



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

Monday, 16th November 2020

At

6.30 pm

The Royal Berkshire Fire Authority meeting is being held online in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) regulations 2020.

The Authority supports the principles of openness and transparency. To enable members of the press and public to see or hear the meeting, this meeting will be livestreamed:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/RoyalBerkshireFRS>

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: Monday, 16th November 2020 at 6.30 pm
REMOTE MEETING: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RoyalBerkshireFRS>

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

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

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AGENDA

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

Purpose:

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

- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 (Pages 7 - 22)**

Recommendation:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Purpose:

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

- 5. Receipt of Announcements**

Purpose:

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

- 6. Recommendations of Committees**

Purpose:

To note that the following agenda items have been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 30 July and 3 November 2020.

- Item 12 – Members Handbook and Constitutional Amendments,
- Item 13 - Local Government Ethical Standards: Committee on Standards in

Public Life

c) Item 14 – Amendments to Contract and Financial Regulations

d) Item 16 – Annual Report on Governance

7. 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.

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. Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award - Presentation

Recommendation:

To receive a presentation on the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award.

11. Fire and Rescue Insurance Company (FRIC) Presentation

Recommendation:

To receive a presentation on Fire and Rescue Insurance Company (FRIC).

12. Members Handbook Constitutional Amendments (*Pages 23 - 80*)

Purpose:

To agree the recommendations set out in the report from Audit and Governance Committee on 30 July 2020.

13. Local Government Ethical Standards Committee on Standards in Public Life (*Pages 81 - 92*)

Purpose:

To agree the recommendations set out in the report from Audit and Governance Committee on 3 November 2020.

14. Amendments to Contract and Financial Regulations *(Pages 93 - 140)*

Purpose:

To agree the amendments made to Contract and Financial Regulations, recommended by Audit and Governance Committee on 3 November 2020.

15. Annual Treasury Management Review 2019/20 and Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2020/21 *(Pages 141 - 168)*

Purpose:

To receive for note the Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management update for 2020/21, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

16. Annual Report on Governance *(Pages 169 - 180)*

Purpose:

To note the report on Annual Report on Governance, recommended by Audit and Governance Committee on 30 July 2020.

17. Lead Member six Month update report *(Pages 181 - 206)*

Purpose:

To note the six month update report from Members.

- a) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member – Cllr Graham Howe
- b) Collaboration Lead Member – Cllr David Cannon
- c) Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Cllr Dexter Smith
- d) Strategic Assets Lead Member – Cllr Angus Ross

18. Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee six month update report *(Pages 207 - 210)*

Purpose:

To receive for note the six month update report on TVFCS Joint Committee.

19. Forward Plan *(Pages 211 - 212)*

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

20. Minutes of the Standing Committees

Recommendation:

To note minutes of recent Management and Audit and Governance Committee meetings were published on RBFPS website:

<http://www.rbfrs.co.uk/about-us/fire-authority/fire-authority-meetings/>

21. Date of the Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 February 2021, at 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed nearer the time based on COVID-19 restrictions in place at that time.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Thursday, 25th June, 2020 at 6.30 pm
This meeting was livestreamed

<https://www.youtube.com/user/RoyalBerkshireFRS>

Members:
(*present)

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

In Attendance:

- Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO)
- Paul Binyon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
- Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
- Doug Buchanan (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
- Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
- Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
- Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
- James Pinchin (Business Support Officer, BSO)
- Fayth Rowe (Democratic Support Lead, DSL)
- Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS)
- Hannah Sheehan (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
- Tony Vincent (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2020/21 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Helliar-Symons proposed Councillor Colin Dudley as Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

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

Action

RESOLVED that Councillor Colin Dudley be elected Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

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

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2020/21 MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Chairman proposed Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons as Vice – Chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle.

On there being no further nominations, it was;

RESOLVED that Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Fire Authority for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons read the following statement, '*I Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons having been elected to the office of Vice-Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability*'. She also stated that she was proud to take on the role of Vice-Chairman for one of the best Fire Authorities in the country.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence received.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2020

Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Tina McKenzie-Boyle, Harjinder Minhas and Angus Ross abstained.

RESOLVED that Part I and Part II minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2020, be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

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

7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements.

I have no doubt you will join me in extending our thoughts and prayers to those who lost their lives and were injured in the terror attack at Forbury Gardens in Reading. I was horrified to receive the news of such a horrific attack within Berkshire. Both Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service offer our sympathies to all of those affected, their family and friends and our local communities. I would like you all to join me in a one minute silence as we pay our respects to all those affected by this tragic event.

Members, I'd like to read a letter this evening that was sent to all staff at Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on behalf of myself as Chairman of the Fire Authority and Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Ferguson.

On the 25th May the world stopped and watched the shocking pictures which captured the death of George Floyd. The words "I can't breathe" have been etched into the minds of every one of us who watched that harrowing 8 minutes 46 seconds. Having watched the video, we felt compelled to write to you to make our views on the matter clear.

The killing of George Floyd was inhumane, brutal and wrong. The actions of those police officers, who should have been there to serve their communities, were appalling. It is a fact that George Floyd was an African American black man whose untimely death represents a completely unacceptable disparity in the treatment of black people. Racism, as with all forms of discrimination, cannot be ignored. To be very clear, racism is wrong and cannot be tolerated. It has no place in society and no place in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

We want Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service to continue to be a diverse and inclusive organisation. We therefore, encourage all of our staff to speak out against racism and prejudice. We also fully support their democratic right to peaceful protest.

We believe now is the time to listen, learn and lead, to ensure that our service is a diverse and inclusive organisation that is trusted by every part of our community.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service must be a safe space, where we can all have respectful and constructive dialogue about racism and all the other prejudices present in society. We appreciate, that these are difficult and emotive

topics, in a difficult and emotive time. That is perhaps why they are rarely discussed in an open and transparent way.

We also know, at times like this, actions are more important than words. We are therefore committing to do the following in the coming weeks and months:

- We will create dedicated space on our intranet and internet pages providing links to information and educational materials on racism and other prejudices.*
- We will run a series of articles in The Shout to enable all of us to read about and learn from historical and personal experiences of prejudice.*
- We will reinforce the importance of our behavioural charter to all staff.*
- We will continue to work with our EDI forum to find new ways to highlight and overcome prejudice.*
- We will use our next leadership forum and further workshops to focus on how we collectively create a safe space to discuss the very real issues of racism and prejudice in our society.*

We believe understanding, education and learning are critical to removing racism and other prejudices from our society. We want to do everything we can to facilitate that learning and understanding in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. As public servants, we have a duty to do the best we can, for all the people we serve.

Members, I felt it important to share this letter with you tonight. I am in doubt that you, as Members of the Fire Authority, support this letter and the commitments contained within it.

Sunday, 14 June was the third anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. As a mark of respect to those who sadly lost their lives, their families and the local community, our staff and Fire Authority observed a two minute silence to mark the sad occasion.

Lastly Members, I would like to welcome Councillor Minhas to the Fire Authority. Councillor Minhas is joining up from Slough Borough Council. Sadly, we say goodbye to Councillor Plenty who has stepped down as a Fire Authority Member.

[Councillor Ross] I am pleased to confirm that, despite of the challenges posed by COVID-19, the rebuild of Crowthorne Community Fire Station has been successfully completed. Firefighters moved from their temporary home back to the station to start serving their community from 1 May. Well done to all involved.

[Councillor Gittings] On behalf of the Labour Group I support the statement made from the Chairman and Chief Fire Officer on the killing of George Floyd and the Grenfell tragedy. The terrorist attack which took place in Reading last Saturday is still very raw. I would like to thank the firefighters that arrived at the

scene on behalf of the Leader of Reading Borough Council, Jason Brook. Reading is a diverse place. We will stand united and will not allow the events which took place to affect our everyday lives.

[Councillor Shepherd-DuBey] In support of the Labour Group on the above, I too would like to commend the firefighters, South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) and members of the public for their bravery last Saturday.

8. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBERS, MEMBER CHAMPIONS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

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

He reported the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance and Management Committees will be made at their respective first meeting of the year in July 2020.

He asked the Fire Authority to agree recommendations 2.1 – 2.3 of the report. The table below outline the nominations that were agreed.

| | |
|---|---|
| Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats) | (Con) Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle (Con) Cllr Tony Linden (Con) Cllr Dennis Benneyworth (Con) Cllr Jane Stanford-Beale (Con) Cllr Christine Bateson (Con) Cllr Garth Simpson (Lab) Cllr Christine Hulme (Lab) Cllr Harjinder Minhas (Lib Dem) Cllr Simon Werner |
| Management Committee (11 seats) | (Con) Cllr Colin Dudley (Con) Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons (Con) Cllr Angus Ross (Con) Cllr Dexter Smith |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>(Con) Cllr David Cannon (Con) Cllr Graham Howe (Lab) Cllr Paul Gittings (Lab) Cllr Jo Lovelock (Lab) Cllr Tricia Brown (Lib Dem) Cllr Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey (Lib Dem) Cllr Jeff Brooks</p> |
| Lead Member | <p>Budget and Income Generation Lead Cllr Graham Howe</p> <p>Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Cllr Dexter Smith</p> <p>Strategic Assets Lead Cllr Angus Ross</p> <p>Collaboration Lead Cllr David Cannon</p> |
| Member Champion | <p>Community Safety Champion Cllr Christine Bateson</p> <p>Health, Safety and Wellbeing Champion Cllr Christine Bateson</p> <p>Organisational Development Champion Cllr Pauline Helliari-Symons</p> |
| Appointments to outside bodies and Working Groups | <p>LGA representative Cllr Tina McKenzie-Boyle</p> <p>LGA representative's substitute Cllr Pauline Helliari Symons</p> |
| TVFCS Joint Committee (2 seats) | <p>TVFCS Joint Committee representative Cllr Angus Ross</p> <p>TVFCS Joint Committee representative Cllr David Cannon</p> |

RESOLVED that:

- The nominations received for the appointment of Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee be agreed;
- The nominations received for the appointments for Lead Member, Member Champion roles, Outside Bodies and Working Groups listed be agreed, and
- The Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members (attached as Appendix A in the report) be agreed.

11. WARGRAVE FIRE STATION

Nikki Richards (Director of Support Services, DSS) reported the closure of Wargrave Fire Station was part of the Service Redesign IRMP consultation that ran from December 2016 to March 2017. At the Fire Authority on 18 April 2017, Members unanimously agreed to close Wargrave Station but deferred the implementation of the closure for twelve months based on the fulfilment of two key criteria:

- 1) The required savings be found elsewhere within the RBFRS budget;
- 2) Wargrave to demonstrate an increase in availability to 60% within that twelve month period.

The twelve-month period commenced on 1 October 2017, and elapsed at the end of September 2018. Through an updated report to Management Committee on the 22 October 2018, a recommendation was agreed by the committee to further defer the implementation of the closure of Wargrave Fire station for 9 months.

On 3 December 2019 Management Committee recommended to Fire Authority that the decision be deferred until June 2020.

On the 20 January 2020, the Fire Authority resolved the deferral period should be extended to June 2020 to give the crew additional time to achieve the required availability levels as prescribed by the IRMP consultation.

In referring to the recommendation of the report, Nikki Richards drew Members attention to paragraph 3.3.8 which detailed the option for affected staff members to transfer into the Service on a wholetime firefighter contract should they so wish.

In answer to a question from Councillor Lovelock on what were the response times in the last two years of appliances within a two-mile radius of attending an incident in Wargrave. Nikki Richards reported the data we hold and use is based on a station ground which is the area around Wargrave Fire Station which may be greater than 2 miles in some places. For 18/19 the mean average response

time was 15 mins, 10 secs and if you remove the Wargrave appliance the mean average is 15 mins, 16 secs. For 19/20 the mean average response time was 12 mins, 10 secs and if you remove the Wargrave appliance the mean average is 12 mins 23 secs.

Councillor Gittings asked why the retention of on-call availability was so low at Wargrave and whether lessons were being learned for other on-call fire stations.

Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) reported on-call stations have a higher level of staff turnover predominately due to their primary employment. In terms of lessons being learnt, he advised that exit interviews were held for recruitment and retention.

Councillor Hulme stated more time should be given to this decision due to COVID-19.

Steve Foye reported the performance of stations are constantly monitored and the Service has also looked at how COVID-19 has affected stations. The pandemic has seen an increase in fire station usage, however it has not been the case for Wargrave.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey asked how would the closing of Wargrave Fire Station affect the response times to the northern Parishes of Wokingham and Oxfordshire, and if closed, would the station be given to the people of Wargrave.

Nikki Richards reported out of 42 incidents that occurred on Wargrave Station ground, the Wargrave appliance arrived first on one occasion. In 19/20 the mean average response time was 12 mins, 10 secs and if you remove the Wargrave appliance the mean average is 12 mins 23 secs.

In relation to the question on Wargrave Fire Station building, Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) stated any proposal on the station usage would be looked at by the Property Development Working Group, headed by Councillor Ross, Strategic Assets Lead.

In answer to a question from Councillor Helliar-Symons, Steve Foye reported the Service has been actively trying to recruit on-call staff at Wargrave and had done so with some success but in 2019, staff had left the station which had affected the availability on staff to attend incidences.

Councillor Brooks asked whether there were any landmark or businesses in the area which were considered high risk and out of the 42 incidents on Wargrave station ground, would any of them make Members anxious.

Trevor Ferguson reported that there were no high risk incidents in the area and none (out of the 42 incidents in the last year) were necessary to draw Members particular attention to.

The Vice-Chairman expressed that she was deeply grieved that the Fire Authority had to make this decision and stated in order to keep Wargrave Fire

Station open, the Service would have to dig into their reserves. Last year the overall availability was 18.3% and in May 2020 2.8%. She added that fires in Wargrave were responded to by other appliances from other stations.

Councillor Gittings stated that he had moved the amendment for this decision to be taken at this meeting. He advised the route cause for this decision was underfunding by government and the cost of COVID-19 and believed due to austerity, we would not have seen these figures pre 2010. 60% availability in 2017 was the condition given by the Fire Authority to keep Wargrave Fire Station open. He felt this was an unachievable target and in retrospect it was set up to fail, although this was not the intention at the time. In relation to recruitment and training, he asked why retention had been so poor and considered it may have been the prospect of the station closure over the last three years. He noted the remaining Firefighters will be offered jobs, however in conclusion, he stated it did not feel right to close a Berkshire Fire Station and stated that he would be voting against.

Councillor Lovelock stated she was extremely uncomfortable in making this decision in December 2019 and also stated that the Nation had been in lockdown for the last three months. She felt that the Fire Authority should make this decision once we were out of lockdown and felt the community of Wargrave should be given another chance. She expressed her concern about the future of the building and did not believe it should be left empty. In addition, Councillor Lovelock asked whether there was community interest in the building and advised she too would be voting against. She expressed that more time should be given to make this decision and that it should be made in normal times.

Councillor Shepherd-DuBey agreed with Councillor Gittings and stated the Liberal Democrat Group would be voting against the closure of Wargrave Fire Station.

Councillor Smith reported he was concerned about the overall impact on the Service being able to respond to core tasks. Twice this decision has been deferred which is at significant cost to the Service in using its reserves to keep the station open. He stated, public sector funding was uncertain and felt that if this decision was deferred again, it might risk the Service achieving satisfactory outcomes to its core business. The targets were very clear and the performance of Wargrave never got close to the targets set. He added that he did not see any value in deferring this decision any longer, due to the financial impact. In conclusion, he stated any deferral of this decision would put additional pressure on the remaining Firefighters at Wargrave.

Councillor Brown stated other on-call fire stations in Berkshire did not have a 60% availability target.

In reflection of the points made by Members, Councillor Ross reported the difference was whether there was an operational impact. He stated Councillor Smith covered the financial constraints in keeping the station open and considered the other financial pressures on the Service in relation to COVID-19 and Grenfell. He asked for this thanks to be recorded to the crew at Wargrave

and highlighted the Firefighters affected had an opportunity to join the Service as Wholetime Firefighters.

The Chairman stated several points had been made and due to COVID-19 other on-call fire stations availability had increased, whereas, Wargrave had decreased. Last month [May 2020] availability was 2.8%, average availability for that period was 50 minutes over a 24 hour period. The Fire Authority cannot afford to keep a fire appliance to be only available for 50 minutes. Neighbouring appliances will attend incidences in Wargrave. This decision was originally taken in 2017 as part of the IRMP Consultation where the Fire Authority voted for option 1 which was the closure of Wargrave. The Fire Authority initially deferred this decision for 9 months and three years in total and stated that he felt that the Fire Authority could not continue to extend this decision.

The Chairman proposed the recommendation and Councillor Ross had seconded.

On being put to the vote, 11 Members voted for, 7 against and one Member abstained.

RESOLVED that it be agreed the deferral period has now concluded and that the key criteria set out in 1.1 (of the report) have not been achieved, therefore, the extant decision, made by Fire Authority in April 2017, will be implemented. Implementation will commence from 1 July 2020.

12. COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB WARGRAVE

Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, ACFO) presented the report and advised a feasibility study, considering the potential for a 'Community Safety Hub' (CSH), was commissioned by the Service and noted by Members of the Management Committee on 3 December 2019.

He reported RBFRS had sought dialogue with potential partner stakeholders and found there were insufficient interest for a CSH.

Councillor Minhas asked based on the previous decision, what would be the immediate plans for the site and would it be marketed for sale immediately.

Mark Arkwell advised the site would not be marketed for sale immediately and any proposals would be brought back to Management Committee for decision.

Councillor Lovelock asked whether any discussion which the wider community was held in relation to community interest in the site. In response, Mark Arkwell reported dialogue was held with Thames Valley Police (TVP), South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Wargrave Parish Council. He was not aware of wider community interest, but the Service would remain open to any approaches and would consider any further opportunities via the Property Development Working Group.

Councillor Lovelock felt post COVID-19 there may be groups that may wish to provide community services at the site and felt that this could be explored.

Councillor Gittings suggested an amendment to the recommendation to include '*.....further feasibility work will continue to find community use*'.

The Chairman stated that the Fire Authority had asked the Service to look at a feasibility study for blue light services. They have confirmed there is no current appetite for use of the site. The decision on the site will be looked at by the Property Development Working Group and would be brought to the Management Committee for decision.

In support of Councillor Gittings suggested amendment to the recommendation, Councillor Shepherd-DuBey stated further dialogue should be held with community groups, such as churches.

The Vice-Chairman reiterated the contents of the report and stated a number of discussions had been held with Parish and Borough Councillors and no one had expressed an interest in the building.

Councillor Ross stated that the door was still open locally. The Parish Council is very active and the Property Development Working Group will look at what the site could be used for.

RESOLVED that it be noted there is currently no collective appetite for the development of a 'Community Safety Hub' in Wargrave and that further feasibility work will now cease.

13. RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM LORD GREENHALGH, MINISTER OF STATE FOR BUILDING SAFETY, FIRE AND COMMUNITIES

Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) informed the Fire Authority on 14th May 2020 new Fire Minister Lord Greenhalgh wrote to all Fire Authority Chairmen and Chief Fire Officers, seeking their views on the recommendations from Sir Tom Windsor's state of fire report (Appendix A of the report).

In referring to Appendix B, Trevor Ferguson reported of a joint response from the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman and CFO.

Councillor Ross requested for the inclusion of a comment on the complications in governance. Trevor Ferguson advised he was happy to include the comment.

Councillor Hulme stated she was surprised the Minister was seeking views on regional pay during a pandemic, and asked whether or not consultation had been held with the FBU on this question.

Trevor Ferguson responded by stating the Service worked closely with the FBU and they would make strong delegations on behalf of their members.

Councillor Linden advised he would be lobbying his local MP Alok Sharma in relation to the funding of the Fire Service (£5 for fire).

Subject to the inclusion of the comment made by Councillor Ross, it was;

RESOLVED that the letter of reply jointly prepared by the Chairman of the Fire Authority Colin Dudley and Chief Fire Officer Trevor Ferguson be noted.

14. STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2018/19

Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS) outlined the purpose of the Statement of Assurance 2018/19 is for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) to formally confirm the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters, as well as overall adherence to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

RESOLVED that:

- The summary judgements within the Statement of Assurance for each of the four key areas of Finance, Governance, Operations and delivering the National Framework be noted, and
- The RBFA Statement of Assurance 2018/19 be approved.

15. CORPORATE CALENDAR 2020/21

Katie Mills (HCS) presented the report and reported on an annual basis, Members are asked to approve its Corporate Calendar of meetings for the year. She drew attention to paragraph 3.3 which stated, subject to business need, additional meetings may be programmed into the Calendar as required.

In answer to a question from Councillor Linden, an additional meeting had been arranged for Audit and Governance Committee on 30 September 2020.

RESOLVED that the 2020/21 Corporate Calendar be agreed.

16. LEAD MEMBER, MEMBER CHAMPION AND THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) JOINT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS

The Chairman proposed for Lead Member, Member Champions and TVFCS Joint Committee annual reports to be taken as read.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

17. MEETING ADJOURNMENT AND RE COMMENCEMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 7.55pm and recommenced at 8.00pm.

18. SUMMARY REPORT OF RESPONSES TO THE IRMP STRATEGY CONSULTATION - PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND RESPONSE PROPOSALS

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Lead Member, Cllr Dexter Smith introduced the report for Members consideration. He advised the majority of respondents was in support of all proposals. The consultation focused on digital promotion and stated he was pleased with the number and range of responses received, especially the FBU.

Katie Mills (HCS) outlined the full and final summary feedback report of the response to the IRMP Prevention, Protection and Response Strategy consultation. She reported the consultation was held from 2 March to 11 May and advised it was extended to 10 weeks due to COVID-19. The report was seeking Members conscientious consideration of the consultation feedback.

In response to a question from Councillor Brown on Equality and Diversity, Katie Mills advised the reason the responses were separated out was to show the representation on the feedback given.

In response to a question from Councillor Gittings on Cycle Safety, Doug Buchanan; Area Manager Prevention and Protection reported currently RBFRS Prevention Strategy does not include cycling safety, however each Unitary Authority has a Road Safety Officer who deliver cycle training and awareness. Whilst this extends beyond the commitment of the Prevention Strategy the Service can look at how they can support cycle safety in an upcoming review of our education delivery. In relation to a question on high risk residential buildings, he added this was of interest to the Service. He stated 19 buildings were on interim measures and the Service have been working with building owners, local authority and partners to reduce risk.

Katie Mills in response to a question from Councillor Smith stated that the Service have an existing relationship with the Berkshire Lowlands Rescue Service in discussions around flood risk. She added that she was happy to confirm the proposed review of Water Rescue would be built into the Response report.

Katie Mills reported COVID-19 had no impact on the proposals outlined in the reports, however it could have an impact on the timescales of implementation.

On being put to the vote, 18 voted for and 2 abstained, and it was;

RESOLVED that:

- The full summary report of consultation responses was considered in relation to the Prevention proposals and it was determined what action should be taken in relation to proposals 1-5.

- The full summary report of consultation responses was considered in relation to the Protection proposals and it was determined what action should be taken in relation to proposals 1 and 2.
- The full summary report of consultation responses was considered in relation to the Response proposals and it was determined what action should be taken in relation to proposals 1-6.
- The full summary report of consultation responses in relation to the Council Tax precept increase question be noted.

19. ANNUAL PLAN 2020/21

Katie Mills (HCS) outlined the Annual Plan 2020/21 proposed the activities and performance measures of the Service for the next year, and the report was seeking the Fire Authority's approval for publication.

In response to a query from Councillor Brooks on ID 12, 13 and 16 of the report on page 151, Trevor Ferguson reported some targets had been reintroduced following the outcome of the recent HMICFRS inspection and advised they were stretched targets. He reported monitoring of Automatic Fire Alarms had been removed and was subsequently reintroduced.

In response to a query from Councillor Benneyworth on the assessment of COVID-19 risks on the Annual Plan, Katie Mills advised a section of the Annual Plan referred to the impact of COVID-19. She added the Plan was drafted before restrictions for example the number of Safe and Well visits and confirmed this would continue to be monitored when we were out of the restriction period.

Nikki Richards confirmed continuity plans were in place in the event of a second wave of COVID-19, for example minimum crewing levels and the ability to move back up to optimum levels when the risk had been reduced.

RESOLVED that the Annual Plan 2020/21 be approved for publication.

20. FORWARD PLAN

Subject to an amendment made on the reporting of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) Joint Committee from 12 to 6 months, it was;

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

21. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of Standing Committees were published on RBFPS website.

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agenda Item 3

Action

Monday, 16 November 2020, 6.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

(The meeting concluded at 8.32pm)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | MEMBERS HANDBOOK CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS |
| LEAD OFFICER | GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLOR TINA MCKENZIE-BOYLE |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR DECISION |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present members with the recommendations below from the Audit and Governance Committee from their meeting held on 30 July 2020. The proposed amendments to sections of the Members' Handbook are seeking Fire Authority approval.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **AGREE** the proposed amendments to sections of the Members Handbook listed in the report from Appendix A – F;
- 2.2 **AGREE** to include the Complaints Procedure as part of the Handbook; and
- 2.3 **AGREE** the removal of Access to information document from the Handbook, due to Members Access to documents are covered in the Standing Orders (Appendix D).
- 2.4 **AGREE** all references to “Chief Fire Officer” in its constitutional documents are changed to “Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive”.

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 In January 2020, Internal Auditors gave the Authority substantial assurance on Risk Management and Governance. The review of the Handbook addresses the two low priorities auditors identified in their key findings in relation to Fire Authority and its Committees Terms of Reference. These findings suggested a management action to insert the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the first meeting of the year and to include a review process in the documents.
- 3.2 The Fire Authority approved an updated Members Handbook; which included Scheme of Delegation, Constitution, Standing Orders and Terms of Reference at its meeting on 28 June 2017, (minute ref 16).
- 3.3 All sections of the Handbook have been reviewed and transferred on to new Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) branding on the website. This report recommends amendments to the following sections; Fire Authority and Committees Terms of Reference, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct. This report is also seeking the Committee to include the Complaints Procedure as part of the Handbook.
- 3.4 In addition, the report is seeking the removal of the Access to Information Procedural Rules due to Members access to documents is sufficiently covered in the Standing Orders (Appendix D).
- 3.5 Some of the recommended amendments are made in line with RBFRS People Strategy 2018-2021, and the Key Principles of the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) People Strategy namely clarity on the decision-making levels, accountability and processes without unnecessary hierarchy. The suggested amendments aim to make the document more inclusive and improve the overall accessibility in line with equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 3.6 Recommendation 2.5 derives from a decision taken by the Management Committee at its 21 July 2020 meeting in connection with Leadership Succession Planning. This was to ensure that the Authority has the opportunity to consider the widest pool of potential candidates, and for the selection process to be designed to enable applications for either a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) or a 'non-operational' Chief Executive (CEX) role.
- 3.7 A review of Financial and Contract Regulations will be brought to this meeting later in the agenda.
- 3.8 Outlined in the list below is a summary of the changes made to relevant sections of the Handbook:
- 3.8.1 **Appendices A to C** – Fire Authority and Committees Terms of Reference include the two low priorities from Internal Auditors key findings outlined in 3.1.

- 3.8.2 **Appendix A** – Fire Authority Terms of Reference – Amended policy direction documents presented to the Fire Authority for approval by removing Community Safety Plan due to the Corporate Plan and IRMP documents encompasses community safety across Berkshire. The removal of Statement of Assurance (which is approved by Audit and Governance Committee). Removal of Strategic Asset Management Plan and insertion of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) and the inclusion of the Reserve Strategy.
- 3.8.3 **Appendix B** – Management Committee Terms of Reference – CO19 changed to include Chief Executive and all other Principal Officers or Directors.
- 3.8.4 **Appendix D** – Standing Orders –SO19 (Petitions) has been updated to reflect petitions may only be made at Fire Authority meetings and not Committee meetings. Review process included in SO123 and SO125 included ‘electronic’ copy.
- 3.8.5 **Appendix E** – Code of Conduct – At paragraph 2.2, it is proposed a hyperlink is attached to reference Member / Officer Protocol and a hyperlink to paragraph 2.5 on *How to Make a Complaint against a Fire Authority Member* (previously this information was not linked to the Code of Conduct document).
- 3.8.6 **Appendix F** – How to Make a Complaint against a Fire Authority Member – suggestion to include this document as part of the Members’ Handbook. This document is currently available on the website and recommendation to include as part of Handbook for ease of reference.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 All sections of the Members Handbook support the Fire Authority’s Strategic Commitments, as set out in the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019-2023.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Financial considerations have been outlined in the current Financial and Contract Regulations.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed Appendices A-E will have legal implications but these have been assessed and are deemed applicable.

Agenda Item 12

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Handbook has been updated in line with RBFRS People Strategy 2018-2021 and the Key Principles of the National Fire Chief Council's (NFCC) People Strategy.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Subject to Fire Authority approval the proposed changes would mitigate the risk of not being legally compliant and current.

8. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Not applicable.

9. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer was consulted during the preparation of the report.
- 10.2 Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted during the preparation of the report.
- 10.3 Monitoring Officer was consulted during the preparation of this report.
- 10.4 Head of Corporate Services was consulted during the preparation of this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Scheme of Delegation Constitution Updates, Fire Authority meeting 28 June 2017.](#)
- 11.2 Leadership Succession Planning, Agenda Item 9, Tuesday 21 July 2020 Management Committee.
- 11.3 [RBFRS People Strategy 2018-2021](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Fire Authority Terms of Reference
- 12.2 Appendix B – Management Committee Terms of Reference
- 12.3 Appendix C – Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

12.4 Appendix D – Standing Orders

12.5 Appendix E – Code of Conduct

12.3 Appendix F – How to Make a Complaint

12. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe

Democratic Support Lead

0118 938 4611

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FIRE AUTHORITY

Terms of Reference



FIRE AUTHORITY TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

- CO1. The Authority shall have 20 Members and the quorum of a meeting of the Authority shall be 7¹ members.
- CO2. The appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be the first item of business at the initial meeting of the Municipal Year.

Functions of the Fire Authority

- CO3. The Authority shall exercise the following functions and responsibilities:
- a) To approve the Authority's Standing Orders; Scheme of Delegation to Officers; Contract Procedure Rules; Financial Regulations; and Terms of Reference for its Standing Committees including deciding upon their political composition and making appointments to them;
 - b) To appoint the Authority's Standing Committees, Lead Members and Member Champions in the following areas of responsibility:
 - i) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member
 - ii) Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Member
 - iii) Strategic Assets Lead Member
 - iv) Collaboration Lead Member
 - v) Community Safety Champion
 - vi) Safety, Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Champion
 - vii) Organisational Development Champion
 - c) To approve a balanced revenue budget and adopt a Medium Term Financial plan for the Authority;
 - d) To approve the Authority's Precept;
 - e) To approve the Strategic Asset Investment Framework;
 - f) To approve the Reserve Strategy;
 - g) To approve the Authority's level of borrowing;
 - h) To approve the Prudential Indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code;

¹ See SI: minimum of a third or such number as the Authority agrees. Therefore see SO13. Sept 2015

- i) To approve the Treasury Investment Strategy;
 - j) To appoint and revoke the appointment of any member or individual to:
 - i) Any office other than an office in which he or she is employed by the Authority; and
 - ii) Any other outside body, organisation or a joint committee of two or more authorities;
 - g) To approve any proposed remuneration for any post in excess of £100,000 per year.
 - h) To approve the terms of appointment or dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive, Deputy to the Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer;
 - i) To approve the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members on recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee;
 - j) To approve the name change of the fire and rescue service for the Authority's area from "Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service";
 - k) To approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement and Scheme of Members' Allowances;
 - l) To approve, amend and adopt the Authority's Policy Direction / Strategic Commitments including (but not exclusively) the following areas of policy: -
 - i) Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
 - ii) Annual Plan
- CO4. To approve all other matters which, by law, must be reserved to the Fire Authority.

Committees

Total Number of Committee Places

- CO5. The total number of Standing Committees shall be two - 1) the Audit and Governance Committee of [9] members and 2) the Management Committee of [11] members - whose membership shall be mutually exclusive.

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To be approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on 16 November 2020

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Appendix A

Terms of Reference

- CO6. All other matters not listed in the Terms of Reference are delegated to the committees except where there is a requirement to submit a recommendation to the Fire Authority or another Committee. A committee may delegate matters within its Terms of Reference to a subcommittee and / or an officer as it deems appropriate.
- CO7. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed no later than every four years.

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To be approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on 16 November 2020

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Membership

- CO8. The Management Committee shall have 11 Members and the quorum shall be 4 Members.ⁱ
- CO9. The appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be the first item of business at the initial meeting of the Municipal Year.

Functions of Management Committee

- CO10. To discharge all of the functions and responsibilities of the Authority except in so far as such function and/or responsibility or any other matter:
- (a) has been expressly reserved as a decision of the Fire Authority or is reserved by law to the Fire Authority, or
 - (b) falls within the terms of reference and delegation of any other Committee, or under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers of the Authority.
- CO11. To nominate member representatives to attend conferences on behalf of the Authority.
- CO12. To determine and oversee the priority programmes specified below, and to determine future priority programmes as and when required:
- (a) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
 - (b) Strategic Assets
 - (c) Budget
 - (d) Collaboration
- CO13. To approve contracts of the value of £1 million or more.
- CO14. To determine matters relating to pay and remuneration where required by collective agreements or legislation.
- CO15. To select on behalf of the Authority - the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, and deputy to the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, or equivalent, taking advice from suitable advisers and to make recommendations to the Authority as to the terms of appointment or dismissal.
- CO16. To consider and make recommendations to the Authority in respect of the appointment of a statutory finance officer and a statutory monitoring officer.

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CO17. To act as the Employers' Side of a negotiating and consultation forum for all matters relating to the employment contracts of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, deputy to the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, or equivalent; and where relevant, employees contracted to "Gold Book" terms and conditions in whole or in part.

CO18. To hear appeals if required to do so in accordance with the Authority's Policies.

CO19. To determine policies, codes or guidance relating to grievance, disciplinary, conduct, capability, dismissals and appeals relating to Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and all other Principal Officers or Directors.

Terms of Reference

CO20. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Authority at least every four years.

ⁱ See SO113

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference



Agenda Item 12

Appendix C

1. To consider the proposed amendments to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's (RBF) Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) Contract with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (RBFRA) for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23.

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To be approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on 16 November 2020

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Membership

- CO21. The Audit and Governance Committee shall have 9 Members and the quorum shall be 3 Members.¹
- CO22. The appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be the first item of business at the initial meeting of the Municipal Year.

Audit Activity

- CO23. To oversee all Audit issues on behalf of the Authority, in accordance with guidance issued from time to time by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.
- CO24. To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal and external audit services and commission services from them.

To consider:

- (a) Reports and summaries from the Internal Auditors, including but not limited to the Annual Assurance Report and opinion, audit activity (actual and proposed) and any information regarding agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;
- (b) Reports and summaries from the External Auditor, including but not limited to the Annual Audit Letter and opinion, external audit activity (actual and proposed) and any information regarding agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;

Governance and Risk Management Framework

- CO25. To maintain an overview of the effectiveness of the Authority's constitutional arrangements in order to ensure compliance with best practice with other national published standards, regulations and controls as well as its own existing arrangements and make recommendations for improvement; and to agree the internal and external audit plans.
- CO26. To approve and monitor the effectiveness and outcomes of the Authority's policies on:
- (a) Whistle blowing;
 - (b) Anti-Money Laundering,
 - (c) Anti-fraud and Anti-corruption;

¹ See SO113

Agenda Item 12

Appendix C

- (d) external Complaints Procedure and
 - (e) employee Grievance, Bullying and Harassment, and Discipline (except where reserved to the Management Committee).
- CO27. To receive reports referred to it from the Authority's local pension board.
- CO28. To consider reports concerning the register of corporate risks and the corporate business continuity planning framework and seek assurance of appropriate management action.
- CO29. To monitor the governance arrangements of partnerships and shared services and to receive and review any Partnership Register held by the Authority.
- CO30. To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Fire Officer, or other Principal Officer or appointed officer of the Authority or the Management Committee.

Members Code of Conduct

- CO31. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct and assist Members of the Authority and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- CO34. To recommend the Authority on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- CO32. To advise, train or arrange to train Members both appointed and co-opted on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- CO33. To deal with cases referred by the Monitoring Officer relating to individuals to whom the Members' Code of Conduct applies.

Accounts

- CO34. To approve the Statement of Accounts and Authority's Annual Governance Statement.
- CO35. To consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Authority.

Scrutiny and Performance Review Responsibilities

- CO36. To investigate any matters the Committee consider relevant to their work area, and to make recommendations to the Authority or to the Management Committee as it sees fit.
- CO37. To assess the performance of the Authority against any agreed organisational targets and to report on areas of strong / weak performance making recommendations where necessary to the Fire Authority.

NOVEMBER 2020

To be approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority on 16 November 2020

CO38. To recommend the Statement of Assurance for Fire Authority approval.

Employees

CO39. To approve the adoption or revision of any policies, codes or guidance:

- (a) regulating working relationships between members and co-opted members of the Authority and the employees of the Authority (the Member/Officer Protocol);
- (b) governing the conduct of employees of the Authority (Employee Code of Conduct).

Terms of Reference

CO40. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Authority at least every four years.

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Appendix C

STANDING ORDERS OF ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



STANDING ORDERS

Interpretation

SO1. In these Standing Orders:

- a) the day of issue and the day of delivery of an agenda, or day of the receipt of a written notice of a question, and the day of the meeting are excluded from the calculation of "clear days";
- b) the day of issue and the day of delivery of an agenda and the day of the meeting, Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Day, Good Friday, statutory bank holidays and a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning are excluded from the calculation of "clear working days";
- c) "Combined Area" means the Fire Authority area comprising the areas of Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Reading Borough Council, the Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

Ordinary Meetings

- SO2. Ordinary meetings shall be held at such places and times as the Authority may determine, at least once per quarter, in accordance with a timetable agreed at the final Meeting of the Municipal Year.
- SO3. The Authority shall hold its Annual Meeting at a place and time and on a day in May or June which it will decide at or before its last meeting prior to the Annual Meeting.

Extraordinary Meetings

- SO4. An Extraordinary Meeting of the Authority may be called at any time by the Chairman of the Authority.
- SO5. If the Chairman refuses to call an Extraordinary Meeting after receiving a requisition for that purpose, signed by six Members of the Authority or if, without so refusing, the Chairman does not call an Extraordinary Meeting

within seven days after receiving the requisition then any six Members of the Authority, on that refusal or on the expiration of those seven days, as the case may be, the Members in question may forthwith call an Extraordinary Meeting of the Authority.

Timing of Meetings

SO6. Meetings shall be held at 6.30pm, unless otherwise agreed.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

SO7. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed at the Annual meeting of the Authority.

SO8. The first item of business on the agenda for the Annual Meeting shall be the appointment of a Chairman for the coming year.

SO9. If the Chairman is absent from a meeting of the Authority, the Vice-Chairman shall preside. If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are absent, another Member chosen by the Members present shall preside.

SO10. If the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman becomes vacant at any time, the Authority shall elect from its Members a person to replace the office holder. Such an election to replace the Chairman shall take place no later than the next ordinary meeting of the Authority after the office has become vacant.

Agendas and Reports

SO11. At least five clear [working] days before any meeting of the Authority, a summons to attend the meeting, specifying the business to be transacted thereat and signed by the Monitoring Officer shall be left at or sent by post to the usual place of residence of every Member of the Authority or to such address (including email address) as a Member may notify for that purpose to the Monitoring Officer.

Attendance Book

SO12. Every Member of the Authority attending a meeting of the Authority shall sign his/her name in the attendance book or sheet provided for that purpose.

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Appendix D

Quorum

- SO13. The quorum at a meeting of the Authority shall be 7 Members.
- SO14. If, during any meeting of the Authority, the Chairman, after counting the number of Members present, declares that there is not a quorum present, the meeting shall stand adjourned. The consideration of any business not transacted shall be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chairman at the time the meeting is adjourned, or, if such a time is not fixed, to the next ordinary meeting of the Authority.

Order of Business

- SO15. Subject to what follows, the order of business at every meeting of the Authority will be:
- a) to choose a person to preside if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are absent;
 - b) to deal with any item required by statute to be done before any other item;
 - c) to receive any apologies for absence and any changes in Membership since the last meeting of the Authority.
 - d) to approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the last meeting of the Authority;
 - e) to receive petitions and questions from the public;
 - f) to receive such communications as the Chairman may desire to lay before the Authority;
 - g) to dispose of business (if any) remaining from a previous meeting;
 - h) to receive and consider the recommendations of Committees;
 - i) to answer questions by Members asked under Standing Order SO30;
 - j) to consider Motions under Standing Order SO43 in the order received;
 - k) other business, if any, specified in the Agenda; and
 - l) to note minutes of Committees.

- SO16. The order of business (with the exception of items (a), (b) (c) and (d)) may be altered by the Chairman of the Authority, or by a resolution following a motion moved, seconded and put to the meeting without debate.

Minutes

- SO17. The minutes of the business considered and decisions reached at each meeting of the Authority shall be printed and a copy sent to each Member with or prior to the Agenda to attend the next meeting of the Authority.
- SO18. When the minutes of a previous meeting come before the Authority, the Authority shall firstly determine any questions raised as to their accuracy and when approved the Chairman shall sign the minutes. No other motion or discussion shall take place upon the minutes, except that a Member may request information as to progress or further development of any matter referred to in the minutes.

Petitions

- SO19. Any petition to be submitted to the Authority must be in writing and signed by at least 25 local government electors of the Combined Area who shall also state their addresses. Any Petition must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer not less than seven clear working days before the meeting at which it is first to be presented. The Monitoring Officer shall date and number each petition on receipt of it and enter it in a book which anyone may inspect.
- SO20. No petition shall relate to any matter of a personal nature.
- SO21. The Monitoring Officer, upon receiving a petition shall present the same, to the next meeting of Authority.
- SO22. Any local government elector of the Combined Area who is a signatory to a petition may be present at the Authority meeting and may speak upon the petition for not more than five minutes, which period of time may be extended with the consent of the Authority. Only one elector may speak upon any petition. No Member of the Authority shall be permitted to speak under this Standing Order.
- SO23. No petition shall be accepted if a petition with the same or similar object has been heard by the Authority, within a period of six months prior to the receipt by the Monitoring Officer of the petition.

Agenda Item 12

Appendix D

SO24. A petition, once received may be acted upon by the Authority.

Questions from the Public

- SO25. At any ordinary meeting of the Authority, any registered local government elector within the Combined Area and any individual acting on behalf of a trade union recognised by the Authority, may ask one question relating to the business of the Authority, **provided that written notice has been given of the question to the Monitoring Officer no later than 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting of the Authority** at which the question is to be asked.
- SO26. The Monitoring Officer may, having consulted the questioner, reword any question received before circulation to Members of the Authority to bring it into proper order or delete improper or unbecoming language.
- SO27. Questions under SO25 shall be taken by the Chairman in the order in which they are received by the Monitoring Officer. Questions shall be asked and answered without discussion. The Chairman may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer it on his/her behalf.
- SO28. A person asking a question may ask one supplementary question arising directly from the answer given, provided that it is relevant to the original question and does not introduce any new subject matter.
- SO29. The time allowed for written and supplementary public questions shall not exceed 25 minutes. Questions not answered within that period shall be the subject of a written reply.

Written Questions by Members

- SO30. If the Member has given the notice required by SO31 he/she may ask up to three questions at any one meeting on any of the functions of the Authority or any business relating to a joint committee or body to which the Authority appoints representatives.
- SO31. A Member wishing to ask a question under SO30 shall send a signed copy of the question to be asked to the Monitoring Officer via committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk, **to be received no later than 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting of the Authority** at which the question is to be asked.

- SO32. In cases of urgency as determined by the Chairman, Members may submit questions without complying with the timetable specified in the preceding subsection.
- SO33. Every question asked under SO30 shall be put when the item "Questions" is reached on the agenda.
- SO34. No such question shall be the subject of a speech or motion.
- SO35. One supplementary question may be asked by the questioner providing it introduces no new matter, or, if the questioner does not exercise this right, another Member of the Authority.
- SO36. The time allocated to questions shall not exceed thirty minutes.
- SO37. Questions shall be taken in the order in which they are received by the Monitoring Officer and questions not answered within the allocated time shall be the subject of a written reply within seven days to all members.
- SO38. A Member submitting a question may indicate if he/she wishes the question to be the subject of a written reply to be circulated to all Members of the Authority before the meeting. If the Chairman of the Authority is able to and chooses to accede to such request, the question and answer shall be circulated to all Members and published.
- SO39. Where a Member is unable through absence to put a question under SO30 when it is reached on the agenda, such question shall be deemed to have been put and shall thereupon be answered if the Member has indicated his/her willingness for it to be so put in the notice given in accordance with SO31.
- SO40. Where the reply to any question cannot conveniently be given orally, the answer shall be circulated to Members of the Authority at the outset of the meeting.
- SO41. A question may be answered by the Chairman, the Chairman of a committee or by such other Member or Members as the Chairman of the meeting may decide.
- SO42. No question shall be asked at any meeting summoned by the Chairman or by the requisition of members under Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 unless it is relevant to the business for which such a meeting is called. The Chairman shall decide whether the question is relevant.

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Appendix D

Motions and Amendments without notice

- SO43. A Member may move without notice any of the following Motions and amendments:
- a) To appoint a Chairman for that meeting or the remainder of the Meeting.
 - b) Motions relating to the accuracy of the Minutes.
 - c) To vary the order of the Agenda.
 - d) That a matter be referred or referred back to a Committee
 - e) To give leave to withdraw or amend Motion.
 - f) To extend the time limit for speeches.
 - g) To move on to the next item on the Agenda.
 - h) To put the question immediately to the vote.
 - i) To adjourn the debate.
 - j) To adjourn the meeting.
 - k) To suspend one or more Standing Orders.
 - l) To exclude the public from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972
 - m) Not to hear a Member further.
 - n) By the Chairman to require a Member to leave the meeting.
 - o) To give any consent required by these Standing Orders.

Notices of Motion

- SO44. A Motion not listed in SO43 must be given in writing to the Monitoring Officer at least seven clear working days before the Authority meeting, and be signed by the Member(s) giving the notice.
- SO45. Motions must relate to matters where the Authority has powers or duties or which affect the Combined Area.
- SO46. The Monitoring Officer shall:

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- a) date and number each Notice of Motion on receipt of it and enter it in a book which anyone may inspect; and
 - b) set out in the Agenda for the Authority meeting all Motions which comply with the requirements of SO44 and SO45 of these Standing Orders in the order they have been received, unless the Member has in writing either withdrawn it or stated a wish to move it at a later meeting.
- SO47. The Authority will treat as withdrawn any Motion not moved at the meeting at which it appears upon the Agenda, unless its postponement is agreed.
- SO48. Any Motion the subject matter of which comes within the province of any Committee(s) may:
- a) be referred without discussion to such Committee(s); or
 - b) be referred without discussion to such other Committee(s) as the Authority may decide; or
 - c) be dealt with at the meeting at which it is moved if the Authority considers that it would be convenient to do so.
- SO49. The Member who has moved the Motion must be notified by the Monitoring Officer of the meeting(s) of the Committee(s) which it has been referred, and has the right to attend the meeting(s) and to explain the Motion.
- SO50. If it appears to the Monitoring Officer that a motion of which he/ she has received notice is not in order, or is framed in improper or unbecoming language, he shall take the direction of the Chairman as to whether and in what form it shall be placed on the agenda, and the decision of the Chairman, after consultation if possible with the giver of the notice, shall be final.
- SO51. If a Motion, notice of which has been given in the Authority agenda, be not moved by the Member who has given notice thereof, such Motion may, with the consent of the Authority given by a show of hands without debate, be moved by some other Member, otherwise it shall be deemed to have been withdrawn and shall not be moved without fresh notice.
- SO52. No Motion to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding six months, and no motions or amendments to the same effect as one which has been rejected within the preceding six months, shall be proposed unless the notice thereof bears the name of at least seven Members of the Authority. When any such motion or amendment has been disposed of

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by the Authority, it shall not be open to any Member to propose a similar motion within a further period of six months. This SO52 shall not apply to motions moved in pursuance of a recommendation of a Committee.

Committee Recommendations and Minutes

- SO53. Any Member of the Authority may ask the Chairman of a Committee any question upon an item in the recommendations or Minutes of that Committee then before the Authority, if the question is put before the consideration of these items by the Authority has been concluded.
- SO54. The Chairman concerned may at any time nominate his/her Vice Chairman or any other Member with special responsibility to answer any such question.
- SO55. Whenever a Committee, in exercise of power delegated to it, resolves to take action or to take no action on any matter, there shall be no debate on this decision except that:
- a) any Member may comment on the decision;
 - b) if a decision shall state no action, a motion may be put to ask the Committee to reconsider its decision;
 - c) a motion may be put to express the Authority's disapproval of the action taken.

Matters to be included in Agendas

- SO56. Members' requests for items to be included on the agenda for a meeting of the Authority shall be in writing and received by the Monitoring Officer at least ten clear days before the next ordinary meeting of the Authority, failing which they shall not be so included without the express approval of the Chairman of the Authority.

Rules of Debate for Authority Meetings

- SO57. Whenever the Chairman signals during a debate, a Member then speaking and all Members except the Chairman shall be silent.
- SO58. A Member seeking to speak shall so indicate by raising his/her hand and shall speak when called to do so by the Chairman.
- SO59. A Member, when speaking, shall address the Chairman.

- SO60. A Member shall direct his/her speech strictly to the subject matter under discussion.
- SO61. Unless with the consent of the Authority, to be ascertained by a show of hands without debate, no Member shall speak for more than five minutes on the question under discussion with the exception of the mover of the original motion giving rise thereto, who in moving his/her proposition shall not, save with the like consent, speak for more than ten minutes.
- SO62. Any extra time agreed to by the Authority shall be limited to one period of five minutes only.
- SO63. SO61 shall not apply to a speech by the Member moving the Budget, for the ensuing year, but shall apply to his/her reply.
- SO64. No motion or amendment shall be spoken upon except by the mover until it has been seconded.
- SO65. Any Member may formally second a motion or an amendment, in which case he may speak later in the debate.
- SO66. A Member shall not (except in the exercise of his/her right to reply) speak more than once on the same motion or amendment except to a point of order, or by way of personal explanation. The mover of an amendment shall have no right of reply to the debate on his/her amendment.
- SO67. Any amendment to a motion shall be either:
- a) to refer a subject of debate to a Committee for consideration or re-consideration;
 - b) to leave out words;
 - c) to leave out words and insert or add others;
 - d) to insert or add words;
- but such omission, insertion or addition of words shall not have the effect of negating the motion before the Authority.
- SO68. When an amendment is moved and seconded, no other amendment shall be taken into consideration until the first has been disposed of, provided that the Chairman may permit 2 or more amendments to be considered together (but not voted upon), if, in his/her opinion, this course will facilitate the proper conduct of the Authority's business.

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- SO69. If an amendment be carried, it shall displace the original motion and become itself the substantive motion, upon which any further amendment may be moved, provided such further amendment is not inconsistent with the alterations of the original motion made by the amendment which has been carried, and provided that any further amendment is not a direct negative of the motion.
- SO70. A Member may, with the consent of the Authority, to be ascertained by a show of hands without debate, alter an original motion which he has moved, or proposes to move, provided that the alteration be such as could be moved as an amendment under this Standing Order.
- SO71. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the mover with the consent of a seconder and of the Authority, to be ascertained by a show of hands without debate, and no Member may speak upon it after the mover has asked permission for its withdrawal; unless such permission shall have been refused.
- SO72. The mover of a motion, or of an amendment which has become the substantive motion, shall have a right of reply. After reply, the motion shall be put from the chair without further debate. The mover of an original motion, or of an amendment which has become a substantive motion, shall not introduce new matter in his/her reply.
- SO73. A Member of the Authority, other than the mover or seconder of a motion or amendment before the Authority, may at any time formally move "that the Authority proceed to the other business of the day" on the formal seconding of which the Chairman shall immediately put the same to the Authority without speech or debate, and if carried by show of hands, the subject in debate shall be considered as disposed of.
- SO74. It shall be competent for a Member of the Authority, other than the mover or seconder of a motion or amendment before the Authority, at any time to move formally "that the question be now put", and upon being formally seconded, it shall be put forthwith without speech or debate. Where an amendment is under discussion, the motion shall apply only to that amendment. If the motion be carried, then, if the question before the Authority be the original motion or a first amendment, the Chairman shall call upon the mover of the original motion to reply before putting the question.
- SO75. Upon the motion for an adjournment, all the speakers shall limit their observations to the question of adjournment. After a motion for adjournment of a debate, or the adjournment of the Authority has been rejected, another motion for the same or the like purpose shall not be

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moved within thirty minutes, except by consent of the Authority, to be ascertained by show of hands without debate. On resuming an adjournment debate, the Member who moved the adjournment shall be entitled to speak first.

SO76. The Chairman may at any time upon being satisfied that any motion or other matter has been fully debated by the Authority require that "the question be now put" but before the question be put, the mover of the original motion shall be entitled to exercise his/her right of reply.

SO77. The ruling of the Chairman, on the advice of the Monitoring Officer, as to the construction or application of these Standing Orders, or as to proceedings of the Authority, shall not be challenged at any meeting of the Authority.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION AND POINTS OF ORDER

SO78. A personal explanation shall be confined to some material part of an earlier speech by the Member and on which a misunderstanding has occurred.

SO79. A point of order is a request by a Member to the Chairman of the Authority to rule on an alleged irregularity in the constitution or procedure in the meeting.

SO80. A Member may rise on a personal explanation or a point of order at any time and is entitled immediately to address the Chairman of the Authority on the matter; but the Member who raises a point of order must specify immediately a Standing Order or statutory provision, and say how it has been broken or infringed and in either case the Member's speech must be confined to the personal explanation or point of order.

SO81. The ruling of the Chairman of the Authority on the advice of the Monitoring Officer on a personal explanation or point of order is not open to discussion.

ORDER AT AUTHORITY MEETINGS

SO82. If at a meeting any Member of the Authority, in the opinion of the Chairman, notified to the Authority, misconducts his/her self by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chairman, or by willfully obstructing the business of the Authority, the Chairman, or any other Member, may formally move "that the Member named be not further heard" and the motion, upon being formally seconded, shall be put and determined without speech or debate.

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- SO83. If the Member named continues his/her misconduct after a motion under the foregoing paragraph has been carried, the Chairman shall either:
- a) move "that the Member named do leave the meeting" (in which case, the motion shall be put and determined without seconding or discussion); or
 - b) adjourn the meeting of the Authority for such a period as his/her discretion shall consider expedient.
- SO84. In the event of general disturbance which, in the opinion of the Chairman, renders the due and orderly dispatch of business impossible, the Chairman in addition to any other power vested in him/her may, without discussion, adjourn the meeting of the Authority for such period as in his/her discretion shall consider expedient.
- SO85. The Chairman may call a Member to order for irrelevance, repetition, imputation of dishonourable conduct or improper remarks, unseemly language, offensive gestures or any breach of order and may direct a Member, if speaking to discontinue his/her speech and any Member of the Authority may rise to call the attention of the Chairman to any of the said matters during the speech of a Member.
- SO86. If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Chairman may warn him/her. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman may order his/her removal from the meeting room.

VOTING

- SO87. The mode of voting at meetings of the Authority shall be by show of hands. Members must be seated when the vote is taken
- SO88. Where immediately after a vote is taken at a meeting:
- (a) any Member may require that his/her vote cast for or against the question or whether he/she abstained from voting is recorded in the Minutes;
 - (b) any Member of the Authority may require, the number of those voting on any question shall be recorded and entered in the Minutes of the Meeting
 - (c) any Member, supported by two other Members, so requires, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show how each Member

present, and voting, gave his/her vote

- (d) which is a budget decision meeting of the Authority there shall be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the Members who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting

SO89. In the case of equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

INTEREST OF MEMBERS IN CONTRACTS AND OTHER MATTERS

SO90. A Member who has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

- a) if the interest has not been registered, shall disclose the interest ; and
- b) shall not participate in discussion of the matter, or vote on the matter and shall leave the Chamber/room when the matter is being considered unless he or she has been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer

SO91. Members shall have regard to the provisions of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct* when taking decisions at meetings of the Fire Authority and its Committees. (* Code of Conduct hyperlinked)

INTEREST OF OFFICERS IN CONTRACTS

SO92. If any officer of the Authority has an interest, direct or indirect, within the meaning of Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 in any contract, proposed contract or other matter under consideration by the Authority, he/she shall withdraw from the meeting, unless the contract, proposed contract or other matter is under consideration by the Authority as part of the Minutes of a Committee or Sub-Committee and is not itself the subject of debate.

CANVASSING OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY MEMBERS

SO93. Canvassing of Members of the Authority directly or indirectly, for any staff appointment under the Authority shall disqualify the candidate concerned for that appointment. The purport of this paragraph shall be brought to the attention of applicants.

SO94. A Member of the Authority shall not solicit for or against any person for any staff appointment under the Authority, but this shall not preclude a Member from giving a written testimonial of a candidate's character for submission to the Authority with an application for appointment.

RELATIVES OF MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

- SO95. A candidate for any appointment under the Authority who knows that he/she is related to any Member or senior officer of the Authority shall, when making application, disclose that relationship. A candidate who fails to disclose such a relationship shall be disqualified for the appointment and if appointed, shall be liable to dismissal without notice. Every Member and senior officer of the Authority shall disclose to the Monitoring Officer any relationship known to him to exist between himself and any person who he knows is a candidate for an appointment under the Authority.
The Monitoring Officer shall report to the Authority, or to the appropriate Committee, Sub-Committee or person having power to make the appointment, any such disclosure.
- SO96. SO95 shall be drawn to the attention of applicants and for the purpose of this, SO95 "senior officer" means the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Support Services and Chief Finance Officer or equivalent.
- SO97. In all other cases declarations shall be made to the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Fire Officer.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

- SO98. Where the Authority proposes to appoint a Chief Fire Officer, the Monitoring Officer shall:
- a) draw up a statement specifying:
 - i) the duties of the officer concerned; and
 - ii) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed.
 - iii) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it, and
 - iv) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph
 - b) above to be sent to any person on request.
- SO99. Where a post has been advertised as provided in SO98 the Authority shall:

- a) interview all qualified applicants for the post; or
- b) select a short list of such qualified applicants and interview those included on the short list.

SO100. Where no qualified person has applied, the Monitoring Officer shall make further arrangements for the post to be advertised in accordance with this Standing Order.

MEMBERS' ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

SO101. On application to the Monitoring Officer and subject to the remaining paragraphs of this Standing Order, a Member of the Authority may, for the purposes of his/her duty as such a Member but not otherwise, inspect any document which has been considered by the Authority or by a Committee or Sub-Committee and, if copies are available, shall on request be supplied for the like purposes with a copy of such a document.

SO102. No Member may knowingly call for the inspection nor call for any copy of any document relating to a matter in which he/she is professionally interested or in which he/she has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, and whether disclosed or not, within the meaning of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

SO103. The Monitoring Officer may decline to allow inspection of any document which has been or is to be considered by a Committee or Sub-Committee which in his/her opinion discloses exempt information of a description for the time being falling within paragraphs 1 to 7, of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

SO104. Any document or information contained within a document which is inspected by or copied to a Member of the Authority shall remain subject to the same restrictions on its disclosure as existed before the inspection or copying. In particular, any confidential information within the meaning of Section 100A(3) or exempt information within the meaning of Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 remains confidential or exempt, as the case may be.

INSPECTION OF LANDS, PREMISES etc

SO105. No Member of the Authority shall issue any order respecting any works which are being carried out by or on behalf of the Authority, nor claim by virtue of their membership of the Authority any right to inspect or to enter

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upon any Fire Stations land or premises which the Authority has the power or duty to enter or which are owned by the Authority.

EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS

SO106. No group of Members or individual Member, other than a duly constituted committee or sub-committee acting in exercise of its delegated powers where applicable and in accordance with its terms of reference, shall be entitled to take any action on behalf of the Authority or to issue any instruction to an officer of the Authority to take executive action.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

SO107. The Authority shall every year at the Annual Meeting decide by resolution which Committees it intends to establish as "Standing Committees", and shall appoint Members to each Standing Committee.

SO108. Any standing committee may appoint sub committees to discharge any of its functions, subject to the approval of the Authority as to the particular functions to be discharged.

SO109. The term of office of each Committee (or Sub-Committee) Member shall expire at the Annual Meeting next after their appointment, or at such earlier time as the Authority shall determine, or by resignation.

SO110. Where a Member is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee, or a Sub-Committee, the Member, or representative of that Member's political group may nominate another Member of the Authority to attend as their substitute, provided the Monitoring Officer is given notice of the proposed change whereupon the provisions of SO [119] and SO[120] shall apply.

SO111. The quorum of the Management Committee shall be 4 and the quorum of the Audit and Governance Committee shall be 3. The quorum for additional Committees or Sub-Committee shall be 3 Members of the Committee or Sub-Committee concerned or such greater number of Members as the Authority may determine.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

SO112. The Monitoring Officer shall summon any Committee or Sub-Committee or group of Members appointed by a Committee or Sub-Committee to consider or deal with a specific matter at the time and date previously resolved, or on request of the Chairman, or without request to deal with business of urgency which, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer necessitates a meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee.

PROCEDURE AT COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

SO113. The Standing Orders of the Authority shall apply to Committee and Sub-Committee meetings, except SO2 - SO10; SO13- SO42 and SO44-SO52.

RESIGNATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

SO114. Any Member of a Committee may resign his/her membership of a Committee, Sub-Committee or other body by notice in writing signed by him and delivered to the Monitoring Officer, which shall become effective immediately.

CONFIDENTIALITY

SO115. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972 all Authority, Committee and Sub-Committee reports and documents marked as "Confidential" shall be treated as confidential at all times. In relation to reports and documents marked "Exempt" they shall be treated as confidential until they become public in the ordinary course of the Authority's business and the following classification shall be used for reports to the Authority or its Committees and Sub-Committees:

- a) "CONFIDENTIAL - Not for publication at any time by virtue of Section 100A(2) of the Local Government Act 1972" - Reports dealing with information supplied by a Government Department on condition that it is kept confidential or where the disclosure of information in the report is prohibited by statute or court order.
- b) "EXEMPT - Not for publication unless authorised by the Authority/Committee/Sub-Committee. This/her report contains exempt information by virtue of paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972" - Reports which the Proper Officer considers contain exempt information and are likely to be considered in private.

(NOTE: The Authority, Committee or Sub-Committee may still resolve to deal with the report in public at the meeting itself)

THE SEAL AND EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

SO116. The Common Seal shall be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Monitoring Officer.

SO117. Any decision of the Authority, a Committee or Sub-Committee or Officer exercising delegated functions shall be deemed to authorise the affixing of

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the Common Seal to that document and the affixing of the Common Seal shall be attested by the Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer.

SO118. Where any document will be a necessary step in legal proceedings on behalf of the Authority, it shall be signed by the Monitoring Officer or such other officer as may be designated by him unless any enactment requires otherwise provided that the Authority or a Committee or Sub-Committee exercising delegated powers, if legally entitled, may authorise some other officer to execute any such document.

SUBSTITUTION

SO119. The nomination of a substitute given in accordance with SO110 shall be in writing specifying the Committee to which it relates and the period or periods of time for which the substitution shall apply, and shall be signed and sent by the substituted Member's political group representative for the purpose of the Authority, to the Monitoring Officer to the Authority. Upon receipt, the Monitoring Officer will amend the Members' Register accordingly.

SO120. A Member attending as substitute shall, at the commencement of the Meeting, identify the Member on whose behalf he attends, who shall then be excluded from participation in that Meeting.

SO121. A Member, attending as a substitute in the absence of the Member from any Meeting of the relevant Committee shall be entitled to attend, speak and vote at the Meeting (but not, in the case of the nominating Member being the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, to exercise the rights and functions of that office.

VARIATION OR REVOCATION OF STANDING ORDERS

SO122. These Standing Orders shall not be amended, added to or rescinded unless notice shall have first been given to the Members in the Authority Agenda and such notice shall state the terms and effect of any proposed variation or revocation of these Standing Orders.

SO123. The Authority will review the operation of these Standing Orders no later than every four years.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SO124. Except in respect of SO17 & SO18 (Minutes); SO87 to SO89 (Voting); and SO92 to SO97 (Staff /interests), any Member may, for any stated purpose, move the suspension of any Standing Order of the Authority and

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the motion, on being seconded, shall be put forthwith without speech or debate.

STANDING ORDERS TO BE SUPPLIED TO MEMBERS

SO125. The Monitoring Officer shall arrange for a printed or electronic copy of these Standing Orders to be provided to each Member of the Authority upon being first appointed a Member of the Authority.

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CODE OF CONDUCT



ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is intended to promote high standards of behaviour amongst Members and Co-opted Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority “RBFA” in pursuant to the Localism Act 2011.

2. Application

- 2.1 This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting as a Member or Co-opted Member of RBFA and you have a responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code. You are expected to:

- 2.2 Represent the community and work constructively with employees as outlined in the [Member /Officer Protocol](#) and partner organisations to ensure the area is a safer place to live, work and visit.

- 2.3 Behave in a manner which is underpinned by the following principles of public life, which should be borne in mind, when interpreting the meaning of the Code.

- Selflessness: act solely in terms of the public interest and not act in such a way as to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, family or friends.
- Integrity: not placing themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties
- Objectivity: make choices on merit, in carrying out public business, including when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals rewards and benefits
- Accountability: be accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

- Openness: be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take, and give reasons for decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest or the law clearly demands.
- Honesty: declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership: promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2.4 Should a complaint be made against you in your role as a Member or Co-opted Member of RBFA, it will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and its supporting Regulations.

2.5 If allegations are made against you they will be handled by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with Independent Persons appointed by RBFA in accordance with RBFA's adopted procedure. The procedure on How to make a Complaint about a Fire Authority Member is outlined [here](#).

2.6 Where the Authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following formal investigation, a decision notice will be published as soon as possible on its website.

3. General Obligations

3.1 When acting in your role as a member of RBFA:-

3.2 You must treat others with respect.

3.3 You must not:-

(a) do anything which may cause RBFA to be in breach of any duty not to discriminate contained in the Equality Act 2010;

(b) bully any person ;

(c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be –

(i) a complainant

(ii) a witness, or

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- (ii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a Member (including yourself) has failed to comply with his or her authority's Code of Conduct.
- (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for or on behalf of RBFA;
- (e) conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office as a Member or Co-opted Member of RBFA into disrepute;
- (f) use or attempt to use your position as a Member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.

4. Access to and Disclosure of Information

4.1 Do not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:-

- (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it
- (ii) you are required to do so by law
- (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person, or
- (iv) the disclosure is:-
 - (a) reasonable and in the public interest, and
 - (b) is made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of RBFA or its "professional advisers".

4.2 Do not prevent another person from accessing information if that person is entitled to do so by law.

5. Decision Making

5.1 When reaching decisions on any matter you must:-

- (a) have regard to any advice provided to you by the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer pursuant to their statutory duties and
- (b) give reasons for the decisions in accordance with any legal requirements or any additional requirements imposed by the Fire Authority.

6. Resources

6.1 When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of RBFA you must:-

- (a) act in accordance with RBFA's requirements, and
- (b) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes);

6.2 You must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986

6.3 You must not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member of RBFA for the advancement of your disclosable pecuniary interests.

7. Pecuniary Interests

7.1 By virtue of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 you must disclose and register disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) (or that a DPI is 'sensitive') as defined in the aforementioned legislation.

7.2 Within 28 days of becoming a Member you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which you have. Where you become a Member as a result of re-appointment the requirement to notify the Monitoring Officer only applies in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests not already notified.

7.3 If you are present at a meeting of RBFA, a Committee, Sub- Committee or Joint Committee, and you are aware that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered:-

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- (a) if the interest is not registered you must disclose the interest to the meeting and notify the Monitoring officer within 28 days;
- (b) you must not participate in discussion of the matter, or vote on the matter and you must leave the Chamber/room when the matter is being considered unless you have been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer

7.4 Failure to disclose such interests may result in criminal prosecution which upon conviction could result in a fine of up to £5,000 being imposed, and/or by disqualification for a period not exceeding five years, for being or becoming (by election or otherwise) a member or co-opted member of RBFA.

8. Sensitive Interests

8.1 If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest but you consider that disclosure of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation and the Monitoring Officer agrees with that assessment then instead of disclosing the interest you need only disclose that you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

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HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER



1. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT A FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBER

- 1.1 Your complaint needs to be made in writing. This can be done by one of the following:
- by letter to: The Monitoring Officer, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD
 - [by submitting an enquiry online](#)
 - by email, in which case the email should be clearly marked for the attention of the Monitoring Officer and it should be sent to committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk
- 1.2 Please send any documents that support your complaint with your letter or email.
- 1.3 If you have any questions about the complaints process, please contact the Monitoring Officer via e-mail to committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

2. WHO YOU CAN COMPLAIN ABOUT

- 2.1 You can complain about Members or Co-opted Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA). A full list of current Members is available on the [Fire Authority's](#) website.
- 2.2 Under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 the Fire Authority has appointed two Independent Persons to advise on allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct by Members.
- 2.3 Please note, we can only consider complaints about individual Members or Co-opted Members. We cannot consider complaints about the Fire Authority as a whole or about any people employed by it.
- 2.4 A complaint about a service provided by RBFRS is dealt with under a separate Complaints Policy and Procedure. If you would like to make a complaint about the service provided choose one of the following options:
- By telephone (0118 945 2888)
 - By email (reception@rbfrs.co.uk)
 - In writing (RBFRS, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD)
 - Online, click on [Contact Us](#) where you can download the Complaints Policy and Procedure, submit an enquiry online by selecting 'Complaint' in the drop box.

3. WHAT YOU CAN COMPLAIN ABOUT?

- 3.1 You can complain about a Member breaking any part of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members. This Code of Conduct was adopted pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 and its duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members of the Fire Authority. Click on the link for a copy of the [Code of Conduct](#).

What we cannot investigate

- 3.2 There are some complaints we cannot investigate, including:-
- Complaints where a Member is not named;
 - Complaints that are not in writing (letter or email);
 - Incidents or actions that are not covered by the Code of Conduct;
 - Incidents that are about a fault in the way the Fire Authority has or has not done something. Matters relating to the policies or performance of the authority generally. This is known as maladministration and may be a matter for the Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk);
 - Complaints about employees;
 - Incidents that happened before a Member was appointed or co-opted

Evidence

- 3.3 If you believe a Member has breached the Code of Conduct for Members it would be useful to attach any evidence that you feel is relevant to your complaint. For example, details of any witnesses or details of any dates/times of any incidents etc. You may send accompanying documents if you wish.

4. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 4.1 In the interests of fairness and natural justice, we believe Members who are complained about have a right to know who has made the complaint. We also believe that they have a right to be provided with a summary of the complaint.
- 4.2 We are unlikely therefore to withhold your identity or the details of your complaint unless there is a good reason.
- 4.3 Please note that requests for confidentiality or requests for suppression of complaint details will not automatically be granted. A decision on your request will be made in consultation with the Independent Person and Monitoring Officer who will carry out the initial assessment of your complaint. We will then contact you with the decision.

5. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR COMPLAINT

Initial Assessment

- 5.1 When we receive your complaint, we will write to you to let you know that we have received it. The Monitoring Officer will consult with the Independent Person and will make an initial assessment of your complaint within an average of **20 working days**.
- 5.2 It may be that they will decide that your complaint will not be investigated for one or more reasons. At this stage there are potentially three types of decision which could arise.
- No further action be taken in respect of the complaint;
 - An informal resolution made by the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Independent Person)
 - If possible criminal conduct has been identified, the matter would be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions and / or the Police. If this occurs the particular complaint would be closed from the Fire Authority's perspective.

Breach Identified

- 5.3 If the allegation discloses a potential breach of the Code of Conduct, it may be appropriate for the matter to be referred to an independent investigator to review.

Evidence of Failure

- 5.4 In cases where formal investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct then a local hearing would be required in which case the Audit and Governance Committee would be called to deal with this aspect.

Actions in response to failure to comply/Sanctions

- 5.5 The Localism Act 2011 does not give the Fire Authority any powers to impose sanctions such as suspension. Requirements for training or an apology from members may be possible as part of the overall requirement to 'promote and maintain high standards of conduct'.
- 5.6 As a result there is a limited range of actions which the Authority can take but such actions must be directed to securing the continued discharge of its functions to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. The following options appear to be available and have been considered in the light of the potential human rights impact on subject members:-
- A formal letter to the member from the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee indicating the failure to comply with the Code

- Removal of a member from a particular committee which can only be achieved in consultation with the Group Leader of the members' party
- Formal censorship motion via Fire Authority initiated by the Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee hearing the complainant
- A formal press release sanctioned by the Audit and Governance Committee summarising the breach
- A local resolution acceptable to the complainant and member and sanctioned by the Audit and Governance Committee

6. APPEALS

6.1 The decision of the Monitoring Officer is final. There is no entitlement to appeal against the Monitoring Officer's decision on a complaint. In these circumstances, you may be able to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman (10th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP, Tel: 020 7217 4620).

7. POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 7.1 We can only consider complaints that are about individual Members of this Authority;
- 7.2 We can only investigate matters where you believe a Member has breached the Code of Conduct;
- 7.3 Your complaint must be in writing and cover all the points set out in the complaints form;
- 7.4 Your details and details of the complaint are unlikely to remain confidential as we need to share it with all parties involved in the process including the subject Member;
- 7.5 Do send us as much information as you can in order for us to decide whether or not the matter should be investigated.

If you have any more questions, you can contact:-

Monitoring Officer

RBFRS Headquarters

Newsham Court

Pincent's Kiln

Calcot

Reading RG31 7SD

E-mail: committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk

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Appendix F

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS: COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE |
| LEAD OFFICER | GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLOR TINA MCKENZIE-BOYLE |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR DECISION |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To inform Members on best practice recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life following its national review of Local Government Ethical Standards; and to agree the recommendations from Audit and Governance Committee from their meeting held on 3 November 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

2.1 **NOTE** the findings and actions from the audit against the best practice recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its January 2019 report (Appendices A and B);

2.2 **AGREE** that:

2.2.1 The Code of Conduct be reviewed on an annual basis commencing 2021/22; and where possible take into account the views of the public, community organisations, and neighbouring and appointing authorities;

2.2.2 in any review of the Code of Conduct:

2.2.2.1 the outcomes of the LGA's consultation on its draft Code of Conduct be taken into account;

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- 2.2.2.2 the prohibition on 'harassment' be added to the prohibition of bullying;
- 2.2.2.3 definitions and examples of both bullying and of harassment be included;
- 2.2.2.4 the requirement on Members to comply with any formal standards investigation be included;
- 2.2.2.5 the requirement to comply with the Authority's protocol on Gifts and Hospitality be included;
- 2.2.3 The procedure for handling allegations under the Code of Conduct be amended to include:
 - 2.2.3.1 A non-exhaustive list of public interest factors which will be taken into account at the filtering stage of a complaint; and
 - 2.2.3.2 Confirmation that where a decision has been made on an allegation of misconduct following formal investigation, a decision notice will be published as soon as possible on its website.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 In January 2019, the Committee on Standards in Public Life published a report on Local Government Ethical Standards. The report considered whether there was a need for a centralised body to govern and adjudicate on standards and concluded there was no need to reintroduce a centralised body.
- 3.2 The report identified local authorities should retain ultimate responsibility for implementing and applying the Seven Principles of Public life in Local Government.
- 3.3 The report did however, make a number of recommendations and best practice to improve ethical standards in local government.
- 3.4 In addition to its best practice recommendations, the report makes 26 recommendations, the vast majority are aimed at to Government to implement through legislative changes; one is to the Local Government Association that it should: "create an updated model code of conduct, in consultation with representative bodies of councillors and officers of all tiers of local government. "
- 3.5 In July 2020, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) wrote to all Local Authorities in England. The letter states that the CSPL would expect that any local authority should implement its 15 best practice

recommendations; and it would be writing to Local Authorities again “in the autumn to ask [...]for [...]progress against these recommendations.

- 3.6 Appendix B to this report lists Royal Berkshire Fire Authority’s audit findings and actions and recommends ways to implement best practice in its Members Code of Conduct and standards.
- 3.7 The updated Code of Conduct and How to Make a Complaint will be published on RBFRS website; and the gifts and hospitality register will be updated on a quarterly basis and quarterly reminders sent to Members.
- 3.8 Members are reminded that a report seeking Fire Authority approval to amendments to sections of the Members Handbook, to include the Code of Conduct was presented earlier in this agenda. It is recommended that further changes are delayed until a further review once the outcomes of the LGA’s draft updated model code of conduct have been determined.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.2 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 direct financial implications relevant to the report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires relevant authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-Opted Members of the authority. Each local authority must publish a code of conduct.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no negative equality and diversity implications from the recommendations.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Future updates to the Code of Conduct and future consultations thereof will be made with Fire Authority partners and communities.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 [Local government ethical standards: report Committee on Standards in Public Life twentieth report, Local Government Ethical Standards, published 30 January 2019.](#)

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Ethical Standards letter (July 2020)
- 12.2 Appendix B – Best practice recommendations audit

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer 01296 744441
- 13.2 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead 0118 938 4611

**Room G.07
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ**

public@public-standards.gov.uk

Sent by email
to Local Authorities in England
For the attention of the Chief Executive

July 2020

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS

I am writing from the Committee on Standards in Public Life to follow up recommendations made in our January 2019 [report](#) on local government ethical standards.

In that report, we identified some best practice recommendations which represent a benchmark for ethical practice and which we expect any local authority should implement.

We said in our report that we would review the implementation of those best practice recommendations in 2020. We completely understand the unexpected and unprecedented pressures that local authorities are facing this year with COVID-19, so we are not of course asking for an immediate response. The purpose of this email is to let you know that we will be writing again in the autumn to ask you for your progress against these recommendations. I have attached a list of the best recommendations for ease of reference, but they are of course also set out in the report.

If you have any questions, please do just let us know. Otherwise, we wish you well and look forward to being in touch again later this year.

Secretariat
Committee on Standards in Public Life

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Appendix A

List of Best Practice Recommendations

Our best practice recommendations are directed to local authorities, and we expect that any local authority can and should implement them. We intend to review the implementation of our best practice in 2020.

Best practice 1: Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5: Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial. 19 List of best practice

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

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| Best Practice | Recommendation | Elements completed | Elements to be actioned | Action Plan | Indicative date |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1 | Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of example of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition | | RBFA Code of Conduct does prohibit bullying and intimidation but it does not include a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition | To include in the RBFA Code of Conduct the following: For the purposes of this Code, bullying and harassment are defined as follows: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; or an abuse or misuse of power in a way that intends | Summer 2021 |
| 2 | Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors. | (amended version) that went to A&GC on 30 July 2020, links the Complaint procedure to the document. The Complaints procedure outline specifically what one can complain about, and what cannot be investigated. It also requests for the complainant to provide evidence e.g. details of | To include a section in the Code informing Councillors they are required to comply with any formal investigation. | On the completion by the LGA of its new draft Model Code of Conduct to include a section in the Code informing Councillors they are required to comply with any formal investigation. | Summer 2021 |
| 3 | Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities | The current Code was adopted in 2012 and amended for recommendation to FA on 16 November 2020. | Recommendation to Fire Authority on 16 November 2020 | Recommendation to the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020 that the Code of Conduct be reviewed on an annual basis commencing 2021/22, and where possible take into account the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |
| 4 | An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises | The Code of Conduct and How to Make a Complaint is available on RBFRS website. | To publish any revised version of the Code of Conduct. | The updated version will be available on RBFRS as soon as it has been approved by the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020. | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |
| 5 | Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV. | Gifts and Hospitality are updated regularly and available on RBFRS website | None | Gifts and hospitality register is updated on an annual basis and published on RBFRS website. Quarterly reminders will be circulated to all Fire Authority Members for updates to register of interests. | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |
| 6 | Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered. | The Audit and Governance Committee reviewed How to Make a Complaint procedure at its last meeting on 30 July 2020. They have recommended this to the Fire Authority on 16 November 2020. | None | Procedure for handling of allegations under the Code of Conduct be amended to include a non-exhaustive list of public interest factors which will be taken into account at the filtering stage of a complaint. | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |

| Best Practice | Recommendation | Elements completed | Elements to be actioned | Action Plan | Indicative date |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| 7 | Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons | The Fire Authority has access to two Independent Persons - appointed for 4 years. New appointments due to be made in 2021 | None | N/A | N/A |
| 8 | An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial. | RBFA Complaints process provides for an Independent Person to be consulted at an early stage, indicating the timeframe of the initial assessment (average 20 days). The guidance does stipulate that the Independent Person and Monitoring Office will decide whether the complaint will be | None | N/A | N/A |
| 9 | Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of the facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied. | Annual updates are provided on the Annual Governance report on whether Member complaints were held in that municipal year. | As and when a decision on a allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, RBFA will publish a decision notice. Including a brief statement of the facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision- | To be included in the Code of Conduct (paragraph 2.6 of the Code of Conduct) and in the complaints procedure. | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |
| 10 | A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes. | How to Make a Complaint currently available on RBFA website. This guidance document will also be linked to the Code of Conduct for easy accessibility on the website (following Fire Authority approval in November 2020). | None | Publish on website soon after Fire Authority approval | Recommendation made by A&GC on 3 November to Fire Authority on 16 November |
| 11 | Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances. | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 12 | Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work. | The Monitoring Officer provide support, advice and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches for both Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority. | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| Best Practice | Recommendation | Elements completed | Elements to be actioned | Action Plan | Indicative date |
|---------------|--|---|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 13 | A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation. | The current Monitoring Officer works for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority and liaises with the Monitoring Officers of the six Royal Berkshire councils and other local authorities and fire and rescue authorities, whose services could be called upon should conflicts of | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 14 | Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place. | N/A - the Service has no separate bodies created by the Fire Authority. (In terms of Thames Valley Joint Committee, members are bound by the RBFA code (and appointing council's code)). | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 15 | Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues. | No formal arrangement exists but the Monitoring Officer has dialogue with the relevant political Group Leaders on standards issues as circumstances arise. The Chief Fire Officer and senior officers regularly meet with the political group leaders. | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | AMENDMENTS TO CONTRACT AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS |
| LEAD OFFICER | CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLOR GRAHAM HOWE |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR DECISION |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- 1.1 This report sets out proposed amendments to the Authority's Contract and Financial Regulations to further strengthen internal controls as well as improve the efficiency of some processes.
- 1.2 The Audit and Governance Committee reviewed these amendments at its meeting on 3 November 2020 and recommended that the Fire Authority approve the draft Regulations as set out in the appendices.
- 1.3 However, it is also recognised that there will be some changes to terminology in relation to public procurement regulations once the transition period with the EU comes to an end. Therefore, this paper also proposes that the Fire Authority delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make changes of a technical nature to the Authority's Contract Regulations so that they remain aligned to legislation from 1 January 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the amended Contract Regulations as set out in Appendix A;
- 2.2 **APPROVE** the amended Financial Regulations as set out in Appendix B;
- 2.3 **APPROVE** the linked amendment to the Scheme of Delegation for the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive as set out in paragraph 3.16;

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- 2.4 **APPROVE** delegated authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make amendments of a technical nature to the Authority's Contract Regulations so that they remain aligned to legislation from 1 January 2021.

3. **REPORT:**

- 3.1 The current Contract and Financial Regulations were approved by Fire Authority in October 2017. It is good practice to review and update these Regulations on a regular basis.
- 3.2 The amendments set out in this report fall into two categories. Firstly, the Regulations have been updated to further improve the effectiveness of our internal controls. The second objective is to reduce the administrative burden of our control processes wherever possible.
- 3.3 The main changes that are proposed are set out below.

Contract Regulations

- 3.4 Several changes to the Contract Regulations are proposed to further improve their effectiveness.
- 3.5 One significant change relates to the authorisation of contracts above £1m. Currently, Management Committee needs to approve contracts over £1m with approval being sought once the outcome of the tendering process is known. This can lead to delays in awarding contracts and can prove problematic when the Authority enters into collaborative procurements. It also means that Management Committee is getting sight of these high-value procurements very late on in the process. In order to make the role of Management Committee more effective and improve the efficiency of the process it is proposed to change the process so that, "tenders for contracts over £1,000,000 require a business case to be approved by Management Committee before the tender process commences. A tender price up to 5% more than the business case can be accepted by officers if budget provision exists. If the final tender award is between 5% and 10% greater than the business case figure, agreement has to be sought from the Chair of the Fire Authority before awarding. Any variance greater than 10% would need the approval of Management Committee."
- 3.6 Given that the Authority is about to embark on the sale of several properties, it is important that processes around such sales are robust and transparent. To this end, once the Management Committee has made a decision to sell property there is a new requirement for the three statutory officers to approve and oversee any process for its disposal. This requirement has been replicated in the Financial Regulations.
- 3.7 Over the last few years we have focused a lot of attention and effort on our procurement processes with the result that we can demonstrate that they deliver value for money. However, it is just as important that we manage the relationship with our suppliers for the duration of the contract. To this end, having a named contract manager with known responsibilities helps to ensure that the contact continues to deliver value for money. Currently our Regulations state that all contracts over £50,000 have a named contract

manager. It is proposed that this threshold should be reduced to £10,000 to embed contract management as a matter of course.

- 3.8 The other changes that are being proposed aim at streamlining processes and removing unnecessary administrative burdens.
- 3.9 In order to speed up the procurement process, contracts with values from £150,000 up to £999,999 can now be signed by any Director rather than just by the Chief or Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
- 3.10 The option to use Approved Supplier Lists for low value spend has been removed from the Regulations. Where these lists have been set up in the past, the limitations around expenditure thresholds has meant that in practice they have not proved to be an efficient way to procure goods and services. Furthermore, Approved Supplier Lists do not sit well within the overall framework of Public Contract Regulations.
- 3.11 The list of our contract clauses has been removed from the Regulations as these are available on Siren and are tailored to each procurement. The Procurement team regularly reviews contract clauses, making additions and subtractions on a regular basis. Removing the list of contract clauses from the Contract Regulations simplifies the administration of this process.
- 3.12 The Procurement team make use of the Procurement Launch Document (PLD) template prior to undertaking any procurement activity. This document is used to record the route to market, assess risks and compute timelines for any proposed procurement. The PLD is a detailed document and whilst it is essential for complex procurements it is recognised that it is too burdensome for more straightforward procurements. Therefore, the amended regulation requires a PLD for procurements over £50,000 rather than the current £10,000 threshold.
- 3.13 Finally, a couple of additional circumstances have been identified where waivers could be allowed. A waiver may be allowed if it is deemed necessary due to the requirements of operational alignment. Also, a waiver will be permissible if the market is such that effective competition does not exist and it can clearly be demonstrated that the proposed award represents best value for the Authority.

Financial Regulations

- 3.14 Three main changes are being proposed to the Financial Regulations.
- 3.15 The first change relates to debt write-offs. The changes are twofold. Firstly, to strengthen the controls around write offs by requiring the three statutory officers to agree higher level write offs rather than just the Chief Fire Officer. Having strengthened the controls around write offs, the new regulation provides for a bit more flexibility. The current Regulation states: "The Chief Finance Officer in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority to write off debts up to £5,000 where there is no prospect of recovery. Debt write-offs up to £10,000 can be authorised by the Chief Fire Officer." It is proposed to change this to: "The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer has delegated authority to write off debts of up to 0.05% of the annual Authority revenue

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budget where there is no prospect of recovery. Debt write-offs of up to 0.1% of the budget can be authorised by the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. All write-offs must be logged and will be subject to scrutiny by both internal and external audit. Debt write-offs above these levels must be approved by Management Committee.”

- 3.16 In order to maintain consistency with the Authority’s Approved Scheme of Delegation, ASD 20 has been amended to state that the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive has delegated authority to write off debts as set out in the Fire Authority’s Financial Regulations.
- 3.17 The second set of changes are in relation to section 5.8 of the Financial Regulations on Stocks, Stores and Inventories. The current wording is confusing as it refers to assets which are dealt with under a different section of the Regulations. In addition, the current Regulations make reference to an arbitrary cut off of £100 which in practice serves no purpose. It is proposed, therefore, to simplify the wording of this section to emphasise the responsibilities of both the relevant Head of Service in maintaining inventories as well as the overall responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer in ensuring controls are in place for stock items.
- 3.18 The final set of changes removes the terms of reference for the Fire Authority and its Committees and the responsibilities of Statutory Officers as these are already set out in the Authority’s Approved Scheme of Delegation. Instead, the Financial Regulations will provide hyperlinks to the relevant section in the Approved Scheme of Delegation in the Members handbook. This removes duplication and the possibility of inconsistencies arising as corporate documents are being updated on a rolling basis.

Ending of the Transition Period

- 3.19 The transition period with the EU comes to an end on 31 December 2020. The practical impacts on the Authority’s procurement processes from 1 January 2021 are likely to be minimal but there will be some changes to terminology and ways of working. For example, one known change is that we will need to publish public procurement notices through *Find a Tender*. This service will go live on 1 January 2021 and will replace the requirement to publish notices in the Official Journal of the European Union.
- 3.20 Rather than try and capture all potential and known changes that will come into effect from 1 January 2021 in this current round of amendments, it is proposed that the Fire Authority delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to make changes to the Contract Regulations to ensure they stay aligned with legislation from 1 January 2021.

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 Both the Contract and Financial Regulations establish internal controls to ensure that all of the Authority's business is conducted in ways that ensure value for money.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The new Contract Regulations comply with all current legislation that affects Public Sector procurement.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The Contract Regulations comply with the UK Contract Regulations 2015. The three guiding principles of the regulations are equal treatment, transparency and proportionality.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Adherence to the Contract Regulations will reduce the financial and legal risk of incorrect award and ensure better management of contracts and suppliers.
- 8.2 Adherence to the Financial Regulations will reduce the risk of financial loss.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE:

- 9.1 The new Contract Regulations now include a requirement for all suitable procurement activity to be carried out in conjunction with partners and actively work in support of national fire reform procurement programme.
- 9.2 The Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services already operate a joint procurement work plan and work collaboratively with the national procurement programme. A review of the options to also work more collaboratively with Thames Valley Police is due to commence in September 2017.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION:

- 10.1 Officers consulted in the preparation of this report include:
- 10.2 The Monitoring Officer
- 10.3 Chief Fire Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- 11.1 Current Contract and Financial Regulations, approved October 2017
- 11.2 Fire Authority Scheme of Delegation

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12. **APPENDICES:**

- 12.1 Appendix A – Draft Contract Regulations
- 12.2 Appendix B – Draft Financial Regulations

13. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

- 13.1 The Contact details of the report author are:

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CONTRACT REGULATIONS



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CR1. INTRODUCTION

These Contract Regulations (known as the Rules) are made under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and approved by Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (“the Authority”) to facilitate efficient and transparent decision making.

The Monitoring Officer is required to ensure that the Rules are fit for purpose, adhere to the legislative framework and follow best practice. As such, these Rules will be regularly reviewed and amended by the Authority.

These Rules are to be read and followed by all RBFRS employees including Thames Valley Fire Control (TVFCS), contract staff and anyone approved to act on behalf of the Authority.

CR2. DEFINITIONS

Contract rule definitions can be found at Appendix 2.

CR3. WHEN THESE RULES APPLY

These Rules apply whenever the Authority expects to give or receive money or payment in kind. They apply to both capital and revenue and cover:

- All expenditure and contracts for goods, works and services
- The acquisition or disposal of land, buildings or capital plant and vehicles

These Rules do not apply to:

- Employment contracts of staff
- The engagement of Counsel or Expert Witness
- Grants
- Public to Public Arrangements
- Statutory Payments
- Services provided in house by the Authority’s own employees
- Approved Procurement Card expenditure

These Rules may be waived under certain conditions as set out in section CR17 but must always comply with prevailing laws.

CR4. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE, RULES AND LAW

Relevant guidance can be found in:

| | |
|--|---|
| RBFA Finance Regulations and Risk Framework | https://decisionmaking.rbfrs.co.uk/documents/s0688/FinancialRegulations.docx.pdf |
| RBFA Procurement Contract Management Strategy | http://siren/services/procurement/ |
| Scheme of Delegation | http://siren/document-library |
| Public Contract Regulations 2015 | http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/contents/made |
| The Authority's Procurement Guidance and Toolkit | http://siren/services/procurement/ |
| Policing and Crime Act 2017 | http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/contents/enacted |
| National Fire Reform Board | https://www.local.gov.uk/fire-reform-board-england |
| Modern Slavery Act and Human Trafficking 2015 | https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted |

CR5. RESPONSIBILITIES

These Rules apply to all Officers and any other persons authorised to act on behalf of the Authority.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all staff attend relevant training and have a full understanding of these Rules and related guidance as it affects their work.

Staff must attend relevant internal training before being authorised to:

- seek quotes or be part of a tender evaluation panel
- manage contracts

The Procurement team are responsible for:

- ensuring that all tenders issued are carried out in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and best practice;
- creating opportunities to collaborate with other emergency services in the development of joint contracts through standardising commodities and services;
- reviewing supplier suitability and undertaking a financial assessment for all new Suppliers
- carrying out regular financial health checks of key suppliers;
- ensuring that staff are appropriately trained and supported to carry out low value quotes and tenders;

- developing the use of Frameworks and joint contracts where they offer best value;
- the secure retention of contracts on behalf of the Head of Finance and Procurement.

Directors and Heads of Service must ensure that every contract:

- supports the delivery of the Corporate Aims and Objectives;
- has adequate or agreed budget provision in place to fund the whole life of the contract;
- provides value for money and continuous improvement throughout the whole life of a contract;
- is awarded based on the publicised evaluation criteria and that non-commercial considerations do not influence any contract award decision;
- considers the whole life costs including disposal;
- has a risk register if the contract value is in excess of £50,000 and the risks are regularly monitored;
- complies with Financial Regulations, Health and Safety and Environmental Regulations;
- does not conflict with any other contract already in place and used by the Authority.

CR6. INTERESTS OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

It is a criminal offence under section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 for an Officer not to declare a financial interest in a contract and for a Councillor not to declare a financial interest in a contract in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Officers and Councillors must declare in writing, any pecuniary interest in any contract or tender process to the Head of Finance and Procurement as soon as possible who will keep a register for this purpose.

CR7. CALCULATING THE TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE

The calculation of the estimated value of a procurement shall be based on the total amount payable, net of VAT, as estimated by the contracting authority, including any forms of option to extend as set out in the procurement documents.

A Procurement shall not be subdivided with the effect of preventing it from falling within the scope of a project.

A contract must not be artificially split into smaller contracts to distort the overall procurement as this would be viewed as anti-competitive and the Authority could be challenged.

For example if several quotes/tenders are issued with the same Common Procurement Vocabulary Codes (CPV) within a few months of each other this could be viewed as distorting the procurement process and classed as Anti-Competitive.

CR8. E TENDERING, CONTRACT DOCUMENTATION AND RETENTION

Quotes and tenders over £10,000 will be released to the market electronically (where appropriate), via the Authority's E tendering system. The opportunity will also be advertised on the Government's procurement portal.

The relevant Head of Service is responsible for retaining copies of all quotes below £10,000. Quotes awarded over £5,000 must be sent to procurement for inclusion on the Corporate Contract Register which will be reviewed and updated monthly and a copy will be available on the Authority's website.

Unsuccessful quotes and tenders must be disposed of 12 months after the award of contract. The successful tender must be retained for a minimum of seven years from the end of the contract.

The contract register will comply with the Transparency Code for Local Government.

CR9. THRESHOLDS FOR SEEKING TENDERS AND QUOTES

Any expenditure that falls within the remit of procurement must follow the competitive process set out in Appendix 1.

For all tenders over £50,000 a Procurement Launch Document (PLD) must be prepared by the owning Department to assess the route to market and undertake a financial review before then proceeding with the procurement.

No additional contract must be approved where a corporate contract already exists without the approval of the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement.

Any new contract or order for IT equipment or software must be approved by the Head of Business Information and Systems.

CR10. PUBLIC CONTRACT REGULATIONS

The procurement process will follow Public Contract Regulations where required.

The Procurement team will ensure the most suitable tender process is selected.

Please note there will be a mandatory standstill period of ten days observed prior to award of contract for all contracts above OJEU¹ thresholds. The contract cannot be awarded until the standstill period has been observed.

CR11. USE OF FRAMEWORKS

For many categories of expenditure there are compliant frameworks in place. Where these meet the requirements of the Authority and the framework demonstrates value for money, these should be used to reduce the administrative burden.

Framework contract terms must be reviewed before awarding to ensure these do not create a risk to the Authority.

CR12. DEVELOPING AND USE OF A COLLABORATIVE CONTRACTS

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 places a duty on police, fire and emergency ambulance services to seek opportunities to collaborate where it is efficient or effective to do so.

The Procurement team will review all new procurement requirements, ensuring that all opportunities to collaborate with partner organisations are exploited where they offer benefits to the Authority and collaborate with partners to develop new joint contracts.

CR13. ACCEPTANCE OF QUOTATIONS AND TENDERS

Quotes and tenders may be accepted subject to the following:

- the price is within the budget;
- the quote or tender has been evaluated in accordance with the published criteria and offers the best value for money;
- where a framework is used, any further competition requirement is carried out in accordance with the framework agreement;
- the Authority's standard contract terms are accepted by the tenderer or alternative terms have been agreed by the Authority;
- the tenderer is determined as having the financial capability and capacity to meet the requirements of the contract by the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement;
- no conflict of interest has been identified;

¹ From 1 January 2021 a new e-notification service called Find a Tender will be used to post and view public sector procurement notices.

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- the tenderer has met the Authority's standard in relation to no canvassing or collusion.

CR14. CONTRACT AWARD PROCEDURE

A contract may be awarded by the approved Officer in accordance with Appendix 1 if there has been compliance with these Rules and the Finance Regulations and a fully signed Contract Recommendation Award completed for any purchases over £10,000.

No officer below Head of Service can award a contract over £10,000.

Tenders for contracts over £1,000,000 require a business case to be approved by Management Committee before the tender process commences. A tender price up to 5% more than the business case can be accepted by officers if budget provision exists. If the final tender award is between 5% and 10% greater than the business case figure, agreement has to be sought from the Chair of the Fire Authority before awarding. Any variance greater than 10% would need the approval of Management Committee.

CR15. FORMAT OF CONTRACTS

Contracts and one off purchases with a value below £10,000 require the issue of a Purchase Order (PO) as a minimum, which states the Authority's standard terms of business.

For any contract or expenditure over £10,000 and up to £50,000 a PO and a letter or short contract document that sets out the agreed terms and contract period can be signed by the relevant Head of Service and Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement.

All contracts over £50,000 require a contract signed by the Head of Service and Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive as well as the Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement.

All relevant contracts must include the Authority's standard terms of business and relevant contract terms as set out in these regulations unless alternative are agreed and accepted by the Authority.

CR16. SIGNING AND SEALING OF CONTRACTS

Authorisation levels for the signing of contracts are set out in Appendix 1.

Contracts will be executed under seal where it is considered appropriate for the purpose of transacting the Authority's business or safeguarding its interests. Such contracts are likely to include major capital works.

All contracts over £1,000,000 will bear the common seal of the Authority.

CR17. WAIVER OF CONTRACT REGULATIONS

In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to waive these Contract Procedure Rules.

Competitive quotes or tenders are not required where any of the following apply:

- effective competition is prevented due to government control;
- the supply or service is unique to a single supplier such as proprietary or patented goods or is deemed necessary due to the requirements of operational alignment and there is no satisfactory alternative;
- the service or works are of a specialist nature and can only be carried out by one supplier;
- the emergency requirements are brought about by events that could not have reasonably been foreseen;
- if the goods or services are not procured there is a risk of danger to life or property or a major impact on the Authority or the public.
- the market is such that effective competition does not exist and it can clearly be demonstrated that the proposed award represents best value for the Authority.

A waiver of up to £50,000 can be approved by the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement, Head of Service and a Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, using the standard waiver form which is to be retained by the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement.

Waivers over £50,000 but below £100,000 can be approved by the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement, Head of Service and a Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Fire Authority and a retrospective report submitted to the next available committee.

Waivers of £100,000 and above can only be approved by the Management Committee and in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

CR18. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

All contracts over £10,000 will be monitored in accordance with the internal Contract Management Guidance Framework.

Contracts over £10,000 will include a named contract manager responsible for:

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- ensuring the contract expectations are being met or exceeded;
- managing the performance of the supplier and carry out contract reviews;
- maintaining a risk register for contracts over £50,000;
- recommending variations to the contract for approval.

CR19. SUB- CONTRACTING AND NOVATION

For works and specialist contracts the lead contractor may wish to use sub-contractors in order to discharge some or all of the contractual obligations. The Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement must consider prior to any contract award whether collateral warranties are required and to include this within the contract terms.

All contracts shall include a statement that does not provide an automatic right of novation. The Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement must approve any request to novate a contract, subject to carrying out a supplier suitability assessment.

CR20. CONTRACT VARIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS

A contract variation may only be approved where the proposed variation does not materially alter the terms of the contract or breach the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Variations should only be entered into after considering the following:

- the addition of good/services which were not originally included within the contract requirements cannot be of a material value compared to the overall contract value;
- a contract variation cannot exceed more than 50% of the original contract value;
- the contract value as a result of the variation will not exceed or breach the requirements as set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015;
- budget provision exists to fund the contract variation.

A contract extension can only be triggered if:

- the contract has been satisfactorily delivered during the initial period of the contract, all obligations have been met successfully and the contract is continuing to represent best value;
- the extension period proposed is triggered by both parties and is in accordance with the contract terms;
- the contract value as a result of the extension will not exceed or breach the requirements as set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015;
- budget provision exists to fund the contract extension.

A contract extension and / or variation must be approved by the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Service and Director before being agreed and signed by all parties.

CR21. TUPE

The Director of Support Services must be consulted before any process is commenced which may result in any transfer of staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations ("TUPE"), or any staff who are or were previously Fire Authority employees, members of the LGPS or a Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

CR22. SOCIAL VALUE ACT 2012 AND SAFEGUARDING

The Act requires people who commission services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits as part of the delivery of the contract. This might include the employment of people from the local area or using local companies or third sector partners within the supply chain.

Before procurement is started commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

A Project Launch Document will be prepared for tenders over £50,000 to consider these issues. Tenderers will be also be required to consider options for embracing social value in any relevant contract they tender for.

All service contracts and those where partners are providing services on our behalf which potentially include the supervision of vulnerable adults or children will include a contract clause relating to safeguarding and the supplier's responsibilities in relation to the appointment of their employees and agents.

CR23. MODERN SLAVERY ACT

In accordance with Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("MSA") the Authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains or any part of its business.

Anti-slavery and trafficking clauses are included in all RBFA standard contracts terms. The clauses also include an obligation for the supplier to contractually manage the risk of modern slavery occurring within its own supply chain.

CR24. EXCLUSION LIST

The Public Contract Regulations 2015 (Regulation 57) provides the Authority with the ability to exclude a supplier from tendering for future contracts where one or

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more of the mandatory ^{Appendix A} exclusions can be applied. This might occur if a supplier has previously defaulted on a contract.

CR25. TRANSPARENCY

The Authority complies with all the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code of Practice through monthly publication on its website.

CR26. ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF LAND AND BUILDINGS

These Rules apply to the acquisition or disposal of freehold or leasehold buildings. Prior to any formal commitment being made or signed a report must go to the Management Committee to advise:

- the estimated value of the land or buildings;
- the current or most recent building use;
- options considered;
- recommendation and disposal route to be followed;
- proposed sale value and planned use;
- if a disposal is for less than best consideration, the report must say whether consent is needed from the Secretary of State or Home Office.

Tenders for disposal do not need to be submitted via the corporate E-tendering portal and may be managed by a third party. The three Statutory Officers must approve and oversee the process that will be used to dispose of land and buildings.

CR27. INTERPRETING THESE RULES

Questions about these Rules and any related guidance should be addressed to the Head or Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement.

APPENDIX ONE – PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

| Total Contract Value | Process | Person Responsible for Process | Contract Award Recommendation and Contract Authorisation |
|--|---|---|--|
| £0,000 <= £9,999 | Best Practice to receive written quotes. | Officer authorised by Head of Service | Not Required – PO Only |
| Option 1. £10,000 < = £49,999 – price evaluation comparison only | Three quotes required unless the market is restricted. Evaluation based on price only with lowest price supplier awarded the goods and/or service/s. | Head of Service | Two Signatories 1. Head of Service or Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive 2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement |
| Option 2. £10,000 < = £49,999 – quality and price evaluation | Three Tenders required unless the market is restricted Evaluation based on price and quality with the Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) awarded the contract. | Head of Service supported by Procurement | Two Signatories 1. Head of Service or Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive 2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement |
| £50,000 to £999,999 | Invite tenderers using Tender Portals or Framework. | Head of Service supported by Procurement Team | Three Signatories 1. Head of Service 2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement 3. Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive |

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|---|
| Over £1,000,000 | Invite tenderers using Tender Portal | Head of Service supported by Procurement Team | <p>Three Signatories</p> <p>1. Head of Service</p> <p>2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement</p> <p>3. Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</p> <p>And Management Committee Approval as per CR14</p> |
| Waiver | CR17 – Waiver of Contract regulations. Based on this criteria service can be awarded if it meets these criteria without going to tender. | Head of Service supported by Procurement Team | <p>Three Signatories</p> <p>1. Head of Service</p> <p>2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement</p> <p>3. Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</p> |
| Extension/Variation | When taking up option to vary or extend a contract based on contract award. | Head of Service supported by Procurement team | <p>Three Signatories</p> <p>1. Head of Service</p> <p>2. Head or Deputy Head of Finance & Procurement</p> <p>3. Director or Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive</p> |

APPENDIX TWO – CONTRACT REGULATIONS

TERMINOLOGY

The table below provides an explanation to the terms used in the Contract Regulations.

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Bond | An insurance policy; if the contractor does not do what it has promised under a contract with the Authority, the Authority can claim from the insurer the sum of money specified in the bond (often ten per cent of the contract value). A bond is intended to protect the Authority against a level of cost arising from the contractor's failure. |
| Collateral Warranty | This is an agreement between a sub-contractor and lead contractor to extend any warranty for their work to the primary contract so that the client receives the benefit of the warranty. This is done as the sub-contractor is not party to the main contract. |
| Competitive tendering | Awarding contracts by the process of seeking competing tenders. |
| Contract | The legal agreement which sets out the rights and obligations of all parties, which is intended to be enforceable in law. |
| Contract Regulations | The Authority's own internal control procedures for procurement and contracting. |
| Collusion | A fraudulent arrangement between two or more parties whereby prices or service requirements are manipulated to get round competitive tendering. |
| Contract documents | Documents incorporated in the enforceable agreement between the Authority and the contractor, including contract conditions, specification, pricing document, form of tender and the successful tenderer's responses (including method statements) and all other relevant documents expressed to be contract documents (such as relevant correspondence). |
| Contract value | The total monetary value of a contract over its full duration (not annual value). The method of payment for contracts for which tenderers quote rates per chargeable day. |
| Default | A breach of a contract condition, e.g. a delay in the promised delivery. |

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Appendix A

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| E-procurement or E-tendering | The use of electronic methods in every stage of the purchasing process from identification of requirement through to payment and potentially to contract management. |
| Evaluation | Detailed assessment and comparison of contractor, supplier or service provider offers against financial and quality criteria. |
| Framework agreement | An arrangement under which a contracting authority establishes with a provider of goods, works or services, the terms under which contracts subsequently can be entered into, or 'called-off' (within the limits of the agreement) when particular needs arise. |
| Invoice | A request to pay submitted by a supplier of works, goods and/or services. |
| Liquidated damages | A genuine estimate of the loss that the authority will suffer if the contractor defaults when performing the contract. This may form the basis of deductions from payments, which will be calculated according to the specific circumstance relating to each type of contract. |
| Performance bond | Bonds or guarantees given to clients by specialist insurers, on behalf of contractors and at their expense, binding the insurers to compensate clients (up to the amount of the bond obtained) in the event of a default. |
| Procurement | The process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering acquisition from third parties and from in-house providers. The process spans the whole life cycle from identification of needs, through to the end of a services contract or the end of the useful life of an asset. |
| Purchase order | This is a standard document setting out the specific requirements to be provided by a supplier at an agreed date and price. |
| Quotation or Quote | Any offer by a supplier to supply goods, works or services requested either orally or in writing. A quotation may be the written confirmation of an earlier offer. |
| Services | Services provided to the Authority by an external service provider (an individual or a company). Contract Standing Orders may have different values covering works, services or supplies. |
| Specification | The document used to set out our requirements for the goods or services. |
| TUPE | The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (as amended from time to time) |
| Variation | Any alteration, modification, addition to or deletion of any requirement of the contract terms or specification. |

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Appendix A

Draft

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

November 2020



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Appendix B

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Financial Regulations are the regulatory framework within which the financial affairs of the Authority operate; they apply to all of the Authority's activities. The regulations identify responsibilities in full but can be summarised as follows:

- Major financial decisions, including setting the annual revenue and capital budgets, must be taken by the Members of the Authority, as advised by the Chief Finance Officer.
- The Authority encourages the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive and his staff to take day-to-day responsibility for financial management of the service within the agreed budget. Expenditure must be regularly monitored to ensure that it stays within approved budgets.
- The Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer have statutory responsibilities and should be consulted on significant issues or where members or officers have any doubt about the correctness of a possible action.
- Members, as advised by the Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, are responsible for identifying significant risks to the Authority and for putting in place strategies to deal with them.
- Payments, including to staff, can only be made through arrangements approved by the Chief Finance Officer.
- All partnership arrangements must take account of appropriate financial and legal matters.

1.2 The Scope of the Financial Regulations

The regulations and procedures apply to all staff (including temporary staff) and members of the Authority. They identify the financial responsibilities of Members, the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer and other officers with financial responsibility.

Members and officers should maintain a written record of any decision-making that has been delegated to members of their staff, including seconded staff. When decisions have been delegated or have been devolved to other bodies or responsible officers, references to members or officers in the regulations should be read as referring to them.

1.3 The Purpose of Financial Regulations

Financial Regulations control the way the Fire Authority manages its business. They clarify responsibilities and provide a framework for decision-making. Where there are specific statutory powers and duties, the financial regulations seek to ensure that these are duly complied with as well as setting out best professional practices and processes for all activities and decisions of the Fire Authority, its committees and staff.

Rather than a barrier to action they should be viewed as providing the framework within which action can be taken, setting out best practice throughout the Authority and ensuring a high quality of financial information, enabling better decision making and improved service delivery.

1.4 Awareness of Financial Regulations

The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all staff with financial responsibilities are made aware of and have access to these Regulations.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff in their departments are aware of the existence and content of the Authority's Financial Regulations and other internal regulatory documents and that they comply with them.

All members and staff have a general responsibility for taking action to provide for the security of the assets under their control and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, is properly authorised, provides value for money and achieves best value.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Financial Regulations that Members, Officers and others acting on behalf of the Authority are required to follow.

1.5 Non-compliance with Financial Regulations

Failure to comply with these regulations and any accompanying financial instructions may have the following consequences:

- For staff, these regulations supplement the code of conduct for employees, so a breach will normally be considered a disciplinary offence that will invoke disciplinary procedures (and can lead to dismissal).
- For Members, these regulations supplement the code of conduct for Members, so a breach may be reported to the Monitoring Officer, which may lead to sanctions being imposed upon the Member.
- For the Authority, there is an overriding duty to secure value for money by conducting its business in an economic, efficient and effective manner. Failing

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to comply with the regulations will have wider implications which could result in the misuse or waste of funds received from taxpayers and the Government.

These Regulations provide clarity about the financial accountabilities of everyone acting on behalf of the Authority, individually or as a whole. To conduct its business efficiently, the Authority needs to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and that they are strictly adhered to.

1.6 Review and Amendment of the Financial Regulations

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for reviewing the Financial Regulations and their amendment from time to time and will submit any additions or changes necessary to the Audit and Governance Committee for approval. The Audit and Governance Committee will then recommend such amendments to the Fire Authority for adoption. The Chief Finance Officer is also responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the financial regulations to the Authority.

2. Financial Accountability and Management

2.1 Overview

Financial management covers all financial accountability in relation to the running of the Service, including the policy framework and budget.

2.2 The Fire Authority and its Committees

The roles of the Fire Authority and its Committees are set out in their Terms of Reference below: (hyperlink to each Terms of Reference)

Fire Authority

Management Committee

Audit and Governance Committee

2.3 Statutory Officers

There are certain duties for which the Authority is required to appoint 'Statutory Officers' and assign responsibilities to those individuals. Their responsibilities are set out in legislation:

- the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive – as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (s4) and listed in RBFA Scheme of Delegations ASD8 – ASD24 (hyperlink to Scheme of Delegation);
- the Monitoring Officer – as set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (s5) and listed in RBFA Scheme of Delegations ASD25 – ASD48 (hyperlink to Scheme of Delegation); and
- the Chief Finance Officer – as set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (s112) and listed in RBFA Scheme of Delegations ASD49 – ASD68 (hyperlink to Scheme of Delegation).

2.4 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Members of SLT are responsible for ensuring that Authority members are advised of the financial implications of all proposals and that the financial implications have been agreed by the Chief Finance Officer.

It is the responsibility of SLT members to consult with the Chief Finance Officer and seek approval on any matter liable to affect the Authority's finances before any commitments are incurred.

2.5 All Managers and Officers with Financial Responsibilities

All managers are responsible for complying with the Financial Regulations within their service area and for the training of staff to enable them to comply with these Regulations.

Managers are individually responsible for the proper financial management of resources allocated to their service area through the budget making process and for the identification of income arising from activities within their operational areas. Good financial management requires managers to be responsible for the control of staff and the security, custody and management of assets including plant, equipment, buildings, materials, cash and stores. Officers who have been issued with fuel cards or procurement cards must use these in line with policy and failure to do so will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

Managers, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, may delegate responsibilities to their staff. These shall be clearly documented and reviewed. The manager will be responsible for ensuring that all staff are adequately trained prior to delegation, to carry out these roles. The competence of staff in these matters should be assessed as part of the Authority's performance management framework.

2.6 Other financial accountabilities

i Budget Virements

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for agreeing procedures for virements of expenditure between budget headings.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within delegated limits with the Chief Finance Officer or Deputy.

ii Reserves

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the management and reporting of the reserves position and movements in year-end balances.

iii Accounting Policies, Records and Returns

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for selecting accounting policies and ensuring that they are applied consistently. In addition, the Chief Finance Officer shall determine the accounting procedures and records for the Authority. Accounting and other related records must be retained for periods which comply with relevant legislation.

iv Annual Statement of Accounts

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that the annual Statement of Accounts is prepared and certified in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting*.

v Grants and Other External Contributions

The Fire Authority is responsible for agreeing additional budgets over and above the approved budget for the year, including match-funding requirements. Directors have delegated responsibility for ensuring that any funding conditions are compatible with the aims and objectives of the Authority prior to acceptance of the grant. Directors have delegated responsibility for agreeing additional expenditure budgets with 100% grant funding in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. The Chief Finance Officer or Deputy must sign off all grant applications.

The Chief Finance Officer or Deputy must examine and certify where required any submission, estimate or claim for payment of a grant by a Government Department or funding from any other body. Officers responsible for the administration of such grants, funds and spending associated with them must ensure compliance with the conditions of the grant/funding.

The Chief Finance Officer or Deputy must examine and certify all financial returns to government departments or other bodies.

vi Pensions

It is the responsibility of officers preparing to outsource or insource activities of the Fire Authority that involve the transfer of pension rights and liabilities to notify the Chief Finance Officer of any proposal prior to substantive negotiations taking place with third parties.

In consultation with the Chief Finance Officer the full cost and implication of the transfer of pension rights and liabilities must be disclosed in the financial appraisal that is prepared in relation to the outsourcing proposal.

The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted about and approve revised pension arrangements before formal agreements are made.

vii Disposals and Capital Receipts

All receipts from the sale of assets which were originally purchased from capital financing will be treated as capital receipts and must be notified to the Chief Finance Officer or Deputy. The Chief Finance Officer or Deputy must be notified of all proposed disposals of assets. All assets with a value over £3,000 must be disposed of by competitive quotations, by auction or by other means, such as land swaps, that have been approved by the Chief Finance Officer and demonstrate value for money. The three Statutory Officers must approve and oversee the process that will be used to dispose of land and buildings.

3. Financial Planning

3.1 Overview

The Authority is responsible for approving its policy framework and budget. In terms of financial planning the key elements are:

- the Annual Revenue Budget;
- the Medium Term Financial Plan;

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- the Strategic Asset Investment Framework;
- the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Borrowing Limits;
- the Reserves Strategy.

3.2 Policy Framework

The policy framework comprises the following documents of the Authority:

- Corporate Plan
- Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Strategic Risk Register
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Strategic Asset Investment Framework
- the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Borrowing Limits;
- the Reserves Strategy.

These documents are underpinned by supplementary strategies:

- Property Strategy
- Fleet Strategy
- ICT Strategy
- Information Governance Strategy
- Equipment Strategy
- People Strategy

They are also supplemented by other policies with financial implications:

- Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Contract Regulations
- Procurement Card Policy

- Code of Conduct

In addition, there are procedure notes supporting the correct usage of the Financial System (Sage), and financial training available from the Finance and Procurement Department.

3.3 Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

These plans must be consistent with the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework.

3.4 Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for producing the Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework each year in consultation with the Budget Lead Member before being presented to the Authority for approval. Both documents should be clearly linked to the Corporate Plan and the Integrated Risk Management Plan and be consistent with the Treasury Management Strategy and Reserves Strategy. The Audit and Governance Committee may wish to review the assumptions underpinning the Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework to provide assurance to the Fire Authority concerning the robustness of the Authority's financial plans.

3.5 Budget Setting

i Budget Format

The Chief Finance Officer will determine the general format of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Annual Budget. These documents should include planning assumptions, an identification of major financial risks to the Authority and proposed taxation levels (precept) as well as the nature and level of contingency funds and reserves.

The Annual Revenue Budget presented to the Fire Authority (including the use of reserves where appropriate) must balance to ensure the Authority does not commit to expenditure that it cannot fund.

The precept must be notified to the collecting authorities by the end of February in respect of the ensuing financial year.

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ii Guidelines

The Chief Finance Officer will issue guidelines for the preparation of the annual Revenue Budget and Strategic Asset Investment Framework. These will take account of:

- legal requirements;
- the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP);
- medium-term financial planning prospects;
- available resources;
- spending pressures;
- best value, efficiency savings and relevant government guidelines;
- other internal policy documents.

iii Revenue Budget Preparation

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and other budget holders to provide relevant information to the Finance team to ensure budget estimates reflect agreed Service Plans.

iv Capital Budget Preparation

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for setting out the Authority's capital requirements and associated costs. Provision for capital expenditure is shown in the Authority's Strategic Asset Investment Framework which is refreshed by the Chief Finance Officer on an annual basis in consultation with the Lead Member for Assets for subsequent approval by the Authority. This will include advice to the Authority in setting an affordable borrowing limit and an assessment of the impact of capital expenditure on the Prudential Indicators as required by the Prudential Code (the CIPFA professional code of practice for local authorities in taking investment and borrowing decisions).

Financial provision in the Strategic Asset Investment Framework does not give authority to spend on capital projects. Provision is only converted into a capital budget once a business case has been approved by Management Committee.

3.6 Budget Monitoring and Control

i Monitoring and Reporting

It is the responsibility of Heads of Service and cost centre managers to control and monitor income and expenditure within their area. They should also take any action necessary to avoid exceeding their budget allocation. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for providing appropriate financial tools to enable budgets to be monitored effectively.

Each month, in accordance with the budget monitoring timescales set out by the Chief Finance Officer, cost centre managers must provide the Chief Finance Officer with budget monitoring information. This will include proposed actions to address any variances against budget together with a forecast of projected outturn at the year end.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for submitting quarterly reports to the Management Committee on the budget position for both revenue and capital expenditure. Financial performance information will also be provided to the Audit and Governance Committee as part of the Quarterly Performance Report.

ii Virements

A virement does not create additional overall budget liability. It is a transfer of budget provision either within or between budget headings and can be used as an effective tool to assist in managing budgets effectively within a cash limit.

Cost centre managers and the Chief Finance Officer are responsible for agreeing in-year virements. The Chief Finance Officer or deputy and the Head of Service must sign-off all virements.

The Management Committee is required to approve a virement if:

- it involves a change in policy;
- it results in expenditure on new capital projects;
- the Chief Finance Officer requires it.

3.7 Maintenance of General Fund Balance and Reserves

It is the responsibility of the Chief Finance Officer to advise the Authority on prudent levels of reserves.

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It is incumbent on the Authority to review the level of reserves each year before deciding the level of Council Tax. Reserves are maintained as a matter of prudence. They enable the Authority to provide for unexpected events and thereby protect it from overspending, should such events occur. Reserves for specific purposes may also be maintained.

The Chief Finance Officer will provide Management Committee with a year-end reserves position to show movements to and from earmarked reserves and the General Reserve.

4. Risk Management and Control of Resources

4.1 Overview

It is essential that robust, integrated systems are in place and maintained for identifying and evaluating all significant operational and corporate risks to the Authority. This should include the proactive participation of all those associated with planning and delivering services.

4.2 Risk Management

The Management Committee is responsible for approving a Corporate Risk Management Policy statement and strategy and for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management, after considering recommendations from the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive is responsible for preparing the Authority's Corporate Risk Management Policy and for promoting it throughout the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive is responsible for maintaining the corporate risk register, which will be reviewed by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for identifying and reporting corporate risks of the Authority to the Management Committee and for monitoring and reviewing corporate risks on a regular basis. The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing the Corporate Risk Management Policy and is also responsible for providing assurance on the robustness of the governance processes around risk management.

All managers are responsible for identifying and reporting to the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive risks in their area which need to be included in the corporate risk register and for risk management within their areas of responsibility.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Authority on insurance matters and for ensuring that proper insurance cover exists.

4.3 Internal Control

Internal Control refers to the systems of control implemented by management to help ensure achievement of the Authority's objectives in a way that promotes economic, efficient and effective use of resources. In addition, the systems of control ensure that the Authority's assets are kept secure and interests are protected.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising on effective systems of internal control. These arrangements must ensure compliance with all relevant statutes and regulations and other relevant statements of best practice. They should ensure that public funds are properly safeguarded and used economically, efficiently and in accordance with statute.

It is the responsibility of Directors and Heads of Service to establish sound arrangements for planning, appraising, authorising and controlling their operations in order to achieve continuous improvement, economy, efficiency and effectiveness and for achieving their financial performance targets.

4.4 Audit Requirements

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Authority to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of controls. A review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit should be conducted at least once a year and the findings considered as part of the consideration of the system of internal control, referred to above.

The Authority must also publish an approved Annual Governance Statement, prepared in accordance with proper practices, with its Statement of Accounts.

The Internal Audit function is outsourced. The Internal Auditors comply with all of the relevant codes and standards.

The Internal Auditors have the authority to enter land or any premises used by the Authority at any time and have access to all Authority correspondence, systems, documents, books, property or other records related to the Authority's business. The Chief Finance Officer shall be entitled to receive an explanation to establish the correctness of any matter under examination.

The external auditor audits and certifies the Statement of Accounts and provides a value for money judgment.

The Authority may be subject to audit, inspection or investigation by external bodies who have statutory rights of access.

The Chief Finance Officer should be notified immediately of any financial irregularities or suspected irregularities, or any circumstances which may suggest the possibility of irregularities in any of the Authority's functions. Any investigation

should be undertaken in accordance with the Authority's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

4.5 Prevention of Fraud and Corruption

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Authority's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy. The Director of Support Services is responsible for the Authority's Whistleblowing policy.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for establishing and implementing effective controls to help prevent and/or detect incidents of fraud or corruption, for addressing key business risks, for ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they comply with the Authority's Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy, and for creating an environment where all staff feel able to raise any concerns they may have.

4.6 Separation of Duties

Financial procedures must be established whenever possible to ensure separation of duties. This means different members of staff should undertake different parts of a sequence of activities in order to ensure that no one individual authorises an entire series of transactions.

4.7 Assets

Directors and Heads of Service should ensure that records and assets are properly maintained and securely held by a method approved by the Chief Finance Officer. They should also ensure that contingency plans for the security of assets and continuity of service in the event of disaster or system failure are in place.

All vehicles and any other assets (purchased individually or as a group) that have a value over £7,000 should be capitalised and entered onto the fixed asset register.

4.8 Investments and Treasury Management

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the arrangements for managing the Authority's cash flow, its borrowing activities and its lending activities, in accordance with policies agreed by the Authority.

The Chief Finance Officer shall undertake Treasury Management activities in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services.

Before the start of each financial year the Chief Finance Officer will prepare a report on the Treasury Management Strategy for approval by the Authority. The Chief Finance Officer will also report to the Authority on the performance of the Treasury Management function.

The Chief Finance Officer will maintain the Treasury Management Policy Statement setting out the framework for Treasury Management within the Authority.

4.9 Staff

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for controlling staffing levels by:

- advising the Authority on the budget necessary in any given year to cover estimated staffing levels;
- adjusting staffing to a level which can be funded within approved budget provision and varying the level as necessary within that budget constraint in order to meet changing operational needs;
- the proper use of agreed recruitment procedures.

5. Systems and Procedures

5.1 Overview

Sound systems and procedures are essential to an effective framework of accountability and control.

5.2 Systems

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the operation of the Authority's accounting systems, the form of accounts and the supporting financial records. Any changes made by Directors and Officers to the existing financial systems or the implementation of new systems must be approved by the Chief Finance Officer prior to any new developments or changes.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for the proper operation of financial processes in their own departments. Any changes to agreed financial procedures by Directors and Officers to meet their own specific service needs must be agreed in advance with the Chief Finance Officer.

Directors and Heads of Service should ensure that their staff receive relevant financial training that has been approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

5.3 Devolved Budget arrangements

The Chief Finance Officer will agree standards, systems and procedures for all budget-holding officers within the Service and the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive will ensure that all budget-holding officers are accountable to the Chief Finance Officer on all financial matters.

5.4 Procurement

Directors, Heads of Service and cost centre managers must ensure that the Authority obtains value for money from procurement and that all procurement is in compliance with the Authority's Contract Regulations.

5.5 Income, Expenditure and Debt Recovery

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the payment of all accounts.

As part of the overall control framework of accountability and control, the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for specifying procedures for ordering, making payments and for collecting income.

Directors, Heads of Service and cost centre managers must ensure that all income due to the Authority is identified and charged correctly in accordance with the Authority's current charging policy. They must also ensure that all income due to the Authority is collected in a timely manner. It must also be receipted properly and banked.

Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring compliance with procedures set out by the Chief Finance Officer on ordering, making payments and for collecting income.

The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer has delegated authority to write off debts of up to 0.05% of the annual Authority revenue budget where there is no prospect of recovery. Debt write-offs of up to 0.1% of the budget can be authorised by the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. All write-offs must be logged and will be subject to scrutiny by both internal and external audit. Debt write-offs above these levels must be approved by Management Committee.

5.6 Payroll

The Director of Support Services and Chief Finance Officer or Deputy are responsible for accurately notifying the payroll bureau of all salary payments,

including payments for overtime, allowances to members and pensions. The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that robust controls are in place.

5.7 Taxation

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for advising the Senior Leadership Team and officers with financial responsibilities on all taxation issues that affect the Authority in the light of guidance issued by appropriate bodies and relevant legislation.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining the Authority's tax records, making all tax payments, receiving tax credits and submitting tax returns by the due date as appropriate.

5.8 Stocks, stores and inventories

Inventories shall be kept by the relevant Heads of Service of:

- items of operational equipment;
- stock items of non-operational equipment or clothing

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for maintaining proper security of stock items and should aim to achieve the maximum utilisation of such assets in the provision of services.

The advice of the Chief Finance Officer or Deputy must be sought for the disposal of stock items.

5.9 Leases

Any cost centre manager seeking to put in place lease arrangements must seek the advice of the Chief Finance Officer or Deputy. All leases must comply with the Authority's Contract Regulations.

5.10 Information technology systems

Directors and Heads of Service must ensure that, where appropriate, IT and other systems are registered in compliance with data protection legislation. Directors and Heads of Service must also ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under any access to information legislation.

The Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive must ensure there is a corporate approach to systems development in line with the IT and e-government strategy.

6. External Arrangements

6.1 Overview

There are and will continue to be requirements to work collaboratively to increase the efficiency of the Authority's activities. The Authority provides a distinctive leadership role for the community and brings together the contributions of the various stakeholders.

6.2 Partnerships

The Management Committee is responsible for approving partnership arrangements and joint working initiatives with other local public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to address local needs.

The Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer are responsible for promoting and maintaining the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration in partnerships that apply throughout the Authority. They must also consider the overall corporate governance arrangements and legal issues when contracts are being arranged with external bodies.

The Chief Finance Officer must ensure that the accounting arrangements to be adopted relating to partnerships and joint ventures are satisfactory and that the risks have been fully appraised before agreements are entered into with external bodies.

The Senior Leadership Team members are responsible for:

- ensuring that appropriate approvals are obtained before any negotiations are concluded in relation to work with external bodies;
- ensuring all partnerships entered into are evaluated and contribute to the achievement of the Authority's objectives;
- ensuring that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place;
- ensuring that such agreements and arrangements do not impact adversely upon the services provided by the Authority;
- ensuring that all arrangements comply with any prevailing partnership policy;
- ensuring that such agreements and arrangements have been properly risk-assessed and linked to the Risk Register.

6.3 External Funding

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for ensuring that all funding notified by external bodies is received and properly recorded in the Authority's accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer must be consulted on the financial and probity implications of all projects involving funding from external sources.

In promoting or committing the Authority to any projects which will receive some external funding Directors must consult with the Chief Finance Officer, where:

- the acceptance of that new grant or contribution would result in costs being incurred prior to receipt; and/or
- the additional cost commitment exceeds the approved budget for the current or future years.

All funding received from external bodies or associated parties must be properly recorded in the Authority's accounts. Key conditions of funding and any statutory requirements must be understood and followed. Any match-funding requirements must be given due consideration prior to entering into long-term agreements and future revenue budgets must reflect those requirements.

6.4 Work for Third Parties

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for approving the arrangements for any officer wishing to work for third parties or external bodies that derives from the position they hold in RBFRS, subject to any advice provided by the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. In the case of Directors working for third parties or external bodies, approval should be sought from the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee.

6.5 Local Authority Companies and Community Interest Companies

Prior to the Authority, or any officer on behalf of the Authority, taking an interest (e.g. membership, share-holding or directorship) in a company, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer.

Any clauses required by the Chief Finance Officer and/or the Monitoring Officer to safeguard the Authority's position must be included in the company's constitutional documents.

6.6 Sponsorship and advertising

Prior to entering into any sponsorship arrangements, formal approval should be sought from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which in turn has sought advice from the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer. This advice should also be sought for services in-kind arrangements where no or little money changes hands.

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2019/20 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2020/21 |
| LEAD OFFICER | CONOR BYRNE, HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLOR GRAHAM HOWE |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | N/A |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To present the Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management update for 2020/21, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE the Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20;**
 2.2 **NOTE the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2020/21.**

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Treasury management in local Government during 2019/20 and 2020/21 has been regulated by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
- 3.2 The Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20 is shown as Appendix A. Performance is in line with the prudential indicators approved by the Authority in February 2019.
- 3.3 The Authority has not borrowed any money since March 2010. Since this time the Authority has been setting aside funds annually to repay these loans, so the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) has reduced to a level lower than

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the total borrowing currently held. However, this position will align over the current year. There is an expectation that additional borrowing will be required in quarter 4 2020/21.

- 3.4 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2019/20 is shown as Appendix B.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Investment income interest received for the 2019/20 financial year totalled £117,000. Estimated interest income to be received in 2020/21 is £22,000.
- 5.2 COVID-19 and the detrimental effect on the Bank of England base rate has had a significant impact on the estimated investment return in the current year. Officers continue to monitor this area closely, but opportunities are extremely limited in the current market.
- 5.3 No further borrowing was undertaken in 2019/20, or to date in 2020/21. Whilst COVID-19 has led to delays in some planned capital projects, it is estimated that capital spend in 2020/21 will still exceed £6.3m. This will be funded from revenue contributions and additional borrowing.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Authority's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles.
- 8.2 The Authority works closely with our Treasury Advisors to ensure that these principles are adhered to, and risk is monitored closely as part of this.

- 8.3 Whilst a small proportion of the investment portfolio is managed by Oxfordshire County Council, their legal status as a public body leads us to believe they are our lowest counterparty risk.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

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

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Chief Fire Officer
10.2 Head of Finance and Procurement

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes (revised December 2017)
11.2 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20 approved by the Authority on 25th February 2019.
11.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020/21 approved by the Authority on 14th February 2020.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Annual Treasury Report 2019/20
12.2 Appendix B – Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2020/21

13. CONTACT DETAILS

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

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ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

End of year review reflecting performance in 2019/20 and the position as at 31 March 2020.





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Appendix A



Introduction

This Authority is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2019/20. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2019/20 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Fire Authority should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Fire Authority 25/02/2019)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Fire Authority 24/10/2019)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

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

The Authority's Capital Expenditure and Financing

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

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



The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure, which was all financed using capital and revenue resources.

| | 2018/19 Actual (£000's) | 2019/20 Original Planned (£000's) | 2019/20 Actual (£000's) |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Capital Expenditure | 2,065 | 6,958 | 4,036 |

The original planned expenditure in 2019/20 included provisional phased budget allocations of £2m for the new station at Theale, £1.75m for new wholetime appliances and £0.75m for the new Aerial Ladder Platform. The timescales and profiling for these, and some of the other major capital property projects, was amended during 2019/20 and this spend will now be incurred in future financial years.

The Authority's Overall Borrowing Need

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

Gross borrowing and the CFR - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Authority should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2018/19) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2019/20) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Authority is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Authority some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2019/20. The table below highlights the Authority's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Authority has complied with this prudential indicator.

| | 2018/19 Actual (£000's) | 2019/20 Budget (£000's) | 2019/20 Actual (£000's) |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Gross Borrowing position | 8,842 | 8,842 | 8,842 |
| CFR | 5,377 | 5,083 | 5,022 |

Whilst the gross borrowing position at the end of 2019/20 does exceed the CFR, the Authority has plans in place to ensure that this is not the case by the end of 2020/21.



The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Authority does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2019/20 the Authority has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

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

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

| | 2019/20 (£000's) |
|---|------------------|
| Authorised Limit | 11,342 |
| Maximum gross borrowing position | 8,842 |
| Operational boundary | 8,942 |
| Average gross borrowing position | 8,842 |
| Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream | 4.94% |

**Treasury Position as at 31 March 2020**

At the beginning and the end of 2019/20 the Authority's treasury position was as follows:

| | 31st March 2019 Principal (£000's) | Rate / Return | Average Life (Yrs) | | 31st March 2020 Principal (£000's) | Rate / Return | Average Life (Yrs) |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Debt: | | | | | | | |
| Fixed Rate Funding | | | | | | | |
| - PWLB | 8,842 | 4.59% | 9.7 | | 8,842 | 4.59% | 8.7 |
| CFR | 5,377 | | | | 5,022 | | |
| Over borrowing | 3,465 | | | | 3,820 | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Investments: | | | | | | | |
| Instant Access | 7,974 | 0.70% | | | 4,253 | 0.53% | |
| 95 Day Notice Accounts | 6,517 | 0.97% | | | 6,548 | 0.97% | |
| Long Term | 479 | 0.99% | | | 534 | 0.99% | |
| Total Investments | 14,970 | | | | 11,335 | | |

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

| | 31st March 2019 Actual (£000's) | 31st March 2020 Actual (£000's) |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Under 12 months | 0 | 1,750 |
| 12 months and within 24 months | 1,750 | 1,170 |
| 24 Months and within 5 Years | 1,170 | 0 |
| 5 Years and within 10 years | 991 | 2,672 |
| 10 Years and within 20 Years | 4,931 | 3,250 |
| Total | 8,842 | 8,842 |



The Strategy for 2019/20

Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment returns remained low during 2019/20. The expectation for interest rates within the treasury management strategy for 2019/20 was that Bank Rate would stay at 0.75% during 2019/20 as it was not expected that the MPC would be able to deliver on an increase in Bank Rate until the Brexit issue was finally settled.

However, there was an expectation that Bank Rate would rise after that issue was settled, but would only rise to 1.0% during 2020. Shorter term investment interest rates were fairly flat during most of the year until the two cuts in Bank Rate in March 2020 caused investment rates to fall sharply.

The Authority does not have sufficient cash balances to be able to place deposits for extended periods so as to earn higher rates from longer deposits. The Authority has continued to take a cautious approach to investing, whilst also being aware of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

The Authority's debt position has remained unchanged during 2019/20. No rescheduling of long term debt was done during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.

Investment Outturn

Investment Policy – the Authority's investment policy is governed by MHCLG investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Fire Authority on 25th February 2019. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

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

Investments held by the Authority – at the end of 2019/20, the Authority had investments totalling £11.34m. The Authority regularly reviews its cash flow requirements over the forthcoming period to ensure liquidity, whilst also looking to maximise return by investing sums for longer periods where possible. The Authority maintained its investments in 95 day notice accounts in 2019/20 to maximise return



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Appendix A

whilst also enabling short term access to the funds when necessary for capital purposes.

Of the investments currently held long term by the Authority, £0.5m is held and invested by Oxfordshire County Council. This is our share of the TVFCS Renewals Fund which has been earmarked to replace IT assets where necessary.

Borrowing Outturn

No additional borrowing, rescheduling or debt repayments were undertaken during the year.

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mid-year review reflecting
performance and the position as
at 30 September 2020.





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Appendix B



Introduction

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

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

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

- An economic update for the first part of the 2020/21 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Authority's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Authority's investment portfolio for 2020/21;
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2020/21;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2020/21;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2020/21.



In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2020/21, all local authorities have been required to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

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

A report setting out our Capital Strategy was presented to Fire Authority in February 2020 and will be presented annually as part of the budget setting papers.

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

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

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

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

Economic Update

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

Movements in the Bank rate agreed by the MPC affect the Authority in two ways. Firstly, the yield we are able to generate from our investment portfolio will have a direct link to the Bank Rate. As the rate increases, the investment rates we are able to access, and therefore return we generate, should also increase.



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

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21 were approved by Fire Authority in February 2020. There are no changes to either strategy; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

Authority's Capital Position and Prudential Indicators

This part of the report is structured to update:

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

The table below shows the capital expenditure budget agreed for 2020/21, and the spend to the end of September 2020. The Strategic Asset Investment Framework (SAIF) was agreed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but work has been ongoing where possible. However, there is still a significant element of uncertainty over potential timescales and therefore subsequent payments that will be due in both this and future financial years, which will impact directly on performance within 2020/21.

| Capital Expenditure | 2020/21 Budget as per SAIF (£000's) | Actual costs as at 30 September 2019 (£000's) |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Property | 5,664 | 1,942 |
| Fleet & Equipment | 2,065 | 60 |
| ICT | 678 | 129 |
| TOTAL | 8,407 | 2,131 |



Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2020/21 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Authority has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

| | 2020/21 Original Estimate (£000's) | Position as at 30 September 2020 (£000's) | 2020/21 Revised Estimate (£000's) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|
| Debt | 10,693 | 8,842 | 8,340 |
| Other long term liabilities | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Total | 10,793 | 8,942 | 8,570 |

The Chief Finance Officer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this prudential indicator. The original estimated debt position at the end of March 2021 was based on the approved capital spend of £8.4m. But with delays to projects now likely due to COVID-19, there is an expectation that spend will not exceed £6.4m and therefore the additional borrowing need in 2020/21 will be reduced to £1.25m. External borrowing totalling £1.75m is due for repayment in March 2021.

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

| Authorised Limit for External Debt | 2020/21 Original Estimate (£000's) | Position as at 30 September 2020 (£000's) | 2020/21 Revised Estimate (£000's) |
|---|---|--|--|
| Debt | 12,693 | 12,693 | 12,693 |
| Other long term liabilities | 500 | 500 | 500 |
| Total | 13,193 | 13,193 | 13,193 |



Investment Portfolio

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

As shown by the interest rate in the table below, it is now impossible to earn the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as all investment rates are barely above zero now that Bank Rate is at 0.10%, while some entities, including more recently the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF), are offering negative rates of return in some shorter time periods. Given this risk environment and the fact that increases in Bank Rate are unlikely to occur before the end of the current forecast horizon of 31st March 2023, investment returns are expected to remain low.

The Authority held short term investments totalling £17.26m as at 30th September 2020.

| | 30 Sept 2020 Principal (£000's) | Average Rate / Return |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Investments: | | |
| Instant Access | 11,691 | 0.01% |
| 95 Day Notice Accounts | 5,038 | 0.33% |
| Long Term | 534 | 0.99% * |
| Total Investments | 17,263 | |

** Long term investments relate to our share of the TVFCS renewals fund which is held and invested by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of TVFCS partners. Rate of return shown is that achieved in 2019/20, but expectation that this will reduce significantly in 20/21.*

The Chief Financial Officer confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2020/21.

The budgeted investment return for 2020/21 is £25,000, and the Authority estimates total income of £22,000 based on the current investment position. However, this forecast is reliant on domestic and global political actions and the subsequent impact on the bank rate set by the Monetary policy Committee in the UK. This area is closely monitored as part of standard cashflow management procedures.



Borrowing Strategy

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) estimate for 2020/21 is £8,340k. The CFR denotes the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Authority may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. It is anticipated that there will be a requirement for additional borrowing of £1.25m in 2020/21.

Debt Rescheduling

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

Detailed Economic Update

Global Outlook from Link Asset Services

UK. As expected, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee kept Bank Rate unchanged on 6th August. It also kept unchanged the level of quantitative easing at £745bn. Its forecasts were optimistic in terms of three areas:

- The fall in GDP in the first half of 2020 was revised from 28% to 23% (subsequently revised to 21.8%). This is still one of the largest falls in output of any developed nation. However, it is only to be expected as the UK economy is heavily skewed towards consumer-facing services – an area which was particularly vulnerable to being damaged by lockdown.
- The peak in the unemployment rate was revised down from 9% to 7½% by Q4 2020.
- It forecast that there would be excess demand in the economy by Q3 2022 causing CPI inflation to rise above the 2% target in Q3 2022, (based on market interest rate expectations for a further loosening in policy). Nevertheless, even if the Bank were to leave policy unchanged, inflation was still projected to be above 2% in 2023.

It also squashed any idea of using negative interest rates, at least in the next six months or so. It suggested that while negative rates can work in some circumstances, it would be “less effective as a tool to stimulate the economy” at this time when banks are worried about future loan losses. It also has “other instruments available”, including QE and the use of forward guidance.



The MPC expected the £300bn of quantitative easing purchases announced between its March and June meetings to continue until the “turn of the year”. This implies that the pace of purchases will slow further to about £4bn a week, down from £14bn a week at the height of the crisis and £7bn more recently.

In conclusion, this would indicate that the Bank could now just sit on its hands as the economy was recovering better than expected. However, the MPC acknowledged that the “medium-term projections were a less informative guide than usual” and the minutes had multiple references to downside risks, which were judged to persist both in the short and medium term. One has only to look at the way in which second waves of the virus are now impacting many countries including Britain, to see the dangers. However, rather than a national lockdown, as in March, any spikes in virus infections are now likely to be dealt with by localised measures and this should limit the amount of economic damage caused. In addition, Brexit uncertainties ahead of the year-end deadline are likely to be a drag on recovery. The wind down of the initial generous furlough scheme through to the end of October is another development that could cause the Bank to review the need for more support for the economy later in the year. Admittedly, the Chancellor announced in late September a second six month package from 1st November of government support for jobs whereby it will pay up to 22% of the costs of retaining an employee working a minimum of one third of their normal hours. There was further help for the self-employed, freelancers and the hospitality industry. However, this is a much less generous scheme than the furlough package and will inevitably mean there will be further job losses from the 11% of the workforce still on furlough in mid-September.

Overall, the pace of recovery is not expected to be in the form of a rapid V shape, but a more elongated and prolonged one after a sharp recovery in June through to August which left the economy 11.7% smaller than in February. The last three months of 2020 are now likely to show no growth as consumers will probably remain cautious in spending and uncertainty over the outcome of the UK/EU trade negotiations concluding at the end of the year will also be a headwind. If the Bank felt it did need to provide further support to recovery, then it is likely that the tool of choice would be more QE.

There will be some painful longer term adjustments as e.g. office space and travel by planes, trains and buses may not recover to their previous level of use for several years, or possibly ever. There is also likely to be a reversal of globalisation as this crisis has shown up how vulnerable long-distance supply chains are. On the other hand, digital services is one area that has already seen huge growth.

One key addition to the Bank’s forward guidance was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that “it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and achieving the 2% target sustainably”. That seems designed to say, in effect, that even if inflation rises to 2% in a couple of years’ time, do not expect any action from



the MPC to raise Bank Rate – until they can clearly see that level of inflation is going to be persistently above target if it takes no action to raise Bank Rate.

The Financial Policy Committee (FPC) report on 6th August revised down their expected credit losses for the banking sector to “somewhat less than £80bn”. It stated that in its assessment “banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC’s central projection”. The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC’s projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.

US. The incoming sets of data during the first week of August were almost universally stronger than expected. With the number of new daily coronavirus infections beginning to abate, recovery from its contraction this year of 10.2% should continue over the coming months and employment growth should also pick up again. However, growth will be dampened by continuing outbreaks of the virus in some states leading to fresh localised restrictions. At its end of August meeting, the Fed tweaked its inflation target from 2% to maintaining an average of 2% over an unspecified time period i.e. following periods when inflation has been running persistently below 2%, appropriate monetary policy will likely aim to achieve inflation moderately above 2% for some time. This change is aimed to provide more stimulus for economic growth and higher levels of employment and to avoid the danger of getting caught in a deflationary “trap” like Japan. It is to be noted that inflation has actually been under-shooting the 2% target significantly for most of the last decade so financial markets took note that higher levels of inflation are likely to be in the pipeline; long term bond yields duly rose after the meeting. The Fed also called on Congress to end its political disagreement over providing more support for the unemployed as there is a limit to what monetary policy can do compared to more directed central government fiscal policy. The FOMC’s updated economic and rate projections in mid-September showed that officials expect to leave the fed funds rate at near-zero until at least end-2023 and probably for another year or two beyond that. There is now some expectation that where the Fed has led in changing its inflation target, other major central banks will follow. The increase in tension over the last year between the US and China is likely to lead to a lack of momentum in progressing the initial positive moves to agree a phase one trade deal.

EU. The economy was recovering well towards the end of Q2 after a sharp drop in GDP, (e.g. France 18.9%, Italy 17.6%). However, the second wave of the virus affecting some countries could cause a significant slowdown in the pace of recovery, especially in countries more dependent on tourism. The fiscal support package, eventually agreed by the EU after prolonged disagreement between various countries, is unlikely to provide significant support and quickly enough to make an appreciable difference in weaker countries. The ECB has been struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target and it is therefore expected that it will have to provide more monetary policy support through more quantitative easing purchases of bonds in the absence of sufficient fiscal support.



CHINA. After a concerted effort to get on top of the virus outbreak in Q1, economic recovery was strong in Q2 and has enabled it to recover all of the contraction in Q1. However, this was achieved by major central government funding of yet more infrastructure spending. After years of growth having been focused on this same area, any further spending in this area is likely to lead to increasingly weaker economic returns. This could, therefore, lead to a further misallocation of resources which will weigh on growth in future years.

JAPAN. There are some concerns that a second wave of the virus is gaining momentum and could dampen economic recovery from its contraction of 8.5% in GDP. It has been struggling to get out of a deflation trap for many years and to stimulate consistent significant GDP growth and to get inflation up to its target of 2%, despite huge monetary and fiscal stimulus. It is also making little progress on fundamental reform of the economy. The resignation of Prime Minister Abe is not expected to result in any significant change in economic policy.

WORLD GROWTH. Latin America and India are currently hotspots for virus infections. World growth will be in recession this year. Inflation is unlikely to be a problem for some years due to the creation of excess production capacity and depressed demand caused by the coronavirus crisis.

Interest Rate Forecasts

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

| Link Group Interest Rate View 11.8.20 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Dec-20 | Mar-21 | Jun-21 | Sep-21 | Dec-21 | Mar-22 | Jun-22 | Sep-22 | Dec-22 | Mar-23 |
| Bank Rate View | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 |
| 3 month average earnings | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 month average earnings | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.10 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12 month average earnings | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.15 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 5yr PWLB Rate | 1.90 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.10 | 2.10 | 2.10 | 2.10 |
| 10yr PWLB Rate | 2.10 | 2.10 | 2.10 | 2.10 | 2.20 | 2.20 | 2.20 | 2.30 | 2.30 | 2.30 |
| 25yr PWLB Rate | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.60 | 2.60 | 2.60 | 2.70 | 2.70 | 2.70 | 2.70 |
| 50yr PWLB Rate | 2.30 | 2.30 | 2.30 | 2.40 | 2.40 | 2.40 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 | 2.50 |

The coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March to cut Bank Rate to first 0.25%, and then to 0.1%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its meeting on 6th August (and the subsequent September meeting), although some forecasters had suggested that a cut into negative territory could happen. However, the Governor of the Bank of England has made it clear that he currently thinks that such a move would do more damage than good and that more quantitative easing is the favoured tool if further action becomes necessary. As shown in the forecast table above, no increase in Bank Rate is expected within the



forecast horizon ending on 31st March 2023 as economic recovery is expected to be only gradual and, therefore, prolonged.

The balance of risks to the UK

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is probably relatively even, but is subject to major uncertainty due to the virus.
- There is relatively little UK domestic risk of increases or decreases in Bank Rate and significant changes in shorter term PwLB rates. The Bank of England has effectively ruled out the use of negative interest rates in the near term and increases in Bank Rate are likely to be some years away given the underlying economic expectations. However, it is always possible that safe haven flows, due to unexpected domestic developments and those in other major economies, could impact gilt yields, (and so PwLB rates), in the UK.

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

- UK - further waves of virus infections requiring national lockdowns
- UK / EU trade negotiations – breakdown in negotiations could cause significant economic disruption and a fresh major downturn in the rate of growth.
- UK - Bank of England takes action too quickly, or too far, over the next three years to raise Bank Rate and causes UK economic growth to be weaker than currently anticipated.
- A resurgence of the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis. The ECB has taken monetary policy action to support the bonds of EU states, with the positive impact most likely for “weaker” countries. In addition, the EU recently agreed a €750bn fiscal support package. These actions will help shield weaker economic regions for the next year or so. However, in the case of Italy, the cost of the virus crisis has added to its already huge debt mountain and its slow economic growth will leave it vulnerable to markets returning to taking the view that its level of debt is unsupportable. There remains a sharp divide between northern EU countries favouring low debt to GDP and annual balanced budgets and southern countries who want to see jointly issued Eurobonds to finance economic recovery. This divide could undermine the unity of the EU in time to come.
- Weak capitalisation of some European banks, which could be undermined further depending on extent of credit losses resultant of the pandemic.
- German minority government & general election in 2021. In the German general election of September 2017, Angela Merkel’s CDU party was left in a vulnerable minority position dependent on the fractious support of the SPD party, as a result of the rise in popularity of the anti-immigration AfD party. The CDU has done badly in subsequent state elections but the SPD has done particularly badly. Angela Merkel



has stepped down from being the CDU party leader but she intends to remain as Chancellor until the general election in 2021. This then leaves a major question mark over who will be the major guiding hand and driver of EU unity when she steps down.

- Other minority EU governments. Austria, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium also have vulnerable minority governments dependent on coalitions which could prove fragile.
- Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary now form a strongly anti-immigration bloc within the EU. There has also been a rise in anti-immigration sentiment in Germany and France.
- Geopolitical risks, for example in China, Iran or North Korea, but also in Europe and other Middle Eastern countries, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.
- US – the Presidential election in 2020: this could have repercussions for the US economy and SINO-US trade relations.
- Geopolitical risks, for example in North Korea, but also in Europe and the Middle East, which could lead to increasing safe haven flows.

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

- UK - stronger than currently expected recovery in UK economy.
- Post-Brexit – if an agreement was reached that removed the majority of threats of economic disruption between the EU and the UK.
- The Bank of England is too slow in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflationary pressures to build up too strongly within the UK economy, which then necessitates a later rapid series of increases in Bank Rate faster than we currently expect.

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Appendix B

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE |
| LEAD OFFICER | KATIE MILLS, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLOR TINA MCKENZIE-BOYLE |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | FOR NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee on 30 July 2020 for the Fire Authority to note the Annual Report on Governance detailing Member Attendance and Allowances in 2019/20.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the Annual Report on Governance and appendices.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 This is my first Annual Report as Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/2020. This report was originally scheduled to be presented to Fire Authority in June 2020, however, it was subsequently moved due to the cancellation of Audit and Governance Committee in March, in response to the Government lockdown measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- 3.2 In June 2019, we started the year with the successful judgement from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) as:

- 'good' at effectively keeping people safe and secure, from fire and other risks;

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- 'good' at efficiently keeping people safe and secure, from fire and other risks; and
 - 'good' at looking after its people
- 3.3 RBFRS had been highlighted in the national report for a number of areas of good practice. The most recent report from HMICFRS published 15 January 2020 'State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019, outlines Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services' Sir Thomas P Winsor's assessment of the fire and rescue sector, based on inspections carried out between June 2018 and August 2019.
- 3.4 HMICFRS had announced the dates of the next round of inspections to be held early 2021, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic the inspection process has been suspended. Management Committee were provided with an HMICFRS inspection update at their meeting on 21 July 2020, to inform them of a potential COVID-19 Inspection and revised timescales for round two inspections.
- 3.5 I have every confidence in RBFRS, based on the judgement received from the last inspection and the diligent work, performance and level of service provided. In addition to the positive strategic direction of the Fire Authority, I for one have every faith the Service will continue going from strength to strength.
- 3.6 The Audit and Governance Committee has been unable to sign off its 2018/19 Statement of Accounts due to a number of complexities that had transpired during the year. The Committee agreed at its meeting on 27 January 2020, to delegate the approval of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts, on receipt of the Audit Opinion to the Head of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.7 RBFRS received substantial assurance in each of the audits undertaken by Internal Auditors, RSM to date (2019/2020) namely:
- Business Continuity and Emergency Planning
 - Financial Planning and Long Term Budgeting
 - Risk Management and Governance
 - Firefighter Pension Administration
 - Payroll Provider – Dataplan
 - Key Financial Controls

3.8 The Committee continued to receive regular updates on Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and in July 2019, Home Office representatives attended a meeting to update Members on the progress. This meeting gave Members the opportunity to voice their concerns on the national programme.

3.9 We continue to receive quarterly performance updates. The Quarter 3 updates key highlights were:

- Since April 2017, we have completed 20,448 Safe and Well visits to individuals at heightened risk of dying in an accidental dwelling fire.
- We have conducted 7,475 Safe and Well checks to individuals at increased risk of having a fire in their home and being injured as a result.
- We have concluded 3,154 full fire safety audits in premises (excluding private dwellings) across Berkshire, ensuring businesses are complying with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and carrying out enforcement action where required.
- Of the 24 new firefighters appointed following the 2019 campaign, two were female and two BME. This compares to 2018 where zero appointees were female and only one BME.
- Diversity and difference guidance for managers has been created and included in the induction process
- The roll out of Behavioural Competency Framework awareness training has commenced with Middle Managers and the Watch Based Station Managers.
- We successfully prosecuted two 'responsible persons' this quarter, resulting in one fine of over £13,700. The second case has been sent to the Crown Court for sentencing.

3.10 Governance

3.10.1 The Constitution is regularly reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and sections recommended for amendment will be brought before the Fire Authority for approval. It has been reassuring as Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee that sections of the Handbook are kept up to date to ensure that the Fire Authority is compliant.

3.11 No formal complaints have been received against Members this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Independent Person (s) who have been on standby on the event they will be required to investigate complaints

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along with our Monitoring Officer, Graham Britten. Our Independent Persons, David Comben and Roger Penfold are currently in the third year of their four-year appointment under section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.

3.12 Member Allowances

3.12.1 Member Allowances for the period of June 2019 – May 2020 are shown in Appendix A.

3.12.2 The Members Scheme of Allowances, MA14 states that *'The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with percentage 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.'*ⁱ

3.12.3 Appendix A reflects the recent increase of 2.75% made to Members Allowances.

3.13 Member Attendance

3.13.1 The Attendance of RBFA Members for the Municipal Year 2019/20, is shown in Appendix B of this report. The appendix includes all meetings up to the 31 May 2020. Members are asked to note Committee meetings and the Fire Authority were cancelled in March and April 2020 due to the pandemic.

3.14 Members have been very flexible and accommodating in relation to meeting changes in the year, namely cancellation of Audit and Governance in July 2019 (private meeting was held with Home Office representatives outlined in paragraph 3.6) and the rescheduling of the above Committee meeting and an extraordinary Fire Authority meeting in January 2020. Despite changes to the published Corporate Calendar of meetings, attendance this year has generally been good, no meetings were inquorate, and all business was able to be conducted.

3.15 Most absences have been due either to a meeting clash or a holiday, and apologies, when received, have generally been in good time.

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 Appendix A outlines the cost of Member Allowances and expenses to the Fire Authority.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no risk implications in this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 None for the purpose of this report.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Audit and Governance Committee, 27 January 2020

11.2 Fire & Fire Service – Effectiveness, efficiency and people 2018/19: An inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

11.3 State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Member Allowances

12.2 Appendix B – Member Attendance

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13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead 0118 938 4611

13.2 Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services 0118 938 4605

ⁱ Scheme of Allowance

<https://decisionmaking.rbfrs.co.uk/documents/s13862/2020-2021%20Scheme%20of%20Allowance.pdf>

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Member Payments June 2019-May 2020

| <u>SURNAME</u> | <u>FORENAME</u> | <u>To date Member Allowance</u> | <u>To date Special Responsibility Allowance</u> | <u>To date Travel Expenses</u> | <u>Total Paid to Date 31/05/20</u> |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bateson | Christine | £2,351.18 | £1,176.00 | | £3,527.18 |
| Benneyworth | Dennis | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| Brooks | Jeff | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| Brown | Tricia | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| Cannon | David | £2,351.18 | £3,528 | £438.99 | £6,318.25 |
| Dudley | Colin | £2,351.18 | £11,752.42 | £272.70 | £14,376.30 |
| Gittings | Paul | £2,351.18 | £2,351.18 | | £4,702.36 |
| Helliar-Symons | Pauline | £2,407.09 | £6,034.58 | £154.80 | £8,596.47 |
| Howe | Graham | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| Hulme | Christine | £1,003.12 | | | £1,003.12 |
| Linden | Tony | £2,351.18 | | £99.00 | £2,450.18 |
| Lovelock | Jo | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| McKenzie-Boyle | Tina | £2,351.18 | £3,528 | £208.50 | £6,087.76 |
| Parmar | Satpal | £1,348.06 | | £93.60 | £1,441.66 |
| Plenty | Ted | £2,351.18 | | £205.40 | £2,556.58 |
| Ross | Angus | £2,351.18 | £3,528 | £424.75 | £6,304.01 |
| Shepherd-DuBey | Rachelle | £2,351.18 | £2,351.18 | | £4,702.36 |
| Simpson | Garth | £2,351.18 | | £143.02 | £2,494.20 |
| Smith | Dexter | £2,358.68 | £3,528 | £570.15 | £6,456.91 |
| Stanford-Beale | Jane | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| Werner | Simon | £2,351.18 | | | £2,351.18 |
| | | £47,087.01 | £37,777.68 | £2,610.91 | £87,475.60 |
| Independent Person (s) | | | | | |
| Comben | David | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Penfold | Roger | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Please Note:

Allowances include 2.75% increase to Basic Allowance (BA) and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) from 1 April 2020
 Councillor Parmar left the Fire Authority on 31 December 2019 and Councillor Hulme joined on 1 January 2020.
 Councillor Helliar-Symons received 9 days SRA from 2018/19 in June 2019 (£62.12) and 9 days basic salary in June 2019 (£93.18)
 Councillor Smith received £7.50 on top of the basic salary in June 2019- backpayments from April/May salary increase in 2019
 Nine Members were in receipt of SRA payments.

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Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Attendance- Municipal Year 2019/20 from 26 June 2019 - 31 May 2020 *Committee meetings and Fire Authority in March and April 2020 were cancelled

| Username | Total Expected | Present | % Present | Apologies | Meeting | Meeting Date | Attendance | Comment |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|---------|
| Councillor Angus Ross | 8 | 5 | 62.5% | 3 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies | |
| Councillor Christine Bateson | 7 | 6 | 85.7% | 1 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies due to Council Business Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Christine Hulme | 3 | 2 | 66.6% | 1 | Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 27/01/20 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies | |
| Councillor Colin Dudley | 8 | 7 | 87.5% | 1 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor David Cannon | 8 | 7 | 87.5% | 1 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 05/02/20 18:30 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Dennis Benneyworth | 7 | 3 | 42.8% | 4 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Apologies Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies | |
| Councillor Dexter Smith | 8 | 8 | 100% | 0 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Garth Simpson | 8 | 8 | 100% | 0 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected | |

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Attendance- Municipal Year 2019/20 from 26 June 2019 - 31 May 2020 *Committee meetings and Fire Authority in March and April 2020 were cancelled

| Username | Total Expected | Present | % Present | Apologies | Meeting | Meeting Date | Attendance | Comment |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Councillor Graham Howe | 7 | 6 | 85.7% | 1 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale | 7 | 4 | 57.1% | 3 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Jeff Brooks | 8 | 3 | 37.5% | 5 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Apologies Present, as expected Apologies Apologies | |
| Councillor Jo Lovelock | 8 | 6 | 75% | 2 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Paul Gittings | 8 | 8 | 100% | 0 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons | 8 | 7 | 87.5% | 1 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies, sent representative Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | Substituted by Councillor Howe |
| Councillor Rachelle Shepherd- DuBey | 8 | 7 | 87.5% | 1 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 03/12/19 18:30 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Attendance- Municipal Year 2019/20 from 26 June 2019 - 31 May 2020 *Committee meetings and Fire Authority in March and April 2020 were cancelled

| Username | Total Expected | Present | % Present | Apologies | Meeting | Meeting Date | Attendance | Comment |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--|--|--|---------|
| Councillor Satpal Parmar | 4 | 4 | 100% | 0 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Simon Werner | 7 | 3 | 42.8% | 4 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Apologies Apologies Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies | |
| Councillor Ted Plenty | 8 | 8 | 100% | 0 | Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Management Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 22/07/19 18:30 14/10/19 18:30 03/12/19 18:30 05/02/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle | 7 | 6 | 85.7% | 1 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies | |
| Councillor Tony Linden | 7 | 7 | 100% | 0 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected Present, as expected | |
| Councillor Tricia Brown | 7 | 5 | 71.4% | 2 | Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Audit and Governance Committee Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Royal Berkshire Fire Authority | 17/09/19 18:30 04/11/19 18:30 27/01/20 18:30 26/06/19 18:30 24/10/19 18:30 20/01/20 18:30 14/02/20 18:30 | Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected Present, as expected Apologies Present, as expected | |

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | LEAD MEMBER SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORT |
| LEAD OFFICER | N/A |
| LEAD MEMBER | LEAD MEMBERS |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | TO NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To note six month update reports from Lead Members.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To **NOTE** the reports.

3. REPORT

3.1 The attached appendices A-D detail the six month update reports Annual from the following Lead Members.

- a) Budget and Income Generation Lead Member – Cllr Graham Howe
- b) Collaboration Lead Member – Cllr David Cannon
- c) Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Cllr Dexter Smith
- d) Strategic Assets Lead Member – Cllr Angus Ross

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

4.1 Commitment 1 – We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.

4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies

Agenda Item 17

- 4.3 Commitment 3 – We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings
- 4.4 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda
- 4.5 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.6 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 Please refer to individual reports.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None for the purpose of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A - Budget and Income Generation – Cllr Graham Howe
- 12.2 Appendix B - Collaboration Lead Member – Cllr David Cannon
- 12.3 Appendix C - Integrated Risk Management Plan Lead Member – Cllr Dexter Smith
- 12.4 Appendix D - Strategic Assets Lead Member – Cllr Angus Ross

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Budget and Income Generation – Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement) 0118 938 4720
- 13.2 Collaboration and Strategic Assets – Mark Arkwell (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) 0118 938 4800
- 13.3 Integrated Risk Management Plan – Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services) 0118 938 4605

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Budget and Income Generation

Review

Over the last few years, Members have seen increasing volatility in relation to the Authority's income streams coupled with growing cost pressures around pay, pensions and the necessity to undertake more Protection work. However, when the 2020/21 Budget was set back in February, no one could have predicted the momentous impact that COVID-19 would have had on our Budget and on service delivery.

Support from the Government in the form of two grants (totalling £807,089) provided us with the financial resources to ensure that we were able to focus on staff welfare and build resilience not only to maintain 100% availability of appliances but also to deliver essential support services.

Whilst COVID-19 has hugely impacted the way we work and the services that we can provide to the public, it is important to reflect on key projects that have been and continue to be delivered through these difficult times.

Given that the 2020/21 Budget is based on reserves funding of £284,000, it is clear that the Authority needs to ensure continued delivery of Efficiency Plan savings or where this is not possible to find alternative ways to balance the budget. In this regard, it was important that a final decision regarding the closure of Wargrave Fire Station was made early in the financial year so as to feed into the budget-setting process for the following year. The use of the COVID-19 grant to develop a secure means of holding committee meetings remotely ensured that the June meeting of the Fire Authority could proceed and it was at this meeting that the decision to close Wargrave Fire Station was taken.

The rebuilding of Crowthorne Community Fire Station was another key deliverable for the Authority and, in spite of the COVID-19 restrictions in place, the project was completed on time and on budget.

Given the importance that the Authority places on its Protection work, it is essential that RBFRS continues to build on the foundations that have been put in place over the last couple of years. As part of the Government's commitment in this area, it is

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Appendix A

providing three grants to the Authority to build resilience and expertise. The Building Risk Review Programme has provided the Authority with £60,000 to review all high-rise buildings over 18m. The Protection Uplift Programme supports initial improvements in local protection capability; the Authority's allocation is £64,899. Finally, the Authority will receive £64,400 from the Grenfell Infrastructure Improvements Grant to implement the relevant findings from the Grenfell phase 1 inquiry. RBFRS had already pushed ahead to deliver against its own action plan but the Authority has welcomed the additional funding which, while not sufficient, is allowing further progress to be made in this critical area.

Whilst the Authority is making excellent progress in delivering certain elements of the Corporate Plan, there are of course many business-as-usual activities that have had to be suspended, curtailed, or delivered using new ways of working. With the myriad changes to COVID-19 restrictions, trying to plan activities over the coming months with any certainty is extremely difficult. With this in mind, monthly reviews of forecast expenditure are undertaken with the aim of reallocating unspent resources either to further support service delivery to the public or to invest in staff or infrastructure that will provide future benefit. That said, the overriding aim of all budget monitoring is to ensure value for money in relation to the spending of public money. It is therefore possible that some budgets may need to be carried over to next year to deliver delayed corporate priority programmes of work.

Looking Forward

Government support for the current financial year means that the Authority does not face any immediate funding pressures. However, the funding position for the next financial year and beyond is precarious as there is no clear consensus on the magnitude of the impact that COVID-19 will have on the wider economy and hence council tax and business rates income streams. Another complicating factor is the extent to which the Government will continue to provide financial support to offset reductions in council tax and business rates income.

Faced with this huge level of uncertainty, we have been working on a range of scenarios and will lobby Government as to the deleterious effects of funding reductions on the provision of our service to the public. Having already made over

£7m of savings since 2010, cuts in funding would certainly impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of our Service.

Cllr Graham Howe, Budget and Income Generation Lead

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Collaboration

Review

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

Clearly, this year has been like no other and the impact of Covid has been felt in delivering some of our collaborative work however, I am pleased to report that there have also been a number of successes as well. During the lockdown period, RBFRS supported the wider Local Resilience Forum (LRF) response to the pandemic and was able to build on the relationships developed through the collaboration group to help facilitate and deliver key activities that enabled Authorities across the Thames Valley to support those most at risk from the virus.

An example of this type of work was the coordination and management of the LRF Logistics cell, which oversaw the administration and distribution of over six million pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline social care providers in the nine Local Authorities and three Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) that make up the Thames Valley LRF area, ensuring that those most vulnerable in our communities continued to get the care they needed. Key to its success were the pre-existing relationships with Thames Valley Police, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services as well as support from partners across the region. This activity, and others such as the completion of the new Crowthorne Community fire station, are further detailed in Agenda Item 17 Appendix D.

Like many other forums, the Steering group meetings were initially postponed during the lock down period, however, like members in our authority and across the region, we embraced the use of technology to undertake meetings virtually and since the summer, the steering group have adapted to a 'life with Covid'. This has enabled and

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Appendix B

supported services to refocus on undertaking and delivering the priority projects that were established at the end of 2019.

Ongoing and looking forward

The focus for the immediate future and into the next financial year is a programme of work that demonstrates how our political leadership is ensuring compliance with our statutory duty under the Act.

Priority activity currently includes four distinct projects:

- **Operational Alignment**
This project is focusing on adopting and implementing National Operational Guidance that is aligned across the three services to maximise the effectiveness of our Operational Response. It builds on the work undertaken to date with the introduction of an aligned fleet of Fire engines and equipment.
- **Specialist Fire Protection Services**
Challenges in the built environment have become a significant issue following the terrible fire in Grenfell Tower. To ensure services can access assured advice and guidance in relation to complex buildings and fire engineered solutions, in a way that maximises the efficiency of this limited and expert resource, RBFRS is leading a project to deliver a specialist 'hub' that will provide a single, sustainable and resilient source for fire engineering and enforcement activity across the Thames Valley. This project is planned to commence in quarter 4 of 2020/21
- **Fire Investigation**
The way that forensic fire investigation is accredited, specifically where the investigation may lead to criminal prosecution, is changing. Currently this activity does not require accreditation but from 2023, it will be an expectation that any fire investigation activity that touches the Criminal Justice System will align to the new standards. The accreditation process is complex, lengthy and incurs a cost. This project will develop a collaborative, cost effective and

sustainable approach to the delivery of fire investigation services in Thames Valley and is being led by Thames Valley Police.

- Procurement

There is a well-established Thames Valley procurement plan, across a range of areas, that ensure RBFRS are able procure goods and services that are cost effective and provide the appropriate quality we would expect. A key focus in the next two years will be the joint procurement of new Breathing Apparatus equipment which is a key enabler to the operational alignment programme.

Collaboration work continues to be a complex and challenging environment, I will be working closely with officers to maintain a focus on the balance of resourcing and the delivery of time critical project objectives through the key components of the Thames Valley collaboration structure as we move towards 2021/22.

Cllr David Cannon, Collaboration Lead Member

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Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Review

In preparing this update, it would be impossible not to start by noting the unprecedented public health crisis faced by the Country. Without doubt, COVID-19 has impacted on both the Service and on the delivery of the IRMP programme of work. However, I am pleased to report that we have adapted as best we can, and delivered a number of notable achievements as part of our IRMP programme since my last update.

At the Fire Authority in June, the Fire Authority conscientiously considered the outcome of the public consultation on our three new strategies and underpinning risk analysis covering our Prevention, Protection and Response activities. At this meeting, these three new strategies, which further refined our understanding of local risk, were agreed and will drive our activity through to 2023.

We have retained an important focus on our Protection activity and, in particular, on responding to and learning from the recommendations relating to the Grenfell Tower fire through our Built Environment Programme. As part of this, there has been an increased focus on the challenges posed by High Risk Residential Buildings (HRRBs), with the Service, where appropriate, making full use of its statutory powers to drive remediation of those buildings. As part of this commitment we have continued to increase our access to specialist qualified fire safety staff and engineers to ensure we have the expertise and experience to deliver this vital area of work.

Members will also be aware that I have chaired a Task and Finish Group to respond to the Government's consultation on Fire Safety. The consultation outlined the Government proposes to implement the recommendations set out in the Phase One report of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry that requires new legislation, and allowed us to input on the Fire Safety Bill, as well as the Building Safety Bill.

COVID-19 has impacted on the number of Fire Safety Audits undertaken in the first two quarters of 2020/21. However, the team has adapted its ways of working, following guidance issued by Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council

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(NFCC), to ensure risk critical activity continued and I am pleased that close to 200 Fire Safety Audits have been carried out during this time.

We have also adapted the delivery of our prevention services in line with Government and NFCC advice to ensure we continue to deliver risk critical services where the risk of fire outweighs the risk of COVID-19. This has allowed us to deliver over 850 Safe and Well Visits in the first two quarters of 2020/21, and ensure our prevention activities continue to support the most vulnerable members of society of this challenging time.

One of our IRMP key deliverables for 2020/21 was to further develop local safety initiatives, campaigns and events to target risk at a local level. This is certainly an area made more challenging by the restrictions in place due to COVID-19. However, our teams have been ensuring that they have made effective use of the channels available to them, and at last count 304 prevention and protection messages had been issued via Twitter leading to 556,633 impressions and 53 Facebook messages with a reach of 320,024.

Despite the challenges faced, since the COVID-19 restrictions have been in place, we have been meeting and exceeding our Response Standard commitment to the people of Royal Berkshire. Our target is to respond to emergency incidents within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions. In Quarter One, we responded within 10 minutes on 78.4% of occasions and on 76.6% of occasions in Quarter Two.

A number of other important IRMP projects have been progressing and will be covered by my colleagues in greater detail. These include the build of a new Aerial Ladder Appliance and the development of the new Community Fire Station at Theale, all of which are important elements of our IRMP programme.

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

IRMPs, which is currently out for peer review. The Standard is designed to be fit for purpose for all UK fire and rescue services. When approved, the Standard is also likely to be used by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services to inform their inspection criteria. I firmly believe our IRMP Risk Methodology can be held up as best practice and I have no doubt we will be well placed to meet the requirements of the Standard in future.

Ongoing and looking forward

I have no doubt we face some difficult months ahead as we continue to navigate our way through this public health crisis. It will not be possible to deliver all of our IRMP commitments in 2020/21, because of this significant additional burden. However, our focus will continue to remain on the delivery of our critical core services and supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities, in accordance with our IRMP. A number of our projects are progressing well despite the challenges faced and I hope the next six months will continue to see important progress being made in a number of areas.

Cllr Dexter Smith, Integrated Risk Management Lead Member

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Strategic Assets

It is difficult to comprehend that 6 months has already passed since my last Lead Member report back in June, when we were all working through a very challenging period in terms of keeping all the projects within Strategic Assets to programme during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The ICT team warrants specific mention in that in a very short space of time, they commissioned and delivered a new system to support the remote working of all staff. This also included providing tablets to Members to allow our statutory Authority meetings to continue. We have all had to learn a new way of working, but it now seems commonplace due to the excellent support of ICT.

Our high profile build projects have also either been delivered, in the case of Crowthorne, or continued in the case of Theale. I understand a significant amount of work and flexibility by both the in-house and external teams has allowed these two projects to continue almost uninterrupted albeit with strict adherence to social distancing requirements etc.

Finally, our Facilities team worked consistently to ensure that our buildings were 'Covid Secure' and the supply chain for key items of essential PPE were available to all staff.

As usual, this is a long and detailed report, but it is very pleasing to be able to share this with you and to celebrate the clear successes of all the teams involved in delivering Strategic Assets.

Property Capital Projects

Like most areas within Strategic Assets, the Property Capital Projects team moved swiftly into working from home during the initial impacts of COVID-19 and a new battle rhythm developed to maintain relationships and keep all projects to programme. With two projects in construction (Crowthorne and Theale), safe measures were put in place to ensure essential site meetings could continue under

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COVID-19 restrictions. This presented its challenges, but the Capital Projects team, our professional consultants at Ridge and the site teams from Knights Brown Construction Ltd, (the main build contractor at both sites), worked tirelessly to build flexibility and alternative ways of working into project programmes to achieve successful outcomes.

After completing the re-build of Crowthorne fire station in May this year, slightly ahead of programme, the team have been working hard to close out the last remaining snagging items. This has taken slightly longer than anticipated due to the availability of specialist sub-contractors to complete specific tasks, but we are on track to complete far ahead of our 12 month contractual defects completion period. As an example, the new appliance bay doors arrived from the supplier in Germany with several broken clear panels. We had to wait until the manufacturer reopened to obtain the required replacements. As soon as we are able, we will be planning the official re-opening of this fantastic community fire station. This will also give us the opportunity to thank all those involved for going above and beyond to help deliver this station on time and on budget.

Turning to the fast progressing build at Theale, restrictions on working patterns due to COVID-19 have required a revision of the planned programme to allow for safe working and separation of teams on site. All site attendees are required to adhere to a rigorous daily sign in process, and clear COVID-19 secure procedures are in place to protect all site workers and visitors. In spite of this, good weather over the summer, as well as the use of local sub-contractors, has enabled us to re-capture the initial 8 week delay and we are currently only 1 week behind schedule. The steel structure has now been completed and the building is clearly starting to take its shape. All four crews from Dee Road have now been to site to see the progress for themselves and both the Chairman and Cllr Ross enjoyed a visit to the site in recent weeks. In fact, whilst one of the crews were on site, they were called to an emergency, so we have effectively had our first 'turn out' from the Theale site. The roof works commence in early November and we expect to be in a position to celebrate 'topping out' at some point over New Year; this is of course subject to any severe adverse weather. Although no-one can predict any future COVID-19 restrictions at this point in time, in addition to the new national lockdown from

Thursday 5th November, we are quietly hopeful that we can maintain our current programme to deliver the build in October 2021 and after final fit-out, commissioning, testing etc, we should be delivering a fully operational fire station in spring 2022. As Theale is delivered, the Dee Road and Pangbourne sites will be released, following the asset release strategy approved by Members at Management Committee in July. A very detailed communications and engagement strategy has been developed and is being maintained to ensure that all key stakeholders are kept appropriately informed. Members of the Property Development Working Group (PDWG) are continuing to receive regular updates on progress. The other site within the Asset Release project is of course Wargrave. We have recently heard back from the Parish Council who have advised that they do not wish to pursue any wider community use. On that basis, we will progress with developing a site release strategy in order to make a recommendation to Members of PDWG and ultimately Management Committee for consideration and approval.

An enormous amount of time and effort has been going into the development of the programme of works to deliver the Fire Authority approved Minor Capital Works scheme. We are nearing completion of the project planning stage and we will then move forward through the procurement process towards delivery. These works will have to be carefully planned and phased, as all six stations (Bracknell, Caversham Road, Newbury, Maidenhead, Slough and Wokingham Road) will have to maintain full operational capability at all times. This project is a good example of Service-wide collaborative working, with the Property Capital Projects Team working with not only the ultimate end users on stations, but also Facilities, ICT and the wider Service Delivery teams to ensure this programme is fully aligned to wider Service objectives. It should be recognised that the funding is sufficient to only address priority areas and a longer-term minor capital works programme will need to be maintained in order to keep our property assets fully operational until greater funding, as part of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework, can be secured in line with the Fire Authority's vision. In terms of project programme, the actual construction and refurbishment works have been deliberately pushed back to start in the spring of 2021 to attempt to avoid any additional pressures that the winter may bring either in terms of Covid19 restrictions or adverse weather. Even so, we are still planning to

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complete the majority of works by the end of March 2022 as per the proposed high level programme shared with Members of PDWG.

The last remaining project within Phase 1 of the Strategic Asset Investment Framework is the major rebuild and refurbishment of the Learning & Development facilities at Whitley Wood. This is currently progressing through feasibility stage which will lead to the development of an Outline Business Case for review and approval firstly by SLT and then with Members of PDWG and ultimately with Members of Management Committee. It is exciting to be within touching distance of completing the first significant phase of approved investment in our property capital assets as set out within the SAIF.

Looking across all the property capital projects, the strong in-house team have had to be even more effective at approaching tasks in a flexible way and their commitment to engagement with all stakeholders has ensured that the flow of communications surrounding these high profile build projects has been maintained.

Facilities, Fleet and Equipment

The first six months of the 2020-2021 financial year has seen the facilities, fleet and equipment teams adapting and reacting to the challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary aims were to support the organisation's core service delivery ensuring that vehicles and equipment remained fully operational and that our workplaces were safe and 'Covid Secure' for our employees' health, safety and well-being.

Initially from a facilities perspective, the team whilst mainly working remotely, were able to ensure statutory compliance tasks and critical defects repairs continued to be carried out so that our buildings remained safe working environments for our staff. The restrictions due to COVID-19 meant that non-critical maintenance requests had to be paused in order to limit the amount of contractors visiting our sites to assist in reducing the risk of virus transmission. Our Reception team based at Newsham

Court were also redeployed to work remotely. With support from ICT, the Reception team were able to have phone calls diverted so that general enquiries received could continue to be passed to the appropriate department and dealt with as quickly as possible.

As part of our on-going response to COVID-19 and developing the 'new normal', the facilities team working with key stakeholders, played a pivotal role in establishing safe working environments across our buildings. This has included assisting the development of a COVID-19 Risk Assessment, implementing additional and enhanced cleaning regimes across all of our sites, undertaking site surveys to establish revised building and office space capacities which take into account social distancing requirements, as well as installing additional hand sanitizer points, additional safety screens and COVID-19 signage across our estate. These measures enabled RBFRS to declare our buildings 'Covid Secure' in July.

The team continue to work closely with the Capital Projects team to ensure successful delivery of the Minor Capital Works programme and support the asset release strategy by facilitating the decommissioning of the identified sites as required. If and when the COVID-19 restrictions hopefully begin to ease, the team will be better placed to tackle some of the less urgent work that has been paused.

The fleet and equipment teams have remained very much on the frontline during this period. The clear priority was to ensure that vehicles and equipment remained fully operational at all times. The biggest challenge to this was the lack of availability of key consumable items due to the pressures on supply chains as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The equipment team worked diligently to establish and secure supply chains for PPE and other key consumables utilising a combination of existing suppliers and by working closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) established a procurement hub led by Kent FRS. This avoided RBFRS being in a critical situation through lack of PPE or other items during the COVID-19 response.

In addition to supporting the organisational response to COVID-19, work has also commenced on a project to replace Breathing Apparatus (BA) sets across the organisation. This is to be done in collaboration with our Thames Valley partner FRS'

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with a view to being able to undertake a joint procurement exercise to procure a common BA set across the Thames Valley to further support operational alignment. We expect to deliver this into RBFRS in 2022/23.

Our vehicle maintenance and servicing schedules remained on track throughout this period utilising and combining both our in-house team of mobile vehicle technicians and our joint working agreement with Hampshire FRS for vehicle maintenance. Despite manufacturing delays caused by COVID-19, which has pushed back delivery of our next batch of fire appliances to January 2021, the fleet team working in collaboration with our Thames Valley partner FRS' have been able to finalise the specification and tender process for the new Thames Valley fire appliance contract which Management Committee agreed to enter in October. This will give the Fire Authority the option to continue their strategic vision and progressive journey to improve and renew our fire appliance fleet. Should existing delivery schedules for existing orders remain on track and no further COVID-19 related restrictions are imposed, RBFRS would have brought into service 19 new Volvo fire appliances by autumn 2021 since the first of the new Volvos entered service on July 2017.

The new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) has been built and is going through a period of acceptance testing at the manufacturer's premises. Upon successful completion of the acceptance testing and final sign off, the vehicle will be brought into service for commissioning and driver & user training. It is anticipated that this will be towards the end of 2020 subject to any further restrictions relating to COVID-19 which could lead to a delay.

In February 2020 the Fire Authority approved the purchase for the renewal of the 4x4 fire appliance at Maidenhead and the purchase of double cab pick-up 4x4s to support our on-call stations and provide additional resilience during spate weather conditions. The fleet and procurement teams have been able to utilise existing frameworks from which to purchase these vehicles and orders have now been placed. Current timelines (COVID-19 dependant) suggest the Maidenhead 4x4 fire appliance will be delivered in summer 2021 and six double cab pick-up 4x4s are to be delivered around March 2021.

The impacts that COVID-19 has had on the year so far across the whole organisation has meant that new ways of working and adaptable processes will more than likely be commonplace for the foreseeable future. The facilities, fleet and equipment teams have laid the foundations for a sustained and agile approach in supporting the organisation to continue to deliver its core services for the people of Berkshire.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The first half of the 2020-2021 financial year presented significant challenges to RBFRS ICT teams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions introduced by the government. For ICT this presented two primary challenges. Firstly, it was critically important to react quickly to ensure ICT had systems of work in place to ensure ongoing support to TVFCS as well as all RBFRS teams, while minimising potential for the spread of infection within the team. Key staff were immediately instructed to work from home, and a number of measures were put in place to ensure that on-site support presence was maintained throughout the crisis. The second challenge came in rapid deployment of technical capabilities to allow RBFRS to continue to function almost exclusively from remote locations. I am pleased to report that throughout this period, there were no significant ICT failures in either TVFCS or RBFRS systems, and that RBFRS was able to adapt very quickly to new ways of working.

Whilst it proved necessary to make some technical changes to RBFRS' internet connectivity and remote access configuration, as well as evaluate, test and deploy remote meeting tools in a very short space of time, this was accomplished effectively and efficiently. Prior strategic investment coupled with sound Business Continuity Management practices ensured that the ICT team had the tools and processes available to manage the transition to new ways of working with minimal overall disruption to the organisation.

As a new normal began to emerge, and it was clear that RBFRS' ICT systems were coping well, the ICT team shifted focus back to delivering activities against more strategic goals, a few of which are highlighted below:

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The highly successful standard replacement of all laptops and desktop PCs has been completed. RBFRS has now reached the goal of a single computer specification deployed across the entire organisation, improving functionality and reliability, reducing overall cost, and making support far less complex for the ICT team.

Members will remember from the last report that ICT had begun to develop solutions required to digitise the capture and direct upload of safe and well data during home visits, by using android tablets rather than paper based processes. I am pleased to report that the project team continued to deliver all milestones with minimal delay and that the first all-digital safe & well visit was carried out using the new system at 11am on the 28th September 2020, as part of a pilot test. It is expected that the system will transition into full live status on the 27th October 2020. This project has highlighted the benefits of cross-organisational working and involvement of end-users in the development of digital systems.

Inevitably, some planned activities have been put on hold or delayed. This has included work on formalising our data classification through the introduction of a formal framework. Our current expectation is that this activity will be re-planned as part of a much wider programme of work to look at all information dependant processes within RBFRS with a view to streamlining and improving overall data and information management within the service.

Ongoing and looking forward

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on RBFRS and all of its resources, and ICT has been no different. The team has had to adapt to new ways of working for our customers whilst at the same time adapting internal processes to provide effective support whilst maintaining staff safety.

As a result of the challenges experienced with inter-organisational collaboration, we plan to explore accelerated deployment of Microsoft Teams to replace WebEx, in the second half of the 2020/2021 year. This will rely on high capacity and robust Network connectivity, which will be also be evaluated and proposed for implementation as funding envelopes permit.

In recognition of the likelihood of permanent changes to the way RBFRS operates, the ICT team will begin a programme of work to equip all meeting spaces across the estate with the technical capability to allow hybrid remote/local meetings as seamlessly as possible. This capability will ensure the maximum degree of flexibility for staff needing to collaborate on tasks and activities, and minimise the ongoing support effort required, both of which are critical factors for RBFRS' continued success in an uncertain world.

Cllr Angus Ross, Lead Member for Strategic Assets

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| COMMITTEE | FIRE AUTHORITY |
| DATE OF MEETING | 16 NOVEMBER 2020 |
| SUBJECT | THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE SIX MONTH UPDATE |
| LEAD OFFICER | JIM POWELL, AREA MANAGER COLLABORATION, CHANGE AND FINANCE |
| LEAD MEMBER | COUNCILLORS ANGUS ROSS AND DAVID CANNON |
| EXEMPT INFORMATION | NONE |
| ACTION | TO NOTE |

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Royal Berkshire Fire Authority with an update on member activity and service performance in relation to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS).

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the contents of this report.

3. REPORT

Review

- 3.1 April 2020 was a significant milestone for TVFCS as it marked the five year anniversary of the service becoming fully operational, replacing the three existing control rooms of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- 3.2 Cllr Angus Ross has been a member of the TVFCS Joint Committee (JC) throughout that time, providing the oversight and guidance that has seen considerable improvement in performance, financial reporting and reduced

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staff turnover. Cllr David Cannon joined Cllr Ross on the committee in 2019 and has been a key member in ensuring continued scrutiny and support to the Senior Responsible Officers (SRO) and TVFCS staff. The JC consists of two elected members from each authority.

- 3.3 At the Joint Committee meeting in June 2020 the role of Chair passed to the member from Oxfordshire county council, Cllr Judith Heathcoat and Cllr Ross was subsequently elected as Vice-Chair. Cllr Ross will take up the role of Chair for the 2021/22 year. This is consistent with the original agreement from that the Chairmanship would rotate around the counties.
- 3.4 COVID-19 has had an impact on TVFCS, as it has across all three Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in the Thames Valley, not least the postponement of events to celebrate the five year anniversary. Members ensured they recognised the valued contribution of staff at this time through a formal message of congratulation.
- 3.5 Clearly COVID-19 also had a significant effect on the operating environment in TVFCS. Detailed preparation took place which enabled focused, proactive planning and communication and drove a number of key activities, including a supportive local agreement with representative bodies and a clear and detailed TVFCS degradation plan, agreed collaboratively between the three FRS, setting out what mitigating steps could be taken as the situation evolved and how this would affect the way the service was provided.
- 3.6 Early action was taken to restrict access to both Primary and Secondary Control sites to reduce the potential exposure of Control staff to the virus and to maintain the integrity of the environment. Steps were taken to provide additional support to Control room crewing in a number of ways, which included the reemployment of a small number of staff who had recently left TVFCS and the provision of 24 hour advice and support to the duty Control room watch from the Control management team and Senior Responsible Owners. This level of planning and support have ensured that to date, TVFCS staff have been able to maintain a minimum crewing level throughout the pandemic.
- 3.7 There has been reduction in the volume and nature of calls received in TVFCS over the first two quarters of 2020/21, with a noted change in the number attendances to Road Traffic Collisions across the Thames Valley. This reduction maybe due to the societal changes resulting from the COVID19 response, and the consequent impacts on the number of journeys being made and lower levels of economic activity. Anecdotally, TVFCS staff are reporting an increase in 999 calls where mental health is a factor.
- 3.8 However TVFCS staff also contribute to Prevention activity through the identification and referral of members of the public with defective smoke alarms in their homes and through the handling of safeguarding notifications, helping some of the most vulnerable members of our communities receive the assistance they require.
TVFCS also deal with notifications from partner agencies, primarily Thames Valley Police, when a credible threat of arson has been received against a person or premises. The notifications are then passed to the relevant Fire &

Rescue Service to be dealt with in line with their respective procedures. TVFCS staff have also worked with colleagues from RBFRS during June, contributing to the production of a fire Safety video for use in schools.

Ongoing and look forward

- 3.9 The next period and into the 2021/22 year will see a number of significant work streams develop and JC members will be attending a range of workshops to provide oversight and support on the direction of the service.
- 3.10 JC Members will be reviewing the contractual provision of maintenance and support provided by Capita to ensure TVFCS can continue to deliver a consistently high level of service to the communities of Royal Berkshire. This will see a programme of both software and hardware upgrades over the next two years. Through prudent financial planning, the Joint Committee and RBFA have ensured a base provision for capital expenditure that will enable this programme of work to go ahead.
- 3.11 The upgraded software will also enable TVFCS to consider the implementation of the Multi Agency Information Transfer (MAIT) system, which will make it possible to quickly share incident information with other FRS and Blue Light control rooms. MAIT is a key part of delivering the recommendations contained in the Grenfell Phase 1 report and the Kerslake review into the Manchester bombing. The National Fire Chiefs Council are undertaking work at a national level to support MAIT implementation across the UK and a level of funding may be provided however clarity on all costs has not yet been identified.
- 3.12 The Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) continues to have an effect on TVFCS with on-going ambiguity in delivery timelines. The programme is indicating delivery of a significant software upgrade to parts of the mobilising system towards the end of 2021. This enabling upgrade will be implemented at the cost of the programme. The National Fire Chiefs Council have a team embedded in the programme and TVFCS Joint Committee and the three Fire Authorities monitor this area closely with officers reviewing and adapting plans to ensure the service can inform and respond appropriately as the situation develops.
- 3.13 There will be a range of challenges and opportunities in delivering these critical improvements whilst staff manage the day to day complexity of delivering a multi service control function in a world with Covid. Members will be supporting officers to examine how we meet those challenges to ensure we continue to build a first class, resilient service over the next five years.

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.

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- 4.3 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda, whilst delivering our core functions.
- 4.4 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None applicable to this report. The TVFCS budget will be considered by Joint Committee in December 2020 for Fire Authority approval in February 2021. Any subsequent expenditure will be subject to the provisions of the TVFCS legal agreement.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None applicable to this report. Provision of TVFCS is set out in the legal agreement.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None applicable to this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None applicable to this report. Service risks are managed through the Joint Coordinating Group.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 TVFCS is a collaboration between Royal Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FRS.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None for the purposes of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 None.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

- 13.1 Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration, Change and Finance)
07774 215 664

| ITEM | DECISION BODY | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Safeguarding Presentation | Management Committee | 7.12.20 | Ad-hoc | Note | AM C&P | N/A | Part I |
| NFCC Consultation Response - Fit for the Future | Management Committee | 7.12.20 | Ad-hoc | Note | CFO | N/A | Part I |
| Budget Monitoring Q2 | Management Committee | 7.12.20 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Appliance Availability Q2 | Management Committee | 7.12.20 | quarterly | Note | AM (R&R) | N/A | Part I |
| Capital Project Update | Management Committee | 7.12.20 | Ad-hoc | Note | HCP&E | Strategic Assets Lead | Part II |
| Statement of Assurance | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Quarterly | Note and Recommend | HCS | RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman | Part I |
| Statement of Accounts | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Annual | Agree | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England) | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Ad-hoc | Note and Recomemnd | DSS | N/A | Part I |
| Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan Assumptions | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Pension Board Six Month Update | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Bi-annual | Note | Pension Board Chair | N/A | Part I |
| Complaints Policy | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Ad-hoc | Agree | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Pay Policy Statement | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Internal Audit report | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| External Audit report | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Q2 Performance Report | A&GC | 28.01.21 | Quarterly | Note | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Budget Monitoring Q3 | Management Committee | 03.02.21 | Annual | Note | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation Lead | Part I |
| Scheme of Member Allowances Review | Management Committee | 03.02.21 | Annual | Note and recommend | MO | N/A | Part I |
| Appliance Availability Q3 | Management Committee | 03.02.21 | Quarterly | Note | AM (R&R) | N/A | Part I |

| ITEM | DECISION BODY | NEXT REPORTING DATE | REPORTING FREQUENCY | RECOMMENDED ACTION | LEAD OFFICER | LEAD MEMBER | PART I / II |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|---|-------------|
| Pay Policy Statement | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Annual | Agree | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Built Environment Presentation | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Ad-hoc | Note | ACFO | N/A | Part I |
| Scheme of Allowances Annual Review 21/22 | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Annual | Agree | MO | N/A | Part I |
| Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England) | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Ad-hoc | Agree | DSS | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Budget 21/22, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Annual | Agree | HF&P | Budget and Income Generation/ Collaboration and Strategic Assets Lead | Part I |
| Statement of Assurance | Fire Authority | 17.02.21 | Annual | Agree | HCS | RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman | Part I |
| Appointment Task and Finish Group's advice on the appointment of New Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive | Management Committee | 15.03.21 | ad hoc | Recommend to the Fire Authority | CFO | N/A | Part I |
| Appointment of New Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive | Fire Authority | 24.03.21 | ad hoc | Agree | CFO | N/A | Part I |
| Internal Audit Report | A&GC | 31.03.21 | quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| External Audit Report | A&GC | 31.03.21 | quarterly | Note | HF&P | N/A | Part I |
| Gender Pay Gap | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Annual | Note | HHR&L&D | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Report on Members Development | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HCS | Organisational Development Champion | Part I |
| Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HCS | A&GC Chairman | Part I |
| Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Bi-annual | Note | DCFO | N/A | Part I |
| Annual Plan 2021/22 | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Annual | Note and Recommend | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Quarter 3 Performance Report | A&GC | 31.03.21 | Quarterly | Note | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Capital Project Update | Management Committee | 19.04.21 | Ad-hoc | Note | HCP&E | Strategic Assets Lead | Part II |
| Annual Plan 2021/22 | Fire Authority | 28.04.21 | Annual | Agree | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Corporate Calendar 2021/22 | Fire Authority | 28.04.21 | Annual | Agree | HCS | N/A | Part I |
| Lead Members Annual Reports | Fire Authority | 28.04.21 | Annual | Note | Lead Officers | Lead Members | Part I |
| Member Champion Annual Reports | Fire Authority | 28.04.21 | Annual | Note | Lead Officers | Member Champions | Part I |