



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

**Tuesday, 25th November, 2025**

**At**

**6.30 pm**

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

Committee Team

0118 938 4611

E-Mail at [committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:committeeteam@rbfrs.co.uk)

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



**MEETING:** Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Tuesday, 25th November, 2025 at 6.30 pm

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

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## **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

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**To: Members of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority:**

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

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

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact:

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**MEETING:** Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Meeting

**DATE AND TIME:** Tuesday, 25th November, 2025 at 6.30 pm

**VENUE:** Lynda Kenyon Suite  
RBFRS Headquarters  
Newsham Court  
Pincent's Kiln  
Calcot  
Reading, Berkshire RG31 7SD

## **AGENDA**

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

Purpose:

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

- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2025 (Pages 7 - 20)**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the meeting and any recorded actions held on 30 June 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Purpose:

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

- 5. Receipt of Announcements**

Purpose:

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

- 6. Issues arising from the Audit and Governance Committee**

Recommendation:

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

**7. Questions from Members under Standing Order 30**

Purpose:

To receive any questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

**8. Notices of Motion under Standing Order 44**

Purpose:

To receive any notices of Motion under Standing Order 44.

**9. Recommendations of Committees**

No recommendations from Committees were received.

**10. Sustainability Update Presentation**

Purpose:

To receive a presentation on Sustainability update.

**11. EDI Objectives** *(Pages 21 - 60)*

Purpose:

To agree the EDI Objectives for public Consultation.

**12. Annual Treasury Report and Mid-year report** *(Pages 61 - 80)*

Purpose:

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

**13. Forward Plan** *(Pages 81 - 82)*

Recommendation:

That the Forward Plan be noted.

**14. Minutes of the Standing Committees**

Recommendation:

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

**15. Date of the next meeting**

Monday 23 February 2026, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court,  
Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

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



Held on Monday, 30th June, 2025 at 6.30 pm

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

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

- In Attendance:**
- Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO)
  - Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO)
  - Tom Brandon (Area Manager Response and Resilience, AM R&R)
  - Becci Jefferies (Head of Human Resources and Learning and Development, HHR&L&D)
  - Graham Britten (Monitoring Officer, MO)
  - Paul Brooks (Head of Assets, HoA)
  - Conor Byrne (Head of Finance and Procurement, HF&P)
  - Nikki Richards (Deputy Chief Executive, DChEx)
  - Michaela Smith (Democratic Support Assistant, DSA)
  - Christian Riley (Communications and Engagement Officer)
  - Lukasz Wrona (Head of Business and Information Systems, HBIS)
  - David Crease (Area Manager, Prevention and Protection, AM P&P)
  - Annie Pratt (Head of Corporate Services, HCS)
  - Angela Smith (Programme Officer & Inspection Manager)

**Action**

**1.1 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Councillor Gittings opened the meeting as 2024/25 Vice-Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA). He requested for nominations for the position of Chair. One nomination was received for Chair. Councillor Werner nominated Councillor Brooks. Seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Brooks be elected Chair of RBFA for the 25/26 Municipal Year.

Councillor Jeff Brooks read the following statement, '*I, Councillor Jeff Brooks having been elected to the office of Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability*'.

He thanked Members for placing their confidence in him and stated that it was an honour and privilege to lead the Fire Authority.

## **2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2025/26 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Chair sought nominations for Vice–Chair. One nomination was received. Councillor Brown nominated Councillor Gittings, and it was seconded by the Councillor Griffith.

There being no other nominations, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Gittings be elected Vice-Chair of the Fire Authority for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

The Vice-Chair read the following statement, '*I, Councillor Paul Gittings having been elected to the office of Vice-Chair of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority declare that I take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgment and ability*'.

## **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors McKenzie-Boyle, Blundell, Drummond, and Satti.

Councillor McElroy joined the meeting on-line.

## **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

There were no Declarations of Interest received from Officers.

**5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2025**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2025, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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

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

**7. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair made the following announcements.

**Incident at Bicester Motion**

A tragic incident occurred in Bicester, Oxfordshire, on the evening of Thursday, 15 May. The Service are deeply saddened to learn that three people – Martyn Sadler, Jennie Logan and Dave Chester, lost their lives as a result of the incident and heartfelt sympathies remain with their friends, families and loved ones.

Martyn Sadler started his career in Berkshire and spent more than 15 years working across the county before taking on a new wholetime role with London Fire Brigade. At the time of the incident, Martyn was serving alongside Jennie as an On-call Firefighter with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Martyn was a highly valued member of the Service and a dedicated public servant, who showed courage and determination throughout his career. His loss is being felt greatly across the Service.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chair invited Members to join him in observing a minute's silence for Martyn, Jennie and Dave.

Over the past few weeks, the Service has offered additional support to staff, including those in Thames Valley Fire Control, who have been affected by this tragic incident. Staff have also organised a series of fundraisers to raise money for The Fire Fighters Charity in honour of Martyn and Jennie. Firefighters at Slough and Bracknell have held car washes that have raised several thousand pounds for the Charity.

Meanwhile, Red Watch from Whitley Wood took on the Three Peaks challenge in full fire kit in memory of Martyn and Jennie. If you would like to support the Red Watch, their fundraising page is still open and will be shared around following this meeting.

### **Welcome and Farewell to Members**

The Chair welcomed two new Members, Councillor Dilbagh Parmar from Slough Borough Council and Councillor Andy Ng Siu-hong from Wokingham Borough Council.

On behalf of the Authority, the Chair said farewell to two Members – Councillor Lou Timlin and Councillor Harjinder Gahir. Both Councillor Timlin and Councillor Gahir have been on the Fire Authority for the 2024 to 2025 unitary year. The Chair thanked them for their valuable contributions to the Authority and wished them all the best in the futures.

### **Wholetime Graduation Ceremony**

On Friday, 20 June, the Service welcomed 12 new Wholetime Firefighters into its ranks. After months of training at the Fire Service College and at the new Learning and Development Centre, the Graduates showed off their new skills in front of their friends and families at Maidenhead Fire Station. In-between their rigorous training programme, the recruits also upheld a longstanding tradition amongst new cohorts and completed a fundraising challenge in support of The Fire Fighters Charity. This time, the cohort cycled the equivalent of the Three Peaks Challenge – approximately 485 miles – on static bikes at The Lexicon in Bracknell. In their incredible effort, the Graduates raised over £6,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity. The Chair asked Members to join him in congratulating the Graduates on this fantastic achievement.

Following the Graduation Ceremony, the Apprentices have now taken up their station placements across the County. The Chair asked Members to join him in welcoming the new Firefighters.

### **Opening of new Learning and Development Centre**

After over a year of work at the site, the Services new Learning and Development Centre at Whitley Wood will officially open on Friday, 25 July. The new facility, built by Premier Modular Limited, represents a significant investment by the Fire Authority into the Service and its staff. Fire Authority Members are all invited to the opening ceremony and should have received an invite via Members RBFRS emails. If Members have not and would like to attend, please contact the Communications and Engagement Team as soon as possible.

### **TVFCS 10 Year Anniversary**

April marked the ten-year anniversary of Thames Valley Fire Control Service. The tri-service centre is based in Berkshire, where colleagues work 24/7 answering emergency calls from the public. From here, staff mobilise fire engines on behalf of the three fire and rescue services to incidents across the Thames Valley, serving a combined population of more than two million people.

Throughout April, a series of events took place across the Thames Valley to mark the occasion. These included team-building sessions for Control staff at fire stations across the region, a formal anniversary lunch at Newsham Court, and a 50-mile commemorative walk between the three counties in support of The Fire Fighters Charity. On behalf of the Fire Authority and colleagues in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the Chair thanked everyone involved with the creation and continued operation of the fantastic Fire Control Service.

### **Station 2 Station Run**

On Monday, 12 May, two firefighters, Martyn Ainsworth based at Newbury Fire Station and Shaun Foley based at Wokingham Road Fire Station, completed the 'Station 2 Station' ultramarathon, in aid of raising money for The Fire Fighters Charity. Starting early in the morning at Newbury Fire Station, the pair ran 58 miles across the county of Berkshire, visiting every single fire station. The marathon eventually finished at Maidenhead Fire Station at 8:51pm.

So far, Martyn and Shaun have raised over £3,600 for the Fire Fighters Charity. The Chair asked Members to join him in congratulating them on their fantastic achievement.

### **8. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

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

### **9. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 30**

There were no questions from Members under Standing Order 30.

### **10. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 44**

There were no notices of Motion under Standing Order 44

### **11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

It was **NOTED** that Item 16 (Annual Report on Governance) has been recommended from Audit and Governance Committee on 24 March 2025

### **12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, LEAD MEMBER, MEMBER CHAMPIONS, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Graham Britten, Monitoring Officer (MO), introduced the report and advised each Political Group had submitted their nominations for the appointment of Committees, Lead Members, Member Champions, Working Parties and Outside

Bodies.

In line with recommendation 2.1 Graham Britten confirmed details of Member nominations for the appointment of Committees as follows:

Table 5

<p>Audit and Governance Committee (9 seats)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Mohammed Nazir</b></li> <li>2. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor NG Siu-hong</b></li> <li>3. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Owen Jeffery</b></li> <li>4. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Billy Drummond</b></li> <li>5. (Lab) <b>Councillor Greg Bello</b></li> <li>6. (Lab) <b>Councillor Tricia Brown</b></li> <li>7. (Lab) <b>Councillor Dilbagh Parmar</b></li> <li>8. (Con) <b>Councillor Dennis Benneyworth</b></li> <li>9. (Con) <b>Councillor Zafar Satti</b></li> </ol>
<p>Management Committee (11 seats)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Jeff Brooks</b></li> <li>2. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor George Blundell</b></li> <li>3. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey</b></li> <li>4. (Lib Dem) <b>Councillor Simon Werner</b></li> <li>5. (Lab) <b>Councillor Paul Gittings</b></li> <li>6. (Lab) <b>Councillor Wendy Griffith</b></li> <li>7. (Lab) <b>Councillor Peter Frewer</b></li> <li>8. (Con) <b>Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle</b></li> <li>9. (Con) <b>Councillor Wayne Smith</b></li> <li>10. (Green) <b>Councillor Dave McElroy</b></li> <li>11. (Independent) <b>Councillor Helen Taylor</b></li> </ol>

In line with recommendation 2.2 Graham Britten confirmed the ungrouped Green (Councillor Dave McElroy) and Independent (Councillor Helen Taylor) Members be appointed on to the tenth and eleventh seat of Management Committee.

Moving on to Member nominations for the Special Responsibility Allowance Roles, Graham Britten confirmed:

- there was one nomination for the Finance Lead, this was for Councillor Jeff Brooks, this was seconded by Councillor Werner.
- there was one nomination for Collaboration Lead, this was for Councillor Werner, this was seconded by the Chair.

- there was one nomination for Community Risk Management Plan Lead, this was for Councillor Gittings, this was seconded by Councillor Griffith.
- there was one nomination for Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead, this was Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, this was seconded by the Chair.
- there was one nomination for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead, this was Councillor Griffith, this was seconded by Councillor Frewer.
- there was one nomination for Community Safety Champion, this was Councillor Jeffery, this was seconded by Councillor Werner.
- the Audit and Governance Chair would be decided at the first Audit and Governance meeting on 10 July 2025.

In line with recommendation 2.3 Graham Britten confirmed the Members listed above be duly appointed to the Special Responsibility Roles as follows:

Table 6

<b>Position</b>	
Chair of Authority	<b>Councillor Brooks</b>
Vice-Chair of Authority	<b>Councillor Gittings</b>
Finance Lead	<b>Councillor Brooks</b>
Collaboration Lead	<b>Councillor Werner</b>
Community Risk Management Plan Lead	<b>Councillor Gittings</b>
Strategic Assets and Sustainability Lead	<b>Councillor Shepherd-DuBey</b>
Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Development Lead	<b>Councillor Griffith</b>
Community Safety Champion	<b>Councillor Jeffery</b>

Moving onto other nominations Graham Britten confirmed that:

- there had been two nominations for the two seats on the TVFCS Joint Committee, these were for Councillor Frewer and Councillor Werner, these were seconded by the Chair.
- there had been three nominations for the two substitute Members for the TVFCS Joint Committee, these were for Councillor Nazir, Councillor Gittings and Councillor Benneyworth.

On being put to the vote, it was resolved that Councillor Gittings and Councillor Nazir be appointed as substitute Members for the TVFCS Joint Committee.

In line with recommendation 2.4 Graham Britten confirmed the Members listed above be duly appointed to their roles as follows:

Table 7

<b>Position</b>	
TVFCS Joint Committee (2 seats)	<b>Councillor Frewer and Councillor Werner</b>
Two substitute Members for TVFCS Joint Committee	<b>Councillor Nazir and Councillor Gittings</b>

Graham Britten confirmed the following nominations for the working groups:

- there were nominations for Councillor Benneyworth, Councillor Gittings, Councillor Brown, Councillor Brooks and Councillor Shepherd-DuBey onto the Budget Working Party. These were seconded by Councillor Brown.
- there were nominations for Councillor Bello, Councillor Smith, Councillor Parmar and Councillor Shepherd-DuBey onto the Estates Development and Sustainability Working Group. These were seconded by Councillor Griffith.

In line with recommendation 2.4 Graham Britten confirmed the Members listed above be duly appointed to their roles as follows:

Table 8

<b>Position</b>	
Budget Working Party - minimum three Members	<b>Councillor Benneyworth, Councillor Gittings, Councillor Brown, Councillor Brooks and Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.</b>
Estates Development and Sustainability Working Group - minimum three Members	<b>Councillor Bello, Councillor Smith, Councillor Parmar and Councillor Shepherd-DuBey</b>

Graham Britten confirmed:

- there was one nomination for Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative, this was for Councillor Nazir and was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.
- there was one nomination for Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission substitute, this was for Councillor Gittings and was seconded by Councillor Griffith.

In line with recommendation 2.4 Graham Britten the Members listed above be duly appointed to their roles as follows:

Table 9

Position	
Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative (1 seat)*	<b>Councillor Nazir</b>
Substitute Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission representative *	<b>Councillor Gittings</b>

Graham Britten confirmed that there was one nomination for the Honorary Armed Forces Champion, this was Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, this was seconded by Councillor Jeffery.

In line with recommendation 2.4 Graham Britten the Member listed above be duly appointed to their role as follows:

Table 10

Position	
Honorary Armed Forces Champion*	<b>Councillor Shepherd-DuBey</b>

*\*These roles do not attract a special responsibility allowance.*

The Chair moved recommendation 2.5 and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

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

- 1) It was agreed the nominations received from the Group Leaders onto the Audit and Governance Committee and Management Committee be appointed (**Table 5**); and
- 2) It was agreed the two ungrouped Members (**Table 5**) be appointed onto the Management Committee; and
- 3) It was agreed the nominations received for Special Responsibility Allowance roles in **Table 6** be approved; and
- 4) It was agreed nominations received for the appointments listed in **Tables 7 – 10** be approved; and
- 5) The Role Descriptions for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members (attached as Appendix C) be noted.

**13. MEMBERS HANDBOOK UPDATE AND AGENDA PACK CONSIDERATION**

The Chair introduced the item and confirmed the report asked Members to agree the amended Standing Orders, agree the reviewed Constitution and consider giving consent to receive electronic agenda packs from 1 July 2025.

Councillor Jeffery commented although he agreed with the potential savings, Members should still receive hard copies of packs if they wish to. The Chair stated the report did not say that hard copies would not be provided going forward.

The Chair asked for clarification on the number of proposed Fire Authority meetings and Graham Britten (MO) confirmed as well as the annual meeting, meetings would take place in November, February and April.

In reply to Councillors Browns question the Chair confirmed if there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed and resolved by the Authority a further meeting could be planned between the annual meeting and the November meeting.

Annie Pratt (Head of Corporate Services, HCS) referencing Appendix B, detailed the amendment to the job title change.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.1 and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

The Chair moved recommendation 2.2 and it was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

The Fire Authority Members confirmed whether they wished to receive electronic agenda packs from 1 July 2025 by voting.

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

- 1) The Amended Standing Orders (Appendix A) be agreed; and
- 2) The Constitution has been reviewed by the Fire Authority on 30 June 2025 to include and a small amendment made to a job title (Appendix B) be agreed; and
- 3) Each Fire Authority Member consider giving their consent to Democratic Support to receive electronic agenda packs from 1 July 2025 to further support the ICT Strategy and Efficiency and Productivity Plan approved by the Fire Authority.

**14. HMICFRS UPDATE**

Angela Smith (Programme Officer & Inspection Manager) explained the report noted findings from the 2024 inspection of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The report was published in April 2025 and included a new grade of ‘adequate’.

Each Fire & Rescue service would receive eleven graded judgements rather than three overall ones provided in previous inspections. RBFRS received gradings of good in eight areas and adequate in three others. HMICFRS confirmed that a change in grade from good to adequate does not necessarily mean there has been a reduction in performance, unless HMICFRS mentioned this in their report.

The report summarised three main findings - the Service continued to provide an effective prevention, protection and response service to the public working well with other public bodies. The Service had worked hard to transform its estate and technology and made sure staff were productive at work. Staff were proud to work for the Service and felt able to raise concerns which are addressed appropriately.

The report highlighted Areas for Improvement (AFIs) for RBFRS, the findings have been considered, and a plan of action was detailed in Appendix A.

The Chair stated he felt the report contained a very good set of results and asked that the table within the pack is added to the annual report.

Risk & Performance

Wayne Bowcock (Chief Fire Officer, CFO) added that prior to the inspection the Service already had plans in place to address the areas that were then subsequently identified by HMICFRS. He thanked all those who were involved in the inspection.

In response to Councillor Jefferys question about the adequate rating received for ‘Responding to major and multi-agency incidents’, Wayne Bowcock replied that the Service had worked hard to apply a robust technical solution to these types of incidents in-line with Grenfell recommendations. He concluded that further work is needed in relation to system management and this was being addressed.

The Chair moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by the Councillor Nazir.

On being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the findings in His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services report on the performance of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service be noted and the action plan to address the Areas for Improvement (AFI) be approved.

**15. ANNUAL REPORT**

Annie Pratt (Head of Corporate Services, HCS) presented the Annual Report for 2024/25 and apologised to Members for an error on the cover report. The report summarised performance against the annual plan in 2024/25 not 2023/24.

The annual plan highlighted achievements and challenges in delivering services for the people of Berkshire including investment in people, estates, training and equipment and the major development of the Whitley Wood Training Centre. The launch of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Sustainability strategy aimed to improve the Services efficiency whilst mitigating the impact it had on the environment. Details relating to challenging incidents, community engagement, contaminants management, culture plans and provisions around maternity and adoption were included in the plan.

Annie Pratt concluded saying as part of the Services commitment to transparency Members are asked to note the annual report for publication on to the website.

The Chair re-iterated his remark from the previous item where he requested the inspection table be added into the report.

The Chair moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by Councillor Shepherd-DuBey.

On being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report prior to external publication be noted.

Risk &  
Performance

**16. ANNUAL REPORT ON GOVERNANCE**

Annie Pratt (Head of Corporate Services, HCS) explained the report was a recommendation from Audit and Governance Committee at the meeting on 24 March 2025. The report was to note the Annual Report on Governance, note Member Attendance and Member Allowances. Member attendance and allowance data covered the period 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025.

The Chair moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by the Vice-Chair.

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

- 1) The Annual Report be noted; and
- 2) The Members' Allowances received from 1 June 2024 – 31 May 2025 be noted; and
- 3) The 2024/25 attendance record of Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members from 1 June 2024 – 31 May 2025 be noted.

**17. TVFCS ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

Mark Arkwell (Deputy Chief Fire Officer, DCFO) presented a high-level summary of Thames Valley Fire Control (TVFCS) activity during the year 2024/25. He confirmed positive performance for call handling and mobilisation and spend being within or less than 1% of the budget. Strong focus on staff well-being and engagement helped to improve staff retention and reduce some short-term sickness. Notable activity included a hardware refresh, and the 10yr anniversary of the collaboration that concluded with a walk which raised £3,500 for The Fire Fighters charity.

Looking ahead a full system replacement is scheduled for 2028/29 and the full business case should be available later this year.

Chairman of the TVFCS Joint Committee 2024/25 Councillor Frewer added that although the hardware refresh is in place the Services face a further challenge in obtaining a new Command Control System. The system will be expensive, but the collaboration saves each of the three collaboration parties around £1 million annually. Councillor Werner agreed with the comments and added that the collaboration was working well and moving forward in the right direction.

Councillor Frewer moved the recommendation, and it was seconded by Councillor Werner.

On being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the TVFCS Annual Report 2024/25 be noted.

**18. FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

**19. MINUTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

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

**20. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 25 November 2025, 6.30pm at RBFRS Headquarters, Newsham Court, Pincents Kiln, Calcot, Reading RG31 7SD.

(The meeting concluded at 19:29)

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**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>25 NOVEMBER 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AND RESUE SERVICE (RBFRS) EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2026</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>BECCI JEFFERIES, HEAD OF HR AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR WENDY GRIFFITH</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the revised equality objectives for the organisation. The report highlights the reasons for suggested amendments, as well as outlining the requirements related to setting objectives. Implications of failing to implement objectives, beyond legal consequences, are also detailed.
- 1.2 The report also outlines the process undertaken so far to review the objectives and details plans for further consultation subject to the approval of the Authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To **NOTE** the contents of this report.
- 2.2 To **AGREE** the proposed objectives outlined in 3.11.
- 2.3 To **AGREE** the consultation approach outlined in 3.16.

**3. REPORT**

- 3.1 This paper is bought to the Fire Authority following initial consultation with various staff groups and approval by the Senior Leadership Team on 24 September 2025.
- 3.2 The requirement to set Equality objectives is outlined in the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The act mandates that public authorities must comply with the PSED, which places a duty on public bodies to consider how their polices and decisions affect individuals protected under the Equality Act. Failure to properly fulfil this duty may result in legal action against the organisation.

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- 3.3 The intention of the duty is to accelerate progress towards equality by placing a responsibility on public bodies to actively address inequalities and discrimination, particularly in relation to individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the act.
- 3.4 The nine protected characteristics outlined in the act are:
- Age
  - Disability
  - Sex
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Gender Reassignment
  - Race
  - Religion and Belief
  - Pregnancy and Maternity
  - Marriage and Civil Partnership
- 3.5 While the PSED primarily aims to ensure public organisations consider the impact of their activities and decisions to reduce or avoid negative outcomes, it also enables RBFRS to tailor services to meet the diverse needs of individuals therefore enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of protecting our communities.
- 3.6 In addition to considering the nine protected characteristics, RBFRS goes further by recognising additional factors such as socio-economic background, caring responsibilities and other circumstances that may affect individuals risk levels. These considerations are embedded in the Equality Impact Assessment process.
- 3.7 The requirements of the PSED are divided into general and specific duties, both of which RBFRS must comply with:

### 3.7.1 General Duties

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, RBFRS must demonstrate compliance with the PSED by:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

### 3.7.2 Specific duties

To support compliance with the general duty, RBFRS must

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how it meets the requirements of the Equality Act.
- Set and publish specific, measurable equality objectives, at least every four years.

**RBFRS Equality Objectives**

- 3.8 The equality objectives have been drafted following an analysis of the progress against the previous equality objectives, alongside reviewing of the SPB and Member Champion Reports. In addition, the EDI Lead and EDI Steering Group identified key areas of focus to help the organisation advance equality, which have been incorporated into the new objectives. Discussions have also taken place with the EDI Member Champion.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the equality objectives remain in place for the full four-year period to allow sufficient time for meaningful action and measurable progress. However, an earlier review may be triggered if necessary.
- 3.10 The development of the new equality objectives has been carried out in consultation with the EDI Steering Group, the Staff Engagement Group and several watches across the service, ensuring alignment with relevant statutory duties.
- 3.11 Equality Objectives 2026

Current (2022-2026)	Proposed (from 2026)
<p><b>Increasing the diversity of staff at all levels</b></p> <p>We recognise the value that a diverse workforce brings and will take action to increase the diversity of job applicants, seeking individuals with the right behaviours and skills to help us reflect and engage with our local communities.</p> <p>This will involve ensuring our recruitment processes remain fair and continuing to appoint on merit, whilst promoting our range of careers to the widest possible audience.</p>	<p><b>Equitable Access</b></p> <p>We recognise that some groups in our communities experience higher risk or face differing barriers when accessing our services. Using risk-based analysis and robust evidence, we will ensure our prevention, protection and response activities are targeted where they are needed most, particularly for communities who face higher risks or barriers.</p> <p><b>What does this mean?</b></p> <p>We will strengthen our understanding of the diverse communities we serve, including their specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks, to shape evidence-based service delivery. This means ensuring that our prevention, protection, and response services are guided by data and informed by meaningful input from underrepresented and at-risk groups. By doing so, we aim to provide more equitable access to service and improve safety outcomes for all.</p>
<p><b>Leadership and corporate commitment</b></p>	<p><b>Employer of Choice</b></p>

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<p>We will support our organisational leaders to understand their role in tackling inequalities and demonstrating inclusive behaviours, in line with our Behavioural Competency Framework. This commitment means we will be strong and visible in our leadership and ensure that all staff and members of our local communities have confidence in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>This will involve continuing to provide a range of learning opportunities for leaders, from the frontline to the Senior Leadership Team, to expand their knowledge and understanding.</p>	<p>We will actively promote RBFRS as an employer of choice and will seek to attract and retain a workforce that reflects the community of Berkshire.</p> <p><b>What does this mean?</b></p> <p>We want to be an employer of choice, where the best talent is attracted, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive. We want to be known not just for what we do but for how we treat our people and the positive environment we create. We are committed to building a workplace where people from all backgrounds feel like they belong and are valued.</p>
<p><b>Improving our service delivery by creating strong links with our community</b></p> <p>We will connect and communicate with our diverse local community to develop meaningful and sustainable links, which help us to increase our understanding of their needs. We will ensure that we tailor our prevention, protection, and response activities accordingly and target the most vulnerable people with the greatest risk.</p> <p>This will involve finding ways to gain feedback from our communities which helps us to identify risk on a local level.</p>	<p><b>Belonging at work</b></p> <p>We will cultivate a workplace culture where every individual feels a strong sense of belonging by embedding inclusive behaviours into everyday interactions. This means setting clear expectations for professional behaviour, actively listening to diverse perspectives, and empowering all staff to contribute to an environment where everyone feels safe, supported and included.</p> <p><b>What does this mean?</b></p> <p>We will continue to foster a culture where everyone understands, respects, and values the diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences of colleagues and the communities we serve. We will support employees to grow their knowledge, awareness and inclusive skills, while encouraging reflection and dialogue that challenges assumptions and address bias. By embedding inclusive behaviours into daily work practices, we aim to create a workplace where people feel seen, heard, and able to thrive not just through policies, but through the way we treat each other every day.</p>

<p><b>Building on our inclusive culture</b></p> <p>We will continue taking action to ensure we have a culture where everyone feels valued and is treated with dignity and respect and support all staff to contribute to the creation of an inclusive working environment.</p> <p>This will involve ensuring that our policies and processes celebrate differences and enable all staff to be themselves in the workplace.</p>	<p><b>Inclusive by Design</b></p> <p>We recognise the value of being inclusive by design and will continue to embed inclusion into the planning, design and delivery of our services. By identifying, understanding and addressing the impacts on different groups from the outset, we aim to proactively reduce barriers across our communications, processes and premises.</p> <p><b>What does this mean?</b></p> <p>We are committed to ensuring that everyone can access our services, premises and information. This means taking a proactive, not reactive approach to identifying barriers and designing inclusive solutions from the outset. By continuing to use Equality Impact Assessments effectively, we can ensure that the potential impacts of our decisions on different groups are considered early enabling us to design more inclusive and accessible services.</p>
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- 3.12 As noted, the proposed objectives reflect feedback gathered from staff across the service. Careful consideration has been given to the language used to ensure clarity and accessibility. The objectives are also mindful of RBFRS's current position and progress in advancing equality.

**Implementation and Ownership**

- 3.13 Considerations such as the resources required for implementation, as well as clarification of accountability and ownership will be agreed and reviewed by the EDI Steering Group.
- 3.14 A detailed action plan outlining the steps for achieving each of the objectives and defining measures of success will be developed following approval. This plan will span the four-year period and will be formally agreed by the EDI Steering Group.
- 3.15 Agreed actions will be regularly consulted on with relevant internal and external representatives, including the EDI and Neurodiversity Network. This collaborative approach will support compliance with the PSED by fostering good relations between different groups.

**Consultation Approach**

- 3.16 While legislation does not specify how the public should be consulted when setting equality objectives, RBFRS intends to follow its established public consultation approach. This will include utilising the community database to engage with a wide

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range of representative groups across Berkshire. Consultation will also be undertaken with local authorities, and key stakeholder such as South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police. In addition, members and employees will be consulted through internal channels such as Siren.

- 3.17 The consultation period will run for 10 weeks.
- 3.18 Accessibility and equality of access will be key considerations throughout the consultation process to ensure it is as inclusive and representative as possible.
- 3.19 Biweekly reviews will ensure responses reflect the demographics of Berkshire and action will be taken to encourage consultation responses from underrepresented groups.
- 3.20 A communications and engagement plan has been completed to outline our approach and is appended as Appendix A.
- 3.21 A risk assessment has been completed to account for potential political instability that may impact the consultation, it is appended as Appendix B for reference.

### **Further benefits of setting Equality Objectives**

- 3.22 Setting Equality Objectives offers wide reaching benefits beyond legal compliance, positively impacting both service users and members of the community.
- 3.23 Failure to fulfil these duties carries significant risks, as outlined in section seven below. Equally, there is a clear moral benefit to establish objectives that promote fairness and equality across all areas of the organisation.

In addition to being legally and morally the right thing to do, RBFRS stands to benefit in several keyways from setting equality objectives, including but not limited to:

- Staff gain clarity on the Services commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion contributing to a confident and informed workforce who understand not only how the Service intends to achieve its goals regarding equality, but also the individual role each member of staff or representative is expected to play. As well as how they can be expected to be treated by others, particularly in relation to the objective focused on fostering a sense of belonging.
  - An expanded and diverse talent pool as a result of this commitment, by being an employer of choice as outlined in the objective it supports the efforts to attract and retain talent from a wider range of backgrounds.
  - Through the duty to consider the impact of our activities, the objectives we set, and tailoring our services to meet the needs of different groups, RBFRS will be better positioned to deliver effective and efficient services to the communities we serve.
- 3.24 Overall, whilst the setting of equality objectives is a legal requirement, the broader benefits, especially those arising from clear, purposeful and authentic objectives are far reaching. They help ensure that all staff, representatives of the organisation and members of the local community receive a fairer more equitable and effective service from RBFRS.

**4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Prevention: We will reduce the risk to our communities through our partnership duties and prevention education activities, ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.2 Protection: We will support those with responsibility for premises to understand their duties in ensuring the safety of all people using buildings covered by the Building Safety Act 2022 and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, whilst ensuring that our services are accessible to all.
- 4.3 Response: We will ensure that our people are trained and resources are located to provide the most effective response and to have a positive impact on incidents in our communities.
- 4.4 Resilience: We will ensure we are resilient and work with our partners to promote and build resilience in the communities we serve.
- 4.5 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.
- 4.6 People: We will support our staff by providing a safe and inclusive environment for them to thrive in, building a diverse organisation that is engaged with, and accessible to, our communities.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications of undertaking consultation and agreeing the proposed equality objectives. The actions required to support achievement of the objectives may require additional resources.
- 5.2 In the event that the consultation does not engage a sufficiently representative cross-section of the community, targeted communications may be required. This could incur additional costs of up to £100 to ensure inclusive and effective outreach.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The PSED consists of both general and specific duties as outlined above, the broad aim is to embed consideration of the advancement of equality into the day-to-day of all bodies subject to the duty. Failure to comply and set equality objectives will result in a breach of the Equality Act 2010.

**7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The objectives focus on advancing equality across the organisation's practices. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed regarding the consultation approach a draft of which is attached as Appendix C.

**8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 If equality objectives are poorly communicated or perceived as tokenistic, RBFRS may face criticism from staff, or the public which may increase reputational risk. In our

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continued efforts to minimise organisational risks, we will embark on meaningful and accessible consultation with our internal and external stakeholders.

8.2 Failing to fulfil these duties invites legal risk. See 6.1.

### **9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No sustainability implications have been identified at this time.

### **10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

10.1 Not applicable – no duty to collaborate required. The objectives relate specifically to the needs of Berkshire residents.

10.2 The project team will work with stakeholders, both internally and externally, to seek feedback on the suitability of the objectives through consultation.

### **11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

11.1 Monitoring Officer

11.2 Chief Fire Officer

### **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 SLT Report- Equality Objectives 2026

### **13. APPENDICES**

13.1 Appendix A – Communications and Engagement Plan, Equality Objectives

13.2 Appendix B – Equality Objectives Consultation Risk Assessment

13.3 Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment – Equality Objectives 2026 Consultation

### **14. CONTACT DETAILS**

14.1 Claudia Trott – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, [trottc@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:trottc@rbfrs.co.uk)



**Communication / Engagement Plan**

<b>Comms lead:</b>	<b>Christian Riley</b>		
<b>Project Manager</b>	<b>Claudia Trott</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>17 October</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Equality Objectives Consultation Comms Plan</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Project Background:</b>	<p>Our Service is committed to inclusion through promoting equality and diversity for all our employees and the wider community. This is more than just a statement – it’s about how we can work towards the society we want to see, both within and outside of our organisation.</p> <p>To promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation, every four years, we set a series of objectives, which we consult staff and the public on.</p> <p>Our new equality objectives have been drafted following an analysis of the progress against the previous equality objectives, alongside reviewing of the SPB and Member Champion Reports. In addition, the EDI Lead and EDI Steering Group identified key areas of focus to help the organisation advance equality, which have been incorporated into the new objectives.</p> <p>The development of the new equality objectives has been carried out in consultation with the EDI Steering Group, the Staff Engagement Group and several watches across the service, ensuring alignment with relevant statutory duties. It is proposed that the equality objectives remain in place for the full four-year period to allow sufficient time for meaningful action and measurable progress. However, an earlier review may be triggered if necessary.</p> <p>The requirement to set Equality objectives is outlined in the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The act mandates that public authorities must comply with the PSED, which places a duty on public bodies to consider how their policies and decisions affect individuals protected under the Equality Act. Failure to properly fulfil this duty may result in legal action against the organisation.</p>		

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Appendix A

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<p><b>Comms objectives/ measures:</b></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To clearly communicate the purpose of the consultation prior to publication and ensure outcomes are clearly communicated following the close of the consultation.</li> <li>• To explain our values as an organisation, while remaining politically neutral.</li> <li>• To generate as many responses to the survey as possible via external and internal communication channels.</li> <li>• To engage all high priority stakeholders in the consultation process from start to finish, making them feel part of the process.</li> <li>• To maintain maximum transparency and accessibility for all those wishing to take part.</li> </ul> <p><b>Measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of respondents to the consultation</li> <li>• Stakeholder feedback during the consultation</li> <li>• Engagement statistics for the webpage hosting the consultation.</li> <li>• Feedback and engagement received through social media channels.</li> <li>• Sentiment of any media coverage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Delivery (channels):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal updates via Siren and the Spark.</li> <li>• Letter from Chair, Chief or Director concerning the consultation</li> <li>• External updates on the Service’s website</li> <li>• Press releases to launch the consultation.</li> <li>• Interviews and statements for media on a reactive basis.</li> <li>• Project Team to hold regular update meetings with key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Social media messaging to promote the consultation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stakeholders</b></p>	<p>The following stakeholders have been identified as groups to communicate with, due to their interest or influence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project Team</li> <li>○ Claudia Trott, EDI Lead</li> <li>○ Cllr. Jeff Brooks, Chair</li> <li>○ Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer</li> <li>○ Nikki Richards, Director of Corporate Services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources</li> <li>● <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Operational Staff</li> <li>○ Professional Services Staff</li> <li>○ Thames Valley Fire Control Service</li> <li>○ Senior Leadership Team</li> <li>○ Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Members</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Core External Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key Community Contacts – to be defined</li> <li>○</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Other External Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Residents of Berkshire</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Berkshire based Newspapers</li> <li>○ Regional Radio and TV stations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Key Messages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Over the next four years, we want to improve our reach within the communities we serve. This means making RBFRS more accessible and improving engagement, particularly with groups that are at higher risk of harm.</li> <li>● Promote our Service as an inclusive place to work</li> <li>● Strengthen ties with the communities that we serve.</li> </ul>
<b>Sign off process</b>	<b>Mark Antell &gt; Claudia Trott &gt; Becci Jefferies</b>

<b>Milestone</b> (what is/are the key point/s you need to get across)	<b>When</b> (when do you need to do it by)	<b>Stakeholders</b> (who do you need to tell)	<b>Media</b> (channel of communication for each stakeholder)	<b>Action owner</b> (who is responsible for the message being delivered)
Draft consultation letter – letter from Chair, Chief or other member of SLT to be published	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Project Team</li> <li>○ Claudia Trott, EDI Lead</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Letter (draft)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications and Engagement</li> <li>● Claudia Trott</li> </ul>



Milestone (what is/are the key point/s you need to get across)	When (when do you need to do it by)	Stakeholders (who do you need to tell)	Media (channel of communication for each stakeholder)	Action owner (who is responsible for the message being delivered)
on website promoting consultation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cllr. Jeff Brooks, Chair</li> <li>○ Wayne Bowcock, Chief Fire Officer</li> <li>○ Nikki Richards, Director of Corporate Services</li> <li>○ Becci Jefferies, Head of Human Resources</li> </ul>		
Pre engagement with community groups, religious groups and other identified key stakeholders.	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Email</li> <li>● Phone calls</li> <li>● Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project Team</li> </ul>
Prepare social media material to promote consultation – video graphics, draft social media posts, etc.	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core External Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key Community Contacts – to be defined</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social media (draft)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>External Go live date:</b> Announcement of the beginning of the Consultation	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>● <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>● <b>Media</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Press Release</li> <li>● Letter</li> <li>● Website</li> <li>● Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications and Engagement</li> <li>● Project Team</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Go live date:</b>	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b></li> <li>● <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Siren</li> <li>● Spark</li> <li>● Screensaver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communications and Engagement</li> <li>● Project Team</li> </ul>
Engagement with community groups, religious groups and other identified key stakeholders.	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Email</li> <li>● Phone calls</li> <li>● Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project Team</li> </ul>



<b>Milestone</b> (what is/are the key point/s you need to get across)	<b>When</b> (when do you need to do it by)	<b>Stakeholders</b> (who do you need to tell)	<b>Media</b> (channel of communication for each stakeholder)	<b>Action owner</b> (who is responsible for the message being delivered)
Ongoing updates to remind people of the consultation and how to take part	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
Targeted engagement with key community targets	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> <li>• Project Team</li> </ul>
<b>Midway external Reminder:</b> Ongoing updates to remind people of the consultation and how to take part	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Midway Internal Reminder:</b>	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siren</li> <li>• Spark</li> <li>• Screensaver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Final Reminder:</b> Ongoing updates to remind people of the consultation and how to take part	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Final Internal Reminder</b>	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siren</li> <li>• Spark</li> <li>• Screensaver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>
Close of survey – thank you for taking part	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Siren</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> </ul>



<b>Milestone</b> (what is/are the key point/s you need to get across)	<b>When</b> (when do you need to do it by)	<b>Stakeholders</b> (who do you need to tell)	<b>Media</b> (channel of communication for each stakeholder)	<b>Action owner</b> (who is responsible for the message being delivered)
Publication of approved objectives	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Core Internal Stakeholder Group</b></li> <li>• <b>Other Internal Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Core External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Other External Stakeholders</b></li> <li>• <b>Media</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Siren</li> <li>• Spark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications and Engagement</li> <li>• Claudia Trott</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation:</b>	The success will be measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of responses to the consultation</li> <li>- Feedback from internal stakeholders</li> <li>- Feedback from external stakeholders</li> <li>- Sentiment of media coverage</li> </ul>			



# Health and Safety Risk Assessment

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<b>Activity:</b>	Equality Objectives Consultation	
<b>Assessment Number:</b>	MISC 25.07	
<b>Assessor and Job Role:</b>	Claudia Trott, EDI Lead	Assessor must be IOSH trained, if you are not, please add who supervised the completion of this assessment here: Helen Morbin, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manger.
<b>Assessment Date:</b>	08/10/2025	
<b>Reviewed On:</b>	Click here to enter a date.	
<b>Reviewed By and Job Role:</b>	Click here to enter text.	Tick here to show you are IOSH trained HM supervised & competent <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Next Review Due:</b>	08/10/2029	

## Risk Matrix

<b>Fatalities</b>	5	10	15	20	25
<b>Major</b>	4	8	12	16	20
<b>Moderate</b>	3	6	9	12	15
<b>Minor</b>	2	4	6	8	10
<b>Negligible</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Severity ↑</b>	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Moderate	Likely	Very likely
	Likelihood →				

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<b>Health and Safety Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

## Part 1 The Risk Assessment

1.Task	2. Hazard and significant outcomes (what could happen)	3. Groups at risk: A – Wholetime B – On-Call C – Young persons D – Non-uniformed E – Public F – Volunteers G – English is not first language H – Contractors	4. Control measures already in place – taking into consideration any additional measures required for those listed in column ‘3’	5. Level of Risk			6. Additional control measures required?	7. Projected level of risk			8. Action plan required? Y/N
				L	S	R		L	S	R	
Public consultation	Sudden political announcements, policy changes, or inflammatory statements that could overshadow or undermine the consultation causing attention to be diverted, and reduced engagement.	Organisational risk.	Comms plan to reference adaptable messaging. Draft holding statement. Comms team to monitor news feeds	3	1	3	Severity based upon conversation that we would accept lower level of engagement rather than seeking increased engagement that may inflame the situation further.	3	1	3	No
Public consultation	Public mistrust towards government spilling into consultation could cause reduced willingness to participate and negative behaviour towards staff.	Organisation – reduced engagement.	Neutral, clear language. Comms team to monitor news feeds. Staff member to complete dynamic RA before attending in person.	3	1	3	Severity based upon conversation that we would accept lower level of engagement rather than seeking increased engagement that may inflame the situation further.	3	1	2	No
Public consultation	Politicised debate around equality objectives. i.e. heated arguments in person or online. Leading to an	A, B, D	Pre prepared statement to manage any online hate.	3	2	6	Scoring based on RBFRS not often receiving negative comments on social media in comparison to other	3	2	6	No

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<b>Health and Safety Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

1.Task	2. Hazard and significant outcomes (what could happen)	3. Groups at risk: A – Wholetime B – On-Call C – Young persons D – Non-uniformed E – Public F – Volunteers G – English is not first language H – Contractors	4. Control measures already in place – taking into consideration any additional measures required for those listed in column '3'	5. Level of Risk			6. Additional control measures required?	7. Projected level of risk			8. Action plan required? Y/N		
				L	S	R				L	S	R	
	increase in complaints for members of the public and damage to RBFRS reputation.		Staff aware of CALM approach. Complaints procedure for staff and public complaints.				services and emergency services.						
Public consultation	Receiving and processing high volume of negative comments when completing in person consultation. Impact on staff's mental health.	D – Democratic Support Lead conducting in person visit.	Only 2 groups to be selected with careful consideration as to which would be the best groups for productive positive engagement. Signpost staff to internal support via HR health and wellbeing team. Regular contact with line manager. Discussed with consultation team to understand impact and roles to minimise number of staff exposed to negative comments.	2	2	4	Discussed with Democratic Support Lead with regards to wellbeing and score based upon this.	2	2	4	No		

1.Task	2. Hazard and significant outcomes (what could happen)	3. Groups at risk: A – Wholetime B – On-Call C – Young persons D – Non-uniformed E – Public F – Volunteers G – English is not first language H – Contractors	4. Control measures already in place – taking into consideration any additional measures required for those listed in column ‘3’	5. Level of Risk			6. Additional control measures required?	7. Projected level of risk			8. Action plan required? Y/N
				L	S	R		L	S	R	
Public consultation	Receiving and processing high volume of negative comments when completing online consultation. Impact on staff’s mental health.	D - EDI Lead if comments are within the consultation response. All staff if reading comments posted on RBFRS social media platforms.	Signpost staff to internal support via HR health and wellbeing team. Social Media Policy. Regular contact with line manager. Filters added to social media to limit visibility of negative comments/hate. Discussed with consultation team to understand impact and roles to minimise number of staff exposed to negative comments. Online abuse and harassment action plan in place and due to be completed by November.	2	2	4	Discussed with EDI Lead with regards to wellbeing and score based upon this.	2	2	4	
Public consultation	Members of staff observing, instigating or engaging in debate on	Organisational	Staff aware of CALM approach.	3	2	6	If situation arises, consider appropriate internal communications to staff.	3	2	6	No

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<b>Health and Safety Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

1.Task	2. Hazard and significant outcomes (what could happen)	3. Groups at risk: A – Wholetime B – On-Call C – Young persons D – Non-uniformed E – Public F – Volunteers G – English is not first language H – Contractors	4. Control measures already in place – taking into consideration any additional measures required for those listed in column '3'	5. Level of Risk			6. Additional control measures required?	7. Projected level of risk			8. Action plan required? Y/N
				L	S	R		L	S	R	
	social media or in person. Leading to an increase in complaints for members of the public and damage to RBFRS reputation.		Social Media Policy Filters on social media for particular language. Holding statement from Comms prepared in relation to social media activity.				HR advice to be sought as required.				
Public consultation	Physical violence against staff as a result of increased debate.	A, B, D, E, F	Violence against staff policy. Higher risk roles have completed de-escalation training. Only face to face consultation by one member of staff and groups will be carefully selected.	2	4	8	Issue reminders to staff engaging in consultation conversations.	2	3	6	No

<b>Health and Safety Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

<b>Contamination risk: N/A</b>	<b>For all activities, consideration needs to be given for the control measures required to protect those involved from contamination. List below where appropriate.</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Control measures already in place for the activity to protect from contamination</b>	<b>Additional control measures required?</b>
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Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

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**Further specialist assessments required?**

<b>Noise - contact Health and Safety Department for advice</b>	<b>COSHH - contact Health and Safety Department for advice</b>	<b>Manual Handling - contact Health and Safety Department for advice</b>	<b>Safeguarding - contact designated child protection officer for advice</b>
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Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.

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**Part 2 Action Plan**

1.Task	2. Additional Control Measures Required	3. Lead officer	4. Timetable Start / Finish		5. Review Date
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Enter detail	Enter detail	Click to enter a date.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Enter detail	Enter detail	Click to enter a date.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Enter detail	Enter detail	Click to enter a date.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Enter detail	Enter detail	Click to enter a date.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Enter detail	Enter detail	Click to enter a date.

<b>Health and Safety Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

### Part 3 Risk Assessment Validation and Approval

NOTE: If the following section is not completed, the assessment cannot be published.

#### Line Manger Validation and Approval

(to be entered by Department/Line Manager)

Becci Jefferies

**Date:** 14/10/2025

#### Advice and Guidance given by Health and Safety Section

(to be entered by H&S)

Helen Morbin

**Date:** 17/10/2025

**Your privacy:** If this is a personal risk assessment, please refer to the [privacy notice](#) for further information.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment	Issue Date
Owner: Health and Safety	18 September 2025 (v18)

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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

<b>EIA Register Reference Number:</b>	<i>To be completed by Business Support</i>
<b>Name of activity:</b> (i.e. change, policy, procedure, project)	Equality Objectives 2026 Consultation
<b>Directorate/department:</b>	Human Resources
<b>Name of department head/policy owner/project lead:</b>	Becci Jefferies
<b>Name(s) of person(s) completing this assessment:</b>	Claudia Trott
<b>Date of commencement of assessment:</b>	20/08/2025
<b>Dates of Review:</b> (please complete the review log at time of each review)	

### 1. What is/are the aims/purpose and intended outcomes of the activity you are assessing?

The requirement to set Equality objectives is outlined in the Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The act mandates that public authorities must comply with the SED, which places a duty on public bodies to consider how their policies and decisions affect individuals protected under the Equality Act. Failure to properly fulfil this duty may result in legal action against the organisation.

The intention of the duty is to accelerate progress towards equality by placing a responsibility on public bodies to actively address inequalities and discrimination, particularly in relation to individuals with protected characteristics as defined by the act.

The equality objectives have been drafted following an analysis of the progress against the previous equality objectives, alongside reviewing of the SPB and Member Champion Reports. In addition, the EDI Lead and EDI Steering Group identified key areas of focus to help the organisation advance equality, which have been incorporated into the new objectives.

It is proposed that the equality objectives remain in place for the full four-year period to allow sufficient time for meaningful action and measurable progress. However, an earlier review may be triggered if necessary.

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

The development of the new equality objectives has been carried out in consultation with the EDI Steering Group, the Staff Engagement Group and several watches across the service, ensuring alignment with relevant statutory duties.

Legislation does not specify how the public should be consulted when setting equality objectives, RBFRS intends to follow its established public consultation approach. This will include utilising the community database to engage with a wide range of representative groups across Berkshire. Consultation will also be undertaken with local authorities, and key stakeholder such as South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police. In addition, members, employees will be consulted through internal channels such as Siren. The consultation period will run for 12 weeks. Accessibility and equality of access will be key considerations throughout the consultation process to ensure it is as inclusive and representative as possible and the EIA will help inform this.

**2. Who is/may be affected by the activity, and how? Consider applicants, service users, members of the public, RBFRS employees, partner organisations etc.**

Please refer to the completion guidance.

Has any consultation taken place with those who may be affected in order to inform this assessment?

RBFRS employees, including volunteers – are affected either directly by the opportunity to participate in the consultation or indirectly following this by the activities undertaken in pursuit of these objectives.

Members of the local community – affected by the opportunity to participate in the consultation and indirectly following this by the way in which the objectives outline our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Potential applicants – affected directly by the opportunity to participate in the consultation and indirectly following this by the way in which the objectives outline our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

**Information**

**3. What information is already available that tells you what impact the activity has/will have on people? Consider quantitative and qualitative data, consultation, research, complaints, etc. What does this information tell you?**

Please list any policies that are related or referred to as part of this assessment.

Is there any equality data relating to this activity? Please also consider any further data that may inform your assessment, i.e. consultations, complaint data, and external research.

Please refer to the central register to identify any related existing EIAs.

Please describe any additional research undertaken to inform this assessment.

*These sources of information will be used to inform your assessment of the activity.*

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Issue Date
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

**Learnings from previous consultations and Equality Monitoring from Previous Equality Objective consultation**

See Equality Objectives Consultation Report 2022 for full summary and breakdown of data.

- Total responses – 252.
- Comments received on online survey – 200.
- Community contacts contacted – 1,373.

**Age**

- Largest response groups – 40-49, 60+, followed by 50-59, 30-39.
- Small number of responses from younger age groups.

**Gender**

- 56.69% female, 35.03% male.
- Small % of non-binary, prefer to self-describe and prefer not to say.

**Ethnicity**

- 78% of respondents were White British, all other represented groups had totals of less than 3%; 5.33% selected prefer not to say.

**Religion and Belief**

- 45.16% Christian, 25.48% no religion or belief, very small percentage of respondents identified their religion or belief as Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh.

**Disability**

- 16.67% respondents do consider themselves to have a disability.

**Sexual Orientation**

- The largest response group was those identifying as heterosexual/straight with 82.35% of responses.

**Local demographic data**

Responses will be compared at weekly meeting throughout the consultation period to ensure a representative range of responses are being received and action will be taken if this is not the case.

[EIA-72 Consultation strategy](#)

**4. What impact may this activity have on the following groups?**

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
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## Appendix C

Assessment of impact on groups in **bold** is a legal requirement, but it is important to consider the potential impacts of your activity on all of the following groups to ensure that your activity does not have unintended consequences.

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
<b>Sex</b> (Men and Women)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation between genders. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to</p>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation and take action if responses are not representative.
<b>Race</b> (All Racial Groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> Potential negative impact if a lack of representation between different ethnic

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<p>groups. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation and take action if responses are not representative.</p> <p>Potential negative impact if the document is not available in a format which can be easily translated.</p>
<p><b>Disability</b> (Mental, Physical, and Carers of Disabled people)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p>	<p><b>Issue Date</b></p>
<p>Owner: Human Resources</p>	<p>06 October 2021 (v06)</p>

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation and take action if responses are not representative.</p> <p>In particular regarding this category, there are potential barriers in our use of an online survey. With this in mind, alternative ways to respond have been offered i.e. in writing.</p>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any</li> </ul>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<p>other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation from different faith groups. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation, and take action if responses are not representative.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b> (All diverse sexual orientations)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination,</li> </ul>

<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p>	<p><b>Issue Date</b></p>
<p>Owner: Human Resources</p>	<p>06 October 2021 (v06)</p>

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<p>harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation amongst sexuality groups. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation and take action if any negative impact is identified.</p>
<p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> (Includes new mothers and those returning to the workplace)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p>

<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p>	<p><b>Issue Date</b></p>
<p>Owner: Human Resources</p>	<p>06 October 2021 (v06)</p>

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul>
<b>Marital Status</b> (Married and Civil Partnerships)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years.
<b>Trans People</b> (Includes non-binary identities and all other diverse gender identities/expressions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<p>following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation of trans or non binary individuals in consultation feedback. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey regarding gender identity to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation, and take action if any negative impact is identified. This question includes trans identity options.</p>

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	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
<p><b>Age</b> (People of all ages)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The objectives aim to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristics and people who do not.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.</li> </ul> <p>Potential negative impact if a lack of representation across age groups. Equality monitoring has been included in the survey to allow us to track this throughout the course of the consultation, and take action</p>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
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	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
				<p>if any negative impact is identified.</p> <p>In particular regarding this category, there are potential barriers in our use of an online survey particularly for those in higher age groups as they are more likely to be digitally excluded. With this in mind, alternative ways to respond have been offered i.e. in writing.</p>
<p><b>People in different family circumstances</b> (including those with caring responsibilities)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years.</p> <p>Potential negative impact if family circumstances make this difficult to complete i.e. whilst managing caring responsibilities. This will be considered when determining the length of the survey to ensure it is easy to respond, and will be open for 12 weeks to allow sufficient time to respond.</p>
<p><b>People in different social circumstances</b> (including socio-economic)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives</p>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
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	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
factors i.e. poverty and isolation)				<p>themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years.</p> <p>Potential negative impact if family circumstances make this difficult to complete i.e. considering socio-economic difficulties such as lack of access to equipment. Consequently we have offered multiple ways to respond to expand ways to access this information and share views and will explore alternative ways to promote feedback beyond online.</p>
<p><b>Different employee groups</b> (including consideration of on-call staff, grades, contract status.</p> <p>Also consider non-employee groups i.e. casual workers, volunteers)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Positive impact intended through this consultation and the equality objectives themselves – the objectives outline our Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion and work will be undertaken in pursuit of these for the following four years. The consultation is shared through various channels and open sufficiently long to allow all staff the opportunity to complete their response if they wish to do so.</p>

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
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	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide detail of potential impact(s), including any relevant evidence from the information section above:
<p><b>Other</b> – this may include consideration of other factors as relevant to the activity such as unemployment, homelessness, urbanisation, rurality, health and wellbeing implications.</p> <p>Please see completion notes for further guidance.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>

**5. What further research or consultation is needed to check the impact/potential impact of the activity on different groups? If needed, how will you gather additional information, and from whom? Please refer to the EIA guidance.**

Ongoing meetings are planned for throughout the consultation period in order to assess impacts as the consultation progresses, and allow for any necessary action to be undertaken to redress impacts.

**Summary of Assessment**

**6. Taking account of the assessment above, have any negative and/or disproportionate impacts been identified? If so, what amendments will you make to the activity?**

Potential negative impacts have been identified across a number of categories regarding representation and access to the consultation itself.

Equality monitoring will be tracked at weekly check-in meetings to identify any negative impacts regarding representation, at which point the EIA will be updated and action taken to redress any identified inequalities.

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
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**7. After these amendments (if any) have been made, is/will there still be a negative impact on any group?**

Yes

No

If No, go to section 9.

If Yes, please explain:

TBD in line with consultation progression.

**8. Can commencing or continuing the activity without further amendment be justified? If so, how? Please refer to the guidance documents for further information.**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**9. How can you ensure that any positive or neutral impact is maintained?**

Following the consultation, all views will be considered to produce the final version of the objectives. Our action plans, strategies and related documentation will be adjusted as a result, ensuring that the positive impacts regarding taking action in pursuit of these aims is maintained.

**10. How will you monitor the impact of the activity in future? Please identify timelines and responsible owner for monitoring, including detail of links to project/service plans if relevant.**

Weekly check-in meetings will be held to monitor this work.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Issue Date
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

**Action Plan**

Following the assessment, please complete the action plan below.

<b>Action Plan Owner:</b> Claudia Trott		<b>Commencement date:</b> 20/08/2025		<b>Sign off date:</b> Click or tap to enter a date. Please ensure all actions are completed before sign-off.	
As a result of conducting this assessment, what actions are proposed to remove or reduce any negative impact identified?					
<b>Action Plan</b>					
Identified Impact:	Recommended Actions:	Responsible Lead:	Target Completion Date:	Completion Date:	
All groups	Monitor and compare equality monitoring information of respondents against Berkshire stats at weekly meetings and take action as required.	Claudia Trott	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Disability	Consultation documents to be compatible with screen readers.	Mark Antell	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Ethnic Groups	Consultation documents to be compatible with translation tools.	Mark Antell	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Various	Consultation responses to be available in writing.	Claudia Trott	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Family circumstances	The consultation is to be open for 10 weeks.	Claudia Trott	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.	

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

**Review Log**

Please ensure that you update the action plan accordingly as a result of any changes to the assessment.

<b>Date of Review:</b>	<b>Reason for Review:</b> (i.e. outcomes of consultation, further research conducted, change to activity etc.)	<b>Outcome of Review:</b> (please describe resulting changes to EIA)
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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**Admin**

Please send the first draft and any further amended versions to Business Support to be held in the central register.

Check this box if you have undertaken research as part of this assessment that may be of use to others in completing other equality impact assessments:

Append this equality impact assessment as necessary to project reports, business cases and other documents as relevant to governance routes.

<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Owner: Human Resources	06 October 2021 (v06)

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT**



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>FIRE AUTHORITY</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>25 NOVEMBER 2025</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2024/25 AND MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE 2025/26</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>IRENE KEMA ONYERI, DEPUTY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF BROOKS</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>FOR NOTE</b>

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 To present the Annual Treasury Report for 2024/25 and the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2025/26, in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Fire Authority:

2.1 **NOTE** the Annual Treasury Report for 2024/25.

2.2 **NOTE** the Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2025/26.

**3. REPORT**

3.1 Treasury management in local Government during 2024/25 and 2025/26 has been regulated by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.

3.2 The Annual Treasury Report for 2024/25 is shown as **Appendix A**. Performance is in line with the prudential indicators approved by the Authority in February 2024.

## Agenda Item 12

- 3.3 The Mid-Year Treasury Management Update for 2025/26 is shown as **Appendix B**. Again, performance is in line with the approved prudential indicators.
- 3.4 Through close cash-flow management, the Authority has been able to capitalise on the high rates available to place a number of fixed term deposits during 2025/26 to maximise investment return, whilst ensuring the security of the underlying capital.
- 3.5 Officers continue to monitor liquidity needs, the underlying Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) and investment opportunities available that are compliant with our treasury management strategy and the advice of our treasury advisors to maximise investment returns.

### **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring that we provide a financially sustainable Service and take meaningful action to help address the climate emergency.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Investment income interest received for the 2024/25 financial year totalled £870,000. Estimated interest income to be received in 2025/26 is £598,000.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None.

### **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Authority's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles.
- 8.2 The Authority works closely with our Treasury Advisors to ensure that these principles are adhered to, and risk is monitored closely as part of this.
- 8.3 Whilst a small proportion of the investment portfolio is managed by Oxfordshire County Council, their legal status as a public body leads us to believe they are our lowest counterparty risk.

### **9. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 No sustainability implications have been identified.

**10. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

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

**11. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 Chief Fire Officer

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 12.1 CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes
- 12.2 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 approved by the Authority on 15 February 2024.
- 12.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26 approved by the Authority on 19 February 2025.

**13. APPENDICES**

- 13.1 Appendix A – Annual Treasury Report 2024/25
- 13.2 Appendix B – Mid-Year Treasury Management Update 2025/26

**14. CONTACT DETAILS**

- 14.1 Irene Kema Onyeri – Deputy Head of Finance and Procurement,  
[kemai@rbfrs.co.uk](mailto:kemai@rbfrs.co.uk)

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# ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

End of year review reflecting performance in 2024/25 and the position as at 31 March 2025.





## Introduction

The Authority is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2024/25. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

During 2024/25 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Fire Authority should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Fire Authority 15/02/2024)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (Fire Authority 13/11/2024)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

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

## The Authority's Capital Expenditure and Financing

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

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



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

	<b>2023/24 Actual (£000's)</b>	<b>2024/25 Budget (£000's)</b>	<b>2024/25 Actual (£000's)</b>
Capital Expenditure	1,079	8,600	5,712
Financed in year	1,079	8,600	5,712
Unfinanced capital expenditure	0	0	0

The 2024/25 original planned expenditure included the main modular building for the training centre which was completed in quarter 4. Slough Station refurbishment and Water Rescue projects were both completed in quarter 3.

LED Lighting project was also completed in quarter 4.

Sustainability – Heat Decarbonisation delivery contract was approved in Q1 of 25/26

White Fleet (including EV vehicle) – 3 light vans were delivered in quarter 3.

The first three out of eight appliances were been constructed. Payment for Stage 1 of the remaining five appliances was made in 2024/25.

The following ICT projects were completed in 2024/25 - Fireground Radio Replacement, Station End Refresh, and Hardware - Laptops phase 1.

## **The Authority's Overall Borrowing Need**

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

**Gross borrowing and the CFR** - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Authority should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2023/24) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2024/25) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Authority is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allowed the Authority some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs in 2024/25. The table



below highlights the Authority's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Authority has complied with this prudential indicator.

	2023/24 Actual (£000's)	2024/25 Budget (£000's)	2024/25 Actual (£000's)
Gross Borrowing position	8,922	8,922	8,922
CFR	9,750	9,200	9,200

There was no new borrowing in 2024/25.

**The authorised limit** - the authorised limit is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Authority does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2024/25 the Authority has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

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

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

	2024/25 (£000's)
Authorised Limit	16,535
Maximum gross borrowing position	8,922
Operational boundary	14,535
Average gross borrowing position	8,922
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	1.71%

## Treasury Position as at 31 March 2025

At the beginning and the end of 2024/25, the Authority 's treasury position was as follows:



	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 Principal (£000's)	Rate / Return	Average Life (Yrs)
<b>Debt:</b>						
Fixed Rate Funding						
- PWLB	8,922	4.4%	7.9	8,922	4.4%	6.9
<b>CFR</b>	9,750			9,200		
<b>Over / (Under) borrowing</b>	(828)			(278)		
<b>Investments:</b>						
Call accounts	10,662	3.57%		16,208	3.11%	
Short Term	4,222	5.46%		73	4.79%	
Long Term	364	5.75%		406	4.79%	
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>15,248</b>			<b>16,687</b>		

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 Actual (£000's)	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 Actual (£000's)
Under 12 months	0	394
12 months and within 24 months	394	0
24 Months and within 5 Years	597	2,278
5 Years and within 10 years	3,581	1900
10 Years and within 20 Years	1,350	1,350
20 Years and within 30 Years	3,000	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,922</b>	<b>8,922</b>

## The Strategy for 2024/25

### Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk

Investment returns remained robust throughout the course of 2024/25 with Bank Rate reducing steadily through the course of the financial year with three 0.25% rate cuts in total.



Bank Rate reductions of 0.25% occurred in August, November and February, bringing the headline rate down from 5.25% to 4.5%. Each of the Bank Rate cuts occurred in the same month as the Bank of England publishes its Quarterly Monetary Policy Report, therein providing a clarity over the timing of potential future rate cuts.

In 2024/25, the Authority was able to achieve returns in excess of 5% in the spring of 2024 but by March 2025 deposit rates were some 0.75% - 1% lower.

While the Authority has taken a cautious approach to investing, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008/09. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.

Investment balances have been kept to a minimum through the agreed strategy of using reserves and balances to support internal borrowing, when possible, rather than borrowing externally from the financial markets. Such an approach has also provided benefits in terms of reducing counterparty risk exposure, by having fewer investments placed in the financial markets.

## Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk

The Authority's debt position in 2024/25, was £8,922k.

During 2024/25, the Authority had an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt, as cash supporting the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure.

The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances has served well over the last few years. However, this has been kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this Authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and / or the refinancing of maturing debt.

## Investment Outturn

**Investment Policy** – the Authority's investment policy is governed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Fire Authority on 15 February 2024. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating



agencies, supplemented by additional market data, (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

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

**Investments held by the Authority** –the Authority had investments totalling £16.69m at the end of 2024/25, The Authority regularly reviews its cash flow requirements over the forthcoming period to ensure liquidity, whilst also looking to maximise return by investing sums for longer periods where possible. The Authority placed a number of fixed term deposits throughout the year to maximise return. Arrangements for immediate access investments were also reviewed, and funds were placed with several counterparties to take advantage of the enhanced rates that were on offer as the year progressed.

The Authority's long-term investments of £0.4m relate to its share of the TVFCS Renewals Fund. The fund is managed by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the three partners.

## **Borrowing Outturn**

The Authority's debt position in 2024/25, is £8,922k. No debt rescheduling was undertaken.



# TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mid-year review reflecting  
performance and the position as  
at 30 September 2025





## Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

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

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

- An economic update for the first part of the 2025/26 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Authority's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Authority's investment portfolio for 2025/26.
- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy for 2025/26.
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2025/26.
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2025/26.



In December 2021, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

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

A report setting out our Capital Strategy is presented to Fire Authority annually as part of the budget setting papers each February.

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

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

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

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

## **Economic Update**

The last section of this report provides an update on the global outlook and provides current projections for interest rates. In May, the Bank of England reduced interest rates from 4.50% to 4.25%, followed by a further cut to 4% in August. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) then decided to keep the Bank Rate steady at 4% in September 2025.



Changes in the Bank Rate, as determined by the MPC, impact the Authority in two main respects. Firstly, the returns we receive from our investment portfolio are directly influenced by the Bank Rate. When the rate is lowered, the investment returns available to us are likely to decline as well.

Similarly, the borrowing rates accessible to us will also mirror any adjustments in the Bank Rate.

## Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 were approved by Fire Authority on 19 February 2025. There are no changes to either strategy; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic and budgetary position.

## Authority's Capital Position and Prudential Indicators

This part of the report is structured to update:

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

The table below shows the expected outturn for 2025/26, and the spend to the end of September 2024.

Capital Expenditure	2025/26 Expected Outturn (£000's)	Actual costs as at 30 September 2025 (£000's)
Property	3,034	349
Fleet & Equipment	1,443	332
ICT	1,550	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,027</b>	<b>692</b>



The modular building for the main Training centre that was finished in March 2025 and became operational from April 2025. The office building was demolished and completing of Landscaping works are still in progress.

Sustainability - Heat Decarbonisation (Phase 1) - delivery contract was awarded and the project commenced at STN 01 in August 2025. Salix has not reported any concerns to date. Part of the contract's cost will be covered by a PSDC grant

6 Light Vans – The remaining three vans were delivered in the second quarter and are currently being equipped.

Appliances – The first three out of eight appliances have been completed and became operational in the first quarter. The other five appliances are currently under construction and are anticipated to be in service by the end of the fourth quarter of 2025–26.

## Limits to Borrowing Activity

A key control over the treasury activity is the prudential indicator that ensures that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2025/26 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

	<b>2025/26 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 September 2025 (£000's)</b>	<b>2025/26 Revised Estimate (£000's)</b>
Debt	8,922	8,528	8,528

The Chief Finance Officer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with this prudential indicator. No new external borrowing arrangements have been entered into during 2025/26, and there has been no repayments of debts.

A further prudential indicator sets the overall level of borrowing. This is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum



borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

<b>Authorised Limit for External Debt</b>	<b>2025/26 Original Estimate (£000's)</b>	<b>Position as at 30 September 2025 (£000's)</b>	<b>2025/26 Revised Estimate (£000's)</b>
Debt	13,252	13,252	13,252
Other long-term liabilities	500	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,752</b>	<b>13,252</b>	<b>13,252</b>

## **Investment Portfolio**

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice sets out the Authority's investment priorities as being security of capital, liquidity and yield. The Authority will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity, which is consistent with the Authority's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the suggested creditworthiness approach provided by our treasury advisors.

The increase in bank rate overseen by the MPC over the course of 2025 has provided the Authority an opportunity to increase return on investments. In recent years, when rates have been historically low, options have been scarce, but in conjunction with our treasury advisors we have placed several fixed-term deposits with counterparties.

The Authority continues to closely monitor liquidity needs and all of these fixed-term deposits mature in the current financial year to provide flexibility where needed.

The Authority held investments totalling £14.878m as at 30th September 2025.



	<b>30 Sept 2025 Principal (£000's)</b>	<b>Average Rate / Return</b>
<b>Investments:</b>		
Fixed Term Deposits	4,000	4.13%
Call Accounts	10,878	3.77%
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>14,878</b>	

The Chief Financial Officer confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2025/26.

The interest earnings budget for 2025/26 stands at £604,000. Although the Bank Rate has dropped by 0.25%, it remains comparatively high. In the second quarter, actual interest received amounted to £142,879, bringing the total earned in the first half of the year to £269,218 from the investments mentioned above.

## **Borrowing Strategy**

The Authority's capital financing requirement (CFR) estimate for 2025/26 is £10.1 million. The CFR denotes the Authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Authority may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions.

## **Debt Rescheduling**

No debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

## **Economic Update**

At the 6 November 2025 meeting, the MPC voted by a majority of five to four to maintain Bank Rate at 4%.

# Agenda Item 12

## Appendix B

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Budget Monitoring Q2	Management Committee	10.12.25	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
CRMP Priority Programmes	Management Committee	10.12.25	Every meeting	Note	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q2	Management Committee	10.12.25	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Statement of Assurance 2024/25	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	A&GC	26.01.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal and External Audit report	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Q2 Performance Report	A&GC	26.01.26	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note and recommend	MO	N/A	Part I
Property Asset Management Strategy 2026 - 2030	Management Committee	10.02.26	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Solar PV Project Stage 2	Management Committee	10.02.26	Ad-hoc	Agree	HoA	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan, SAIF and TVFCS Budget	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note and recommend	HF&P	Finance Lead	Part I
Budget Monitoring Q3	Management Committee	10.02.26	Annual	Note	HF&P	Budget and Income Generation Lead	Part I
CRMP Priority Programmes	Management Committee	10.02.26	Every meeting	Note	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I
Appliance Availability Q3	Management Committee	10.02.26	Quarterly	Note	AM (R&R)	N/A	Part I
Scheme of Member Allowances Annual Review	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	MO	N/A	Part I
Contract Regulations	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Ad-hoc	Decision	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Budget 25/26, Medium Term Financial Plan & Strategic Asset Investment Framework and TVFCS Budget	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	HF&P	Finance Lead	Part I
Pay Policy Statement	Fire Authority	23.02.26	Annual	Decision	HHR&L&D	N/A	Part I
Internal Audit Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
External Audit Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	HF&P	N/A	Part I
Annual Report on Members Development	A&GC	16.03.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	N/A	Part I
Annual report on Governance / Members attendance and allowances	A&GC	16.03.26	Annual	Note and Recommend	HCS	A&GC Chairman	Part I
Quarter 3 Performance Report	A&GC	16.03.26	Quarterly	Note	Data, Performance and Risk Manager	N/A	Part I
Members Code of Conduct Consultation	A&GC	16.03.26	Every four years	Decision	MO	N/A	Part I
CRMP Priority Programmes	Management Committee	16.04.26	Every meeting	Note	HCS	CRMP Lead	Part I

ITEM	DECISION BODY	NEXT REPORTING DATE	REPORTING FREQUENCY	RECOMMENDED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LEAD MEMBER	PART I / II
Corporate Calendar 2025/26	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Decision	HCS	N/A	Part I
Lead Member and Champion Annual Reports	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Note	Lead Officers	Lead Members	Part I
Annual Plan	Fire Authority	30.04.26	Annual	Decision	HCS	N/A	Part I