they can be at work.

The service hasn't reviewed its shift patterns since 2018. It has evaluated its current operational model and understands that current patterns support staff with their cost of living through overtime opportunities. The service is considering ways it could further improve its operational model and technology systems to balance workloads. The service should assure itself that its workforce is productive and that their time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet the priorities in the CRMP.

The service relies too much on overtime and still has a significant number of vacancies. It has a high number of staff in development and must use more short-term contracts than it would like to manage areas of its work.

The service had to adapt its working practices because of the pandemic, which are still part of its day-to-day activity. These include some staff working flexibly from home or the office and using virtual meeting options to reduce unnecessary travel.

The service collaborates to achieve efficiencies

We are pleased to see the service meets its statutory duty to collaborate and routinely considers opportunities to collaborate with other emergency responders. The service has a maintenance of fleet arrangement with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service. It also formally shares several of its facilities with South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police.

Collaborative work is aligned to the priorities in the service's CRMP. For example, the service has bought new fire engines through the joint Thames Valley procurement contract, which supports the services when responding across the borders. It recently obtained a new aerial ladder platform in collaboration with the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service to make sure the services can respond to an increasing number of high-rise developments in the area.

The service comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and results of its collaborations. Notable results include using learnings from creating shared estates with Thames Valley Police and South Central Ambulance Service at Hungerford and Crowthorne to improve the new shared site at Theale. This ensured reduced costs for all involved.

The service has robust continuity arrangements

The service has good continuity arrangements in place for areas where threats and risks are considered high. These threats and risks are regularly reviewed and tested so that staff are aware of the arrangements and their associated responsibilities. During our inspection, the service put a critical event management process in place to prepare for the heat wave of July 2022. This supported the service to respond effectively during a period of increased demand.

Thames Valley Control has robust and regularly tested operational continuity arrangements in place in case of disruption, cyber-attack or a major incident requiring multiple fire survival guidance calls or a national response.

The service has sound financial management

There are regular reviews to consider all the service's expenditure, including its non-pay costs. And this scrutiny makes sure the service gets value for money. For example, an external consultant has supported the service to benchmark itself against other services. The benchmarking report identifies that the service manages costs well and has the scope to improve its efficiency through its staff, technology and estate.

The service has made savings and efficiencies, which haven't affected its operational performance or the service for the public. These include:

- restructuring its senior and middle leadership teams and reducing the number of department heads and flexi duty officers;
- managing some of its stations in pairs with the reduced leadership teams;
- sharing fleet maintenance with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; and
- rationalising the service's estate, saving on maintenance costs of older properties.

This has helped it to save £2.4m in the last 5 years, as required by its efficiency plan. A thorough evaluation of the approach shows overall improvement in service provision and some opportunities for further improvements.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service is taking steps to make sure important areas, including estates, fleet and procurement, are well placed to achieve efficiency gains through sound financial management and best working practices. The service is due to buy breathing apparatus jointly with the Thames Valley services in 2022/23. It continues to review its equipment and purchase needs through a joint Thames Valley procurement contract. This contract supports the service's work with other Thames Valley fire services when responding across its borders.

Making the fire and rescue service affordable now and in the future



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at making the service affordable now and in the future.

Fire and rescue services should continuously look for ways to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. This includes transforming how they work and improving their value for money. Services should have robust spending plans that reflect future financial challenges and efficiency opportunities, and they should invest in better services for the public.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service understands its future financial challenges

The service has a sound understanding of future financial challenges. It plans to mitigate its main or significant financial risks. For example, the service recognises that the property element of its capital programme isn't fully funded from 2024/25. It submitted two previous bids to the [Salix Finance Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#), which were unsuccessful. The outcome of a third bid hasn't been decided. The service intends to review its future plans in 2022/23, considering the condition of its estate, to make best use of its available resources.

The underpinning assumptions are relatively robust, realistic and sensible. They take account of the wider external environment and some scenario planning for future spending reductions. This includes council tax precept flexibility, which has enabled an increase of £5 (7.2 percent) for a Band D property in 2022/23.

We are pleased to see that the service has identified savings and investment opportunities to improve the service to the public or generate further savings. It has benefited from using an external company to benchmark itself against other fire and rescue services and determine where it can improve value for money. The service met its previous efficiency plan and saved £2.4m by 2022.

In the service's medium-term financial plan, it has identified savings of £345,000 that it can make in 2022/23. This includes its successful appeal of business rate charges worth £77,000 per year. It has also identified £120,000 of the £325,000 savings it needs to make in 2023/24. The service has transferred £332,000 from its budget carry-forward reserve to its transition fund reserve. This will support invest-to-save IT projects from 2023/24.

The service maintains and makes good use of its reserves

The service has a sensible and sustainable plan for using its [reserves](#). This plan includes holding a general reserve of £2.2m, which is 6.8 percent of its revenue budget and will mitigate against the risk of unexpected events, such as unfunded pay awards.

Fleet and estate plans are improving the service's efficiency and effectiveness

The service's estate and fleet strategies have clear links to the CRMP. The development of the new station at Theale was as a direct result of needing to improve the service's response in the west of the county. Both strategies exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the service's arrangement with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service for fleet maintenance saves the service approximately £69,000 per annum.

The strategies are regularly reviewed so that the service can accurately assess the impact that any changes in estate and fleet provision, or future innovation, would have on risk. The service knows that some of its estate needs improvement and it may not be able to fund all the projects. It is considering how to make best use of future available resources. At times, the service has used a self-improvement approach. This has meant station-based staff have used some of their time to improve their working environment.

The service has made improvements to its IT systems

We are encouraged to see the improvements the service has made since the previous inspection in 2019, where we identified this as an area for improvement. Some of the service's prevention and protection activities have moved from paper-based recording to digital systems. Further improvements could still be made to better integrate the service's systems and make sure workforce time is used as efficiently as possible.

The service actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk. It adapted its IT strategy to meet service needs during the pandemic. It also seeks to exploit opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness presented by changes in technology. For example, it is using a QR code system to promote fire safety advice for residents and owners of high-rise buildings.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

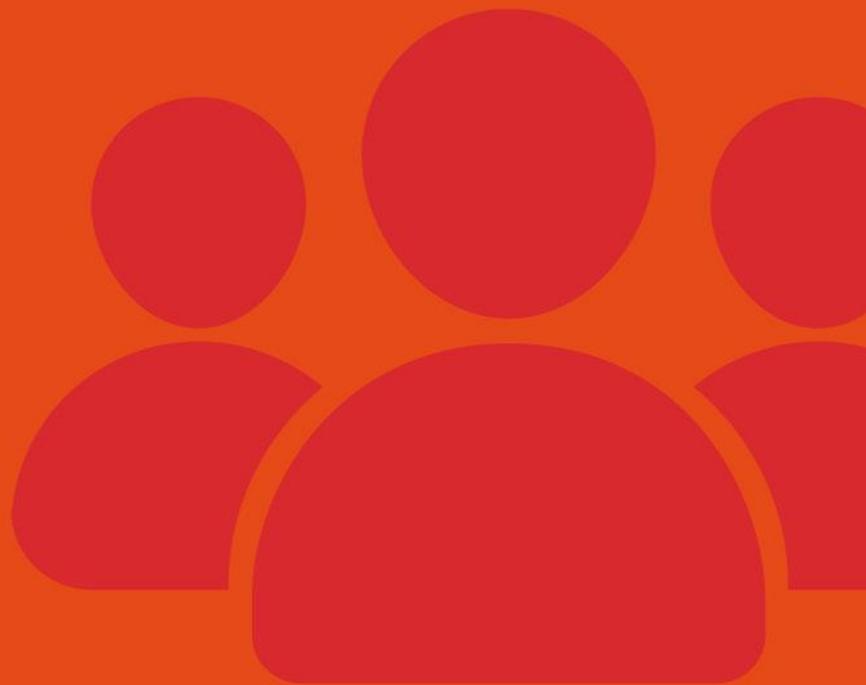
The service has put in place some of the capacity and capability needed to achieve sustainable transformation. It routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency and provide better services in the future. It should continue to consider how it can be competitive and attract those with the right skills to implement its IT strategy.

The service generates some of its income from external sources

The service actively considers and exploits opportunities for generating extra income. It continues to rent out some of its office spaces and has agreed lease terms with Thames Valley Police.

Where appropriate, it has applied for external funding to invest in improvements to the service given to the public. These include a recent application to the community infrastructure levy. The service is a member of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company and received a proportion of the accumulated surplus due to a lower-than-expected level of claims.

People



How well does the service look after its people?



Good

Summary

A well-led fire and rescue service develops and maintains a workforce that is supported, professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The service's leaders should be positive role models, and this should be reflected in the behaviour of staff at all levels. All staff should feel supported and be given opportunities to develop. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is part of everything the service does and its staff understand their role in promoting it. Overall, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at looking after its people.

The service has made good progress against the areas for improvement identified in our previous inspection. The behaviours it expects and the values it promotes are now well understood and displayed by all staff. Staff are confident to use the feedback systems in place and feel valued and listened to. Grievance procedures have been reviewed and are effective.

The service promotes a positive learning culture. The service has made sure that the competency recording process is consistently applied and staff are well trained for their roles.

The service has effective and well-understood health and safety policies and procedures in place and promotes them to all staff. The service could improve its absence procedure to ensure a consistent approach is applied by managers.

The service is facing challenges in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures raised through pension changes make workforce planning difficult for the service. It should continue to assess innovative ways to mitigate and manage this risk.

The service has high personal development review completion rates but should make sure that all staff use the process to support development. The service has improved its promotion process and is developing its leaders. It could do more to identify high potential in its workforce to support succession planning.

Promoting the right values and culture



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at promoting the right values and culture.

Fire and rescue services should have positive and inclusive cultures, modelled by the behaviours of their senior leaders. Health and safety should be promoted effectively, and staff should have access to a range of well-being support that can be tailored to their individual needs.

Area for improvement

The service should make sure that it has effective absence/attendance procedures in place.

Innovative practice: The service has a culture that promotes positive behaviours and values

We are encouraged by the cultural improvements the service has made since our previous inspection in 2019. The service now has well-defined values that are understood by staff. Staff talked positively about the service's approach to values and the introduction of the behavioural competency framework. The main staff communications, including the intranet, staff magazine and manager information sheet, are based on the service values. The service sent the new behavioural competency framework and employee code of conduct to every employee. We saw behaviours that reflected the service's values at all levels of the service.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service has a culture that promotes positive behaviours and values

We are encouraged by the cultural improvements the service has made since our previous inspection in 2019. The service now has well-defined values that are understood by staff. In our staff survey, conducted between 7 June 2022 and 11 July 2022, 88.9 percent of respondents (200 of 225) said they were aware of the service's values. This was an area for improvement in our previous inspection.

We saw behaviours that reflected the service's values at all levels of the service. Staff talked positively about the service's approach to values and the introduction of the behavioural competency framework. The main staff communications, including the intranet, staff magazine and manager information sheet, are based on the service's values. The service sent the new behavioural competency framework and employee code of conduct to every employee. Work has also been carried out to show how the service's values align to the new national [Core Code of Ethics](#).

Senior leaders act as role models. For example, most staff described the senior leadership team as visible and approachable, providing opportunities for feedback. In our staff survey, 76.9 percent of respondents (173 of 225) said that senior leaders consistently model the service's values.

There is a positive working culture throughout the service, with most staff empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours when they encounter them. Staff described situations when they had challenged inappropriate language or behaviours and felt well supported by the service. However, we heard that some staff would be reluctant to challenge some behaviours and may still need support to confidently and consistently do so.

Staff have good access to services that support their mental and physical health

The service continues to have well-understood and effective well-being policies in place that are available to staff. A significant range of well-being support is available to support both physical and mental health. For example, the service has an occupational health team, employee assistance programme, links to private healthcare options and promotes the use of the [Fire Fighters Charity](#). Staff spoke positively about the trauma support given automatically following difficult incidents.

There are good provisions in place to promote staff well-being. This includes a well-being working group to monitor trends and establish opportunities to give sessions on issues such as financial well-being or one-to-one health checks for staff. In our staff survey, 96.4 percent of respondents (217 of 225) said they feel able to access services to support their mental well-being. Some staff still reported delays in accessing health services, but most understand the well-being support processes available and have confidence in them.

The service has a positive health and safety culture

The service continues to have effective and well-understood health and safety policies and procedures in place. The service's health, safety and well-being strategy focuses on three areas:

- safe and healthy people;
- safe and healthy places; and
- safe and healthy processes.

These policies and procedures are readily available and effectively promoted to all staff. Health and safety or operational bulletins give information and learning for staff, while critical detail is sent by email. In our staff survey, 97.3 percent of respondents (219 of 225) said they feel their personal safety and welfare is treated seriously by the service. Both staff and representative bodies have confidence in the health and safety approach taken by the service.

The service monitors staff who have secondary employment or dual contracts to make sure they comply with the secondary employment policy and don't work excessive hours. The service sets out its expectations in its policy. Managers described monitoring the hours worked by staff, while considering their health and well-being.

Absence isn't consistently managed within the service

As part of our inspection, we reviewed some case files to consider how the service manages and supports staff through absence.

The service has an absence policy, but it isn't widely understood by staff or managers. From the files we reviewed, we saw several inconsistent decisions made as a result of a lack of guidance and managerial discretion being applied. Policy wasn't always followed and we saw examples of triggers being missed for repeat periods of short-term absence. In addition, some formal review meetings weren't held.

Overall, the service has seen an increase in staff absences over the last 12 months. Some of these were related to COVID-19. The service identifies that staff absences are having an impact on daily staffing arrangements and fire engine availability.

Getting the right people with the right skills



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at getting the right people with the right skills.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

Fire and rescue services should have a workforce plan in place that is linked to their CRMPs, sets out their current and future skills requirements and addresses capability gaps. They should supplement this with a culture of continuous improvement that includes appropriate learning and development throughout the service.

Area for improvement

The service should review its workforce planning to make sure that it has effective arrangements in place to manage staff turnover while continuing to provide its core service to the public.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service has a good process to plan its workforce requirements

The service has good workforce planning in place. This makes sure skills and capabilities align with what is needed to effectively action the CRMP. However, the service is facing difficulties in recruiting staff promptly to fill current skills gaps. These gaps have been created by external factors, including additional unexpected leavers following changes to the pension scheme, the cost-of-living crisis and competitive external recruitment opportunities. The service needs to do more to improve how it considers its future needs and succession planning.

The service knows it needs a minimum number of operational firefighters to maintain fire engine availability and a good response standard. [As described earlier](#), the service has maintained a good response standard even with recent reduced availability.

Workforce and succession planning is subject to consistent scrutiny in the form of regular meetings to discuss requirements. The workforce planning group meets quarterly to review the skills and profile of the workforce expected in the year ahead. To support managers in daily staffing needs, a response resourcing group has been developed. This approach means the service can identify gaps in workforce capabilities and resilience.

The service has a good process to monitor operational skills and capabilities

Operational staff told us that they could access the training they need to be effective in their role. The service's training plans make sure they can maintain competence and capability effectively. We reviewed the service's training records and found that staff were qualified in the core skills needed for their role, such as water safety, breathing apparatus and incident command.

The service monitors staff competence on an electronic operational training package. This provides managers with a dashboard and colour coded system to review staff compliance. We are pleased with progress the service has made in ensuring that all staff use the system consistently. This was an area for improvement identified in our previous inspection in 2019. The service also regularly updates its understanding of staff's skills and risk-critical safety capabilities in line with [national operational guidance](#).

The service promotes a positive learning and improvement culture

A culture of continuous improvement is promoted throughout the service and staff are encouraged to learn and develop. For example, the service has adopted the apprentice firefighter route for new recruits and introduced development assessment pathways for all operational staff. The development assessment pathways determine the training courses needed to be competent in current and future roles. They have been extended to roles in the protection team. The service plans to include other roles in future.

We are pleased to see that the service has a range of resources in place. This includes a new online learning system that all staff can easily access, including [on-call](#) staff. All staff have regular refresher training in topics including [safeguarding](#), media, health and safety, and EDI. The service has also invested in leadership development courses from an external specialist for its managers. The service continues to develop staff through its annual training bursary scheme.

Most staff told us that they can access a range of learning and development resources. In response to our staff survey, 87.6 percent of respondents (197 of 225) said they had received sufficient training to do their job effectively. In addition, 87.1 percent (196 of 225) agreed that they were satisfied with the level of learning and development available to them.

Ensuring fairness and promoting diversity



Good (2019: Requires improvement)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

Creating a more representative workforce will provide huge benefits for fire and rescue services. This includes greater access to talent and different ways of thinking, and improved understanding of and engagement with their local communities. Each service should make sure that EDI is firmly understood and demonstrated throughout the organisation. This includes successfully taking steps to remove inequality and making progress to improve fairness, diversity and inclusion at all levels

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

of the service. It should proactively seek and respond to feedback from staff and make sure any action taken is meaningful.

Area for improvement

The service should improve its use of positive action tools and opportunities to increase diversity in the service.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service is good at encouraging and acting on staff feedback

The service has developed several ways to engage with staff on issues and decisions that affect them. This includes methods to build all-staff awareness of fairness and diversity. It also includes targeted work with people to determine matters that affect different staff groups. Feedback and challenge are encouraged by senior leaders visiting stations, through a private, confidential reporting line or annual staff surveys.

The actions being taken to address matters raised are communicated and have been positively received by staff. This was an area for improvement in our previous inspection of the service in 2019. The service has published the results and agreed action plans following annual staff surveys. In our staff survey, 71.1 percent of respondents (160 of 225) said they were confident in the system for providing feedback to all levels. In addition, 77.3 percent of respondents (174 of 225) said they would be able to challenge ideas without any detriment. Representative bodies and staff associations reported that the service engages with them well.

The service is good at tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination

Staff have a good understanding of what bullying, harassment and discrimination are and the negative effect on colleagues and the organisation.

In response to our staff survey, 4.4 percent of respondents (10 of 225) told us they had been subject to harassment and 6.7 percent (15 of 225) to discrimination over the past 12 months. Of these staff, most did not think that their concerns had been dealt with appropriately.

Most staff are confident in the service's approach to tackling bullying, harassment, discrimination, grievances and disciplinary matters. The service has updated its grievance procedures, which we identified as an area for improvement in our previous inspection. The service has made sure all staff are trained and clear about what to do if they encounter inappropriate behaviour.

The service could do more to improve its operational workforce diversity

The service knows it needs to go further to increase its operational workforce diversity. Limited development of its recruitment campaigns in 2021 meant [wholetime firefighter](#) recruitment rounds haven't been directed at or accessible to under-represented groups. The service told us it had to rush these recruitment rounds due to a delay during the pandemic.

The service needs to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds into operational roles. There has been slow progress to improve both the diversity of ethnic backgrounds and genders for operational staff in the service. None of the new wholetime firefighter recruits were women or from an ethnic minority background. Some success has been seen in on-call station areas due to localised promotional activities leading more women to join the service recently.

The service has improved its recruitment and retention processes

There is an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for the fire and rescue service. The service has an effective system to understand and remove the risk of disproportionality in recruitment processes. Staff on interview panels receive [unconscious bias](#) and behavioural interview training.

The service has put a lot of effort into developing its wholetime recruitment processes so that they are fair and understood by potential applicants. Following its recruitment campaigns in 2021, the service evaluated its processes to understand where and why applicants might have dropped out. Additional support opportunities are being trialled by the service and include ongoing fitness sessions and interview skills and preparation support. We look forward to seeing the impact of this work.

The recruitment policies for all service roles are comprehensive. Recruitment opportunities are advertised both internally and externally.

The service has made some improvements in increasing staff diversity at all levels of the organisation. Of the whole workforce, 4.4 percent are from an ethnic minority background and 23.8 percent are women. This is higher than the proportion of women in the workforce across all fire and rescue services in England, which is 18 percent, and an improvement on HMICFRS data from 2017.

The service has acted positively to improve diversity. For example, it has expanded its internship opportunities to attract young people from more diverse backgrounds and provided permanent full-time employment to some of its previous [Leonard Cheshire](#) interns. This has been supported by the workforce.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service promotes equality, diversity and inclusion with its workforce

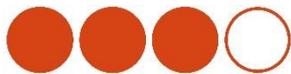
The service has improved its approach to EDI. Staff spoke positively about the service's focus and direction in understanding what more it could do. The service is making sure that it can offer the right services to its communities and support staff with [protected characteristics](#).

Staff receive regular training in EDI. The EDI forum, disability network and separate steering group meet regularly to ensure progress against the service's objectives. Police and other staff networks have been consulted to widen their understanding of supportive action. The service is good at providing reasonable adjustments and supporting staff with a disability.

In our staff survey, 91.6 percent of respondents (206 of 225) said they were treated fairly at work. In addition, 79.6 percent (179 of 225) agreed that they are given the same opportunity to develop as others.

The service has an effective process in place to assess and improve equality as needed. A comprehensive guidance document supports staff to consider the impact that a change in policy, practice or procedure might have on any of the protected characteristics. All completed equality impact assessments are stored and made available on the service's intranet.

Managing performance and developing leaders



Good (2019: Good)

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service is good at managing performance and developing leaders.

Fire and rescue services should have robust and meaningful performance management arrangements in place for their staff. All staff should be supported to meet their potential, and there should be a focus on developing staff and improving diversity into leadership roles.

Area for improvement

The service should improve all staff understanding and application of the performance development review process.

Area for improvement

The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

We set out our detailed findings below. These are the basis for our judgment of the service's performance in this area.

The service has a good performance management process and should ensure consistency in its use

There is a good performance management system in place, which allows the service to develop and assess the individual performance of all staff. Each staff member has individual goals and objectives that reflect the service's behavioural competency framework. There are regular performance assessments and completion rates are high. Data from the service shows that in the year ending 31 March 2021, almost 100 percent of staff had completed a performance development review.

Staff don't always think the system is fair or meaningful. For example, some staff felt that their manager hadn't given the same level of thought to the process that they had themselves. In our staff survey, 16.7 percent of respondents (37 of 221) reported that they don't find performance reviews useful.

The service has improved its promotion and progression processes

The service has put considerable effort into developing its promotion and progression processes so that they are fair and understood by staff. Most staff said they were happy with the changes and that they felt the new process was and would be fair. The promotion and progression policies are comprehensive and cover opportunities in all roles.

The service has some effective succession planning processes in place. These processes allow it to effectively manage the career pathways of its staff, including some roles requiring specialist skills. The processes include development assessment pathways that have been clearly communicated. Staff are supported to access the process. At the time of inspection, the pathways didn't cover all roles in the service and there were initial problems adapting the process to roles in control.

Selection processes are managed consistently using an initial blind sift. This is followed by interviews based on the behavioural competency framework and according to the level of leadership needed. Temporary promotions are used appropriately to fill short-term resourcing gaps.

Agenda Item 10

Appendix A

The service is developing leaders and could do more to identify high-potential staff at all levels

The service has some talent management schemes in place to develop leaders and high-potential staff. A middle and senior-leadership development course has been well received by staff.

The service should consider putting in place more formal arrangements to identify and support members of staff to become senior leaders. There are clear gaps in its succession planning. As such, the area for improvement identified in our previous inspection in 2019 remains. The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

This page is intentionally left blank

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	15 FEBRUARY 2023
SUBJECT	ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY – PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024
LEAD OFFICER	LUCY GREENWAY, SENIOR HR ADVISER
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to prepare and publish a Pay Policy Statement each financial year. This statement includes information on remuneration for all staff as defined by the Act.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **APPROVE** the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 (Appendix A) for publication subject to any further amendments considered appropriate.

3. REPORT

3.1 Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require that relevant authorities in England prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. Pay Policy Statements must be approved by a meeting of the full Fire Authority and subsequently published.

3.2 A draft Pay Policy Statement for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) for the forthcoming year (2023/2024) (Appendix A) is drafted to take into account guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government Transparency Code 2014 and the Local Transparency Publishing Organisational Information guidance provided by the Local Government Association in 2015.

Agenda Item 12

- 3.3 The attached draft was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 23 January 2023 for consideration. The Committee recommended an amendment to the population figures quoted in the 'Responsibility and Scale' section of the statement to reflect the latest Census data. This has been amended.
- 3.4 Whilst it has not been necessary to amend the format of the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24, a number of updates have been included and are detailed below.
- 3.5 An updated section relating to the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the impact on RBFRS. This includes the removal of employer and employee contribution information related to the 1992 and 2006 Firefighter Pension Schemes which have now closed as all members have transitioned to the 2005 scheme.
- 3.6 Inclusion of information on the enhanced mileage rates for casual, essential and lease car users.
- 3.7 Removal of specific information on the amounts paid to lease car users.
- 3.8 Inclusion of information relating to Special Severance Payments (SSPs) which are made to employees outside of statutory or contractual payments when they leave employment, and the process that is followed when an SSP may apply.
- 3.9 Inclusion of information relating to the alignment of the non-operational Assistant Chief Fire Officer role to the pay award arrangements for the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services.
- 3.10 In light of the ombudsman case on pension's discretions, an amendment has been made to the 'Pensions Policy' section of the statement. Pending a decision from the Authority relating to pensions discretions, an amendment has been made to the sentence "in the event that re-engagement of a retiree takes place, their pension payments will be abated (up to 100%)" so it now reads "in the event that re-engagement of a retiree takes place, their pension payments may be abated (up to 100%)".

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 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is prepared to enable Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to meet its obligations under Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Local

Transparency Code 2015 and in accordance with issued Government guidance.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct equality issues arising from this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 N/A.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

The following individuals have been consulted in preparation of this report.

10.1 Monitoring Officer

10.2 Head of Finance and Procurement

10.3 Chief Fire Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Localism Act 2011

11.2 Openness and Accountability in Local Pay, Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act, February 2012, Department for Communities and Local Government.

11.3 Openness and Accountability in Local Pay, Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act, February 2013, Supplementary Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government.

11.4 Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector: Final Report, March 2011

11.5 Pay Policy and Practice in Local Authorities – A guide for Councillors, Local Government Association (January 2013) issued November 2013 to Local Authority Chairs.

11.6 Local Government Transparency Code 2014 – Department for Communities and Local Government, October 2014.

11.7 Local Transparency Publishing Organisational Information - Local Government Association 30 November 2015.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A - Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

Agenda Item 12

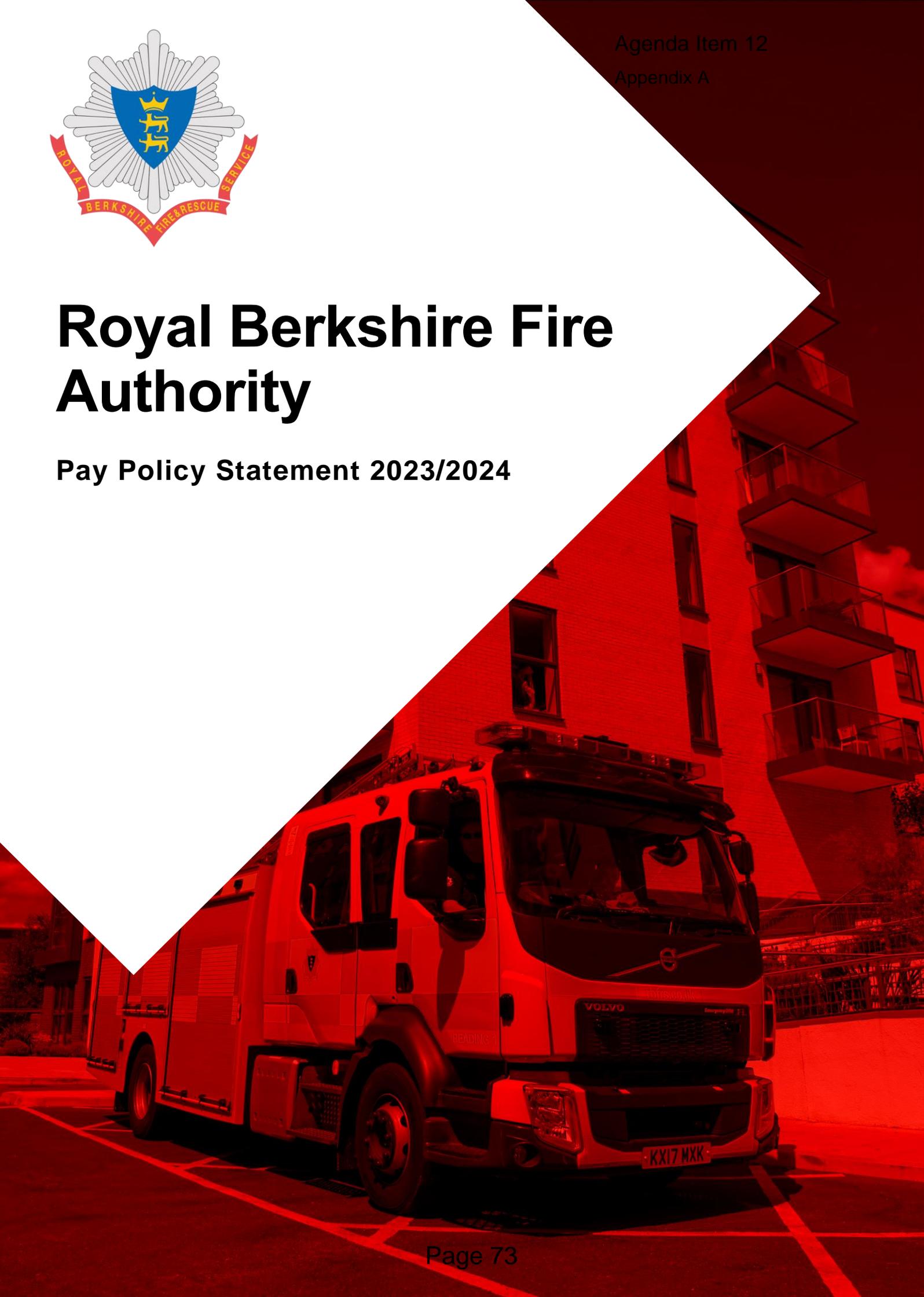
13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Lucy Greenway, Senior HR Adviser, 07585 991 606



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024





Contents

»»	Introduction	4
»»	Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023	5
	Accountability and Decision Making	5
	Responsibility and Scale	5
	The Fire Authority's pay strategy - How is pay determined?	5
	The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services	6
	The NJC for Local Government Services	7
	Senior Managers' Pay	7
	Benefits Other Than Pay	9
	Pensions	9
	Car Provision	9
	Cycle to Work Scheme	10
	Subscriptions	11
	Uniform	11
	Employee Assistance Programme	11
	Occupational Health Support	11
	Healthcare Provision	11
	Outplacement Support	11
	Highest and Lowest Paid Employees	12
	Remuneration packages (as at 31 October 2022):	12
	Pay Multiples	13
	Payments on Termination of Employment	13
	Compensation Policy	13



Pensions Policy	14
Publication of Pay Statement	14

Introduction

This Pay Policy Statement reflects the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBFA) long standing Pay and Reward Strategy, which has been in place since its inception in 1998.

It has been formulated to discharge the RBFA's obligation to publish such a statement as required by Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. The purpose of this statement is to provide transparency with regard to RBFA's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:

The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined; and

The detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff as defined by the relevant legislation

The detail and level of remuneration for the lowest level of post/employee

The ratio of pay of the top earner and that of the median earner

RBFA seeks to balance the need to reward its staff sufficiently to attract, motivate and retain the talented individuals needed to deliver a first class fire and rescue service with the need to ensure that RBFA delivers its strategic commitment of providing good value for money.

This policy statement has been approved by RBFA. It will be subject to review annually and in accordance with new or proposed legislation to ensure that, it remains relevant and effective. Information supplied to inform the Pay Policy Statement will be based on figures available at the time of writing (31 October 2022).

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024

Accountability and Decision Making

The Fire Authority is responsible for decision making in relation to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements in relation to its' employees subject to the exercise of delegated powers. The Fire Authority has approved the pay ranges for any post in excess of £100,000 per year on appointment.

Responsibility and Scale

For 2022/2023, RBFA was directly responsible for a budget of £38,445,604 and the employment of 651 staff. The Fire Authority provides services to a total population of 949,700 residents.

The Fire Authority's pay strategy - How is pay determined?

The RBFA's overall approach to determining the pay of its employees is to participate in national collective bargaining for fire-fighters and fire control staff through the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services; for non-operational support staff through the NJC for Local Government Services and for Directors through NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. These arrangements account for a total of 473 employees covered by NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, 174 employees covered by NJC for Local Government Services and four covered by NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

The pay scale rates for apprentices have been reviewed and remain well in excess of the National Minimum Wage for apprentices as at 1 April 2022.

The RBFA's long term approach to pay and reward has been to continue to support national pay bargaining as the most effective way to manage payroll costs and the challenge of running a fire and rescue service in one of the highest cost-of-living areas outside London.

RBFA does not pay any location allowances related to the cost of living in Berkshire.

There are occasions where the job evaluation scheme and pay grading structure does not take into account market factors such as market pay rates for specialist and technical project roles, or fluctuating demand for skills in the marketplace. It is therefore sometimes necessary to pay a supplement in addition to base salary in order to recruit and retain staff. To this end, a Role

Specific Supplement Policy has been published to ensure RBFA has a fair, transparent and controlled approach to pay. Currently seven individuals receive a role supplement.

At times we need ad hoc project work to be completed, which is achieved via Framework arrangements or paid on a casual hourly or day rate as appropriate to the task, duration and/or local market rates.

The Fire Authority also operates an individual Merit Payment Scheme to reward individual employees in any staff group as a result of specific exceptional performance in a one off task, sustained high performance within their normal job, or undertaking temporary additional responsibility where another allowance is not applicable.

The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services

The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services currently provides a nationally agreed competence based pay structure of six roles ranging from Firefighter to Area Manager and a parallel, with fewer levels, structure for Fire Control staff. For each role there is a Role Map and National Occupational Standards have been established.

Firefighters begin their careers as trainees for which there is a separate rate of pay. Wholetime Firefighters join under an apprenticeship scheme for which they are paid a trainee rate of pay. On satisfactory completion of initial training they move onto the development rate of pay and undertake a Development and Assessment Pathway (DAP). When they have demonstrated competence against the National Occupational Standards they receive competent pay. A similar structure of development and competent pay rates exists for each role, and for roles from Watch Manager to Area Manager, there are two job sizes at each role level for competent staff, which are based on the scale of the duties and responsibilities of the post. Allocation of posts to roles and job sizes within roles is determined through locally agreed evaluation processes.

At the time of writing, the 2022 pay award has not yet been agreed.

Other elements of pay include:

- ✓ Allowance payments for work undertaken outside the role map
- ✓ Continuous Personal Development (CPD) payments
- ✓ Locally agreed allowance for Area Managers undertaking a Head of Service role
- ✓ An operational allowance for being available to undertake 'Gold' level command
- ✓ Station Manager allowances paid to Watch Based Station Managers
- ✓ A flexible duty allowance paid to officers undertaking duties as part of the flexible duty rota

- ✓ A one-off payment made to members of the Pension Board for attendance at each Pension Board meeting
- ✓ Training allowance for Training Centre Instructors

Full details of the NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services terms and conditions of service are set out in the Sixth Edition of the NJC Scheme of Conditions of Service and any subsequent updates, Local Agreements reached between the Fire Authority and the Fire Brigades Union and the Fire Authority's Policies.

The NJC for Local Government Services

The NJC for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, sets the framework and provides a national pay scale for the pay and conditions of service for the Fire Authority's non-operational support staff.

RBFRS uses the pay ranges identified within the national pay scales, localised to reduce the number of spinal column points (SCP) within each grade and further extended to provide ten pay grades. Posts are allocated to a grade through a process of job evaluation using the HAY job evaluation methodology.

Staff are appointed to a spinal column point (SCP) in the appropriate pay grade and progress subject to satisfactory performance confirmed through an annual appraisal (Performance and Development Review (PDR)), to the top of their pay scale by annual increments on the first of April each year. Based on the outcome of PDRs, there are provisions for the acceleration or stopping of incremental progression. In order to avoid possible claims for age discrimination, there are no more than six SCPs in each grade range.

Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIOs) progress through pay grades as they complete nationally recognised fire safety qualifications. Trainees in Procurement are able to receive increment SCP increases within their Grade subject to the achievement of the relevant examinations in addition to annual increments.

The 2022 pay has been reached between the National Employers and the National Joint Council (NJC) on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2022.

In addition, the NJC has agreed that from 1 April 2023, all employees covered by Green Book conditions, regardless of their current leave entitlement or length of service, will receive a permanent increase of one day (pro rata for part-time staff) to their annual leave entitlement.

Senior Managers' Pay

A new Senior Leadership Team (SLT) structure was put in place with effect from 1 December 2021. This structure retains four positions designated as Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Agenda Item 12

Appendix A

(CFO/CEX), Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services (DCEX), Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Director of Operations and Collaboration (DCFO) and Assistant Chief Fire Officer/Director of Service Delivery (ACFO). The ACFO role can be assigned as either operational or non-operational role.

Conditions of service for the CFO/CEX, DCEX, DCFO and ACFO are aligned with those set out in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service. The DCEX is aligned to the Joint National Council for Joint Chief Officers of Local Authorities – Constitution, Conditions of Service, and Salaries document; A decision by the CFO on 20 June 2016, aligned the pay award for the non-operational Director (DCEX position) to those set out in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. The non-operational ACFO role is awarded pay increases in line with the DCEX arrangements.

The CFO/CEX, DCEX, DCFO and ACFO are each placed on a five point pay range set by the Fire Authority:

CFO	CO16	£134,576	DCFO/DCEX	CO11	£108,230	ACFO	CO9	£99,815
	CO17	£139,009		CO12	£111,925		CO10	£102,672
	CO18	£143,453		CO13	£115,617		CO11	£108,230
	CO19	£148,579		CO14	£119,311		CO12	£111,925
	CO20	£153,570		CO15	£130,132		CO13	£115,617

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman determine where on the agreed pay scale the CFO/CEX is placed, based upon year-end performance appraisals. The RBFA have determined that the CFO/CEX, as Head of Paid Service determines where on the agreed pay scales the Directors are placed based upon year-end performance appraisals. At the time of writing, the 2022 pay award had not yet been agreed.

In addition the operational CFO/CEX and DCFO are entitled to a vehicle for use in connection with Fire Authority business. Those in these roles are entitled to a Provided Car or receive the enhanced rate of £3,500 as a contribution towards a lease car. This is in line with the contributions towards a lease car for other eligible staff as outlined in the Car User Scheme. The non-operational DCEX and ACFO receive a Car Allowance of £1,239 per annum.

The operational Director posts (CFO and DCFO) also receive an additional allowance for providing out of hours operational incident command cover and services based on 10% of the mid-point of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer salary range, currently £10,823 per annum.

There are no other bonuses or additional payments currently made to the Directors. In the event a merit payment is made, details will be included in the annual report to the Management Committee.

Senior Managers' pay (i.e. Grade 7 to 10, Area Managers and Directors) accounts for 6.29% of the total pay bill (which includes all taxable earnings, including base salary, variable pay, allowances and lease car cash value).

Benefits Other Than Pay

Pensions

The RBFA offers membership of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2015) to newly appointed staff engaged in operational fire-fighting. From 1 April 2022, all operational members in a Firefighters' Pension Scheme became members of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme.

Non-operational support staff and Control Staff are offered membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

In 2015 most public service pension schemes were reformed. These reforms included 'transitional protection' for people closer to retirement. The Courts have ruled that this directly discriminated against some younger pension scheme members. The Public Services Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (PSPJO) received Royal Assent on 10 March 2022 and this set out in law HMT's solution to the age discrimination. We currently await secondary legislation which address issues with legacy schemes. The impact on RBFA is likely to be significant and will continue to be monitored.

The respective contributions made by the RBFA and employees who are members of these pension schemes, from 1 April 2022 are as follows (in all cases members are auto-enrolled into the appropriate pension scheme in accordance with legislation in relation to workplace pensions):

Scheme	Employer Contributions	Employee Contribution Bands
2015 FPS (2015 Scheme)	28.8%	11% - 14.5%
LGPS	13.5*%	5.5% - 12.5%

* Employer contributions for members of the LGPS scheme are set at 13.5% of annual salary. RBFA also pays an employer annual lump sum to the pension fund of £366,000

Car Provision

The RBFA offers a Car User Scheme to staff who are required have access to a vehicle to be used in connection with their official duties. A revised Car User Scheme was adopted in September 2021 to ensure a fair and equitable process for determining the provisions for staff across the service. The Car User Scheme is currently under review. The scheme is in three parts:

1. **Lease Cars** – Lease Cars are available for essential car users. The annual allowance is as follows:

- a. Standard rate of £2,000 per annum
- b. Enhanced rate of £3,500 per annum

The enhanced lease car rate is provided for individuals who need an enhanced vehicle specification specifically related to the requirement of their role. This includes Flexible Duty Officers who are required to have a vehicle with a defined specification as outlined in the Car User Scheme. Any payment of the enhanced rate for non-Flexible Duty Officers is subject to approval by the appropriate Head of Service.

2. **Provided Cars** - following a change in taxation rules for car users, a Provided Car Scheme is available for Flexible Duty Officers (FDO) as an alternative to a lease car. The Fire Authority also maintains a pool of provided vehicles for use by other members of staff requiring access to a vehicle as part of their role.

3. **Car Allowance** – a car allowance of up to £1,239 per annum is payable to those using their own car, for those not eligible for a lease car, should they meet the criteria outlined in the Car User Scheme.

Mileage Rates

RBFA pays an enhanced mileage rate to Casual and Essential car users of 55p per mile for the first 10,000 business miles in the tax year and 31p per mile for mileage over 10,000 in the tax year. This is above the authorised HMRC rates of 45p and 25 per mile. Any amount over the HMRC authorised rates are subject to tax and national insurance.

The enhanced mileage rates are reviewed on an annual basis and are based on the CPI rate of inflation.

Lease car users are paid mileage based on whatever is higher of the HMRC Advisory rate and the average monthly prices of road fuels. This is reviewed on a monthly basis. Provided car users will reimburse their commuting and incidental mileage at the same rate that lease car user mileage is paid.

Cycle to Work Scheme

RBFA participate in the national “Cycle to Work” scheme through which its employees hire bicycles to use for travelling to and from work.

Subscriptions

Individuals required by RBFA to be members of professional bodies in relation to their duties are reimbursed subscription fees.

Uniform

The RBFA provides uniform clothing for its operational firefighting and Control Room staff and some Green Book staff engaged in public facing activities such as prevention work, Fire Safety Inspecting Officers and HQ reception staff. A number of other staff are provided with work wear as required for the purpose of their role. In addition, the operational firefighting staff are issued with and required to wear Personal Protective Equipment when undertaking operational duties.

Employee Assistance Programme

The RBFA provides an employee assistance programme for all its staff.

Occupational Health Support

The RBFA provides an Occupational Health Service to all its staff which seeks to keep them fit and well to undertake their duties and to ensure their speedy and safe return to work when they are injured or sick.

Healthcare Provision

Where appropriate and cost effective, the RBFA may pay for physiotherapy, private medical assessment and/or treatment for its staff in order to secure their more rapid return to work following injury or sickness.

RBFA also provides the opportunity for staff to access the Benenden employee healthcare scheme at no direct cost to employees other than tax due on the benefit. This is currently at a cost of £11.90, for those who choose to opt into the scheme. As at 31 October 2022, there were 458 members of the scheme.

Outplacement Support

In the rare event of employment being terminated on the grounds of redundancy, RBFA may provide appropriate outplacement support to the employee(s) concerned in order to assist them to find alternative employment elsewhere.

Highest and Lowest Paid Employees

The CFO/CEX is the RBFA’s highest paid employee. The policy regarding his remuneration is set out in RBFA’s Senior Managers Pay section.

The CFO/CEX is selected by an RBFA Members’ Appointment Panel following a comprehensive selection process and national advertising campaign.

Remuneration packages (as at 31 October 2022):

	Basic Salary and (operational command allowance (per annum))	Total remuneration (including pension contributions and car provision)
CFO/CEX	£159,402	£208,809.78
Lowest paid employee (excluding Apprentices)	£21,748	£25,445.16
Competent Firefighter	£32,244	£36,854.89

From April 2022, the compulsory government National Living Wage for workers over 23 years of age and over is £9.50 per hour. Please note the National Living Wage is distinct from the Living Wage, which is the level of pay recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, an independent campaign group. In assessing this requirement on current pay arrangements in RBFA it is noted that the lowest paid post to which an employee would be recruited would attract an hourly rate of £11.05 (excluding apprentices on apprenticeship rates of pay).

Given that staff pay and benefits dominate the RBFA budget, the current and anticipated future reductions in RBFA’s financial resources mean that these costs are and will continue to be under close scrutiny.

RBFRS has in some cases found it difficult recruit suitable professionally qualified staff through normal channels and in some areas the use of interim agency staff or contractors working outside of IR35 legislation, is in place.

Reviews will be required to ensure appropriate remuneration is in place to attract and retain staff as structures within the Service are examined. Consideration of the total reward available to respond to changing organisational pressures and the linkages between pay and performance and redesigned structures will continue to be explored through organisational change programmes to ensure staff are attracted to, and retained by RBFA. In accordance with our Equality Policy, pay is monitored and reviewed. An equal pay audit was completed during 2022/2023. RBFA has

published its Gender Pay Gap report in line with legislation, which can be viewed on the Services' website and also at gov.uk. RBFA also publishes an Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which will be available on the Services' website.

Pay Multiples

The relationship between the rate of pay for the median full time equivalent earnings and the highest paid employee excluding pension, can be described as the pay multiple.

The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings and the CFO/CEX is 1:4.72.

Payments on Termination of Employment

Compensation Policy

The RBFA currently exercises its discretions under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment), (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 to enhance statutory redundancy payments by paying one and a half times the Statutory Redundancy Pay Table and waiving the statutory maximum week's pay for calculation of redundancy payments. These discretions only apply to staff who are offered membership of the LGPS, that is Fire Control Staff and non-operational support staff.

Uniformed operational staff at all levels are not currently covered by the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations 2006 and in the event of redundancy, their compensation is limited to statutory redundancy pay.

Special Severance Payments

Special Severance Payments (SSPs) are payments made to employees outside of the statutory or contractual payments when leaving employment in public service. SSPs will include any outstanding loans, bursaries or training expenses which are not being repaid by the employee. Payments (or write off of loans which includes bursaries or training expenses) will only be made where there is a convincing case that it is in the interest of the tax payers.

As a public body, the RBFA must demonstrate it has appropriately considered whether making a SSP is an appropriate use of public money, and that payments are consistent with the Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, when an SSP may apply, the case is fully considered and appropriate approvals are sought in line with the scheme of budget delegation before any such payments are made or loans written off.

Pensions Policy

RBFA has adopted a policy of considering the re-engagement of its retired operational staff subject to certain conditions. In the event that re-engagement of a retiree takes place, their pension payments may be abated (up to 100%) to ensure that they do not earn more in retirement than they did immediately prior to their retirement. Refer to the Pensions and Retirement Planning Policy.

Publication of Pay Statement

Upon approval of the full Fire Authority, this statement will be published on RBFA's web site. In addition RBFA publishes the following details for Directors for the two most recent years in its Annual Statement of Accounts:-

- ✓ Salary including fees and allowances
- ✓ Any sums payable by way of expenses allowance that are chargeable to UK income tax (Benefits in Kind/Car Allowance)
- ✓ Total Remuneration excluding pensions
- ✓ Employer Pension Contributions
- ✓ Total Remuneration including pensions

In addition, RBFA publishes the numbers of employees earning £50,000 and over in bandings of £5,000 and any compensation for loss of employment and any other payments connected with termination

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

This page is intentionally left blank

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	15 FEBRUARY 2023
SUBJECT	2023/24 MEMBER SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE REVIEW
LEAD OFFICER	GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To receive recommendation from Management Committee on 7 February 2023, to approve the update of the 2023/24 Member Scheme of Allowance Review, and to note the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) to their respective councils.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2) require the Authority to make a Scheme of Allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** that the Scheme of Allowances is indexed to the annual local government increase for allowances;
- 2.2 **APPROVE** that the new rates for allowances, uprated by 4.04% be backdated to 1 April 2022;
- 2.3 **NOTE** the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs).

3. REPORT

Agenda Item 13

- 3.1 Subject to an amendment made to paragraph 3.8 and an update to 3.12, this report is a recommendation from Management Committee on 7 February 2023.
- 3.2 On an annual basis the Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowance prior to the start of the financial year. The Authority's Scheme of Allowance is indexed to National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions.
- 3.3 Each year, the NJC negotiates a pay agreement and on 1 November 2022, an agreement was reached on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2022 for 2022/23. Unlike previous years where the agreement was a percentage applied to staff pay, a flat rate pay offer of £1,925 on each scale point was made and a new rate for allowances, uprated by 4.04% was made.
- 3.4 This report is seeking Members approval to update the Scheme of Allowance to reflect the new rate for allowances (4.04%) and that paragraph MA14 is reworded to reflect this change, highlighted in yellow.

'MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage allowance salary increase (known as the 'spinal column point 49') agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.

- 3.5 The proposed 4.04% has been applied to the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances outlined in Appendix A, highlighted in yellow. Attached as Appendix B is the letter, dated 1 November 2022 from NJC local government services confirming the pay agreement.

Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs)

- 3.6 There are six Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) in the Royal County of Berkshire, which make recommendations to Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Members are asked to note the recommendations of each IRP.
- 3.7 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a local agreement. Basic, special responsibility, Civic allowances and financial loss allowances are updated annually in line with the average pay increase given to Royal Borough employees (and rounded to the nearest pound as appropriate). Any implementation of this index should continue to be applicable from the same date that it applies to officers.
- 3.8 Wokingham Borough Council on 19 January 2023 made no changes and resolved *'the £500 component of the Basic Allowance for the provision of IT should continue to only be claimed by those Members who provide facilities which allow constituents and Officers to communicate with them by email, in*

addition to having adequate equipment and connections to allow for effective participation in virtual and hybrid meetings and the self-certification process related to this component of the basic allowance to be continue'.¹

- 3.9 The following four Unitary Authorities Scheme of Allowance are indexed to pay negotiations agreed by the NJC for local government employees:
- Bracknell Forest Council
 - Reading Borough Council
 - Slough Borough Council
 - West Berkshire Council
- 3.10 Reading Borough Council has applied 4.04 % increase to their Scheme of Allowances.
- 3.11 Slough Borough Council's Scheme of Allowances contains a provision on index linking whereby the Basic Allowance and the Special Responsibility Allowances are index linked to the percentage salary increase for local government staff at spinal column point 49. The increase for those on SCP49 amount to 3.57%, which is the uplift applied to allowances, backdated to 1st April 2022.
- 3.12 Bracknell Forest Council – uplift is index linked to the percentage increase for local government staff on spinal column point (SCP) 43, equivalent to 4.04%, backdated to 1 April 2022.
- 3.13 West Berkshire Council – On 3 December 2020, West Berkshire Council agreed Scheme of Allowances be implemented from the beginning of the financial year (01 April 2022) minute reference 46. The present scheme makes provision for the basic allowance, the special responsibility allowances, Independent Persons and the dependants' carers' allowance to be adjusted annually in line with staff salaries at West Berkshire Council.

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 current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is estimated to be in the region of £102k. Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a Berkshire newspaper. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £300.
- 5.2 An Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances is held every four years. The last independent review was held in September 2019 by South

¹ Minute 97 of Wokingham Borough Council held on 19 January 2023

Agenda Item 13

East Employers. The next Independent Review of the Scheme of Allowances will be held in 2023/24.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report is in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Regulations 10 and 19 (2) which require the authority to make a scheme of allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 No risk implications have been identified.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Senior Leadership Team were consulted during the preparation of this report. The Monitoring Officer is the report sponsor.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Bracknell Forest Council, Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead and West Berkshire Council Constitutions.
- 11.2 Wokingham Borough Council agenda pack of meeting held on 19 January 2022.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – 2021/22 RBFA Scheme of Allowances.
- 12.2 Appendix B – LGPS Pay agreement letter – 1 November 2022

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead, 0118 938 4611

This page is intentionally left blank

SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

February 2023



MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

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

NAME AND DURATION

MA1. This scheme may be cited as the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme.

MA2. **This scheme shall have effect for the financial year 2023/24.** The Scheme may be amended at any time by resolution of the Authority.

BASIC ALLOWANCE

MA3. A **Basic Allowance** at a rate of £2,701.56¹ per annum shall be paid to each Member in monthly instalments.

MA4. For the avoidance of doubt, 'Member' in this context means a person appointed to the Authority under the provisions of the Royal Berkshire Fire Service Combination Scheme.

MA5. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members including calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of Members' homes.

MA6. Where a Member's term of office does not extend throughout a complete year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists.

¹ Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on 1 November 2022.

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

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

Schedule 1

Position	Special Responsibility Allowance ²
Chair of Authority	£13,509.94
Vice-Chair of Authority	£6,754.97
Chair of Committees	£4,052.34
Lead Members	£4,052.34
Opposition Group Leaders	£2,701.56
Member Champions	£1,350.78
RBFA Chair of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)	£2,701.56
Co-optees' Allowance	£150.32 per meeting

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

CO-OPTTEES' ALLOWANCE

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

² Indexed to local government percentage allowance increase agreed by NJC on 1 November 2022.

SCHEDULE 2 – APPROVED DUTIES

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

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

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

INDEXATION OF ALLOWANCES

- MA14. The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage **allowance** salary increase (~~known as the 'spinal column point 49'~~) agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year for the year the index is applied to staff.
- MA15. The rates of travel allowances shall be the same as those approved by the HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) and shall be adjusted and take effect in line with alterations made from time to time by the HMRC.
- MA16. The rates of subsistence allowances shall be the same as those agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- MA17. The Chief Finance Officer shall have delegated power to approve the adjustment in accordance with paragraphs MA15 and MA16 above.

RENUNCIATION OF ALLOWANCES REPAYMENT

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

CLAIMS

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

Agenda Item 13

Appendix A

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

SCHEDULE 3 - TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

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

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

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

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

National Joint Council for local government services

Employers' Secretary
Naomi Cooke

Trade Union Secretaries
Rachel Harrison, GMB

Mike Short, UNISON

Address for correspondence
Local Government Association
18 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ
Tel: 020 7664 3000
info@local.gov.uk

Address for correspondence
UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY
Tel: 0845 3550845
l.government@unison.co.uk

**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland
(copies for HR and Finance Directors)
Members of the National Joint Council**

1 November 2022

Dear Chief Executive,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2022-23

Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

Pay

Agreement has been reached on rates of pay applicable from **1 April 2022**. The new pay rates are attached at **Annex 1**.

The new rates for allowances, uprated by 4.04 per cent, are set out at **Annex 2**.

The NJC has agreed that from **1 April 2023**, Spinal Column Point (SCP) 1 will be permanently deleted from the NJC pay spine.

Annual Leave

The NJC has agreed that from **1 April 2023**, all employees covered by this National Agreement, regardless of their current leave entitlement or length of service, will receive a permanent increase of one day (pro rata for part-timers) to their annual leave entitlement. This may require, in some organisations, that a local agreement has to be reached in order for the extra day to be applied. The NJC's full expectation is that the additional day's leave will be applied for all NJC staff, regardless of existing local arrangements.

The National Agreement Part 2 Para 7.2 will, with effect from **1 April 2023**, be amended to read as follows:

7.2 Annual Leave

With effect from 1 April 2023, the minimum paid annual leave entitlement is twenty-three days with a further three days after five years of continuous service. The

Agenda Item 13

Appendix B

entitlement as expressed applies to five day working patterns. For alternative working patterns an equivalent leave entitlement should be calculated.

7.3 *The annual leave entitlement of employees leaving or joining an authority is proportionate to their completed service during the leave year.*

7.4 **Extra Statutory Holidays**

Employees shall have an entitlement to two extra statutory days holiday, the timing of which shall be determined by the authority in consultation with the recognised Trade Unions with a view to reaching agreement or added to annual leave by local agreement.

Joint work

The NJC has also agreed to enter into discussions on homeworking policies, mental health support and maternity etc leave.

Backpay for employees who have left employment since 1 April 2022

If requested by an ex-employee to do so, we recommend that employers should pay any monies due to that employee from 1 April 2022 to the employee's last day of employment.

When salary arrears are paid to ex-employees who were in the LGPS, the employer must inform its local LGPS fund. Employers will need to amend the CARE and final pay figures (if the ex-employee has pre-April 2014 LGPS membership) accordingly. Further detail is provided in [section 15 of the HR guide](#) which is available on the [employer resources section](#) of www.lgpsregs.org

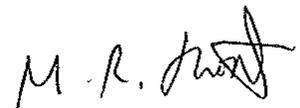
Yours sincerely,

Naomi
Cooke

Naomi Cooke



Rachel Harrison



Mike Short

SCP	01-Apr-21		01-Apr-22	
	per annum	per hour	per annum	per hour
1	£18,333	£9.50	£20,258	£10.50
2	£18,516	£9.60	£20,441	£10.60
3	£18,887	£9.79	£20,812	£10.79
4	£19,264	£9.99	£21,189	£10.98
5	£19,650	£10.19	£21,575	£11.18
6	£20,043	£10.39	£21,968	£11.39
7	£20,444	£10.60	£22,369	£11.59
8	£20,852	£10.81	£22,777	£11.81
9	£21,269	£11.02	£23,194	£12.02
10	£21,695	£11.25	£23,620	£12.24
11	£22,129	£11.47	£24,054	£12.47
12	£22,571	£11.70	£24,496	£12.70
13	£23,023	£11.93	£24,948	£12.93
14	£23,484	£12.17	£25,409	£13.17
15	£23,953	£12.42	£25,878	£13.41
16	£24,432	£12.66	£26,357	£13.66
17	£24,920	£12.92	£26,845	£13.91
18	£25,419	£13.18	£27,344	£14.17
19	£25,927	£13.44	£27,852	£14.44
20	£26,446	£13.71	£28,371	£14.71
21	£26,975	£13.98	£28,900	£14.98
22	£27,514	£14.26	£29,439	£15.26
23	£28,226	£14.63	£30,151	£15.63
24	£29,174	£15.12	£31,099	£16.12
25	£30,095	£15.60	£32,020	£16.60
26	£30,984	£16.06	£32,909	£17.06
27	£31,895	£16.53	£33,820	£17.53
28	£32,798	£17.00	£34,723	£18.00
29	£33,486	£17.36	£35,411	£18.35
30	£34,373	£17.82	£36,298	£18.81
31	£35,336	£18.32	£37,261	£19.31
32	£36,371	£18.85	£38,296	£19.85
33	£37,568	£19.47	£39,493	£20.47
34	£38,553	£19.98	£40,478	£20.98
35	£39,571	£20.51	£41,496	£21.51
36	£40,578	£21.03	£42,503	£22.03
37	£41,591	£21.56	£43,516	£22.56
38	£42,614	£22.09	£44,539	£23.09
39	£43,570	£22.58	£45,495	£23.58
40	£44,624	£23.13	£46,549	£24.13
41	£45,648	£23.66	£47,573	£24.66
42	£46,662	£24.19	£48,587	£25.18
43	£47,665	£24.71	£49,590	£25.70

NB: hourly rate calculated by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week)

Part 3 Paragraph 2.6(e) Sleeping-in Duty Payment:

1 April 2022
£39.24

**RATES OF PROTECTED ALLOWANCES AT 1 APRIL 2022
(FORMER APT&C AGREEMENT (PURPLE BOOK))**

Paragraph 28(3) Nursery Staffs in Educational Establishments - Special Educational Needs Allowance

1 April 2022
£1,401

Paragraph 28(14) Laboratory / Workshop Technicians

City and Guilds Science Laboratory Technician's Certificate Allowance:

1 April 2022
£228

City and Guilds Laboratory Technician's Advanced Certificate Allowance:

1 April 2022
£165

Paragraph 32 London Weighting and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum

Inner Fringe Area:

1 April 2022
£951

Outer Fringe Area:

1 April 2022
£663

Paragraph 35 Standby Duty Allowance - Social Workers (1)(a)(i) Allowance - Per Session

1 April 2022
£31.58

FORMER MANUAL WORKER AGREEMENT (WHITE BOOK)

Section 1 Paragraph 3 London and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum

Inner Fringe Area:

1 April 2022

£951

Outer Fringe Area:

1 April 2022

£663

This page is intentionally left blank

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	15 FEBRUARY 2023
SUBJECT	EMERGENCY SERVICES SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER
LEAD OFFICER	ANDY MCLENAHAN, HEAD OF FACILITIES FLEET AND EQUIPMENT
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR DAVE MCELROY
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks agreement from the Authority to sign up to the Emergency Services Sustainability Charter (Appendix A), to demonstrate a commitment to working collaboratively alongside other emergency service partners in improving our overall organisational sustainability and working towards meeting government environmental targets.
- 1.2 Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS) through its Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) aims to work towards improving its sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint by investing in its estate and fleet. The recent carbon footprint assessment indicates that the estate and fleet are the main sources of carbon output for the organisation.
- 1.3 The Emergency Services Environmental and Sustainability Group (EESG) Sustainability Charter is a high-level strategic document that gives a foundation from which RBFRS can shape its own plans and strategies for the future which can include the proposed improvements to the estate and fleet as outlined in the SAIF.
- 1.4 Further plans and strategies to build on some of the work already undertaken are to be developed with a view to reducing future carbon output and realising revenue savings. Future improvements and initiatives will be subject to resourcing, budget availability and achieving the required approval.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **AGREE** to sign up to the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group Charter.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 Climate Change is one of the key global issues of the 21st Century and Fire & Rescue Services in the UK have a key role to play in successfully mitigating, managing and responding to its growing impacts on society.
- 3.2 Over the last two decades, Services have responded effectively to a growing number of emergency incidents linked to Climate Change, such as flooding, wildfire, heatwaves, landslides, sink holes, high-intensity storms and high winds. They have done this by primarily deploying and co-ordinating their existing resources, skills and equipment not only to support stricken communities in their time of need but also to help their multiagency partners with areas of their priority work in order to better manage the crisis overall.
- 3.3 Climate change is a risk that UK Fire & Rescue Services need to adapt to and mitigate as a sector. As such the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are placing greater emphasis on work in this area.
- 3.4 Climate, Sustainability, and the Environment is not a stand-alone component or objective, it cross cuts everything we do as an organisation. Work in this area is taking place across many areas and committees of the NFCC including procurement, estates, operations, research, and development. It is essential that cross functional activity in this area is enabled and supported and not constrained or siloed.
- 3.5 In addition to the work the NFCC are doing within the fire sector, the need to broaden the scope of participants to work collaboratively and share knowledge on this collective issue has led to the creation of the Emergency Services Environmental and Sustainability Group (EESG) of which RBFRS is a member. The EESG is made up from representatives across the UK Fire & Rescue Services, UK Police Forces and Ambulance Services.
- 3.6 The EESG Sustainability Charter has been developed by members from multiple Fire & Rescue and Police Services to:
- Drive the collective action needed to address the challenges climate change
 - Assist all Emergency Services with their sustainability journey, whatever their starting point
 - Include the latest developments of the sustainability agenda
 - Adopt the three principles of sustainability (People, Planet, Public Purse) for inclusion in every day operations
- 3.7 The benefits of signing up to the Charter include:

- Demonstrating collaboration with other emergency services through the adoption of common sustainability goals and aspirations
 - Showcase the collective commitment to act responsibly and contribute positively to sustainability and be able to share these with the communities we serve
 - Provide a sustainability working structure that can be adopted by all emergency services at any point of their sustainability journey
 - Share knowledge and experiences of a common challenge
- 3.8 The Emergency Services Sustainability Charter shall be managed by the ESESG and will be reviewed every three years. Regular reviews of member progress will take place highlighting and sharing sustainability best practice and successful projects.
- 3.9 Whilst improvements have been taking place within our estate and fleet which will have a positive impact in carbon reduction going forwards, further future improvements to the estate and fleet will be dependent on resourcing, budget availability and approval.
- 3.10 Potential opportunities for specific “invest to save” initiatives, in addition to the overall estate development needs, can be brought forward on a case by case basis for approval where it is appropriate and savings to revenue budgets and or carbon output can be demonstrated.
- 4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**
- 4.1 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.2 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.3 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.
- 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report. Any potential future spend for improvements will require separate approval.
- 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 6.1 The Fire and Rescue sector, alongside all public sector organisations, has a legal duty to act. The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% from 1990 levels by 2050.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no immediate equality or diversity implications as a result of this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 By not signing up to the Charter, RBFRS has limited its ability to demonstrate a commitment to improving its sustainability and reducing its carbon footprint.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 The duty to collaborate is fully supported by opting to sign the Charter. The collaboration includes all three blue light emergency services.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 Lead Member for Strategic Assets and Sustainability.

10.2 Chief Fire Officer

10.3 Senior Leadership Tea

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Strategic Asset Investment Framework

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A - The Emergency Services Sustainability Charter

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Andy McLenahan – Head of Facilities, Fleet & Equipment

mclenahana@rbfrs.co.uk



ESESG Sustainability Charter

The Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group (ESESG) includes members from UK Police Forces, Fire & Rescue Services, Ambulance Services and other Emergency Services who meet to share best practice and discuss emerging technologies, government policy and legislative requirements.

This Sustainability Charter has been developed for members to pledge their support to work towards a set of common goals and aspirations, embed sustainability within their own organisations, and achieve national and international sustainability objectives. It will also enable members to identify positive effects on sustainability within their communities and manage any negative effects and risks.

All members shall consider the Sustainability Charter aspirations in the development and delivery of their own policies and strategies. It is acknowledged that members are at different stages of their sustainability journey and will have different priorities depending on their core business activities and regional issues.

This Charter has adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to provide a consistent framework with consideration to all areas of sustainability. Key goals are linked under the People, Planet and Public Purse headings to enable all members to identify relevant areas of sustainability and incorporate these back into their own organisations.

For ESESG sustainability means:

Reducing the negative impacts associated with our operations, whilst working towards positive and long-lasting outcomes for our planet, the people within our organisations, the communities we serve and the public purse.

Our organisation recognises that all emergency services have the potential to affect the local and global environment, society and the wider economy. We also recognise that climate change and global trends will continue to have an impact on the demands placed upon our emergency services. We need to be proactive in recognising these impacts to continuously provide an efficient and effective service, and therefore aspire to:

People

- ▶ Take action in our local areas to contribute to the transition to more sustainable cities and communities.
- ▶ Proactively manage our resources as communities change and develop to continue to be receptive to their needs.
- ▶ Provide our staff with the tools and resources required for them to make informed sustainable decisions both in the workplace and at home.
- ▶ Provide a safe and healthy working environment and improve wellbeing for all staff.
- ▶ Continue to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisations and in the communities we serve.
- ▶ Reduce the harmful emissions associated with our operations, to improve local air quality, reduce pollution and enhance the wellbeing of our communities.





Planet

- ▶ Work towards net zero carbon emissions through improving the energy efficiency of our estate and sustainable business and personal travel.
- ▶ Improve resource efficiency and adopt circular economy approaches to reduce waste and save money.
- ▶ Restore and enhance local biodiversity through considered management of our estates.
- ▶ Adapt to inevitable climate change through proactively managing our ability to respond to extreme weather events and changes to service demand.
- ▶ Take action to avoid or mitigate pollution of water courses.
- ▶ Minimise our reliance on fossil fuels by actively seeking to generate renewable energy at our sites, and through the adoption of greener technologies and fuels for our fleet.



Public Purse

- ▶ Use our spending power to promote and adopt sustainable procurement practices
- ▶ Proactively manage the opportunities brought by new technologies to maximise financial budgets.
- ▶ Proactively prosecute wildlife crime.
- ▶ Support our staff and local supply chains to develop and maintain the skills needed to meet our organisational needs and sustainability goals.
- ▶ Maximise Social Value contributions through the contracts we procure.



By signing this Charter

[Redacted signature area]

is agreeing to embed sustainability considerations throughout our organisation. We will measure and monitor progress and will strive to continually improve.

Signed:

NAME: [Redacted] TITLE: [Redacted] DATE: [Redacted]

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	15 FEBRUARY 2023
SUBJECT	BUILT ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME CLOSE DOWN REPORT
LEAD OFFICER	NOOSHA CHURCHILL, PROGRAMME MANAGER
LEAD MEMBER	NOT APPLICABLE
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	TO NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 14th June 2017, a fire took hold in Grenfell Tower, a high rise residential building within London. This sadly resulted in 72 people losing their lives.
- 1.2 On 30th October 2019, The Grenfell Tower Inquiry chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick published its phase 1 report.
- 1.3 The report highlighted a number of serious issues and provided 46 recommendations for Fire & rescue Services and other stakeholder groups to address
- 1.4 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has provided investment and support to ensure the Service is able to respond appropriately to the recommendations
- 1.5 This report is to outline the key changes and achievements the Service has implemented as part of its Built Environment programme.
- 1.6 The programme closed in January 2023 which was within the agreed timeframe and has received independent assurance through an internal audit which stated '***the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective***'

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To **NOTE** the Built Environment Programme close down report.

Agenda Item 15

3. REPORT

- 3.1. Following the Grenfell Tower Incident, RBFRS introduced a four phase plan to manage the immediate and anticipated implications.
- 3.2. As part of phase 3 'responding to new information' the Built Environment Programme was formed. Their primary objective was to provide assurance that any areas of concern identified were appropriately addressed to help mitigate the risk.
- 3.3. In early 2020 a gap analysis was completed to assess the inquiries recommendations against the organisational position at that point in time.
- 3.4. All of the recommendations were translated into risks using the organisational risk management approach. This allowed us to address both the specific recommendations as well as any underlying issues.
- 3.5. As a service we felt it was appropriate to not only consider the specific Fire Service recommendations but consider and support other stakeholders in improving safety across the built environment. Therefore we included all 46 recommendations within our risk assessment.
- 3.6. Some of the key changes we have implemented through the programme include;
 - 3.6.1. EPIPS for all High Rise residential buildings – these provide a simple one page overview of key risk information available to crews in initial attendance
 - 3.6.2. Conducted radio tests across all High Rise residential buildings within Berkshire
 - 3.6.3. High Rise Boards are now available on all front line appliances
 - 3.6.4. Assured aerial capabilities through the testing of the NPAS helicopter video downlink to RBFRS receivers
 - 3.6.5. Introduced joint visits between our operational crews and our Fire Safety Inspectors
 - 3.6.6. Escape hoods are available on all front line appliances
 - 3.6.7. 12 e-learning packages delivered
 - 3.6.8. National talk group 20 embedded to allow instant communication with all FRS control rooms across England
 - 3.6.9. TVFCS are participants in Operation Willow Beck which redistributes 999 calls for the FRS
 - 3.6.10. All 187 High Rise residential buildings within Berkshire have been visited and returned to hub for ongoing management.

- 3.6.11. The programme has carried out a number of exercises looking at areas such as communications, Incident Command, testing of new equipment and mass evacuation. These have provided us with learning & assurance of the improvements we have implemented to date and have been fed into our Operational Learning & Assurance board for future considerations.
- 3.6.12. Between April and August 2022, the programme team and members of SLT held 12 virtual and in person engagement sessions with crews and TVFCS. This provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and provide their own feedback
- 3.7 Any recommendations included within the report that have not been fully implemented have been handed over to be incorporated into other areas of the service for completion and will be monitored through Corporate Programme Board.
- 3.8 A review of the BEP was undertaken in December 2022 as part of the approved internal audit plan for 2022/23 and is due to be included in the next Audit and Governance meeting in March.
- 3.9 The objective of the review was to provide assurance that actions had been developed and progressed to address gaps identified against the 46 recommendations from the Grenfell Tower inquiry phase 1 report.
- 3.10 The review confirmed that RBFRS had developed actions and established a framework to monitor progress to address gaps identified against the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (phase 1).
- 3.11 There was one minor control weakness in relation to the lack of centralisation for the storage and retention of evidence to confirm completion of actions.
- 3.12 The Service will continue to monitor the Building Safety Act and Grenfell Inquiry phase 2 outcomes to ensure we are in a position to address any further recommendations or changes that arise.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will provide advice on how to prevent fires and other emergencies.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and appropriate response when called to emergencies.
- 4.3 Commitment 3 – We will provide advice, consultation and enforcement in relation to fire safety standards in buildings.
- 4.4 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.5 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government and key stakeholders in the interests of the people of Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Fire Authority Members approved £600,000 of additional funding for Protection Activities. £343,500 was made available for additional FSI posts and £256,500 was allocated to Built Environment Programme and continued throughout the life of the programme.
- 5.2 For the past 3 years we have also received a Protection uplift grant from government of approx. £121,000 per year.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 To ensure the programme is delivering effective change which is aligned to the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and meeting our duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010, a series of actions have been taken to establish a consistent and proactive approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)
- 7.2 An EIA matrix was set within the programme which enabled us to identify the activities that require assessment, assign owners and ensure regular reviews took place.
- 7.3 The work we did with EIAs enabled us to identify areas of work that needed adjusting to meet various needs this has included how we communicate with residents of high rise residential buildings

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 All risks have now been closed or handed over to the relevant BAU area.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Throughout the programme we have ensured that we are working with others at both a regional and national level across a complex network of stakeholders to ensure we can support and benefit from wider sector learning and activity.
- 9.2 We have extended invites to all of our monthly workstream meetings for Thames Valley partners in Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire
- 9.3 We have taken part in cross border exercises with both Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue and London Fire Brigade which has allowed us to capture learning to support further improvements
- 9.4 We invited our partner agencies including local authorities to take part in a number of our assurance exercises.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 Mark Arkwell, Deputy Chief Fire Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Grenfell Phase 1 Inquiry - Executive Summary](#)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A, Built Environment Progress Report

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Noosha Churchill, Built Environment Programme Manager
churchilln@rbfrs.co.uk 07785 573363

This page is intentionally left blank



Implementation of Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Recommendations

Progress Update 4 – Winter 2022/23

Close down report

For further information please visit [RBFRS-High-rise Guidance](#)



Contents

»»	Introduction	3
»»	Methodology.....	6
»»	Recommendations Overview.....	13
»»	Progress Summary.....	19
	Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings.....	19
	Visits under section 7(2) (d) of Fire and Rescue Services Act.....	19
	Building Plans	20
	Communication between control room and incident commander	20
	Emergency Calls.....	21
	Emergency calls – transition from stay put to get out.....	22
	Emergency Call – Other Control Rooms.....	23
	Command and Control – breathing apparatus crews.....	23
	Command and Control – Communication	24
	Equipment.....	25
	Evacuation	26
	Evacuation – Smokehoods	26
	Cooperation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine	26
	Cooperation between emergency services – information sharing.....	28
»»	Non-Fire Service Recommendations	29
»»	High Rise Residential Buildings Project.....	34
	Table 3: The RBFRS’ performance dashboard as of 6 th May 2022 in regards to the HRRB36	
»»	Next Steps.....	37



Introduction

This is our 4th and final edition of this report which provides the progress made against the recommendations through the Service's Built Environment Programme (BEP) including our High Rise Residential Building (HRRB) project. The Built Environment Programme was a 2 year programme which finished at the end of 2022. Any recommendations that have not been fully completed will be incorporated into business as usual for completion.

On 14th June 2017, a fire took hold in Grenfell Tower, a high rise residential building within London. This sadly resulted in 72 people losing their lives.

On 30th October 2019, The Grenfell Tower Inquiry ('the inquiry'), chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, published its phase 1 report. This highlighted a number of serious issues and provided 46 recommendations for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) and other stakeholder groups including building owners and Government.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority has provided significant investment to ensure the Service has responded appropriately to the recommendations. Ultimately, we can no longer fully rely on the buildings we attend to behave in the way they were designed to and how we might have expected them to in the past.

We have looked to ensure that we have the correct arrangements in place to keep residents and staff safe, not just in incidents in high rise residential buildings, but all incidents across the complex built environment. Furthermore, where we can support others in acting on the recommendations and making improvements for the benefit of resident safety, we have.





Following the Grenfell Tower incident Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) introduced a four phase plan to manage immediate and anticipated implications as shown in fig 1.

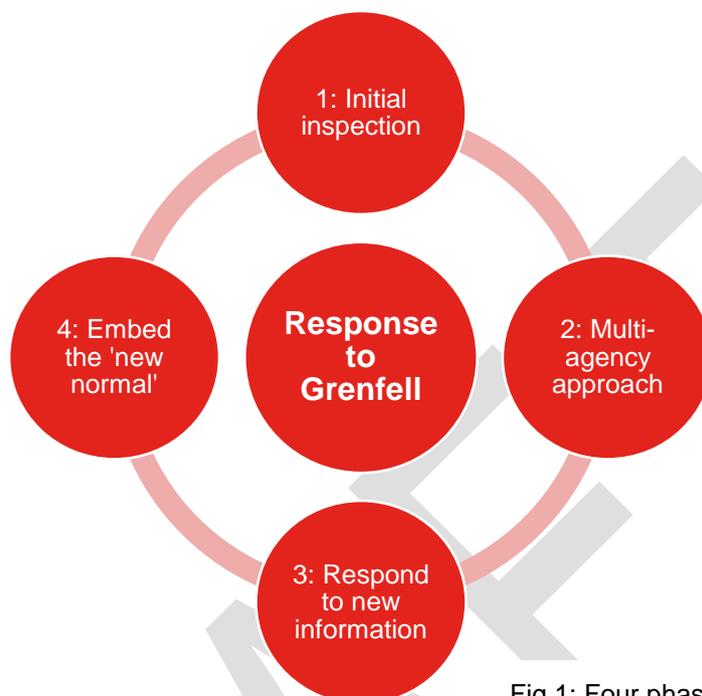


Fig 1: Four phase approach to Grenfell

The BEP was established as part of Phase 3 with the following key objectives:

- 1- To provide assurance that the 46 recommendations within the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 1 report are assessed and that any areas of concern identified are appropriately addressed to help mitigate risk
- 2- To provide assurance that targeted 'high risk' premises have been audited and are compliant with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and where areas of concerns have been identified a joined up approach (Protection, Prevention and Response) will be taken to help mitigate the risks
- 3- To ensure a coordinated response to both internal and external impacts including; legislative changes, further Grenfell Inquiry recommendations and additional areas of improvements identified within the programme.*

Our aim was to complete objective 1 and 2 by December 2022. Some areas have required significant organisational and/or sector wide changes which have been beyond the direct control of the programme. Where this is the case we have worked and engaged with others to ensure these areas continue to be a focus for RBFRS.

Objective 3 will continue to be monitored and reviewed through a number of channels within the organisation. Following the introduction of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, RBFRS have conducted a thorough gap analysis and have a project team in place to ensure we are able to address and implement changes to allow us to comply with these regulations.



Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase 2 has now concluded but we are not expecting to see the final report until Spring/Summer 2023. We will monitor updates in regards to this and will look to be in a position to assess and respond to any further recommendations that arise.

Throughout the programme we have identified a number of improvements that haven't been directly linked to one of the 46 recommendations. These include when considering procurement of mobile data terminals in the future that we ensure they are 4G compatible this now sits within our technology road map for continuous monitoring and the use of complex building officers at incidents which will continue to be monitored by our Service Delivery Management Team.

*We have simplified four original objectives into three since our last progress report.



Methodology

Gap Analysis

In early 2020 a gap analysis was carried out assessing the inquiry recommendations against the organisational position at the time. This involved engaging and triangulating evidence across a number of stakeholders, including; frontline crews, fire control, Fire Safety Inspectors and prevention staff as well as a complex network of external sources including NFCC working groups, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (known as MHCLG at the time) and an array of reviews such as the Hackitt Report, Raising the Bar and State of Fire and Rescue report. This allowed us to properly understand the challenges we face locally.

The approach we took to systematically identify, prioritise, deliver and monitor actions included;

- Completion of a gap analysis between the 46 recommendations and current evidenced organisational position
- Established a structured programme of work, supporting existing governance structures and change approaches
- Translated identified gaps/recommendations into risks, using the recognisable RBFRRS organisational risk management approach. This has allowed us to address both the specific recommendations and underlying issues where appropriate
- Identified and commissioned appropriate treatments/tasks with responsible owners and resource
- Peer reviews within the sector and external associates
- Established an assurance approach to verify results of actions taken so far, whilst linking into the organisational assurance framework to support longer term continuous learning
- Identified, engaged and directly supported a wide network of groups and individuals to ensure we learn from and provide learning to the wider sector. (see figure 3)
- Responded to new information from internal and external sources and adapting our plans as required
- Ensured visibility, scrutiny and performance management of progress through a number of internal and external reporting arrangements.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

To ensure the Programme delivered effective change which was aligned to the Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and meeting our duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010, a series of actions were taken to establish a consistent and proactive approach to conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

EIAs are a useful tool that can help to identify any groups or individuals who could be impacted either positively or negatively by a planned activity or change, for example when policies are amended or new training is delivered.



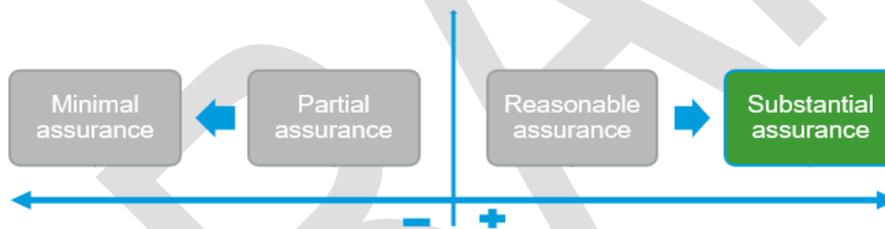
An EIA Matrix was set up within the Programme which enabled us to identify the activities that required an assessment, assign owners and ensure regular reviews of the EIA and activities were conducted. These are also captured using our organisational register.

The work we did with EIAs within the programme enabled us to identify areas of work that needed adjusting to meet various needs which included how we communicate with the residents of high-rise residential buildings. We have made adjustments to our [high-rise guidance pages](#) on our website and made these easily accessible via a QR code poster which has been sent to all HRRBs within Berkshire.

All EIAs completed by the programme will be handed over to the relevant business area to enable these to continue to be reviewed and monitored.

Evaluation and Assurance

An independent review of the BEP was undertaken as part of RBFRS approved internal audit plan for 2022/23. The objective of the review was to allow management to have assurance that actions had been developed and been progressed to address the gaps identified against the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. The review confirmed the Authority can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.



Many of the recommendations directed at Fire and Rescue Services within the inquiry phase 1 report were aimed at the training and upskilling of our staff. To provide confidence that our changes were having the positive impact we expected and that these were measured and assured a learning assurance framework was created by the Programme. The basis of this was to set out key criteria during the development of learning which enables us to measure 'success' at the end. These criteria or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were defined and tracked throughout the process to give a clearer overview of the impact of the training.

We have evaluated what we have achieved within the Programme using our organisational evaluation toolkit. We have evaluated the programme outcomes against the following questions:

1. Have we assessed and addressed any areas of concern identified within the 46 Grenfell recommendations?
2. Have the changes we have made through the programme improved our effectiveness when responding to an incident within a complex building?



3. Has the programme increased the knowledge & understanding of our crews when attending an incident within a complex building?

Below is a synopsis of our findings against each of the questions above.

Have we assessed and addressed any areas of concern identified within the 46 Grenfell recommendations?

Table 1 within this report provides a RAG rating showing the progress we have made against the 29 recommendations directed towards Fire and Rescue Services. We have reviewed these on a monthly basis and have not marked any of these as complete until we are entirely satisfied that our crews have a thorough understanding of what we are trying to achieve and we can see it is making a difference.

18 recommendations have been completed in full

4 recommendations are being worked in the Thames Valley Collaboration Incident Command Project

7 recommendations are being handed over to BAU for completion

Following the introduction of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, RBFRS have conducted a thorough gap analysis and have a project team in place to ensure we are able to address and implement changes to allow us to comply with these regulations. They will also monitor the 17 recommendations aimed at building owners and responsible persons.

Have the changes we have made through the programme improved our effectiveness when responding to an incident within a complex building?

14 recommendations refer or allude to a policy being needed to fulfil the recommendation. Having completed a review of the policies implemented by the programme against the recommendations all have been covered in at least 1 if not more policies.

Electronic Premise Information Plates (EPIPS) have been developed for all HRRBs across Berkshire. An EPIP is a simple 'one page' overview of key operational risk information available to crews in initial attendance. Following an assurance exercise any issues or concerns have been raised with the relevant station/hub managers to rectify. Continued assurance is taking place as part of business as usual.

We completed a programme of assurance exercises, throughout the year, looking at areas such as communications, Incident Command, testing of new equipment and mass evacuation. These have provided us with learning and assurance of the improvements we have implemented within the programme. These recommendations will be fed into our operational and assurance learning board so they can focus work and initiatives in the right areas over the next year. These exercises have included our own staff as well as Thames Valley Fire Control Service and our partner agencies.

A no notice assurance exercise has also been carried out to look at our resource availability using the timeline of a major incident. This did flag concerns in this area and has been handed across to our Community Risk Management Team (CRMP) for future considerations.



Has the programme increased the knowledge & understanding of our crews when attending an incident within a complex building?

We have delivered crew engagement sessions where we took the opportunity to meet with all watches so they could gain a better understanding of what the Programme was doing but more importantly so that we could capture their feedback on the work we had done so far and what they would like to see in the future.

Focus groups were held to gain feedback on the 5 LMS packages that were directly linked to recommendations aimed at Fire & Rescue Services. These were represented by the following groups; Firefighters, Protection staff, LMS content creators and TVFCS.

Detailed feedback was captured for the individual packages which has been fed into R & D for use when these packages are reviewed at the appropriate time.

We have also conducted a survey of which 70 of our crews responded to gain an understanding of how the changes the implemented have affected individuals and their roles. Some of the key responses are below;

91.3% of staff who responded to our survey question stated they now feel at least somewhat confident to respond to incidents at HRRBs

92.6% of staff who responded to our survey question stated that they feel somewhat to extremely confident in conducting familiarisation visits following the training.

85.46% of staff who responded to our survey question felt that EIPS provided them with the operational risk information needed during an incident

86.48% of staff who responded to our survey question found the assurance exercises useful.

11 online training packages have been developed and made available for all crews. We have aimed for 100% throughout the programme currently have a completion rates ranging from 99% to 90%. These will continue to be progressed and monitored by our Service Delivery Management Team.



Programme Structure

Within the structure we had a central programme coordination team which was led by Noosha Churchill and spanned all work streams. This acted as an escalation and monitoring forum and was responsible for coordinating common features, including;

- Training
- Policy
- Assurance
- Communications
- New Information Management

The Programme had senior leadership sponsorship from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer. To manage the scale of change we arranged the Programme into five work streams (see fig 2).



Fig 2: Programme work stream structure.

*additional work stream added January 2022



Collaboration

Throughout the Programme we have ensured we have worked with others at both regional and national levels across a complex network of stakeholders to ensure we could support and benefit from wider sector learning and activity. Fig 3 illustrates some of the groups we have worked with. We have taken part in cross border exercises with both Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue and London Fire Brigade which allowed us to capture learning to support further improvement and assurance. We have completed a programme of assurance exercises throughout the year and invited our partner agencies including Local Authorities to take part.

The work we have done with our HRRBs within Berkshire ensured that we worked closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons as well as our partners within Local Authority Housing teams. We started communications at the earliest opportunity when we identified a potential prohibition of a building. Our aim has been to make joint decisions with our partner agencies where possible and offer joint visits to assist with this. Our Protection teams will continue to work to develop this further by creating a memorandum of understanding with the 6 local unitary authorities in how we deal with situations within our high and medium rise blocks of flats.

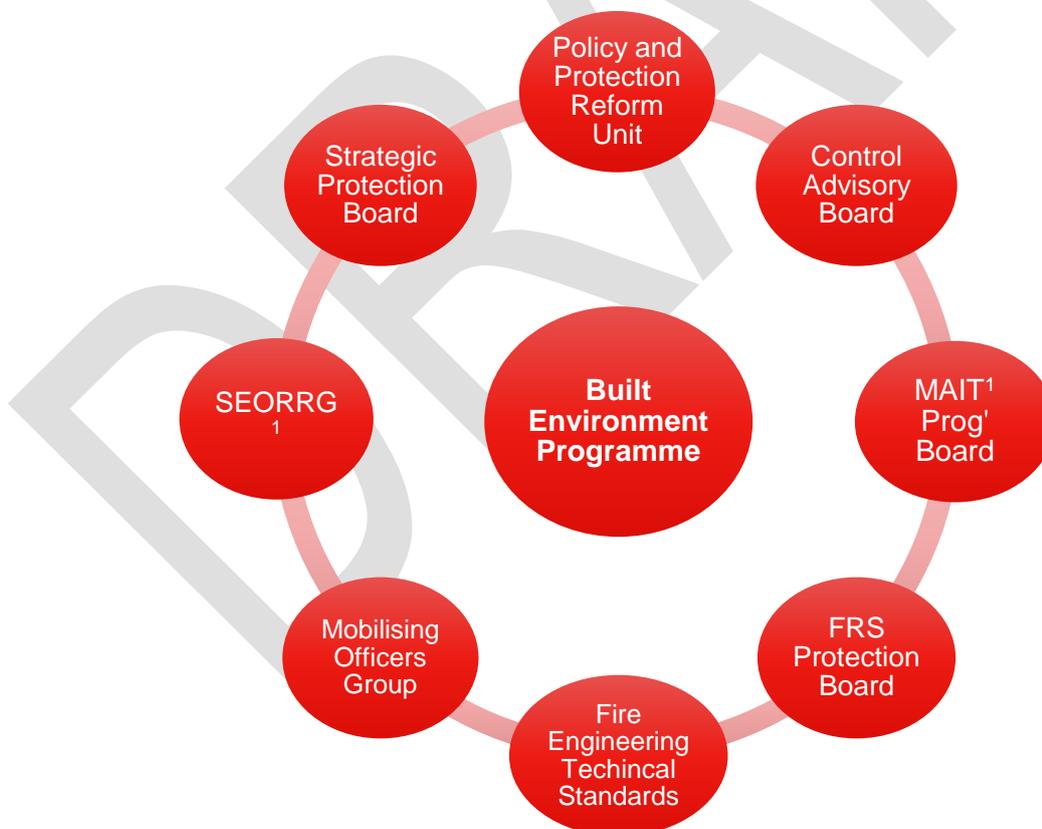




Fig 3: Current network of external support groups

1: MAIT: Multi Agency Incident Transfer / SEORRG: South East Operational Response and Resilience Group

We continue to want to help lead the sector and will continue to have a number of middle and senior managers actively participating in national NFCC groups. For example we have a senior user representative and a strategic lead at the NFCC MAIT hub procurement project board.

We have also contributed by developing and sharing a number of online training packages including specialist learning where we have identified a sector gap including modules on external wall systems, for example.

DRAFT



Recommendations Overview

From the 46 phase 1 inquiry recommendations there are 29 aimed at Fire and Rescue Services. 14 of these are solely aimed at London Fire Brigade with the remaining 15 directed to Fire and Rescue Services more broadly.

A further 11 recommend a change to the law to put new requirements on building owners and managers. This process is underway with the introduction of clarifications to the Fire Safety Act, introduction of the Building Safety Act and introduction of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations. A further 3 recommendations are aimed at building owners and managers but do not require legal changes.

RBFRS felt that it was appropriate to not only consider the specific Fire Service recommendations, but seek to consider and support other stakeholders in improving safety across the built environment for the benefit of Berkshire communities. Therefore, we included all 46 recommendations within our risk assessment methodology and had risk treatments and tasks in place beyond those directly aimed at fire and rescue services.

Table 1 provides an overview of the recommendations directed towards fire and rescue services, including those for London Fire Brigade specifically. Other non-fire service specific recommendations are addressed in Table two from page 27.

While Table 1 (pages 12-16) provides a high-level status overview this is followed by further supporting narrative on pages 17-26.

The progress key supports an understanding of each recommendation's current status, with table 1 also illustrating our position as of our third progress report in May 2022.

Progress Status Key	
R	Has significant issues that are affecting deliverable/timescale
A	Has issues that may affect deliverable/timescales
G	On track, no issues or risks identified
C	Task completed
NS	Task not started



No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry's phase 1 recommendation	W/S	May 2022	Dec 2022	Anticipated completion Date
2	All fire and rescue services ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.	Tactics& Equip			Dec – 95% completed. This will be monitored through Service delivery to ensure 100% completion
3	The LFB review, and revise as appropriate, Appendix 1 to PN6336 ² to ensure that it fully reflects the principles in GRA 3.2. ³	Risk & Info			Complete
4	The LFB ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out the requirements of PN633 ² relating to the inspection of high-rise buildings.	Risk & Info			Jan – 90% completed. This will be monitored through Service delivery to ensure 100% completion
7	All fire and rescue services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and to make them available to incident commanders and control room managers.	Risk & Info			Complete
10	The LFB review its policies on communications between the control room and the incident commander.	Tactics& Equip			Complete
11	All officers who may be expected to act as incident commanders (i.e. all those above the rank of Crew Manager) receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the control room.	Tactics& Equip			Dec - 97% completed. This will be monitored through Service delivery & TVFCS to ensure 100% completion



12	All CROs ⁴ of Assistant Operations Manager rank and above receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the incident commander.	Tactics & Equip			Complete
13	A dedicated communication link be provided between the senior officer in the control room and the incident commander.	Tactics & Equip			Training in development
14	The LFB's policies be amended to draw a clearer distinction between callers seeking advice and callers who believe they are trapped and need rescuing.	Call Mngt			Complete
15	The LFB provide regular and more effective refresher training to CROs ⁴ at all levels, including supervisors.	Call Mngt			Dec 95 % completed. This will be monitored through TVFCS to ensure 100% completion
16	All fire and rescue services develop policies for handling a large number of FSG calls simultaneously.	Call Mngt			NOG published – will be handed over to TVFCS to continue
17	Electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units.	Command Support			Handed over to Thames Valley Collaboration Incident Command Project
18	Policies to be developed to manage the transition from 'Stay Put' to 'Get Out'	Call Mngt			Complete



19	Control room staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.	Call Mngt			Complete
20	Steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.	Call Mngt			Complete
22	The LFB develop policies and training to ensure better control of deployments and the use of resources.	Tactics& Equip			Training in development
23	The LFB develop policies and training to ensure that better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments and that the information is recorded in a form that enables it to be made available immediately to the incident commander (and thereafter to the command units and the control room)	Tactics& Equip			Training in development
24	The LFB develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander and improve the means of communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead.	Command Support			Handed over to Thames Valley Collaboration Incident Command Project
25	The LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide a direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployments.	Command Support			Handed over to Thames Valley Collaboration Incident Command Project



26	The LFB urgently take steps to obtain equipment that enables firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead effectively, including when operating in high-rise buildings.	Tactics& Equip			March 2023
27	Urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.	Command Support			Handed over to Thames Valley Collaboration Incident Command Project
29	Fire and rescue services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them.	Tactics& Equip			Nov - 99% completed. This will be monitored through Service delivery to ensure 100% completion
34	All fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.	Tactics& Equip			Complete
40	That each emergency services must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible.	Call Mngt			Complete
41	That on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services.	Call Mngt			Complete



42	That a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication.	Call Mngt			Complete
43	That a "METHANE" ⁵ message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident.	Call Mngt			Complete
44	Steps be taken to investigate the compatibility of the LFB systems with those of the MPS and the LAS with a view to enabling all three emergency services' systems to read each other's messages.	Call Mngt			TBC: Reliant on national MAIT programme
46	The LFB, the MPS, the LAS and the London local authorities all investigate ways of improving the collection of information about survivors and making it available more rapidly to those wishing to make contact with them.	Tactics & Equip			Training in development

2: Policy number 633 (PN633) is the brigade's policy on high-rise firefighting.

3: Generic risk assessments 3.2 (GRA 3.2) is national operational guidance on high-rise firefighting.

4: Control room officers (CROs) work in fire and rescue services' control rooms.

5: 'METHANE' message is the recognised common model for passing incident information between the emergency services and their control rooms

6: MAIT –Multi Agency Incident Transfer



Progress Summary

Further detail of the Service's progress against each of the 29 recommendations aimed specifically at Fire and Rescue Services can be found below.

Knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings

- 2. that all fire and rescue services ensure that their personnel at all levels understand the risk of fire taking hold in the external walls of high-rise buildings and know how to recognise it when it occurs.*

Initial guidance was delivered during 2019/2020 to operational crews.

Fires in Tall buildings Operational Information Note (OIN) was published in December 2020. This sets out procedures that firefighters should follow when responding to a fire in high-rise buildings. This also covers 'buildings with external cladding' and operational considerations when attending an incident.

RBFRS has developed an online assessable training package which has been quality assured by an external associate as well as peer reviewed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). We believe we were one of the first FRS' to have produced a training package in this area and have made this available to other Fire and Rescue Services to use. The package includes; Legislation, cladding systems and materials, mechanism of fire spread and fire performance testing. This has been made available to all of our operational crews as well as our Fire Safety Inspectors.

The Programme delivered a number of assurance exercises during 2022 which tested and assured crews understanding within this area.

Visits under section 7(2) (d) of Fire and Rescue Services Act

- 3. that the LFB review, and revise as appropriate, Appendix 1 to PN633 to ensure that it fully reflects the principles in GRA 3.2⁶;*
- 4. that the LFB ensure that all officers of the rank of Crew Manager and above are trained in carrying out the requirements of PN633 relating to the inspection of high-rise buildings.*

7(2)(d) visits enable Fire Fighters to learn about buildings and be more familiar with local risk. They help us prepare for incidents and check the risk information we hold is accurate.

Recommendation 3 has been implemented – The Service completed a review of its current policy and a new Operational Risk Information policy has been developed which aligns with National Operational Guidance (NOG). The Service is currently reviewing its wider operational risk approach.



Recommendation 4 – Initial guidance was delivered to our crews in July 2020. The service has developed an online Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) Visits training package for all operational crews alongside a new data collection form.

The Service has also introduced joint visits between our operational crews and our Fire Safety Inspectors providing an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and understand the risks each of the areas are looking for.

6: *The Government has now withdrawn Generic Risk Assessment 3.2 as its content has been incorporated in National Operational Guidance. GRA 3.2 is available as legacy guidance here:*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generic-risk-assessment-32-fighting-fires-in-high-rise-buildings>

Building Plans

- 7. that all fire and rescue services be equipped to receive and store electronic plans and to make them available to incident commanders and control room managers.*

The Service is able to receive and store electronic plans and can access these via our Incident Command Unit. Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) are able to access floor plans via a mobile data terminal if they should require them.

To fully implement this recommendation there needs to be a consistent national approach to enable FRS' to prepare for the volume, frequency and format of information that building owners and managers will be required to share with FRS'. The Fire Safety (England) Regulations will look to address this.

Communication between control room and incident commander

- 10. that the LFB review its policies on communications between the control room and the incident commander;*
- 11. that all officers who may be expected to act as incident commanders (i.e. all those above the rank of Crew Manager) receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the control room;*
- 12. that all CROs of Assistant Operations Manager rank and above receive training directed to the specific requirements of communication with the incident commander*
- 13. that a dedicated communication link be provided between the senior officer in the control room and the incident commander.*

These recommendations are about improving the communication between the control room and the Incident Commander in charge at the incident ground. TVFCS is a joint control room funded by RBFRS, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services.

The Service has carried out a review of its policies and training against current processes. A comprehensive gap analysis was completed with minor changes being made to policies and a number of our existing training packages being updated as well new ones being introduced. A radio procedures online training package has been developed and made available to all RBFRS operational crews and Thames Valley Fire Control staff.



RBFRS are working collaboratively with both Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue and Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue to review Command Support seeking to ensure all 3 services have effective and resilient 'end to end' arrangements in place.

The way in which TVFCS delivers control room services differs from the approach taken by London Fire Brigade (LFB) in a number of ways. All TVFCS staff are given training on communicating with incident commanders and incident command points in their initial training and this training is refreshed on a regular basis. More frequent refresher training on Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) will be available, which contains specific content relating to the information required by incident commanders when dealing with an incident where persons trapped by fire require rescue.

An Evacuation Commander Operational Information Note has been published which specifies that a single point of contact within TVFCS needs to be established to liaise with the evacuation commander on the incident ground. If this creates a capacity issue then a L2 or L3 officer will be mobilised to TVFCS to perform this role. There is also a dedicated radio operative who will liaise with the incident ground, usually the driver of the appliance or command unit if in attendance. A training package is in development to support this process and rolled out to all operational staff.

The Programme ran a number of assurance exercises during 2022 which tested and assured the communication between TVFCS and the Incident Ground.

Emergency Calls

14. that the LFB's policies be amended to draw a clearer distinction between callers seeking advice and callers who believe they are trapped and need rescuing;
15. that the LFB provide regular and more effective refresher training to CROs at all levels, including supervisors;
16. that all fire and rescue services develop policies for handling a large number of Fire Survival Guidance calls simultaneously;
17. that electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units;

A Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) policy has been published in line with Control National Operational Guidance. A training package has also been developed and delivered to control staff. All previous training packages that relate to FSG have been amended to incorporate the new policy.

The National Operational Guidance – 'Multiple Calls and Multiple Incidents' has now been published. TVFCS are currently completing a strategic gap analysis and will report their findings to the Thames Valley Joint Coordination Group who will monitor this recommendation going forward.

TVFCS have an ongoing programme of refresher training, which requires staff to undergo training in a number of key areas regularly. The system used to manage this training has



recently been reviewed and it has been determined that a new system will be introduced which prioritises high risk activities which occur rarely over other subjects. This change has been captured in the TVFCS Service Plan.

To assist with these recommendations and the challenge of handling large call volumes 'National Talk Group 20', a dedicated radio channel has been implemented within Thames Valley Control. This allows the sharing of risk critical information, including evacuation strategies, with other FRS' during an incident should they receive a call on our behalf. Our assisting control rooms are also in the process of upgrading to 'Vision 4' software which will enable them to view our system during an incident, if required. This is tested on a weekly basis and we take part in a national assurance exercises as they happen.

Thames Valley Fire Control has agreed to take part in Operation Willow Beck. Operation Willow Beck can be initiated when the number of emergency calls being received exceeds the capacity of the host control room and its normal 'buddy arrangements'. During Operation Willow Beck, calls for the affected Fire Control will be filtered by BT and distributed amongst participating fire control rooms nationally, with call information then being passed back to the affected fire control via pre-arranged routes. Operation Willow Beck is intended to preserve capacity within the affected Control room to allow for more effective incident management and communication with the incident ground and multi-agency partners.

To enable the implementation of recommendation 17 a technological solution is required. The Programme has investigated options including Microsoft Teams which would allow us to share Fire Survival Guidance information between TVFCS, bridgehead and the command unit simultaneously. We will continue to monitor wider market and FRS activity for opportunities to enhance or further collaborate on this solution through our Thames Valley Collaboration project.

Emergency calls – transition from stay put to get out.

18. that policies be developed for managing a transition from "stay put" to "get out";
19. that control room staff receive training directed specifically to handling such a change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.

The Service published the 'Evacuation and Rescue of Persons OIN' in December 2020. This sets out the procedure for a transition from 'stay put' arrangements to a 'get out' evacuation strategy. This completes recommendation 18.

An online training package 'Evacuation Management in complex buildings' has been rolled out as part of our Control Development and Assessment Pathway (DAP). We have updated this training to incorporate the handling the change of advice and conveying it effectively to callers.

The Service tested and assured both of these training packages within the assurance exercises which ran during 2022.



The Service already has a translation service available which enables them to communicate with callers should English not be their first language. Following a suggestion made from a member of staff we have loaded the 'live transcribe' app onto every service wide mobile device. This allows us to communicate with members of the public who may have a hearing impairment.

Emergency Call – Other Control Rooms

20. that steps be taken to investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room

This has been implemented by the introduction of National Talk group 20. This enables services to share risk critical information quickly during an incident. Within Thames Valley Fire Control, all control room operatives have now received training and national testing of this takes place regularly. National assurance exercises are coordinated by NFCC and Home Office and we take part in these as they happen.

Command and Control – breathing apparatus crews

- 22. that the LFB develop policies and training to ensure better control of deployments and the use of resources;*
- 23. that the LFB develop policies and training to ensure that better information is obtained from crews returning from deployments and that the information is recorded in a form that enables it to be made available immediately to the incident commander (and thereafter to the command units and the control room).*

Our 'Fire in Tall Buildings' Operational Information Note was published in December 2020, which is aligned to National Operational Guidance. This document sets out the procedures firefighters should follow when responding to a fire in a high-rise building.

The Service has introduced High Rise Information Boards which are available on all appliances. These enable crews to collate information including progress on searches, allocation of teams during searches, causalities/fatalities and additional comments during an incident. These have been tested during a number of our assurance exercises and feedback will continue to be assessed.

We are currently developing an online training package for our crews which includes deployment structure as well as guidance for obtaining better information when crews return from deployment.



Command and Control – Communication

24. *that the LFB develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander and improve the means of communication between the incident commander and the bridgehead*
25. *that the LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide a direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployments.*

Recommendations 24 and 25 have overlaps with recommendation 13 which recommends a dedicated communications link between the control room and incident commander and recommendation 17 which requires the service to display information simultaneously at control and in the command units.

The Service has completed an assurance exercise which tested the communication between TVFCS and the Incident Commander/incident ground. A number of recommendations have arisen from this exercise which have been reviewed by the BEP and will help inform the Thames Valley Command Support collaboration project.

We have investigated options for a technological solution including Microsoft Teams to allow us to share FSG information between control, bridgehead and command unit simultaneously. We will continue to monitor wider market and FRS activity for opportunities to enhance or further collaborate on this solution through our Thames Valley Collaboration project.

The Service have purchased 3 portable radio signal boosters which sit within our Incident Command Unit and Multi-Role-Vehicle (MRV). These allow us to strengthen our radio effectiveness if required which can improve communication at the scene of operations and ultimately with TVFCS.

A Radio Procedures online training package has been made available to all crews which provides them with an understanding of the radio procedures that should be adopted when communicating with TVFCS. In addition to this, a presentation has been developed for our crews on how to increase the performance of our radios in various situations, we are currently developing this into an online training package.

An Evacuation Commander Operational Information Note has been published which specifies that a single point of contact within TVFCS needs to be established to liaise with the evacuation commander on the incident ground. If this creates a capacity issue then a L2 or L3 officer will be mobilised to TVFCS to perform this role. There is also a dedicated radio operative who will liaise with the incident ground, usually the driver of the appliance or command unit if in attendance.



RBFRS are working collaboratively with both Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue and Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue to review Command Support seeking to ensure all 3 services have effective and resilient 'end to end' arrangements in place.

Equipment

- 26. that the LFB urgently take steps to obtain equipment that enables firefighters wearing helmets and breathing apparatus to communicate with the bridgehead effectively, including when operating in high-rise buildings*
- 27. that urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.*

Our current Breathing Apparatus (BA) equipment is designed to connect to our fire ground radios and allow the BA wearer to communicate with other fire ground radios. This is via a Draeger system that connects directly to our radios.

We are currently procuring new radios as part of our BA replacement project alongside Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire FRS', although these will not be available until March 2023. Radio compatibility has featured in recent BA replacement procurement exercises. There will be a second part to this project whereby we look at our wider fireground radio communication.

The Service has conducted radio tests within all of our High Rise Residential Buildings to identify and flag any issues within our site specific risk information and EPIPS to ensure that this is easily available to crews on arrival at an incident. The Service has purchased three portable radio signal boosters as well as having internal boosters available on our Incident command unit and MRV. These will allow us to strengthen our radio signals if required.

An operational bulletin has been issued which describes to crews how they can increase the performance of radios in various situations. We are developing this into an online training package.

The Service tested and assured this area within the assurance exercises carried out during 2022.

An Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) refresh and upgrade was carried out on our Incident Command Unit during 2020 as well as a conversion from satellite to GSM 4G broadband data to improve our connectivity. We conducted an assurance exercise in spring 2021 which showed our current process to be effective but there was potential for it to be more efficient. Our crews both Whole-time and On-Call at Maidenhead Fire Station are trained on how to operate the Command Unit. The programme have liaised with other fire and rescue services to identify best practice, provide assurance of existing arrangements and have recommendations of further improvements which have been reviewed and will be fed into the Thames Valley Command Support collaboration project.



Evacuation

29. that fire and rescue services develop policies for partial and total evacuation of high-rise residential buildings and training to support them;

The Service published an 'Evacuation and Rescue of People' Operational Information Note in December 2020 which sets out the procedures for how firefighters should plan and carry out a safe and effective evacuation of a building.

An online training package 'Evacuation from Complex Buildings' was published in September 2020 and made available for all crews and TVFCS staff.

The Programme carried out a series of exercises during 2022 which tested and assured our evacuation procedures and training.

A national steering group has been established by the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support a research project on means of escape and the stay put policy. We are expecting a report outlining the initial findings in the near future.

Evacuation – Smokehoods

34. that all fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in the evacuation of occupants through smoke-filled exit routes.

Smokehoods, also known as Escape hoods, have been introduced to the Service and are now available on all full time fire engines and the Aerial Ladder Platform should they be required.

Training has also been rolled out across the county. As part of our assurance process we tested our staff understanding and found that it had not been fully embedded or understood so we have now retrained our staff within this area.

Cooperation between emergency services – Joint Doctrine

40. that each emergency service must communicate the declaration of a Major Incident to all other Category 1 Responders as soon as possible;

41. that on the declaration of a Major Incident clear lines of communication must be established as soon as possible between the control rooms of the individual emergency services;

42. that a single point of contact should be designated within each control room to facilitate such communication;

43. that a "METHANE" message should be sent as soon as possible by the emergency service declaring a Major Incident.

These recommendations are aimed at all emergency services and are about the content of the JESIP Joint Doctrine. This is an interoperability framework setting out the standard approach to multi agency working. It is developed by the national Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP).



METHANE refers to a model promoted by JESIP for managing information in initial stages of an incident. It stands for:

- **M**ajor Incident
- **E**xact Location
- **T**ypes of Incident
- **H**azards
- **A**ccess
- **N**umber of casualties
- **E**mergency Services



The Service has a Major Incident OIN which details the procedures to be followed during initial attendance which includes Thames Valley Fire Control advising all relevant agencies and having a designated single point of contact to facilitate such communication.

Communication will be carried out using our interagency control room talk group which was introduced in November 2020. This is covered in the guidance note held on the Vision system.

JESIP principles, where the need for M/ETHANE comes from, are imbedded in the SFJ incident command standards. JESIP is specifically referenced in the learning outcome document for incident command L2, L3 and we send all L2's to multi agency JESIP training. We have reviewed the online training package from JESIP and this is now available to crews.

The Service is well represented and a proactive participant in with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and there are procedures in place to initiate a partner activation teleconference (PAT) which is activated to share risk critical information with Category 1 and 2 responders. The PAT enables an early multi-agency assessment and monitoring of the situation and decision on the appropriate level of multi-agency response to be made. This could result in an escalation to a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) / Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) or the incident being coordinated through the PAT. Training events for middle managers, to increase awareness and confidence of this approach were held in late 2021.

RBFRS have volunteered to lead the Thames Valley JESIP strategic group to further embed JESIP principles and support shared understanding and closer interoperability.

The Programme carried out a series of exercises during 2022 which tested and assured working with other emergency services.



Cooperation between emergency services – information sharing

- 44. that steps be taken to investigate the compatibility of the LFB systems with those of the MPS and the LAS with a view to enabling all three emergency services' systems to read each other's messages*
- 46. that the LFB, the MPS, the LAS and the London local authorities all investigate ways of improving the collection of information about survivors and making it available more rapidly to those wishing to make contact with them.*

We are reliant on the Multi Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) facility being introduced to complete recommendation 44, this is a system used for the sharing of information between control rooms. This is an area being looked at both locally and nationally. RBFRS has a senior user representative and a strategic lead at the NFCC MAIT hub procurement project board. This will be picked up within TVFCS Service plan to take forward after the programme closes.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have liaised with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Humanitarian Assistance Programme, Thames Valley Police, and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in regards to the collection of survivor information.

We have worked with the Thames Valley Development Liaison Group to develop the Survivor Management Operational Information Note which was published in October 2022. This provides our crews with an awareness of current Local Resilience Forum procedures in setting up reception areas and timeframes involved as well as the Police MIPP system which allows survivor information to be recorded. We are currently in the process of developing training to support this.



Non–Fire Service Recommendations

The Service’s response to the remaining 17 recommendations which include those aimed at Government and/or building managers and owners which will require legislation changes.

RBFRS felt it was appropriate to not only consider the specific Fire Service recommendations, but seek to support other stakeholders in improving safety across the built environment for the benefit of Berkshire residents.

Many of the recommendations below are aimed at building owners and managers and will require the new legislation to complete these. Following the introduction of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, RBFRS have conducted a thorough gap analysis and have a project team in place to ensure we are able to address and implement changes to allow us to comply with these regulations

(Numbers are from the original report so not always consecutive because not all apply to Fire and Rescue Services)

No	Grenfell Tower Inquiry’s phase 1 recommendation	RBFRS Progress to date
1	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to provide their local fire and rescue service with information about the design of its external walls together with details of the materials of which they are constructed and to inform the fire and rescue service of any material changes made to them;	<p>HRRB Project set up to inspect all HRRBs within Berkshire.</p> <p>All buildings have been issued with ‘Article 27’ letters requesting information on external walls.</p> <p>All information received on external walls is included within our site specific risk information which is available to crews during an incident.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
5	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law: to provide their local fire and rescue services with up-to-date plans in both paper and electronic form of every floor of the building identifying the location of key fire safety systems;	<p>Electronic premise information plates (EPIP) have been developed for our High Rise Residential buildings within Berkshire and we are looking to introduce these across other high risk buildings.</p> <p>An EPIP is a simple ‘one page’ overview of key operational risk information available to crews in initial attendance.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>



6	<p>that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law: to ensure that the building contains a premises information box, the contents of which must include a copy of the up-to-date floor plans and information about the nature of any lift intended for use by the fire and rescue services.</p>	<p>Standard letters have been amended to <i>recommend</i> the implementation of premise information boxes within all High Rise Residential Buildings.</p> <p>Premise information boxes are checked to see if they are present during our audits and inspections.</p> <p>We are using the Code of Practice guidance that was developed by NFCC and Fire Industry Association (FIA) to recommend and check what documents should be included within a Premise Information Box.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
8	<p>that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular inspections of any lifts that are designed to be used by firefighters in an emergency and to report the results of such inspections to their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals;</p>	<p>Fire Safety Inspecting Officers do check maintenance and inspection reports during our audit process.</p> <p>Amended our site specific risk information form so our crews can note information around lifts such as location, activation, access etc.</p> <p>An LMS training package on lifts has been developed for all operational crews. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
9	<p>that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to carry out regular tests of the mechanism which allows firefighters to take control of the lifts and to inform their local fire and rescue service at monthly intervals that they have done so.</p>	<p>Fire Safety Inspecting Officers do check maintenance and inspection reports during our audit process.</p> <p>Amended our site specific risk information form so our crews can note information around lifts such as location, activation, access etc.</p> <p>An LMS training package on lifts has been developed for all operational crews. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
21	<p>that the LAS and the MPS review their protocols and policies to ensure that their operators can identify FSG calls (as defined by the LFB) and pass them to the LFB as soon as possible.</p>	<p>TVFCS have developed alongside Hampshire Fire and Rescue services a FSG policy/training for South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and Thames Valley Police (TVP). We have recently carried out an assurance exercise with SCAS and in the process of arranging time with TVP to conduct the same exercise.</p>



28	that the government develop national guidelines for carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise residential buildings, such guidelines to include the means of protecting fire exit routes and procedures for evacuating persons who are unable to use the stairs in an emergency, or who may require assistance (such as disabled people, older people and young children);	<p>A national steering group has been established by the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support a research project on means of escape and the stay put policy. We are expecting a report outlining the initial findings in the near future.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Project</p>
30	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to draw up and keep under regular review evacuation plans, copies of which are to be provided in electronic and paper form to their local fire and rescue service and placed in an information box on the premises	<p>Started to identify how we would receive such plans, where we would store them and how we make them accessible during an incident.</p> <p>We have amended a number of our standard letters to include a recommendation that evacuation plans should be sent to local Fire and Rescue Services and also stored within a Premise Information Box.</p> <p>Awaiting further legislative changes. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Project.</p>
31	that all high-rise residential buildings (both those already in existence and those built in the future) be equipped with facilities for use by the fire and rescue services enabling them to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building by means of sounders or similar devices;	<p>NFCC have produced an online training package which we have made available to all of our crews.</p>
32	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition)	<p>We have PEEPS for buildings within interim measures with a waking watch and have amended our standard letters to recommend that we are supplied with PEEPS where required.</p> <p>We have responded to the PEEPs consultation and EEIS consultation.</p> <p>Awaiting further legislative changes. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Project.</p>
33	that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises information box;	<p>We do currently have PEEPS for all buildings within interim measures with a waking watch and have amended our standard letters to recommend that we are supplied with PEEPS where required.</p> <p>We have responded to the PEEPs consultation and EEIS consultation.</p> <p>Awaiting further legislative changes. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Project.</p>



35	that in all high-rise buildings floor numbers be clearly marked on each landing within the stairways and in a prominent place in all lobbies in such a way as to be visible both in normal conditions and in low lighting or smoky conditions.	<p>The Service has updated its standard letters to include a recommendation around implementing internal signage.</p> <p>We have updated our site specific risk information form used by crews to include 'signage for Fire Fighters' giving an opportunity to detail if signage is available and potential hazards.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
36	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not it is a high-rise building) be required by law to provide fire safety instructions (including instructions for evacuation) in a form that the occupants of the building can reasonably be expected to understand, taking into account the nature of the building and their knowledge of the occupants.	<p>The Service has amended its data collection proforma used during an audit to include the checking of Fire Safety instruction forms and the accuracy of the information provided.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
37	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) carry out an urgent inspection of all fire doors to ensure that they comply with applicable legislative standards;	<p>Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits.</p> <p>In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors. This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
38	that the owner and manager of every residential building containing separate dwellings (whether or not they are high-rise buildings) be required by law to carry out checks at not less than three-monthly intervals to ensure that all fire doors are fitted with effective self-closing devices in working order.	<p>Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits.</p> <p>In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>
39	that all those who have responsibility in whatever capacity for the condition of the entrance doors to individual flats in high-rise residential buildings, whose external walls incorporate unsafe cladding, be required by law to ensure that such doors comply with current standards.	<p>Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are checking fire doors within our audits.</p> <p>In addition we have produced an LMS package for our crews covering basic information in regards to fire doors.</p> <p>This will be monitored through our Fire Safety (England) Regulations Project</p>



45	that steps be taken to ensure that the airborne datalink system on every NPAS helicopter observing an incident which involves one of the other emergency services defaults to the National Emergency Service user encryption	An assurance exercise has been carried out to ensure that we are able to download and receive images from the TVP helicopter. We are developing an online training package to inform crews how they can request this service (and other aerial support) which is currently being quality assured by subject matter experts.
----	--	--

DRAFT



High Rise Residential Buildings Project

Our High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB) project came into being in August 2020, since then we have embarked on an ambitious schedule of audits of an identified 198 HRRBs taking into account all types of cladding systems in buildings over 6 floors or 18m in height.

The project was set up in alignment with the NFFC Building Risk Review (BRR) and reported their progress on a monthly basis, complying with the requirements of the BRR several months ahead of Government's deadline. The HRRB team comprised of existing resource supported by a number of specialist external associates to help with the demand and more complex issues that arose.

It became increasingly apparent that a number of cladding systems, not just ACM (the type used at Grenfell Tower) have or will fail the safety tests in terms of external fire spread. During phase 1 of our project we had a clear focus on cladding however Fire Safety Inspecting Officers (FSIO) were also instructed and better equipped to take a more intrusive approach to the investigation of internal compartmentation.

During Phase 1 of the project, which was successfully completed in July 2021, the team visited 187 buildings (the remaining that were identified were either duplicates, demolished or not yet built). This provided RBFRS with a clear understanding of the risks associated with these premises and enabled us to ensure appropriate regulatory activities were in place.

Phase 2 of the project identified 97 buildings as needing further management due to cladding, internal compartmentation or other fire safety concerns. This phase of the project saw further regulatory activity leading to remediation and ran until December 2022 before passing back to business as usual. The other HRRBs of less concern were managed through business as usual protection activity by local protection staff following a comprehensive handover. We have introduced joint visits between our operational crews and our Fire Safety Inspectors providing an opportunity to share knowledge, experience and understand the risks each of the areas are looking for. In addition our operational crews are now visiting these buildings on a regular basis for operational risk awareness and to provide information and community confidence.

The team has worked closely with Building Owners and Responsible Persons, alongside our partners in Local Authority Housing Teams and Building Control Bodies ensuring, where necessary, enforcement action was taken and interim measures were applied as appropriate. Whilst we recognised that the full remediation of a building can be a long process, there are already several examples of premises where fire safety has been significantly improved as a result of the RBFRS' work with Building Owners and Responsible Persons. During Phase 2 of the HRRB project, the HRRB Team have continued to support a number of high-rise buildings through to the completion of their remediation work.



Currently within Royal Berkshire;

- **23 buildings have completed their remediation projects**
- **8 buildings are in the process of having remediation work done and this will be complete by Spring/Summer 2023**
- **3 buildings are still completing work but have significantly improved the fire safety of buildings including completing internal compartmentation works and the implementing of permanent fire alarm systems**
- **4 buildings where further remediation work is required and further monitoring is needed**

Interim measures, which have been applied, vary depending on the circumstances at each building. It is ultimately the responsibility of the Responsible Person to ensure safety standards are met. For some buildings, Automatic Fire Detection Systems (AFDs) have been installed, there have been changes to the evacuation strategies from 'stay put' to 'simultaneous evacuation' and the car parks of some buildings have been removed from use where there were concerns about fire spread to the building. In some circumstances, a 'waking watch' was temporarily put in place, a dedicated resource with the responsibility of patrolling the building, identifying fire, raising the alarm and managing the evacuation.

Throughout this process, the safety of those living in high-rise premises has remained our priority.

Table 3 provides a summary of HRRB project phase 2 findings.





Table 3: The RBFRS' performance dashboard as of 4th January 2023 in regards to the HRRB (Phase 2)

HRRB UPDATE IN NUMBERS





Next Steps

This has been a significant programme of work within a complex and changing environment.

As a Service we have worked extremely hard to accomplish what we have to date, and we will be continuing with our efforts to assure and embed the changes we have implemented. We will be working with our internal colleagues to ensure the changes we have made continue to be monitored through operational learning, training and policies.

Following the introduction of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, RBFRS have conducted a thorough gap analysis and have a project team in place to ensure we are able to address and implement changes to allow us to comply with these regulations which will also address many of the recommendations that are aimed at building owners and managers.

We await the commencement of the Building Safety Act, which will set the legislative landscape for high-rise fire safety moving forward. As a Service, we will continue to monitor this closely within our Protection department and we will need to remain adaptive in our approach to any changes introduced by this legislation.

The proposed new Building Safety Regulator will create new challenges for fire services to respond to, but RBFRS welcome the strengthening regulatory framework to make buildings and residents safer.

Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 came to a close in November 2022 although we are not expecting to see the report until Spring/Summer 2023. We will continue to monitor this closely as we do expect further recommendations to arise from this which we will need to review and consider.

Publication date – Jan 2023

ROYAL BERKSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.23	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	28.3.23	quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
Annual Governance Statement 22/23	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note	Programme Office and Inspection Manager	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	Organisational Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances ? Code of Conduct annual consultation results	A&GC	28.3.23	Annual	Note and Recommend	DChEx	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	28.3.23	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
LFB Culture Review - Audit (Gap analysis)	Management Committee	03.04.23	Ad-hoc	note and recommend	CFO	N/A	Part I
Corporate Calendar 2023/24	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Agree	DChEx	N/A	Part I
Corporate Plan and CRMP Consultation Results	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
LFB Culture Review - Audit (Gap analysis)	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	CFO	N/A	Part I
Contaminants presentation	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Ad-hoc	Agree	DChEx	Healthy and wellbeing champion	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	27.04.23	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I

This page is intentionally left blank

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

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

Qualifications:

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

is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest

Agenda Item 20

in disclosing the information.

Interpretation:

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

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank