



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

Wednesday, 17th February 2021

At

6.30pm

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: Wednesday, 17th February 2021, at 6.30pm
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 16 November 2020 (Pages 7 - 24)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020, and the completion of the actions, 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. Issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee**

Recommendation:

That it be noted that no reports have been referred by the Audit and Governance Committee.

7. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

8. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

9. Recommendations of Committees

Purpose:

To note that the following agenda items have been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 28 January 2021, and Management Committee on 3 February 2021.

- a) Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022
- b) 2021/2022 Members' Scheme of Allowance Review

10. Annual Budget 2021/22, Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework and Thames Valley Control Service Budget (To Follow)

Purpose:

To agree the Annual Budget 2021/22, Medium Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Investment Framework and Thames Valley Fire Control Service Budget.

11. Built Environment Presentation

Purpose:

To receive a presentation on Build Environment Programme.

12. Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England) Presentation

Purpose:

To receive a presentation on the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (England).

13. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 (Pages 25 - 42)

Purpose:

To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/2022 for publication.

14. 2021/2022 Members' Scheme of Allowance Review (Pages 43 - 54)

Purpose:

To agree the Scheme of Allowances 2021/22.

15. Findings of COVID Inspection and Inspection Update (Pages 55 - 74)

Purpose:

To receive a presentation and to note the findings of the recent inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's response to COVID-19, together with an update on the inspection programme for 2021/22.

16. Forward Plan (Pages 75 - 76)

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

17. Minutes of the Standing Committees

Recommendation:

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

18. Date of Next Meeting

Extraordinary meeting on Wednesday, 24 March 2021, 6.30pm. This meeting will be held remotely. Members of the public will be able to view this meeting on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service YouTube page.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



Held on Monday, 16th November 2020, at 6.30 pm
This was a remote meeting.

Members: (*present)	*	Councillor Christine Bateson	*	Councillor Tony Linden
	*	Councillor Dennis Benneyworth	*	Councillor Jo Lovelock
	*	Councillor Jeff Brooks	*	Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle
	*	Councillor Tricia Brown	*	Councillor Harjinder Minhas
	*	Councillor David Cannon	*	Councillor Angus Ross
	*	Councillor Colin Dudley	*	Councillor RaCh�elle Shepherd-DuBey
	*	Councillor Paul Gittings	*	Councillor Garth Simpson
	*	Councillor Pauline Helliarsymons	*	Councillor Dexter Smith
	*	Councillor Graham Howe	*	Councillor Jane Stanford-Beale
	*	Councillor Christine Hulme	*	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)
Alex Brown (Head of Capital Projects and Estates, HCP&E)
Doug Buchanan (Area Manager Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, H&FP)
Trevor Ferguson (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
Steve Foye (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
Andrew McLenahan (Head of Facilities, Fleet and Equipment, HFF&E)
Katie Mills (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
James Pinchin (Business Support Officer, BSO)
Jim Powell (Area Manager Collaboration and Policy, AM C&P)
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)

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Action

25. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020, be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

26. 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.

27. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman gave the following announcements:

HMICFRS inspection completed

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has been inspecting the response of the fire and rescue sector in England to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HMICFRS inspectors conducted a virtual inspection of our Service in the week beginning 12 October.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the inspection team and to all staff that assisted with the inspection. I would like to also take the opportunity to more widely thank all our staff who have worked tirelessly, under extremely challenging circumstances since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Service will be issued with an outcome letter for the inspection in January, and a national report will also be issued early in 2021.

Update regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at RBFRS

In June, the Chief Fire Officer and I wrote a letter setting out the commitments the Service has made in the wake of the death of George Floyd.

In the letter, we committed to a series of actions to remove racism and other prejudices from our society. We'd like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the actions we have taken since.

We have now refreshed our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pages](#) on the Service's intranet, Siren, providing more links and resources to information and materials.

We have also included an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion section in our internal staff magazine, [The Shout](#), which aims to raise awareness of history, celebrate diversity and share ways in which we can all be more inclusive.

A collaborative working group has been formed with other fire and rescue services in Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, with the aim of working together to tackle racial prejudice and address inequalities in our services and communities.

October was Black History Month and we recognise that our commitment to removing racism and other prejudices from our society and celebrating Black History needs to extend beyond a month.

The Service is on a continuous journey of growth with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion, and we believe that the best way to combat racism and prejudice is by listening and learning. If you have any feedback, suggestions for how we can grow and improve, questions, or ideas for additional resources, please contact ediresources@rbfrs.co.uk.

Workshops to find next Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive

As you are aware, the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer will both be eligible to retire next year, in July and May respectively.

As an Authority, we are keen to build on the progress we have made in recent years and ensure that the Service has the right leadership for the next stage of our journey.

Therefore, we have held a number of workshops to review our current and future challenges and the leadership approach and skills we will need to achieve our ambitions. Our intention is to use this feedback to shape the recruitment and selection process.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part to share their views as part of these workshops. Staff that are unable to make the workshops have been able to provide confidential feedback on this process.

As your Chairman, I believe that our collaborative working style and Member/Officer relationships, paired with the immense dedication and professionalism of our teams, will make these positions very attractive to potential candidates. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure that we attract and select the calibre of leader that our Service deserves. Over the coming weeks and months I will continue to keep you updated on our ongoing work to select your next leader.

Military Veteran Hub Initiative

Following the Service's commitment to the armed forces community and receipt of the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, we

hosted the first Armed Forces Veterans' Hub in Royal Berkshire on Saturday, 7 November.

The current COVID restrictive measures meant we had to alter our original plans for the event, which was to hold the event at one of our fire stations. Whilst we weren't able to meet in person we really wanted to find a way to host this event on what was Remembrance Sunday weekend.

I was joined on Saturday by the Fire Authority's Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Angus Ross, and the Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Ferguson. The aim of the Hub is to support those within our communities who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, and provide a space in which veterans can listen to guest speakers, access support, and have a chat to others who have also served in the Armed Forces.

We were very fortunate to have James Sunderland, MP for Bracknell, join the session and he spoke about his commitment to the Armed Forces having served in the military for 26 years up until his selection as MP last year.

We were also very privileged to have Colonel Bob Stewart, MP for Beckenham, and a former Officer in the British Army, join us and share a very moving personal account of his time as an officer.

I'd like to record my thanks to James Sunderland and Colonel Bob Stewart for making time to support this important initiative. I'd like to also extend my thanks to the many charities and organisations that offer services to the Armed Forces community for attending this inaugural event.

The event was hosted by Station Manager Ché Scott and Ché is joining us later this evening and I'm sure he will provide a bit more detail during his presentation.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important initiative. We will keep the way the Hub is run under review based on the COVID guidelines but this is a long term commitment from the Authority.

Smarter Working Live Awards

The Smarter Working Live Awards will be taking place virtually on 26 November 2020. The Remotely Managed Stations and Flexi Duty Officer Project has been shortlisted for two awards at the event in, the Skills and Succession Planning and Workforce categories.

These awards aim to recognise innovation and transformative programmes in the public sector that align to the Government's Smarter Working programme, and reflect the hard work and commitment that has gone into the project. We would like to wish the best of luck to all those involved in the project.

Charity Car Wash at Crowthorne Community Fire Station

Firefighters at Crowthorne held a car wash to help raise much needed funds for The Fire Fighters Charity on Saturday, 19 September.

With control measures in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, firefighters welcomed members of the public safely to the new community fire station for the first time, albeit that visitors had to remain inside their cars.

The crew exceeded their £750 target, raising an incredible total of £1,250. Well done to all involved.

Spirit of Fire Awards 2020

The Fire Fighters Charity's Spirit of Fire Awards took place online on Wednesday, 4 November.

Included in this year's nominees was Paul Watts, Watch Manager on Blue Watch at Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS). Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle, former Mayor of Bracknell, was recognised for her contributions.

Paul has been supporting the charity for over 20 years through his roles as an operational firefighter and as Watch Manager in Control. As well as acting as an advocate for the Charity and signposting colleagues to our services, he has continued to raise money through two tuck shops in Newsham Court.

We also separately received a letter of thanks from the Charity for the fundraising that took place when then Mayor of Bracknell, Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle, led a range of fundraising activities including a Sky Dive, Golf Day and End of Year Celebrations to generate support for the Charity. Tina also supported corporate activity and raised awareness of the Charity's work.

I'd like to place on record my thanks and congratulations to both Paul and Tina. Their efforts are a testament to the dedication of supporters of the Charity and we are grateful for all they have done to support the fire community.

You can [watch the awards](#) on The Fire Fighters Charity's YouTube Channel.

Remembrance Day

This year's Remembrance Day ceremonies took place under the Government's new COVID restrictive measures. Whilst we weren't able to hold our ceremonies entirely as originally planned, we were able to pay our respects and show our support in many cases in the same way.

Our teams marked Remembrance Sunday on station by flying remembrance flags and observing the two-minute silence outside their stations in

remembrance of our fallen heroes. Large poppies were also sent to all fire stations to put on their fire engines to display our support.

Ché Scott, Station Manager, and armed forces advocate, having served himself for 10 years, attended a COVID secure service in Windsor where he laid a wreath in memory of all those who lost their lives on behalf of the Service and Authority.

We also had some pictures of poppies drawn by local children which created an impressive display in the bay windows of the new Crowthorne Community Fire Station.

Maidenhead Fire Station also followed suit, having some poppies also drawn by the local children put up on display for the weekend.

Thank you to all who attended and to all staff who supported our efforts to recognise those that have served, are serving and those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice to secure and protect our freedom.

COVID-19 and the FRS – a message from the Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities

In a letter to Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners and Chief Fire Officers, Lord Greenhalgh has extended his thanks to the fire and rescue service sector for their work during the first wave of the COVID outbreak.

The letter highlighted the great work of the sector in response to the pandemic. At the latest Management Committee meeting, we heard about the incredible dedication and commitment of the teams across the Service.

This included chairing the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Logistics Cell, which has seen the distribution of over 6.5 million pieces of PPE to frontline healthcare workers, through to helping our local communities by providing welfare visits to the clinically extremely vulnerable. All this work speaks to Lord Greenhalgh's points of recognition within his letter where he explains how vital the support that the fire and rescue service has offered during this national health emergency.

Lord Greenhalgh has also asked for us to work with the National Fire Chiefs Council on how we will continue to support local partners, details of which will be shared soon.

28. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The following agenda items were recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 30 July, and 3 November 2020.

- a) Item 12 – Members Handbook and Constitutional Amendments
- b) 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

29. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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

30. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

31. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44

None have been received.

32. ARMED FORCES COVENANT GOLD AWARD - PRESENTATION

Ché Scott, Station Manager, delivered a presentation on the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award. He took Members through the journey from achieving the Bronze Award in 2018, Silver Award in 2019, to the Gold Award in 2020.

The Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) was established following a decision at Government level to formally recognise organisations and businesses across the UK in support of Armed Forces.

AFC supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans, and their families. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) initiated the Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS) to recognise organisations and businesses in support of Armed Forces.

The MOD established three awards, which reflect the employer's level of commitment, which were Bronze, Silver and Gold.

On 27 February 2018, Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Chairman, Councillor Colin Dudley, Councillor Angus Ross, and Chief Fire Officer, Trevor Ferguson, signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Present were representatives from Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Dr Karen Arnold from the MOD Career Transition Partnership and Kate Lole, South East Regional Engagement Director for the MOD.

By signing the covenant Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) pledged to support the Armed forces by:

- Promoting being Armed Forces friendly
- Open to employing reservists and Armed Forces Veterans, Cadet Adult Volunteers
- Self-nominated by Employers who pledge to support the Armed Forces

On signing the AFC, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) satisfied the criteria for the Bronze ERS Award.

Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and RBFRS received Silver and Gold Award ERS for their work and support in a number of events and initiatives held over the last two years. The most recent was RBFRS' launch of the Military Forces Veterans Hub on 7 November 2020.

The Military Forces Veterans' Hub was created to support those who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces, to provide a space in which veterans can listen to guest speakers, access support, and talk to others who have served in the Armed Forces.

The Hubs will put fire stations at the heart of the community and allow RBFRS to have a positive impact on the Armed Forces Veterans community.

By allowing Veterans, their organisations, charities, support groups and associations access to our stations, and meeting with our workforce; some of whom are Veterans themselves, we are further promoting our core values and advocating our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion within the community we serve.

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

33. FIRE AND RESCUE INSURANCE COMPANY (FRIC) PRESENTATION

Trevor Ferguson, Chief Fire Officer (CFO), delivered a presentation on the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC).

He stated FRIC was an innovative and successful company, and Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) was one of its founding Members. It has grown from success to success over the last few years. RBFA is a shareholder of FRIC and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

FRIC is a Hybrid Discretionary Mutual, which is, a blend of discretionary protection for expected losses and contractual insurance for large single incidents or accumulations. It is a long-term collaborative partnership focused on Member benefits not shareholder benefits. FRIC focuses on reducing the risk of loss through sharing best practice and collaboration. It buys and manages insurance on behalf of its Members.

Formed in 2009 by nine fire authorities, Fire and Rescue Authority Mutual (FRAML) was the first version of FRIC. Due to changes in legislation and some legal challenges from the insurance company industry, led to the Discretionary Mutual Model being founded in 2015. This was when the Fire Authority became a founding stakeholder.

In 2017, the National Fire Chiefs Council recognised FRIC as best practice and in 2019, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) highlighted FRIC as an excellent example of collaboration. Luke Edwards, Director for Fire Policy in the Home Office, has been very supportive of FRIC and has questioned other fire authorities as to why they are not a partner of this collaborative and innovative project.

The ethos behind FRIC is based on trust, honesty, openness and transparency, with a focus on long-term risk reduction through collaboration. Any money left at the end of the year does not go to shareholders, but is held on behalf of the member fire authorities, who are ultimately the shareholders and can potentially be redistributed at some point in the future.

FRIC member contributions are calculated and held in a 'pot'. FRIC then purchases insurance for high value claims beyond the value of the 'pot'. Lower value claims are settled by FRIC, on behalf of the member out of the 'pot'. When the 'pot' is not fully used at the end of the year, the benefits are returned to the members not the shareholders.

FRIC has a board of six directors and an Independent Chair. Until quite recently, Trevor Ferguson was a Director. Conor Byrne is still a Director. Directors are drawn from all of the member authorities who own a share, and manage the company on behalf of the Authorities. FRIC then employs a Mutual Manager, currently Regis, who manages the day-to-day business.

Conor Byrne reported the total member contributions were approximately £4 million per annum and FRIC has generated a surplus each year since its inception. FRIC has built up these surpluses in its reserves, which currently stand at £950,000 at the end of the 2018-19 year. FRIC financial year runs from November to October. Should prior year surpluses be distributed, only fire authorities that were members in those particular years will be entitled to receive a share.

Over the long run, it is expected that the continued focus on risk management by the member authorities will contain the volume and magnitude of claims and thus lead to cheaper protection, than what would otherwise be the case, with standard insurance arrangements.

The Chairman stated the more member authorities or fire and rescue services join FRIC, the better the chances of a surplus at the end of the year.

Ideally, the market for FRIC should be probably be all Combined Fire Authorities and perhaps some of the smaller Metropolitans, would provide a healthy share of profit.

The Chairman asked how much was the Fire Authority currently saving on insurance premiums by being a Member FRIC. Conor Byrne reported it was a difficult question to answer due to the insurance market continually changing. When FRIC was established in 2015, insurance companies were quite keen to offer very good rates and some fire and rescue services did not join FRIC.

Conor Byrne stated the Authority will save substantial sums of money, based on the fact that no major claims have been made

Trevor Ferguson highlighted there was a huge emphasis on risk reduction and if authorities were all with individual insurance companies, there would not be the same incentive to reduce risk and reduce claims. In the past, we've had a very good claims record but premiums kept going up, based on market conditions, which FRIC we're in control.

In response to a question from Councillor Smith in relation to the type of claims that are made, Trevor Ferguson explained that there were three main areas of claims; vehicles, buildings and public and employer liability.

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

34. MEMBERS HANDBOOK CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, reported she was pleased to introduce this item on the agenda. She stated the proposed revisions include the two low priorities identified in the Auditors findings earlier in the year, and the other amendments, were aimed at making the procedures more inclusive and accessible in line with the Authority's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives.

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), presented and stated the purpose of the report was to approve the recommendation by Audit and Governance Committee on changes to the Members Handbook identified. He thanked Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead (DSL), for her work on the Members Handbook.

He highlighted the Internal Auditors gave the Authority substantial assurance on Risk Management and Governance in January 2020. One of the changes to the Handbook addressed the low priority they identified which was to include the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman in the Committees Terms of Reference and to include review process.

Action

He brought Members attention to paragraph 2.4 of the recommendation, which derived from Management Committee in connection to the succession and leadership planning for a Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive.

In referring to Appendix A; Fire Authority Terms of Reference, and Appendix D; Standing Orders, Councillor Ross queried whether the role of Armed Forces Champion would be included, and whether the recommendation for petitions to be brought to just the Fire Authority would be an excessive period of time that petitions would be seen.

In answer to Councillor Ross first question, the Chairman stated the inclusion of the Armed Forces Champion into the Fire Authority Terms of Reference may have an implication to the Scheme of Allowance and advised that officers look at this off-line and would report back to the Fire Authority.

HCS

Graham Britten advised that the Authority was the body that could respond to petitions and suggested the amendment was trying to clarify that point due to it was not as clear in the previous version.

Councillor Brooks stated that the suggested amendments to the Standing Orders were pre-COVID-19 due to its mention of physical meetings and queried whether they should reflect remote meetings.

Graham Britten responded by stating the Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus (Flexibility of Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, came in effect as a result of the pandemic to enable Local Authorities to conduct remote meetings. He reported that this regulation was only in effect for one year.

The Vice-Chairman queried SO105 of the Standing Orders (Appendix D) in relation to Members inspection of land and stated it could be interpreted that Members could not enter Fire Stations.

The Chairman suggested officers amend SO105 in liaison with the Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee, subject to approval.

MO

Councillor McKenzie–Boyle moved the recommendation, subject to the amendment of SO105 in the Standing Orders (Appendix D). Councillor Linden seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED that:

- The proposed amendments to sections of the Members Handbook listed in the report from Appendix A – F be agreed, and that delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to agree an amendment to SO105 in consultation with the Vice-Chairman;

- The inclusion of Complaints Procedure as part of the Handbook be agreed; and
- The removal of Access to information document from the Handbook, due to Members Access to documents are covered in the Standing Orders (Appendix D) be agreed.
- All references to “Chief Fire Officer” in its constitutional documents are changed to “Chief Fire Officer or Chief Executive” be agreed.

35. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, introduced the item. As Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee, I was pleased that the Committee received this report at its meeting on 3 November. It was comforting to read the audit undertaken by Fayth Rowe on how well the Authority’s procedures already accord substantially with the Best Practice Recommendations, made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The Audit & Governance Committee endorsed the Officer’s recommendations, which will position the Authority well when further communications are received from the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Graham Britten presented the report. He reported that the genesis of the report was the letter to Chief Executives of all local authorities published in July 2020, from the Committee on Standards in Public Life on Local Government Ethical Standards. A copy of the letter is at page 85 in the agenda pack. The report made 26 recommendations, mostly aimed at Government requesting changes to legislation and one aimed at the Local Government Association (LGA) to create a new model draft Code of Conduct after consultation with Councils. The LGA has stated that it is due to report its final model Code of Conduct later this calendar year.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life report also include 15 best practice recommendations, and as the July letter states, they expect all local authorities to implement these recommendations. The 15 best practice recommendations are at pages 86 and 87 of the agenda pack.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life letter states that it will be writing to local authorities again in autumn to ascertain progress against its 15 best practice recommendations. With this in mind, Fayth Rowe has undertaken an audit of RBFA’s current arrangements benchmarked against the 13 recommendations applicable to Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Appendix B list the findings from the audit. Graham Britten reported that there was nothing in the findings, which gave him cause for concern.

The Chairman proposed recommendations 2.1 and 2.2, Councillor Stanford-Beale seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED that:

- 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) be noted;
- It be agreed 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 and appointing authorities;
- In any review of the Code of Conduct:
 - The outcomes of the LGA's consultation on its draft Code of Conduct be taken into account;
 - The prohibition on 'harassment' be added to the prohibition of bullying;
 - Definitions and examples of both bullying and of harassment be included;
 - The requirement on Members to comply with any formal standards investigation be included;
 - The requirement to comply with the Authority's protocol on Gifts and Hospitality be included;
- The procedure for handling 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; and
 - 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.

36. AMENDMENTS TO CONTRACT AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee, Councillor McKenzie-Boyle, stated the updated Contract and Finance Regulations have been scrutinised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Committee believed that the proposed amendments further strengthen controls and will ensure that the Authority continue to obtain value for money from its contractual amendments.

The Committee, therefore, recommend the Fire Authority approve both sets of Regulations.

Conor Byrne, Head of Finance and Procurement (HF&P), reported the Fire Authority approved the current regulations in October 2017. He advised the proposed amendments to the regulations would strengthen effective internal controls and the efficiency of processes.

He stated a significant change relates to the authorisation of contracts above £1m. The proposed change would require a business case to be approved by Management Committee for contracts over £1m before the contract commenced. He explained, if the tender price was up to 5% more than the business case, the regulations allow officers to accept providing budget provision existed. Conor Byrne further explained that if the final tender award was between 5% and 10% greater than the business case figure, agreement would to be sought from the Chairman of the Fire Authority before awarding. Any variance greater than 10% would need the approval of Management Committee.

The other significant change relate to the disposal of land and buildings outlined in the Financial Regulations and debts write-offs outlined in paragraphs 3.15 through to 3.19. Finally, he drew Members attention to the ending of the transition period on 31 December 2020. The final proposal was seeking Members to approve that the Fire Authority delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer (HF&P) to make changes to the Contract Regulations to ensure they stay aligned with legislation from 1 January 2021.

In answer to a question from Councillor Bateson in relation to debt write-offs, he advised that the requirement to use the debt write-offs clause was rare and that it had been used in the past in the area of pensions. To date, major write-offs had been brought to the Management Committee.

He added the proposal around debt write-offs required the three statutory officers to agree the higher level write-offs.

The Chairman moved the recommendations and it was seconded, by Councillor Stanford-Beale.

RESOLVED that:

- The amended Contract Regulations as set out in Appendix A be approved;

- The amended Financial Regulations as set out in Appendix B be approved;
- The linked amendment to the Scheme of Delegation for the Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive as set out in paragraph 3.16 be approved;
- Delegated authority be given 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 be approved.

The meeting was adjourned for five minutes and recommenced at 8.10pm.

37. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2019/20 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2020/21

Conor Byrne (HF&P) advised there were two treasury management reports to note, first was the Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20, and the second was the Mid-Year Management Update for the current year.

The Annual Treasury Report 2019/20 confirmed the actual performance complied with the prudential indicators that were approved by the Fire Authority in February 2019. No additional borrowing was undertaken in 2019/20 and the Authority received £117,000 in investment income.

In discussing the current year, Conor Byrne reported of the significant cash outflows relating to approved capital projects. This together, with the cuts in the interest rate to 0.1% meant that investment income for the year was expected to be around £22,000.

Later this year the Authority will be repaying a £1.75m loan to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). It is anticipated that the Authority would take out new loans amounting to £3.6m, however due to COVID-19 there has been some slippage and profiling of stage payments in relation to capital projects. On this basis it is estimated that new borrowings at the end of the financial year will only be £1.25m.

The Chairman proposed recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 of the report and Councillor Howe seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED that:

- The Annual Treasury Report for 2019/20 be noted;
- The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2020/21 be noted.

38. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

The Audit and Governance Committee Chairman, Councillor McKenzie-Boyle reported the Annual Report on Governance for the 2019/20 Municipal Year was her first. She advised the report was originally scheduled to be presented to Fire Authority in June 2020, but had been subsequently moved due to the cancellation of Audit and Governance Committee in March, due to restrictions in response to COVID-19.

Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services (HCS), drew Members attention to Appendices A and B which outlined Members Allowances and Attendance from June 2018-May 2019.

The Chairman moved the recommendations and it was seconded, by Councillor Bateson.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report on Governance and appendices be noted.

39. LEAD MEMBER SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORT

The Chairman thanked Members for submitting the reports, which contained very comprehensive updates. The Chairman proposed that the reports were taken as read.

The Chairman proposed recommendation 2.1 and, the Vice-Chairman seconded the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the reports be noted.

40. THAMES VALLEY FIRE CONTROL SERVICE (TVFCS) JOINT COMMITTEE SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORT

Jim Powell, Area Manager Collaboration, Change and Finance (AM CC&F) presented the six-month report and stated that 2020 was the five-year anniversary of Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS). He reported that COVID-19 had impacted on TVFCS, not least because of the postponement of events to celebrate its anniversary.

Councillor Ross echoed that it had been a challenging time for TVFCS and looked forward to when the anniversary could be celebrated. He thanked staff for their resilience.

Councillor Cannon thanked Jim Powell and colleagues across TVFCS for their dedication and management of the Service in the last six months.

Councillor Brooks requested for further information in relation to paragraph 3.7, which outlined the reduction in the volume and nature of calls received.

Trevor Ferguson reported that a breakdown of the volume and nature of calls was provided at the last Management Committee and advised he would provide him with the information discussed at that meeting.

CFO

The Chairman moved the recommendation and it was seconded, by Councillor Ross.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

41. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

42. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

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

43. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 17 February 2021. The public will be able to watch this meeting on Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service YouTube page.

(The meeting concluded at 20:39)

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	17 FEBRUARY 2021
SUBJECT	ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY – PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022
LEAD OFFICER	BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	DECISION

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **APPROVE** the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/2022 for publication, subject to any further amendments required in relation to section 3.6 and 3.9 below or as considered appropriate by the Authority.

3. **REPORT**

- 3.1 Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require that relevant authorities in England prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. Pay Policy Statements must be approved by a meeting of the full Fire Authority and subsequently published.
- 3.2 A draft Pay Policy Statement for the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) for the forthcoming year (2021/2022) is drafted (Appendix A) taking into account guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government

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Transparency Code 2014 and the Local Transparency Publishing Organisational Information guidance provided by the Local Government Association in 2015.

- 3.3 The attached draft was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 28 January 2021 for consideration. The Committee made no recommendations for amendments to the contents and agreed to recommend to the full Fire Authority its approval.
- 3.4 Whilst it has not been necessary to amend the format of the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21, a number of updates have been included and are detailed below.
- 3.5 Following consultation, three individuals who transferred in to RBFRS under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006 as amended by the 'Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, are now employees of RBFRS and are covered by the NJC for Local Government Services. It was agreed during consultation that these individuals would receive a market supplement.
- 3.6 On 18 December 2019 Fire and Rescue Services were advised of the interim order on remedy for the transitional protection pension claims and that the Home Office would be required to provide guidance on its implementation. This guidance is not yet available and therefore the pensions section of the statement cannot yet be updated to reflect any new arrangements. Should clarity on this position arise after Fire Authority approval of the Pay Policy Statement, it is proposed that officers amend this section accordingly following direction/guidance issued by the Home Office.
- 3.7 A revised Car User Scheme was published in June 2020. The section on Car Provisions has been updated to reflect this.
- 3.8 Inclusion of the introduction of the £95,000 exit payments cap following the introduction of the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020, which came into force on 4 November 2020.
- 3.9 The recruitment of Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CEO) commenced on 11 December 2020. This is open to operational and non-operational candidates. As a result, the terms and conditions of the successful candidate will be conditioned to, and any benefits received, may require an amendment to the Senior Managers' Pay section of the Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022.
- 3.10 Subject to any further amendment the Fire Authority may wish to make, officers recommend that the Fire Authority adopt the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report is prepared to enable Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to meet its obligations under Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Transparency Code 2015 and in accordance with issued Government guidance.

6.2 The Pay Policy Statement must be approved by the full Fire Authority.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

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

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

N/A

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

- 10.1 Monitoring Officer
- 10.2 Head of Finance and Procurement
- 10.3 Chief Fire Officer

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Localism Act 2011
- 11.2 Openness and Accountability in Local Pay, Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act, February 2012, Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 11.3 Openness and Accountability in Local Pay, Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act, February 2013, Supplementary Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 11.4 Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector: Final Report, March 2011
- 11.5 Pay Policy and Practice in Local Authorities – A guide for Councillors, Local Government Association (January 2013) issued November 2013 to Local Authority Chairs
- 11.6 Local Government Transparency Code 2014 – Department for Communities and Local Government, October 2014.
- 11.7 Local Transparency Publishing Organisational Information - Local Government Association 30 November 2015

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12. **APPENDICES**

12.1 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2020/2021

13. **CONTACT DETAILS**

13.1 Becci Jefferies
Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development
0118 9384670

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

Pay Policy Statement 2021/22





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Introduction

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

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

- The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined; and
- The detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff as defined by the relevant legislation
- The detail and level of remuneration for the lowest level of post/employee
- The ratio of pay of the top earner and that of the median earner

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

This policy statement has been approved by RBFA. It will be subject to review annually and in accordance with new or proposed legislation to ensure that, it remains relevant and effective. Information supplied to inform the Pay Policy Statement will be based on figures available at the time of writing (31 October 2020).



Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

Accountability and Decision Making

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

Responsibility and Scale

For 2020/2021, RBFA was directly responsible for a budget of £35,263,256 and the employment of 651 staff. The Fire Authority provides services to a total population of 914,859 residents.

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

The RBFA's overall approach to determining the pay of its employees is to participate in national collective bargaining for fire-fighters and fire control staff through the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services; for non-operational support staff through the NJC for Local Government Services and for Directors through NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services. These arrangements account for a total of 474 employees covered by NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, 173 employees covered by NJC for Local Government Services and four covered by NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

Following consultation, three individuals who transferred in to RBFRS under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006 as amended by the 'Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, are now employees of RBFRS and are covered by the NJC for Local Government Services. Following market research into pay and a result of the consultation, these individuals receive a market supplement.

The pay scale rates for apprentices have been reviewed and remain well in excess of the National Minimum Wage for apprentices as at 1 April 2021.

The RBFA's long term approach to pay and reward has been to continue to support national pay bargaining as the most effective way to manage payroll costs and the

challenge of running a fire and rescue service in one of the highest cost-of-living areas outside London.

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

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

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

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

The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services

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

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

For staff on Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services conditions, the NJC for Local Authority Fire Services agreed a two percent increase in September 2020 to be effective from 1 July 2020.

Other elements of pay include:

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Appendix A

- Allowance payments for work undertaken outside the role map
- Continuous Personal Development (CPD) payments
- Locally agreed allowance for Area Managers undertaking a Head of Service role
- An operational allowance for being available to undertake 'Gold' level command
- Station Manager allowances paid to Watch Based Station Managers
- A flexible duty allowance paid to officers undertaking duties as part of the flexible duty rota
- A one-off payment made to members of the Pension Board for attendance at each Pension Board meeting.
- Training allowance for Training Centre Instructors

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

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, sets the framework for the pay and conditions of service for the Fire Authority's non-operational support staff. This provides a national pay spine which was reviewed in April 2019 following the two year pay agreement reached in 2018 to address the impact on local government employers of the National Living Wage increases. RBFRS uses the pay ranges identified within the National pay scales, localised to reduce the number of spinal column points (SCP) within each grade and further extended to provide ten pay grades. Posts are allocated to a grade through a process of job evaluation using the HAY job evaluation methodology.

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

For staff on Local Government Services conditions, the NJC for Local Government Services agreed a 2.75 percent increase in September 2020 to be effective from 1 April 2020.

Senior Managers' Pay

Conditions of service for the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFO/CEX), Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) have been aligned with those set out in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service. A decision by the CFO on 20 June 2016, aligned the pay award for the non-operational Director of Support Services (DSS) to those set out in the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services.

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

CFO	CO16	£132,587	DCFO	CO11	£106,631	ACFO	CO9	£98,340	DSS	CO8	£95,379
	CO17	£136,954		CO12	£110,271		CO10	£101,154		CO9	£98,340
	CO18	£141,333		CO13	£113,909		CO11	£106,631		CO10	£101,154
	CO19	£146,383		CO14	£117,548		CO12	£110,271		CO11	£106,631
	CO20	£151,301		CO15	£128,209		CO13	£113,909		CO12	£110,271

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman determine where on the agreed pay scale the CFO/CEX is placed, based upon year-end performance appraisals. The RBFA have determined that the CFO/CEX, as Head of Paid Service determines where on the agreed pay scales the Directors are placed based upon year-end performance appraisals. A two per cent increase on was agreed for Directors in November 2020, backdated to 1 January 2020.

In addition the CFO/CEX, DCFO and ACFO are entitled to a vehicle for use in connection with Fire Authority business. The contribution for operational roles is currently £3,500 per annum and £2,000 per annum for those in non-operational roles, which is in line with the contributions towards a lease car for other eligible staff.

The operational Director posts (CFO, DCFO and ACFO) also receive an additional allowance for providing out of hours operational incident command cover and services based on 10% of the mid-point of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer salary range, currently £10,663 per annum.

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

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Appendix A

Senior Managers' pay (i.e. Grade 7 to 10, Area Managers and Directors) accounts for 8.16% of the total pay bill (which includes all taxable earnings, including base salary, variable pay, allowances and lease car cash value).

Benefits Other Than Pay

Pensions

The RBFA offers membership of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2015) to newly appointed staff engaged in operational fire-fighting. Non-operational support staff and Control Staff are offered membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Following the introduction of the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2015 FPS) on 1 April 2015 transitional arrangements for members of the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS), the New Firefighters Pension Scheme 2006 (NFPS) and individuals in the Retained Modified Scheme 2006 were put in place.

Currently, the majority of the existing operational workforce are members of the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme.

In 2015 most public service pension schemes were reformed. These reforms included 'transitional protection', for people closer to retirement. The Courts have ruled that this directly discriminated against some younger pension scheme members. The government's proposals to remove the discrimination were set out in a consultation document, the outcomes of this is awaited and the impact on RBFA is unknown.

The respective contributions made by the RBFA and employees who are members of these pension schemes, from 1 April 2020 are as follows (in all cases members are auto-enrolled into the appropriate pension scheme in accordance with legislation in relation to workplace pensions):

Scheme	Employer Contributions	Employee Contribution Bands
FPS (1992 Scheme)	37.3%	11% - 17%
NFPS (2006 Scheme)	27.4%	8.5% - 12.5%
2015 FPS (2015 Scheme)	28.8%	11% - 14.5%
LGPS	13.5*%	5.5% - 12.5%

* Employer contributions for members of the LGPS scheme are set at 13.5% of annual salary. RBFA also pays an employer annual lump sum to the pension fund of £341,000

Car provision

The RBFA offers a Car User Scheme to staff who are required have access to a vehicle to be used in connection with their official duties. A revised Car User

Scheme was adopted in June 2020 to ensure a fair and equitable process for determining the provisions for staff across the service. The scheme is in three parts:

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

£3,500 per year for Flexible Duty Officer users.

£2,000 per annum for non-Flexible Duty Officer users.

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

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

Cycle to Work Scheme

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

Subscriptions

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

Uniform

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

Employee Assistance Programme

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

Occupational Health Support

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

Healthcare Provision

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

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Appendix A

RBFA also provides the opportunity for staff to access the Benenden employee healthcare scheme at no direct cost to employees other than tax due on the benefit. This is currently at a cost of £11.50, for those who choose to opt into the scheme. As at 31 October 2020, there were 443 members of the scheme.

Outplacement Support

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

Highest and Lowest Paid Employees

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

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

Remuneration packages (as at 31 October 2020):

	Basic Salary and (operational command allowance (per annum)	Total remuneration (including pension contributions and car provision)
CFO/CEX	£161,964.00	£208,609.63
Lowest paid employee (excluding Apprentices)	£21,748	£25,445.16
Competent Firefighter	£31,767	£38,660.44 (1992 scheme) £35,547.27 (2006 scheme) £36,309.68 (2015 scheme)

From April 2021, the compulsory government National Living Wage for workers over 23 years of age and over is £8.91 per hour. Please note the National Living Wage is distinct from the Living Wage, which is the level of pay recommended by the Living Wage Foundation, an independent campaign group. In assessing this requirement on current pay arrangements in RBFA it is noted that the lowest paid post to which an employee would be recruited would attract an hourly rate of £11.27 (excluding apprentices on apprenticeship rates of pay).

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

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

Reviews will be required to ensure appropriate remuneration is in place to attract and retain staff as structures within the Service are examined. Consideration of the total reward available to respond to changing organisational pressures and the linkages between pay and performance and redesigned structures will continue to be explored through organisational change programmes to ensure staff are attracted to, and retained by RBFA. In accordance with our Equality Policy, pay is monitored and reviewed. An equal pay audit was completed during 2019/20. The next equal pay audit will be undertaken in March 2022. RBFA has also published its Gender Pay Gap report in line with legislation, which can be viewed on the Services' website and also at gov.uk (please note, due to the COVID pandemic, RBFA was not required to report on the Gender Pay Gap for 2020 on gov.uk).

Pay Multiples

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

The multiple between the median full time equivalent earnings and the CFO/CEX is 1:4.87.

Payments on Termination of Employment

Compensation Policy

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

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

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Appendix A

Pensions Policy

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

Exit Payment Cap

The Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 came into force on 4 November 2020. This imposed a £95,000 cap on exit payments, subject to specified exemption, to employees in the public sector, and applies to exit payments made to RBFA employees on or after this date. RBFA will operate in accordance with legislation as appropriate.

Publication of Pay Statement

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

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

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

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	17 FEBRUARY 2021
SUBJECT	2021/2022 MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE REVIEW
LEAD OFFICER	GRAHAM BRITTEN, MONITORING OFFICER
LEAD MEMBERS'	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	NOTE AND DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To receive Management Committee's recommendation made on 3 February 2021, to agree the 2021/22 Members' Scheme of Allowance, and to receive for note the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) to their respective councils.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 regulations 10 and 19 (2) require the authority to make a scheme of allowances before the beginning of the financial year; and, before it makes it, to have regard to the recommendations made by Independent Remuneration Panels of its constituent councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **AGREE** the 2021/2022 Scheme of Allowance;
- 2.2 **NOTE** the recommendations of each of the six unitary authority Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs);
- 2.3 **NOTE** the increase of 2.75% to the Scheme of Allowances backdated 1 April 2020.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 On an annual basis the Authority is required to adopt a Scheme of Members' Allowance prior to the start of the financial year. MA14 of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) Scheme of Allowances states that *'The Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-optees' Allowances shall be adjusted annually in line with the average percentage pay increase agreed by the NJC for Local Government Services. Adjustment of the allowance shall take effect from the beginning of the financial year'*
- 3.2 In September 2020, the National Joint Council (NJC) Government Services had reached pay agreement for staff employed under 'Green Book' terms and conditions for 2020/21. This resulted in a 2.75% increase in pay backdated to 1 April 2020.
- 3.3 Appendix A reflects the 2.75% increase in the Members' Scheme of Allowances effective from 1 April 2020.
- 3.4 At the Fire Authority meeting on 16 November 2020, the Authority requested that consideration is given to formalising the roles of the Honorary Champions for Armed Forces and EDI. As it is not proposed that these posts will attract special responsibility allowances, they have not been included in the updated Scheme of Allowances. However, a separate report will be presented in due course to ensure the appointment to these positions is reflected in our constitutional procedures.

Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs)

- 3.5 There are six Independent Remuneration Panels (IRPs) in the Royal County of Berkshire, which make recommendations to Bracknell Forest Council, Reading Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council. Members's are asked to note the recommendations of each IRP.
- 3.5.1 **Bracknell Borough Council's** Members' Scheme of Allowance became effective from 1 April 2018 and subsequent years until it is reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Scheme is indexed to the annual local government pay increase.
- 3.5.2 **Slough Borough Council** at its Council meeting on 24 November 2020, it approved the IRP recommendation of recalibrated Basic Allowance be set at £8,687 effective from 1 April 2021. In accordance with its terms of reference the IRP benchmarked the allowances under consideration against i) Other Berkshire Unitaries (mean), ii) South East Employers (SEE) Survey (mean) and CIPFA 10 Nearest Neighbours (mean).
- 3.5.3 **West Berkshire Council** – On 1 April 2020 the Basic Allowances was increased by 2.75% due to Basic Allowance is index linked to staff pay increases, from £7,696 to £7,908. The Scheme was last amended, following a meeting of the IRP on 6 November 2017, and Council on 1 March 2018.

- 3.5.4 **Reading Borough Council** – In 2019/20 the IRP undertook a full review and recommended an increase to Special Responsibility Allowances to bring the rate broadly up to Berkshire average. The Council at its meeting on 25 June 2019, approved Basic Allowances to remain the same at £8,220 a year and amended the SRA
- 3.5.5 **Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead** approved on 25 September 2018 that Basic Allowance should continue to be paid during any period of maternity, adoption or paternity leave. The Basic Allowance to each Councillor be £8,143 each year, and shall have effect for the year ending 21 March 2021.
- 3.5.6 **Wokingham Borough Council** – Effective from 22 November 2018, the Basic Allowance is £7,784. The scheme is linked to staff pay increases.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

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

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The current budget for Members' Allowances (Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances) is estimated to be in the region of £95k. Costs will be incurred in publishing a notice that the Authority has made a Scheme of Members' Allowances in a Berkshire newspaper. The cost is estimated to be in the region of £300.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 No risk implications have been identified.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

9.1 Not applicable.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Bracknell Forest Council Constitution, Part 6 – Members’ Allowances](#)

11.2 [Slough Borough Council – Council meeting, Tuesday 24th November 2020](#)

11.3 [West Berkshire Council – Independent Review of Councillors’ Allowances](#)

11.4 [Reading Borough Council – Council Meeting 25 June 2019](#)

11.5 [Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Constitution – Part 9 – Miscellaneous Items](#)

11.6 [Wokingham Borough Council Constitution – Section 2 \(2.2.5\)](#)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – 2021/22 RBFA Scheme of Allowances.

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Fayth Rowe, Democratic Support Lead, 0118 938 4611

SCHEME OF ALLOWANCE

February 2021



MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

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

NAME AND DURATION

- MA1. This scheme may be cited as the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members' Allowances Scheme.
- MA2. **This scheme shall have effect for the financial year 2021/22.** The Scheme may be amended at any time by resolution of the Authority.

BASIC ALLOWANCE

- MA3. A **Basic Allowance** at a rate of £2,552¹ per annum shall be paid to each Member in monthly instalments.
- MA4. For the avoidance of doubt, 'Member' in this context means a person appointed to the Authority under the provisions of the Royal Berkshire Fire Service Combination Scheme.
- MA5. The Basic Allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of Members including calls on their time at meetings with officers and constituents. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of Members' homes.
- MA6. Where a Member's term of office does not extend throughout a complete year, the amount payable shall be pro rata to the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists.

¹ Indexed to local government percentage salary increase so may be subject to change.

SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

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

Schedule 1

Position	Special Responsibility Allowance ²
Chairman of Authority	£12,762
Vice Chairman of Authority	£6,381
Chairmen of Committees	£3,828
Lead Members	£3,828
Opposition Group Leaders	£2,552
Member Champions	£1,276
RBFA Chairman of Thames Valley Joint Committee (if applicable)	£2,552
Co-optees' Allowance	£142.00 per meeting

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

CO-OPTEEES' ALLOWANCE

- MA10. The Co-opted Independent Person (s) shall be entitled to receive a payment of £142.00 per meeting.
- MA11. Independent Persons are entitled to receive only the allowances under this scheme for the duties he/she undertakes on behalf of the Fire Authority, and

² Indexed to local government percentage salary increase so may be subject to increase.

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may not claim or receive allowances from another Local Authority or any other source for the same duties.

SCHEDULE 2 – APPROVED DUTIES

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

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

MA13. The amounts of allowances paid by the Authority are set out in Schedule 3.

INDEXATION OF ALLOWANCES

- MA14. 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.
- MA15. The rates of travel allowances shall be the same as those approved by the HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) and shall be adjusted and take effect in line with alterations made from time to time by the HMRC.
- MA16. The rates of subsistence allowances shall be the same as those agreed for officers of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- MA17. The Chief Finance Officer shall have delegated power to approve the adjustment in accordance with paragraphs MA15 and MA16 above.

RENUNCIATION OF ALLOWANCES REPAYMENT

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

CLAIMS

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

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

SCHEDULE 3 - TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

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

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

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

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

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

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ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	FIRE AUTHORITY
DATE OF MEETING	17 FEBRUARY 2021
SUBJECT	FINDINGS OF COVID INSPECTION AND INSPECTION UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	COUNCILLOR COLIN DUDLEY
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR NOTE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is note the findings of the recent inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's response to COVID-19, together with an update on the inspection programme for 2021/22. A presentation will accompany the report at the meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Fire Authority:

- 2.1 **NOTE** the findings of the COVID-19 Inspection for Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services.
- 2.2 **NOTE** the update on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services planned inspection activities for 2021/22; and
- 2.3 **NOTE** the letter of thanks received from the Home Secretary and Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 In August 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) was commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England were responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- 3.2 The inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service took place in October 2020, and largely focused on the period between April and June 2020.
- 3.3 The findings, attached at **Appendix A**, state that the Service has “adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively”. The letter highlights that the Service maintained its critical core services, adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic, supports its communities and partners through additional activities, continued to manage its resources well and prioritised the wellbeing of staff throughout.
- 3.4 As part of the COVID-19 inspection, a staff survey was conducted by HMICFRS. In total 256 members of staff responded to the survey, which represented 39% of the workforce. A presentation on the results of the survey will be made, alongside the findings of the inspection, at the Fire Authority meeting.
- 3.5 As set out in **Appendix B**, HMICFRS is planning its inspection activity for 2021/22, and continues to work on the presumption of a full inspection programme being implemented, pending approval from the Home Secretary in April 2021.
- 3.6 In November 2020, HMICFRS set out its anticipated inspection programme with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service’s inspection taking place in Tranche 3 of the 2021/22 programme. This would mean inspection fieldwork would take place between spring and summer 2022.
- 3.7 Lastly, attached at **Appendix C**, is a letter received from the Home Secretary and Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities, extending their thanks for the leadership shown by fire and rescue services in supporting their communities in the response to COVID-19.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 The inspection programme covers a number of the service areas outlined in the Strategic Commitments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No financial implications as a result of this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No risk implications as a result of this report.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

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

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix A – Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service: COVID-19 Inspection Letter

12.2 Appendix B – HMICFRS Inspection Activity 2020/21

12.3 Appendix C – Letter from Home Secretary and Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities

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Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

6th Floor, Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN
Email: matt.parr@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Matt Parr
Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

Trevor Ferguson
Chief Fire Officer
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service

Councillor Colin Dudley
Chair
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

22 January 2021

Dear Mr Ferguson and Councillor Dudley,

COVID-19 INSPECTION: ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

In August 2020, we were commissioned by the Home Secretary to inspect how fire and rescue services in England are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This letter sets out our assessment of the effectiveness of your service's response to the pandemic.

2. The pandemic is a global event which has affected everyone and every organisation. Fire and rescue services have had to continue to provide a service to the public and, like every other public service, have had to do so within the restrictions imposed.
3. For this inspection, we were asked by the Home Secretary to consider what is working well and what is being learned; how the fire sector is responding to the COVID-19 crisis; how fire services are dealing with the problems they face; and what changes are likely because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognise that the pandemic is not over and, as such, this inspection concerns the service's initial response.
4. I am grateful for the positive and constructive way your service engaged with our inspection. I am also very grateful to your service for the positive contribution you have made to your community during the pandemic. We inspected your service between 12 and 23 October 2020. This letter summarises our findings.
5. In relation to your service, the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (LRF) jointly declared a major incident on 19 March 2020.
6. In summary, the service adapted and responded to the pandemic effectively. The service was able to respond to emergency calls, engage with communities most at risk, and fulfil its prevention and protection duties. It provided additional support to the community during the first

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Appendix A

phase of the pandemic. It used its wholetime firefighters to respond to emergencies, and the increased availability of its on-call workforce provided additional resource which it used in different ways. These included managing a logistics cell that distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers across the Thames Valley and meeting a request from Slough Borough Council to provide welfare visits to residents in its communities that were shielding. The service also provided emergency planning expertise to assure the coroner that effective death management processes were in place. This meant the people of Berkshire were better supported by the service throughout the pandemic than they would otherwise have been.

7. Resources were well managed and the service's financial position was largely unaffected, especially as reserves didn't have to be used to cover extra costs. The service was able to respond quickly to staff absences and implemented work to build resilience in its control room. The service communicated well with its staff throughout the pandemic, including on issues relating to staff wellbeing and mental health provision. It also provided guidance and support to its managers and staff to develop their understanding of the potential increased risk of domestic violence during the pandemic. It made sure all staff had the resources they needed to do their jobs effectively, including providing extra IT and putting in place new flexible working arrangements.

8. We recognise that the arrangements for managing the pandemic may carry on for some time and that the service is now planning for the future. To be as efficient and effective as possible, the service should focus on the following areas:

(a) It should determine how it will adopt for the longer term, the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic, to secure lasting improvements.

(b) It should evaluate how effective its extra activities have been. It should then consider how its activities can give local communities the most benefit in future.

Preparing for the pandemic

9. In line with good governance, the service had a pandemic flu plan (the Thames Valley LRF's plan) and business continuity plans, which were in date. These plans were activated. They were enough to enable the service to anticipate and mitigate the risks presented by COVID-19, including maintaining an appropriate level of fire cover and protecting its staff. The service has reviewed its plans to reflect the changing situation and what it has learnt during the pandemic.

10. The plans now include further detail on what elements of the service should maintain response capability if loss of staff is greater than normal. These are the degradation arrangements. They cover prevention, protection, response and support functions, social distancing, making premises 'COVID secure', remote working, mutual aid and the supply of PPE. Further guidance was provided to staff about COVID-19 testing, self-isolation, living with vulnerable people and dealing with bereavement.

Fulfilling statutory functions

11. The main functions of a fire and rescue service are firefighting, promoting fire safety through prevention and protection (making sure building owners comply with fire safety legislation), rescuing people in road traffic collisions, and responding to emergencies.

12. The service has continued to provide its core statutory functions throughout the pandemic in line with advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This means the service has continued to respond to calls from the public and attended emergencies. It has also continued to undertake prevention work, and has carried out home safety visits using a risk-based approach following NFCC guidance. Face-to-face visits by operational staff and community safety advisers were provided only for the most vulnerable people. Protection activity continued, with the service maintaining audits in line with NFCC guidance and COVID-19 alert levels. It continued with building consultations, enforcement activity and visits to high-rise buildings in line with its building risk review programme.

Response

13. The service told us that between 1 April and 30 June 2020 it attended fewer incidents than it did during the same period in 2019.

14. The overall availability of fire engines was better during the pandemic than it was during the same period in 2019. Between 1 April and 30 June 2020, the service's average overall fire engine availability was 84.6 percent compared with 78.6 percent during the same period in 2019. We were told that this was as a result of lower sickness levels and an increased number of on-call firefighters being available to respond to emergencies due to being furloughed from their primary employment.

15. The service didn't change its crewing models or shift patterns during this period.

16. The service told us that its average response time to fires improved during the pandemic compared with the same period last year. This was due to several reasons including lower sickness levels, better fire engine availability and less road traffic during this period. This may not be reflected in [official data recently published by the Home Office](#), because services don't all collect and calculate their data the same way.

17. The service had good arrangements in place to make sure that its control room had enough staff during the pandemic. These included effective resilience arrangements, such as daily reporting to management on staffing levels, restricting access to its control room, and implementing enhanced cleaning regimes for all staff. The service also collaborated with the other fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley region and ensured that the secondary control room in Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service also restricted access to control room staff only.

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Appendix A

Prevention

18. The NFCC issued guidance explaining how services should maintain a risk-based approach to continuing prevention activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The service adopted this guidance.

19. The service conducted fewer safe and well visits than it would normally undertake. It reviewed which individuals and groups it considered to be at an increased risk from fire as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it added those at risk of arson, hate crime, and domestic violence, and health and social care referrals from local authorities or other trusted partners. Accordingly, it responded to each high-risk referral from partners, including Thames Valley Police. It also instigated a triage system to identify risk levels by telephone with the resident. The service would then either undertake a face-to-face visit or provide safety advice over the phone, highlighting any needs to relevant partner agencies.

20. The service decided to continue offering face-to-face safe and well visits on a risk-assessed basis and was able to give staff suitable PPE equipment.

21. The service introduced the option of a safe and well visit by telephone instead of face to face. In response to an increased number of referrals relating to concerns about safeguarding or arson, the service provided guidance on safeguarding to all staff, and extended who it provides advice to. The service also responded to a request from Slough Borough Council, providing seven on-call staff to provide over 200 welfare checks to vulnerable residents.

Protection

22. The NFCC issued guidance on how to continue protection activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included maintaining a risk-based approach, completing desktop audits and issuing enforcement notices electronically. The service adopted this guidance.

23. The service didn't review its definition of high-risk premises during the pandemic.

24. The service conducted fewer fire safety audits than it would normally undertake. It decided to continue face-to-face fire safety audits and enforcement work because it could give staff suitable PPE. It introduced risk-based desktop appraisals instead of face-to-face audits to minimise face-to-face contact between members of staff and the public.

25. The service continued to issue enforcement and prohibition notices. It brought a successful prosecution against a business owner following several serious fire safety breaches. One area of protection activity that was unaffected by the COVID-19 control measures was consultation work, which continued to be done remotely. During COVID-19, 204 consultations were completed.

26. It also introduced other measures to reduce social contact, such as using telephone and email to make the initial contact, using video conferencing and live streaming, and using electronic documents to replace hard-copy letters. It also used social media and its own website to inform the public about fire safety measures.

27. The service has continued to engage with those responsible for fire safety in high-risk premises with cladding similar to that at Grenfell Tower, in particular, premises where temporary evacuation procedures are in place.

28. A temporary mortuary was built in the service area. The service worked with the mortuary's responsible person to put in place suitable and reasonable fire safety measures.

Staff health and safety and wellbeing

29. Staff wellbeing was a clear priority for the service during the pandemic. It identified wellbeing problems and responded to any concerns and further needs. Senior leaders actively promoted wellbeing services and encouraged staff to discuss any worries they had.

30. Most staff survey respondents told us that they could access services to support their mental wellbeing if needed. Support put in place for staff included occupational health, counselling, peer support, and access to external resources such as a GP through private healthcare services.

31. Staff most at risk of COVID-19 were identified effectively, including those from a black, Asian and minority ethnic background and those with underlying health problems. The service worked with staff to develop and implement processes to manage the risk. It assessed government guidance and carried out specific risk assessments for those staff who were most vulnerable, and provided a forum for staff members to discuss concerns and request additional support. All wellbeing support was monitored and recorded by human resources. The service also provided advice and support to staff with regards to bereavement, financial hardship, religious observance, domestic violence and living with a vulnerable person. The service was able to provide alternative accommodation for staff to allow families to remain safe, while maintaining operational resilience.

32. Wellbeing best practice was also shared with other services. The service doesn't yet have plans to discuss with its staff the potential longer-term effects of COVID-19 on its workforce.

33. The service made sure that firefighters were competent to do their work during the pandemic. It launched a learning management system and was able to convert some core skill training to online virtual learning. On-call staff completed virtual drill nights to maintain competency. The service kept up to date with most of the firefighter fitness requirements.

34. The service assessed the risks of new work to make sure its staff had the skills and equipment needed to work safely and effectively. It provided its workforce with appropriate PPE on time. It participated in the national fire sector scheme to procure PPE, which allowed it to achieve value for money.

Staff absence

35. Absences have decreased compared with the same period in 2019. The number of days/shifts lost due to sickness absence decreased by 37.8 percent between 1 April and 30 June 2020 compared with the same period in 2019.

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Appendix A

36. The service updated the absence policy so that it could better manage staff wellbeing and health and safety to make more effective decisions on how to allocate work. This included information about recording absences, self-isolation, testing, training for managers and bereavement. Data was routinely collected on the numbers of staff absent, self-isolating and working from home.

Staff engagement

37. Most staff survey respondents told us that the service provided regular and relevant communication to all staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included regular virtual team meetings, written correspondence and one-to-ones with a manager. The senior leadership team held a series of 'keeping in touch' calls to give staff the opportunity to share their views and provide feedback on how the service had been responding to the pandemic.

38. The service made use of telephone, email, social media, messaging services and virtual meeting platforms when communicating with on-call staff during COVID-19. The service also provided an on-call workplace group, which has 81 members. This provided key updates without requiring access to emails. Following this, on-call firefighters were also given access to their emails and the intranet via a virtual private network (VPN) on their personal devices.

39. The service intends to maintain changes it has made to its ways of working in response to COVID-19 (including virtual meetings) through continuing to introduce new technology. It will continue to allow staff to work remotely, while taking account of the value of social interaction between staff. And it will prioritise the wellbeing services it provides to all staff.

Working with others, and making changes locally

40. To protect communities, fire and rescue service staff were encouraged to carry out extra roles beyond their core duties. This was to support other local blue light services and other public service providers that were experiencing high levels of demand, and to offer other support to its communities.

41. The service carried out the following new activities: providing emergency planning expertise to the excess death management cell; co-ordinating a logistics cell to distribute PPE across the Thames Valley area; and undertaking welfare visits to those who were shielding.

42. A national 'tripartite agreement' was put in place to include the new activities that firefighters could carry out during the pandemic. The agreement was between the NFCC, national employers, and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), and specified what new roles firefighters could agree to engage in during the pandemic. Each service then undertook local consultations on the specific work it had been asked to support, to agree how any health and safety requirements, including risk assessments, would be addressed. If public sector partners requested further support from services with additional roles that were outside the tripartite agreement, the specifics would need to be agreed nationally before the work could begin. The service consulted locally to implement the tripartite agreement with the FBU and the Fire and Rescue Services Association.

43. All of the new work done by the service under the tripartite agreement was agreed on time for it to start promptly and in line with the request from the partner agency.
44. There were extra requests for work by partner agencies that fell outside the tripartite agreement, including the distribution of PPE across the Thames Valley. The service co-ordinated a collaborative approach with Thames Valley Police and the other two Thames Valley fire and rescue services. During the time the logistics cell was running, PPE was distributed to partners who were experiencing shortages.
45. The service provided support to the LRF in developing a contingency plan for transporting bodies in the event of excess deaths and in support of the LRF's wider work on the death management processes. The team worked with the LRF's death management team and co-ordinated the work to make sure that appropriate risk assessments and relationships were established with a third sector body, Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue, to meet the plan.
46. The service responded to a request from Slough Borough Council to provide on-call staff to undertake welfare visits to residents who were shielding. This work was agreed and undertaken on time and in line with the requests from the partner agencies.
47. All new work, including that done under the tripartite agreement, was risk-assessed and complied with health and safety requirements.
48. All activities to support other organisations during this period were monitored and reviewed. The service has identified which of these to continue. For example, the relationship between the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS) and the service has been strengthened as a result of the Thames Valley collaboration request. In future, the service will provide staff to drive ambulances when it is able to do so, and there will be joint training.

Local resilience forum

49. To keep the public safe, fire and rescue services work with other organisations to assess the risk of an emergency, and to maintain plans for responding to one. To do so, the service should be an integrated and active member of its LRF – in this case Thames Valley LRF.
50. The service was an active member of the LRF during the pandemic. The service told us that the LRF's arrangements enabled the service to be fully engaged in the multi-agency response.
51. As part of the LRF's response to COVID-19, the service's deputy chief fire officer acted as deputy chair to the LRF executive committee. The service chaired the PPE logistics cell, tactical co-ordinating group, and risk working group, and attended the testing cell and media advisory cell (MAC), which included being the MAC representative on the community hub working group. The service was able to allocate suitably qualified staff to participate in these groups without affecting its core duties.

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Appendix A

Use of resources

52. The service's financial position hasn't yet been significantly affected by the pandemic.

53. The service has made robust and realistic calculations of the extra costs it has faced during the pandemic. Up until 30 June, its main costs were £75,000 on PPE, £11,000 on cleaning products and decontamination supplies, £56,000 on IT, £9,000 on premises changes to facilitate social distancing, and £54,000 on firefighter overtime payments. It fully understands the effect this will have on its previously agreed budget and anticipated savings. The service made savings of £9,500 from travel and subsistence mileage payments.

54. The service received £807,000 of extra government funding to support its response. By 30 June, it had spent £532,000 on technology to support remote working, PPE, cleaning products and overtime to maintain operational resilience on fire stations. It has shown how it used this income efficiently, and that it mitigated against the financial risks that arose during this period. The service has put aside £275,000 to cover any additional costs relating to COVID-19 this financial year.

55. The service didn't use any of its reserves to meet the extra costs that arose during this period. When used, overtime was managed appropriately. The service made sure that its staff who worked overtime had enough rest between shifts.

Ways of working

56. The service changed the way in which it operates during the pandemic. For example, it enabled staff to work at different locations within the service to maintain productivity. It had the necessary IT to support remote working where appropriate. Where new IT was needed, it made sure that procurement processes achieved good value for money.

57. The service could quickly implement changes to how it operates. This allowed its staff to work flexibly and efficiently during the pandemic. The service plans to consider how to adapt its flexible working arrangements to make sure it has the right provisions in place to support a modern workforce.

58. The service had positive feedback from staff on how they were engaged with during the pandemic. As a result, the service plans to adopt these changes in its usual procedures and consider how they can be developed further to help promote a sustainable change to its working culture.

59. The service made good use of the resources and guidance available from the NFCC to support its workforce planning, and help with its work under the tripartite agreement.

Staffing

60. The service had enough resources available to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, but not enough to respond to all the requests for support it received from its partner organisations. The service trained its staff to undertake ambulance driving, although they didn't end up doing this. The initial request from SCAS for drivers was picked up by other fire and rescue services in Thames Valley that had more resources available at the time. However, the service would welcome the opportunity to support future requests.

61. Arrangements put in place to monitor staff performance across the service were effective. This meant the service could be sure its staff were making the best contribution that they reasonably could during this period. Extra capacity was identified and reassigned to support other areas of the service and other organisations.

62. For most of the pandemic, the main role for wholetime firefighters was to provide the service's core responsibilities, while work under the tripartite agreement and other additional work was done by other parts of the workforce. We expect the service to keep their processes under review to make sure they use their wholetime workforces as productively as possible. This approach was taken because the service felt this was the best way to make sure it had the resources it needed to meet its foreseeable risk.

63. The on-call workforce took on extra responsibilities covering some of the roles agreed as part of the tripartite agreement.

Governance of the service's response

64. Each fire and rescue service is overseen by a fire and rescue authority. There are several different governance arrangements in place across England, and the size of the authority varies between services. Each authority ultimately has the same function: to set the service's priorities and budget and make sure that the budget is spent wisely.

65. Members of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) were actively engaged in discussions with the chief fire officer and the service on the service's ability to discharge its statutory functions during the pandemic.

66. The RBFA maintained effective ways of working with the service during the pandemic. This made sure the service could fulfil its statutory duties as well as its extra work supporting the LRF and the tripartite arrangements. The service regularly updated the RBFA about how it was responding to the pandemic and the extra activities of its staff. This included work carried out as part of the tripartite arrangements.

67. During the pandemic, the RBFA continued to give the service proportionate oversight and scrutiny, including that of its decision-making process. It did this by regularly communicating with the chief fire officer and receiving the service's written briefings.

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Appendix A

Looking to the future

68. During the pandemic, services were able to adapt quickly to new ways of working. This meant they could respond to emergencies and take on a greater role in the community by supporting other blue light services and partner agencies. It is now essential that services use their experiences during COVID-19 as a platform for lasting reform and modernisation.

69. The service is an active member of the Thames Valley collaboration group, strengthening its relationships with Thames Valley Police, local authorities, the NHS and health agencies during the pandemic. This has enabled the service to support the LRF more effectively, which, in turn, has provided better service to communities across the Thames Valley. It is looking at ways its workforce can support these organisations more consistently, especially during periods of future high demand. The service has enhanced how it communicates with staff and explored different ways of working. This has helped different parts of the workforce to connect and work together. The service also transformed its use of technology, and is considering how virtual platforms and remote working can help it become more effective and efficient.

70. Good practice and what worked was shared with other services, central government and Thames Valley Police. The service collaborated with the other Thames Valley fire and rescue services, Thames Valley Police, the NHS and health agencies on the logistics cell, which delivered more than 6m pieces of PPE to key workers. The service opened its second tri-service community fire station during the pandemic. The site is shared with Thames Valley Police and SCAS.

71. The service recognised the link between the threat of arson and the rise in domestic violence during COVID-19. All intervention work carried out following referrals from Thames Valley Police and local authority partners was shared with the other Thames Valley fire and rescue services, Thames Valley Police and SCAS.

Next steps

72. This letter will be published on our website. We propose to restart our second round of effectiveness and efficiency fire and rescue inspections in spring 2021, when we will follow up on our findings.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Parr CB

Her Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services
Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary



Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

Agenda Item 15

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Sir Thomas Winsor ws

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

Chief Constables
Chief Fire Officers
Police and Crime Commissioners
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners
Chief Executives
Chairs of Fire & Rescue Authorities
Lead Fire and Rescue Authority Members
Locally elected Mayors

18 January 2021

Dear Colleagues,

HMICFRS INSPECTION ACTIVITY 2020/21

On 6 November 2020, I wrote to you to advise you about how we expected to continue our work in light of the announcement about restrictions as a result of the pandemic. This letter provides you with a further update following the recent announcements by the Prime Minister and the devolved administrations.

2. Following those recent announcements, HMICFRS Board members considered a number of factors including the demand on our inspected sectors, the reported higher transmission rates of the virus variants, and the progress made with remote inspection activity over previous months.
3. The Board decided that in-person inspection activity should be suspended. Where possible and until 22 February 2021, planned inspections will continue using virtual methods only. Virtual inspection activity will be discussed with each force or service in advance, but the presumption is that it will continue.
4. Exceptions will of course exist, and I do not underestimate the difficulties you face as you continue to provide a vital service amidst the circumstances caused by the pandemic. Where particular difficulties are faced or where inspection activity requires appreciable input that is not sustainable or practicable, discussions can take place with your regional HMI. Decisions on whether to suspend planned virtual inspection activity will be taken on a case-by-case basis by the inspectorate.
5. It is important that we try to conduct as much virtual inspection activity as is possible in a way that supports our inspected sectors, and ultimately contributes to the service provided to the public. This evolving environment may become our new normal. I of course recognise the need to continue to adapt and be flexible whilst still contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services, in the public interest.
6. My Board colleagues and I will continue to discuss inspection plans against the changing operational circumstances to ensure they remain appropriate. Our inspection planning for 2021/22

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Appendix B

continues, with a presumption of the full programme being implemented, pending approval by the Home Secretary, from 1 April 2021.

7. Once again, I offer my thanks and appreciation for your commitment during these changing times.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Thomas Winsor WS

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

Copied to: HMIs Home Office NFCC Chair NPCC Chair

DG, National Crime Agency LGA APCC

CEO, College of Policing Criminal Justice Chief Inspectors

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BY EMAIL ONLY

To:
Chief Fire Officers
Chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners
Roy Wilsher, National Fire Chiefs' Council

14 January 2021

All,

Response to Covid-19 – Support by Fire and Rescue Services

We continue to be hugely thankful for the hard work of everyone in Fire and Rescue Services – both firefighters and staff – during the Covid-19 pandemic. We want to take this opportunity to again extend our thanks for the leadership you have all shown during this period.

The work that firefighters and staff have done has been critical to the response to the pandemic. We have heard many amazing examples of what has been achieved and spoken to frontline staff about the work they have done. A consistent theme has been how committed and proud they are to support people in need. It goes without saying that we share your collective commitment to put the safety of staff at the centre of this effort whilst doing all you can to help save lives and protect the NHS.

We support you in encouraging your firefighters and staff to continue to undertake this important work, particularly in providing support to local authorities, the NHS and Ambulance Trusts. The next phase of mass testing and the roll out of the vaccination programme is critical. As Chief Fire Officers told Lord Greenhalgh last week – this is an all hands to the pump moment and supporting mass testing and vaccine deployment should be a key community safety focus for Fire and Rescue Services. We ask you to find as many volunteers across your service as possible and to encourage them to support mass testing and vaccination efforts across the country.

For the first phase of the vaccine rollout, the Government is rightly prioritising the elderly and clinically extremely vulnerable, alongside front-line healthcare workers. However, we are continuing to work with our ministerial colleagues, to ensure that the role Fire and Rescue Services continue to provide in supporting the pandemic response is recognised in the continuing discussions on prioritisation for the next phases of the rollout.

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Appendix C

HMICFRS have inspected all Services' performance during the pandemic and we look forward to seeing their findings when the reports are published this month. The Home Office will continue to support Fire and Rescue Authorities that have taken on additional Covid-19 related duties through the Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund. Following first payments from the fund in December, the Contingency Fund has just been re-opened for a second round of applications and will remain open until 14 February. The fund eligibility criteria have been widened, so that in some instances Fire and Rescue Authorities may also be able to claim money for other additional Covid-19 related costs, such as overtime and on-call costs to support core functions, PPE items and cleaning. We would like to encourage all eligible services to apply and to get in touch with our officials in case of any questions.

This, as the Prime Minister has said, is the most critical phase of the pandemic. I know you will do all you can to ensure Fire and Rescue Services play their part in responding to this. On behalf of the British people, we thank you.

With our great wishes


Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP



**Lord Greenhalgh
Minister of State for Building Safety,
Fire and Communities**

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Appointment Panel's recommendation 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
Constitutional Update - Fire Authority Terms of Reference	A&GC	31.03.21	Ad-Hoc	Note and Recommend	DCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Statement of Assurance	A&GC	31.03.21	Quarterly	Agree	DCS	RBFA Chairman and A&GC Chairman	Part I
Statement of Accounts	A&GC	31.03.21	Annual	Agree	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	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	DCS	Organisational Development Champion	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	31.03.21	Annual	Note and Recommend	DCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	31.03.21	Quarterly	Note	DCS	N/A	Part I
Capital Project Update	Management Committee	19.04.21	Ad-hoc	Note	HCP&E	Strategic Assets Lead	Part II
Corporate Calendar 2021/22	Fire Authority	28.04.21	Annual	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Members Annual Reports	Fire Authority	28.04.21	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Constitutional Update - Fire Authority Terms of Reference	Fire Authority	28.04.21	Ad-Hoc	Agree	MO	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Member Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	28.04.21	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Member Champions	Part I
Annual Plan 2021/22	Fire Authority	30.06.21	Annual	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I
TVFCS Joint Committee Annual Report 2020/21	Fire Authority	30.06.21	Annual	Note	AM (C&P)	Collaboration Lead	Part I
Appointment of Committees, Lead Members and Member Champions and Outside Bodies 2021/22	Fire Authority	30.06.21	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Appointment of Chairman / Vice-Chairman 2021/22	Fire Authority	30.06.21	Annual	Appoint	MO	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Governance - to include Member attendance, allowances and expenses	Fire Authority	30.06.21	Annual	Note	DCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Annual Outturn	Management Committee	19.07.21	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q4 Appliance Availability	Management Committee	19.07.21	quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Member/Officer Protocol Review	A&GC	29.07.21	every four years	Agree	DCS	N/A	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Annual Governance Statement	A&GC	29.07.21	Annual	Agree	DCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Pension Board Annual update	A&GC	29.07.21	bi annual	Note	Pension Board Chair	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit report	A&GC	29.07.21	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	29.07.21	Annual	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q4 Performance Report	A&GC	29.07.21	Quarterly	Note	DCS	N/A	Part I
RBFRS Annual Report 20/21	A&GC	29.07.21	Annual	Note	DCS	N/A	Part I
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme	A&GC	29.07.21	Bi-annual	Note	HBIS	N/A	Part I